

# An Ecocritical Study of Amitav Ghosh's Sundarbans Trilogy

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## Abstract:

Eco-criticism is a branch of literary scholarship that finds tangible connections between the environment and literature. The environmental problem is one of the most prominent issues of current generation. Climate crisis stands as a sole factor in the environment in view of ecological imbalance. This is an ever increasingly presence in our daily lives. The prominent causes of climate change are an increase of greenhouse gasses, deforestation to develop human settlements, excessive use of fossil fuels and so on. The Sundarbans is the world's largest contiguous mangrove forest. It is internationally recognized for its unique biodiversity and ecological importance. Ecosystem impacts Climate change has already affected the Sundarbans significantly in terms of sea-level rise and resulting salinization of water and soil. In *The Hungry Tide, Jungle Nama and Gun Island*, Ghosh's concerns about the existential crisis that may occur due to such negligence are depicted. Besides, natural calamities, pandemics can also paralyze the world which can occur due to ecological imbalance. He believes that only by caring for and loving other people, humanity will be able to care for and protect mother earth. In this paper, I would like highlight on eco-critical issues reflected in Sundarbans by focusing on the aforesaid works of Amitav Ghosh.

**Keywords:** Environment, Literature, Climate Crisis, Fossil fuels, existential Crisis., Ecological Imbalance, biodiversity, Calamities

## 1.Introduction:

Literature and Ecocriticism are interrelated to each other .This relation results in recognition of environmental issues. Language and literature carry ethical values identifying ecological implications. In the name of capitalism and industrialization, the relationship between nature and humans is curtailed. This will destroy the Earth and the environmental slaughter has never been accurately assessed. Ethical responsibility is ignored by landlords and capitalists. Instead of thinking seriously about the aesthetic beauty of the environment, human beings are clearing forests. Natural vegetation which has grown naturally without human aid has been left disturbed for long time. The future generation will meet an imminent crisis of survival.

All the plants and animals are interdependent and interrelated in their physical environment. The vegetation cover of India in large parts is no more natural in real sense because most of the areas at some places have been degraded by human activities. In view of alteration in vegetation, the nature of the plants,

to a large extent, fails to determine the animal life. At present, this has come to the knowledge of ecocritics, researchers, environmentalists and fictional writer.

Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary study of literature and environment Literature responds to global climate change. The environmental awareness becomes the main agenda to reflect on excessive modification of the earth by humans. To put back the environmental condition and think of finding the solution should be the strong united voice of human beings. Now the moral duty of human society is to stand against such unexpected crisis of the earth. The future generation will suffer a lot in view of our reckless activities for gaining our targets. This is the belief of Ecologists that we have failed to reinstate the face of the climatic condition.

In an age of environmental crisis, we should re-think over nature and take the best shot to keep the earth in better order. The modern environmentalist movement emerged first in the late-nineteen century. Ecocriticism is foregrounded in man-nature relationship that brings both the human and non-human world together. It an umbrella term used to analyze the intimacy between literature and the environment. It highlights ecological concerns detected in the environment.

Ecocriticism comes after structuralism. So, It can be read with post-structuralism. William Rueckert, an American critic first used the term Ecocriticism in 1978. But after 1990, this term developed as a school of criticism in America with the foundation of an organization called the Association for the Study of Literature.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared the Indian and Bangladesh portions of the Sundarbans World Heritage Sites in 1987 and 1997, respectively. The region is also internationally recognized under the Ramsar Convention. Despite this recognition, the Sundarbans is under threat from climate change, along with a combination of natural factors and human actions. The region's land is still changing with the tides, and its rivers are changing their course. Over time, the eastward meandering of the Ganges River is affecting sedimentation and reducing freshwater inflows significantly. In recent decades, human actions, construction of upstream dams, embankments to protect land from tides, overexploitation of mangrove timber, urban and industrial pollution, and mangrove clearing for agriculture and aquaculture have affected the region's water supplies, sedimentation, topography, and hydrology.

Beyond these concerns, climate-induced changes have significant implications for managing this critical ecosystem and the forest-dependent livelihoods of surrounding inhabitants, which include some of South Asia's poorest and most vulnerable communities. Multifaceted climate-related threats include sea-level rise, increased atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), higher air and water temperatures, and greater frequency and intensity of precipitation and storms. Climate-induced changes are expected to lead to fragmentation of the Sundarbans landscape, including area loss, progressive water and soil salinization, and changes in flora and fauna. The impacts of a changing climate could differ significantly across the Sundarbans. A review of the literature reveals the scarcity of sound technical knowledge on the impacts of climate change and adaptation measures for the Sundarbans and its inhabitants. Previous studies, which were extremely limited in geographic scope, failed to provide a comprehensive, regional perspective.

Critical problems addressed include inundation from sea-level rise and cyclone-induced storm surges and salinization of water and soil. Understanding the current distribution of flora and fauna of the Sundarbans is important as the accompanying physical, climate-related changes will have significant implications for the forest-based livelihoods of the inhabitants of the region. Planning for appropriate adaptation will be critical for management of the Sundarbans, as well as for long-term development and poverty alleviation

in adjacent areas. The Sundarbans is known for its exceptional diversity of flora, which includes 528 species of vascular plants and many mangrove species. Although ecologically resilient, the mangrove species of the Sundarbans are highly sensitive to hydrological changes. For the Bangladesh Sundarbans, the Bangladesh Department of Forest provided a high-resolution map of the current (2013) distribution of mangrove species.

The Sundarbans are located across the western coast of Bangladesh and the south coast of India's Eastern state of West Bengal. The region is characterised by vast natural forests and deltas.<sup>[1]</sup> At greater than ten-thousand square kilometre, the Sundarbans are the world's largest mangrove forest. They are divided by three main rivers, the Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Meghna, which branch to form a major wetland that discharges into the Bay of Bengal. The Sundarbans are everchanging and composed of thousands of islands, many being uninhabitable. The Sundarbans are a UNESCO World Heritage site with four protected areas being held under reserve forest and wildlife sanctuary. The name Sundarbans comes from the common Mangrove trees which populate the area, known locally as Sundori trees.

The Sundarbans experience extreme environmental conditions including climate catastrophes such as cyclones and flash flooding. This major weather events and climate change has resulted in habitat loss, saltwater intrusion (sea water moving further inland), sea-level rise and the submerging of islands. The region also experiences social pressures including poverty, illegal immigration, climate refugees, and government oversight. The region has a history of poverty with many locals relying on the shrimp seed industry for income by working as seed collectors in the forests. Fieldwork researcher Annu Jalais notes that the Sundarbans region is sometimes referred to as 'Kolkata's Servant' ('Kolkatar jhi') in reference to the many locals that become servants within the households of Kolkata's wealthy.<sup>[10]</sup>

Ecosystem impacts Climate change has already affected the Sundarbans significantly in terms of sea-level rise and resulting salinization of water and soil . Unless the responsible agencies in both India and Bangladesh are equipped to promote climate resilience, one can expect that future climate-induced changes will undermine regional management. It is difficult to predict the extent of area loss from sea-level rise in a changing climate without first knowing the region's geomorphological history. As climate change continues, inundation from the increased frequency and intensity of cyclonic storms and progressive water salinization from sea-level rise are expected to have further adverse impacts on households that depend on the Sundarbans region's natural-resource base for their lives and livelihoods.

Sundarbans as represented in his novels is a place where the human beings have a vulnerable life as it is continuously under the jaw of natural hazards. This is a tide country located in Bay of Bengal where the destitute rehabilitated due to many impoverished circumstances. The helpless communities of tide country were not considering facts and science and instead they were more worried of the tradition, myth, legends, and so on which they blindly follow in their life time. These aspects are spreading from one generation to next through oral stories. Here in the novel many became homeless destitute only because of a terrible cyclone. It sweeps away life and existence of many people in society. The remaining members of the family have to suffer a lot due to poverty and are forced either to leave their places or to continue in the swampy areas of Sundarbans where the nature is the strongest enemy for them.

The Sundarbans is the world's largest mangrove forest area, situated on the delta where three rivers the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna—meet the sea. It covers an area of 10,000 square kilometres, sprawling across India and Bangladesh. The Indian part of the Sundarbans was declared a Tiger Reserve in 1973 and a national park in 1984. Due to its unique and rich biodiversity, the area was declared a Biosphere Reserve in 1989 and a World Heritage Site in 1985 (United Nations Environment Programme

and International Union for the Conservation of Nature). It is home to the largest remaining contiguous population of tigers in the world—245 in Indian Sundarbans in 2001-02 according to the Project Tiger census, plus 200 in the Bangladesh Sundarbans (Khan<sup>3</sup>)—living side by side with seven million people. The Sundarbans also has a perpetually mutating topography: there are no constant borders between river and sea, fresh water and salt water; and while some islands have existed intact over centuries, many others have their life expectancy measured in hours. Islands here appear and disappear in the course of a single day with the ebb and flow of the tide. If the tide leaves new land without flooding for a while, the mangroves spawning dense undergrowth invade the area within a few short years.

With sea-level rise, this trend is expected to lead to significant fragmentation of the Sundarbans landscape, causing habitat loss for many endangered species. Landscape fragmentation and wildlife habitat loss (for example, for tigers and venomous snakes), in turn, are likely to increase human wildlife conflicts in the region. Currently, the Sundarbans is one of the highest impact zones for tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal. As a result, massive losses from recurrent cyclonic storms are one of the region's primary development challenges.

Jnanpith awardee Amitav Ghosh and Professor Sukanta Chaudhuri had an interactive session during the ongoing Literary Meet at Victoria Memorial. Engaging in an interactive session with the audience, Ghosh delved into the historical impact of colonial exploitation on Eastern India and its enduring influence on the region's history. Additionally, he explored the repercussions of climate change on forests.

Addressing the colonial trade, Ghosh said, "The colonial trade has wreaked havoc on Eastern India, creating a lasting divide between the western and eastern regions. Its consequences continue to affect us today. The long-term disparities are a stark reminder of this historical exploitation. In shaping India's pre-colonial history, Ghosh explained, "The opium trade in East India was entirely monopolised by the East India Company, a key factor leading to the revolt against British rule. This trade held immense importance, generating substantial revenue, primarily due to its plantation system enforced by the government."

Discussing the impact of climate change on forests, Ghosh remarked, "We are currently facing a planetary crisis on multiple levels. Forests are not machines. Various forms of diversity interconnect them. They have an underground communication network that is spread across. Mere tree planting falls short. It doesn't address the complexities of forest ecosystems. Unfortunately, the government's decision to open forests to mining poses a threat, causing harm to indigenous communities and resulting in a drastic reduction in primary forest areas."

Focusing on the Sundarbans, Ghosh raised concern about their rapid disappearance he stated, "The Sundarbans are disappearing rapidly. Kolkata wouldn't exist without the Sundarbans. They are what protects Kolkata.

An anthropologist, as well as a novelist, Amitav Ghosh exhibits his deepest concern about ecological imbalance and its consequences in the Anthropocene in his fictional and non-fictional works. In his books, he warns that destruction of the protective ozone layer, overcutting of the world's remaining great forests, extinction of plants and animals, overfishing, and toxic poisoning of the world's oceans constantly threaten our environmental balance. These destructive trends leave an increasing number of people in poverty and hopelessness. In his seminal work, *The Great Derangement* Ghosh posits that the majority of the potential victims of ecological disparity live in Asia. The Bengal Delta formed by the Ganges and the Brahmaputra is one of the most densely populated areas of the world which is frequently ravaged by the "world's worst disaster" (119).

In his **Sundarbans Trilogy** (The Hungry Tide, Jungle Nama and Gun Island) Ghosh painstakingly portrays ecological imbalance and its effects on humans and animals. Due to the adverse impact of climate change on the people of this area, they are at risk of fulfilling their fundamental needs. According to a report of the Inter-Governmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) under the United Nations (UN) lack of sufficient food, attack on public health, and destruction of homes and properties due to cumulative natural disasters narrow down the income source of the people which increase social and gender discrepancy.

Amitav Ghosh depicts female characters, including human and supernatural, are the target of discrimination in his present works. Like mother nature, they are degraded, dominated, and exploited. The exploitation of the female community and mother nature ultimately creates crises for all

Among the 330 million people out of 360 million in the world are under the threat of ecological imbalance. Due to gender discrepancy, women are in more vulnerable positions than men. Public health risks often cause pandemics which makes their life more susceptible. In the Sundarbans Trilogy Ghosh exhibits some female characters whose lives are threatened by climate change. His nonfictional works indicate that sheer negligence to overcome such oppression of nature and women may result in a catastrophic end. This paper will highlight an appreciation of the connection between women and the natural world and an understanding of ecofeminism that advocates their liberation during the pandemic period which can enhance strategies of action for change.

As a distinguished novelist and an eminent anthropologist, Amitav Ghosh exhibits his deepest concern about the inability of the present generation to deal with the crisis of climate change in literature. In *The Great Derangement*, he forecasts the looming disaster that may arise from such carelessness. His **Sundarbans trilogy** (The Hungry Tide, Jungle Nama, Gun Island) surpasses all his previous works as he combines his personal voice with a factual and accurate description of the mangrove forest.

In his novels, he notes that the emission of carbon dioxide, discharge of dangerous levels of methane, greenhouses gases by some developed countries, and the resulting rise of sea levels increase the frequency of natural disasters that jeopardize the natural phenomenon of the Sundarbans-the biggest mangrove forest of the world. Thus, Ghosh's novels are intended to play a significant role in raising South Asian consciousness about climate change at a time when the pandemic becomes a life-threatening issue for the whole region. In *Gun Island*, Ghosh forebodes scarcity and pandemics due to ecological disruption that may result in migration in the both natural and human worlds.

The Covid-19 pandemic is but one of the most recent disasters to ravage the entire world. As a South Asian writer, Ghosh also highlights the doubly threatened situation of women in this region that arises from natural calamities. The pandemic has made us worried about the repression of nature and women in particular. Thus ecofeminism, a practical movement for social change arising out of the struggle of women, is a thriving branch of academic research now. The joint oppression of women and nature is not a natural connection but a constructed connection that has been created by patriarchy as a means of oppression.

In his **Sundarbans Trilogy** Ghosh portrays some female characters who are as degraded as nature is. The life of Kusum is oppressed by the same ideology that "sanctions the oppression of nature", Kusum, the daughter of a poor day labourer of Sundarbans was killed by a tiger attack. Ecofeminism and *The Hungry Tide*: In the essay "Mediating Climate Change: Ecocriticism, Science Studies and *The Hungry Tide*" Adam Trexler labels the novel "a canonical text for environmental critics" (210). Located in the Indian mangrove forest the novel is preoccupied with the preservation of both human and nonhuman animal interests.



## 2. An Eco-Critical Analysis Of *The Hungry Tide*:

In *The Hungry Tide* Ghosh problematizes the tensions between and within human communities, their respective relations with the natural world. The reality of nature is simultaneously changed by humanity. Ghosh sets his novel in the Sundarbans, the tide country where the contours of land constantly change with the ebb and flow of water. But Ghosh uses water as the agent that rewrites the social matrix of the Sundarbans in the novel. Water is both motif and agent, shaping not only the story but also the geography and history of the land.

It is also significant that Ghosh uses water as the agent to resolve the chief conflict fictionalized in the novel. First, Ghosh addresses the complex struggle between humans and animals for survival. Second, the motif of water makes it possible to objectively and dispassionately highlight the plight of both the dispossessed people and the threatened wildlife. Third, Ghosh is able to keep the focus on the conflict, rather than on the resolution. He makes the novel itself and indeed its primary trope, water, the agents of political and social change.

*The Hungry Tide* (2004) is one of the greatest books related to the ecological and eco-critical book written by Ghosh. It's a contemporary story of disjunctions, dislocations and destabilization. It has been well known about ecological novel. It is remarkable novel with the mixture of anthropology, environmentalism, migration, travel, ethnography, and landscape wrapped under the veil of English fiction. Its limited range of characters make it more appealing to reader.

*There are no borders here to divide fresh water from salt, river from sea. The tides reach as far as three hundred kilometers inland and every day thousands of acres of forest disappear underwater, only to re-emerge hours later. The currents are so powerful as to reshape the islands almost daily-some days the water tears away entire promontories and peninsulas; at other times it throws up new shelves and sandbanks where there were none before. (THT p.7)*

At the beginning of the novel Ghosh reveals the power of Nature through these lines. In this novel, Ghosh tries to portray the picture of conflict between man and nature. Sometimes Man gets victory over nature and sometimes nature dominates its presence upon man. Man deals with nature as a Helot. Man has been thinking since long time that Nature exists to fulfil their desire so they exploit Nature at broad level. As people of Morichjhapi are doing in the novel. They are destroying Natural resources to fill their stomach and build house for living. Overuse of environment resulted in climate change and depletion of Natural resource in Morichjhapi.

It is considered that if we exploit Natural resources there will be no natural resource for our future generation and depletion of nature brings hazardous for man. Nature also takes revenge with men in the form of Typhoon, Cyclone, Hurricane, Earthquake, Landslide etc. As in the novel we witness a great cyclone which results in the death of Fokir. Nature has started to take its right in severe manner. Human beings shall have to reshape their bondage with Nature by admitting that Nature and Human beings are two parts of one coin and one is not superior to the other. The setting of *The Hungry Tide* is in the heart of Nature. The novel knowingly deals with ecological issues of the Sunderbans, the mangrove forests between the plains and the sea of Bengal. Biodiversity of Sundarbans is slowly imbalanced due to modern activity of human beings to make alive themselves and their family. As in the novel Moyna explains Nilima's view about the new nylon nets which are used to catch tiger in Sunderban. "These new nylon nets, which they use to catch chingrimeen- the spawn of tiger prawns. The nets are so fine that they catch the eggs of all the other fish as well. Mahima wanted to get the nets banned, but it was impossible" (THT p.134).

These lines exactly depict the drawback of the advancement of technology which is, to some extent useful

for men, but dangerous for Biodiversity. The wealthy and balanced natural resources of Sunderbans of West Bengal (India), are deeply being influenced by uneducated poor man of the Island. They consider Natural resources are only for them and they can use it at any cost. So, Government has to take serious action to flee them from the island to save nature's wealth and to maintain proper cycle of biodiversity of Sundarbans. As Nilima said-

*Some refugees have occupied one of the islands in the forest. There was a confrontation with the authorities that resulted in a lot of violence. The government wanted to force the refugees to return their resettlement camp in Central India. They are put in the truck and buses and taken away... ( THT. p. 26)*

Ghosh tries to reveal the discipline of Nature in this particular novel. Somewhere he is mocking upon human that human being is considered as the most intellectual being of earth and he does not follow any rules until he feels the need of rules for their proper nourishment. But Nature does its job unconditionally.

As:

*Piya remembered a study that had shown there were more species of fish in the Sundarbans than could be found in the whole continent of Europe. This proliferation of aquatic life was thought to be the result of the unusually varied composition of the water itself. The waters of river and sea did not intermingle evenly in this part of the delta; rather, they interpenetrated each other, creating hundreds of different ecological niches, with streams of fresh water running along the floors of some channels, creating variation of salinity and turbidity. (THT p. 125)*

In general, we consider that natural calamities like, Hurricane, Cyclone, Earthquake, al-nil-lo etc, are natural process of our ecosystem but this is not true. These incidents are the wrath of Nature or we can say that oppose of Nature over man who tries to remove the existence of Nature for their benefit without knowing the result.

In spite of love story Ghosh includes ecological issues, Language problem and sophisticated relationships among Piyali, Fokir and Kanai. He intelligently solves this perplex relationships by the climatic ending in the novel with a cyclone which kills Foir, while saving the life of Piya. As, M. Abhijit Dhakuria Comments, "Amitav Ghosh is a master of the genre 'fictionalized thesis'." This comment rightly suits to Amitav Ghosh for his remarkable Contribution. He is the minute observer of Nature and tries to show how human being's share a complicated and hazardous ecosystem with living things like dolphins and tigers. Climate change is the notable thing in the novel. Due to climatic disorder in the environment of Sunderbans that rare species of Dolphins and other fishes are languishing. At the same time the population of tigers is dwindling day by day. Ecosystem of Morichjapi Island is at alarming level. Due to misbalance in ecology of the Sunderbans lead to dangerous conditions. Submersion of Islands is real ecosystem are the prominent part of the environment. A minute misbalanced in ecosystem leads to dangerous in ecological chain. As Piya reveals:

*Some kind of crabs actually laundered the mud they lived in, scrubbing it grain by grain. Their feet and their sides were line with hairs that formed microscopic brushes and spoons. They are used these to scrape off the diatoms and other dibble matter attached to each grain of sand. They were a sanitation department and a janitorial team rolled into one: they kept the mangroves alive by removing their leaves and litter; without them the trees would choke on their debris. Didn't they represent some fantastically large proportion of the system's biomass? Didn't they outweigh even the trees and the leaves? Hadn't someone said that intertidal forests should be named after crabs rather than mangroves since it was they –certainly not the crocodile or the tiger or the dolphin –who were the keystone species of the entire ecosystem? (THT p.142)*

Nature is the boon for human beings which God has given as gift since the birth of man. Ghosh portrays the picture of Nature as mother. Without Natural resources human being can't be nurtured in proper manner. He has to take help of Nature for comfortable life. As in the novel, Kusum expresses when her father returned from a long and successful fishing trip, there was money in the house and food. In this way Nature fulfills the basic needs of human. Anyone can survive with the help of Nature. But the needs of human turned into greed. Therefore, they have to face the wrath of Animals as well as Nature. Kusum's father wanted to eat delicious food. So, Kusum's mother cooks rice, dal and vegetables. But, firewood ran out when it came time to cook some fish. His father became angry when he heard about ran out of firewood. So, he stormed out of the house and went to bring some firewood. Here, Amitav Ghosh depicts that man doesn't want to compromise and this leads to damage for their life. As kusum's father finished his life, when he went to bring only some firewood.

Ghosh tries to show the power of Humans and Animals. Sometimes Human came in power and sometimes men overwhelmed upon animals but there are the loss of both. Human being is considered as the most intellectual being of the earth, they should be considered about the balance of ecosystem and thinks about animal that they too have emotion and feeling and they will behave according to their nature. But problem is that Human being known everything but he ignores. As Kusum's father went to bring firewood in angry mood and failed to recognize the situation which resulted in his death. Ghosh writes:

*The animal was in the trees that lined the shore, and from the direction of its advance she knew it had watched the boat as it came across the river. At kusum's first scream her mother and many others from the hamlet ran up to embankment. But her father, for whom the shout of warning had been intended, didn't hear for the wind was blowing in the wrong direction.*

*Within moments dozens of people had joined her on the embankment and all saw what she had seen: The animal was stalking her father." (THT p.108)*

Ghosh's, ideas, that animal too has emotion but due to selfishness of human being they feel trouble and sometime they attack us due to fear or to protect themselves and eat them as their food. Nobody wants to get cross other persons in his territory. Therefore, Animals also want to live free at their place. Due to overpopulation human being knowingly destroys the forest and constructs their mansion. These all activities effect the emotions of animals because forest and caves are safe place for them. They can easily get everything for their survival. Animals feel helpless and some they get angry when he saw their enemy in the form of human being. He tries to take revenge from them because they think that they came to kill him or destroy their area. That's why Animals use their power to save their life and sometimes to make human as their food. As Ghosh's reveals the emotion and predication of animals in this novel;

*"The animal was to upwind of its prey and they could see its coal flashing as it closed in; because of the distinctiveness of its own odour, it was skilled in dealing with the wind and it knew that the people on the other bank were powerless against these gusts" (THT p.108).*

Ghosh depicts the cycle of nature in the novel. He introduces the incident of 1970 in which there was a great cyclone and at the present time Fokir, Piya and other people of island facing the same cyclone which brought destruction and turmoil in Sunderbans at immense level. Somewhere Ghosh wants to warn the people that if we don't bring change in our life style, Nature will take its revenge in this manner. Ghosh wants to get aware to the people about the natural calamities of environment in future which will be the result of human's own karma. As Ghosh reveals the cycle of nature in the novel:

*It was in 1737. The Emperor Aurangzeb had died some thirty years before and the country was in turmoil. Calcutta was a new place then-the English had seized their opportunity and made it the main port of the*



east.'

'Go on, Saar.

*it happened in October- that's always when the worst of them strike, October and November. Before the storm had even made landfall the tide country was hit by a huge wave, a wall of water twelve metres in height. Can you imagine how high that is, my friend? It would have drowned everything on your island and on ours too. Even we on this roof would have been under water.'* . . . *'And this, my friend and comrade, is a true a story, recorded in documents stored in the British Museum, the very place where Marx wrote Das Capita.'*

*But, Saar, it couldn't happen again, Saar, could it? . . . 'My friend, not only could it happens again- it will happen again. A storm will come, the waters will rise, and the badh will succumb, in part or in whole. It is only a matter of time.'* (THT p.204-205)

Piyali Roy comes to do survey of the marine mammals of the Sundarbans. She is interested in Gangetic Dolphins and Irrawaddy Dolphins. Piya tries to depict the description of dolphins- their discovery, history, and problems faced by them. Piya lived in Lusibari for few days but due to hazardous incident in the life and area of Lusibari, she left for a month, but returned to work for Badabon trust. She decided to move the trust in the direction of conservation of the Gangatic Dolphins, in consultation with the local fisherman of Lusibari: she is also helped by financing a house for Moyna and College education for Tatal. She asks Nilima for the rent of Upper floor of her house to set guest house. She wanted to work on project at the name of Fokir and at last she said, Nilima, "For me, home is where the Orcaella are, so there's no reason why this couldn't be it." (THT p.400) And Kanai starts to write what he remembered from reading Nirmal's journal. Ghosh tries to end the novel with happy setting from the hazardous Nature calamities face by the people of Lusibari:

*The novel abounds in information about natural history, the authenticity of which need not be questioned from a writer with a reputation for meticulous research and one who is an anthropologist by training. However, it is the movement towards a vision at the end, which is more interesting and enlightening. What Piya realizes should be realized by all the eco-critics. After the storm and Fokir's death, Piya goes away only to return with funds and a proposal for a research project. Piya wants to work in consolation with the local fishermen so that the burden of conservation would not fall on those who could least afford it. She wants the project to run under the sponsorship of the Badabon Trust. It is a small gesture but significant nevertheless. She refuses to exclude the man at the grassroots from her work as a conservationist. She is aware that without Fokir's particular knowledge of his environment, she would have remained ignorant of the river dolphins in the tide country and so would the rest of the world. (Thakur 70-71)*

The Hungry Tide is set in the Sundarbans meaning "beautiful forest" which comprises of more ten thousand square kilometers. Climate change in the Sundarbans affected both human being and Animals. Flora is also in danger. Due to increase in the population mangroves of Sunderbans begin to wrinkle. Sudden, rising of water level increase the possibility flood and Tsunamis. People of the islands are uneducated and lack of awareness which leads to imbalanced biodiversity in Sunderbans- tide country.

The novel recounts the event of the Morichjhapi incident that took place in 1979 and it depicts the exploitation faced by the refugees from Bangladesh. The Government of India has taken steps to preserve its natural resources which include the endangered species like the Royal Bengal Tiger and the Gangetics Dolphins called as Oracella.

The preservation of the region has given rise to confrontation with the local people. In 1978 a large number

of people came and settled here. There were refugees from Bangladesh who were exploited Muslim communists and upper class Hindus. Since this place was a reserved forest the government authorities declared eviction of the settlers. For almost a year, there was strong conflict between the authorities and the people. The ultimate conflict took place in the year 1979 and it remains a mystery whether Nirmal was a part of it. The incidents of Morichjhapi are revealed through the papers left by Nirmal for Kanai.

Environmentalism and Destabilization are some of the predominant themes in the novel. The geographical location of the Sundarbans serves as a significant metaphor in the novel. The physical environment is a representation of an active force that connects the plant, animal and human life together and one is affected by the other directly or indirectly. The topographic features habitats of the people, professions of this tide country are responsible for the formation of their communities. In the novel, we see a co-existence among various kinds of people face the same consequence while encountering with the environment which comprise of dense forests, rivers, snakes and crocodiles, fishes, tigers and also the natural disasters like the cyclone and terrible storms.

The environment is not only important to form the narratives structure but also its highlights the mystery and fates of an individual's existence even in the midst of a dangerous but at the same time a beauty of nature. The people living in close proximity with Nature have their own myths and legends about Mother Nature. Here in this novel we have the Bon Bibi myth that is necessary in the formation of an identity for the people of this tide country who believe so much in the myths, customs and rituals of the Sunderbans jungle and its influence upon their lives. The concept of the Jungle is a distinct paradigm which shows the differences between the civilized and the uncivilized people.

In *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh has depicted nature's resistance towards its regimentation and strict categorization. We clearly see that Nature has its own workings that are beyond human control. In the Sundarbans the boundaries collapse and rivers merge with each other. Amitav Ghosh's novel explores the theme of destabilization mainly caused by globalization. It is based on a true historical incident; the event of Morichjhapi and also concern the issues of the environment, its protection and conservation of the Sundarbans. Ghosh shows the conflict between the refugees and the government authorities and also focuses on the suffering of the settlers in a hostile environment where they have no other place to go.

Through the novel, Ghosh hints at the fact that globalization far-reaching impact upon the people who are considered backward and uncivilized. Through the globalization, even these sections of people have benefitted a lot and the transfer of knowledge and effect of communication will pave the way for further education and advancement in technologies and ideas. However, Ghosh shows the negative aspects of globalization as well. This is seen in the inhuman and different attitude shown by the urban people towards the settlers of the Morichjhapi.

*The Hungry Tide* unfolds through the eyes of two upwardly mobile, educated individuals who undertake a journey to the tide country. Kanai Dutt, the Bengali born, Delhi-settled businessman, arrives in Lusibari to visit his Aunt Nilima and claims the package left for him by his late uncle, Nirmal. The package, he discovers, is an account of his uncle's last days. It revolved around Kusum and her son Fokir, who are portrayed as the victims of eviction from the island of Morichjhapi. The second voice of the novel is that of Piyali Roy, an American-born cytologist of Indian background who chooses to journey into the Sundarbans to study the threatened Gangetic River dolphins. Ghosh weaves together two temporal narratives: one unfolding through Nirmal's journals recounting the Morichjhapi episode that happened twenty-eight years earlier, and the second through Piya's expedition, revealing the contemporary situation of the people and the flora and fauna of the Sundarbans.

The sub-narrative is foregrounded in the character of Fokir. Fokir represents the third voice of this ecological drama. William W. Hunter mentions that Fokir accompanied woodcutters and hunters on their expeditions to the forest. Hunter points out that these woodcutters were so superstitious that they would not venture into the forest being unaccompanied by Fokir. In Ghosh's character, Fokir guides Piya and Kanai through the waterways. Fokir also worships Bon Bibi, the forest goddess, and loses his life in the process of steering the outsiders safely through the forests.

The novel is suffused with multiple social transitions, between the First World and the Third World, local and global, rural and urban, traditional and modern, and among linguistic, religious, and class barriers, all played out in the context of the waterscape. Only in the face of a hostile environment are the social barriers broken down and overcome. Nature serves as the agent to level all social and cultural hierarchies. In locating the novel in an environment such as the Sundarbans, place emerges as a larger-than-life character, where the water engages with every minor and major change in the lives of the people and the environment.

In "The Hungry Tide" Ghosh has intricately arranged a narrative network taking Sundarbans in order to find out the relationship between humans and the fragile ecosystem of this unique delta. The study illustrates the ecological impact of human interference. This is highlighting the themes of climate crisis and biodiversity loss. The Sunder bans play a major role in the novel. It is largely covered by mangrove forests, flora and fauna. The narrative is a long river trip in search of the Irrawaddy dolphin. Amitav Ghosh's scholarship as well as reading of the hostile environment and ecology as a social anthropologist has closely examined the pros and cons of the Sundarbans.

This novel creates a hostile environment where every character is in equal struggle to survive in the unfriendly environment. Sundarbans is the largest mangrove forest in the world. It has already seen the impact of climate change. The endangered species like the Royal Bengal Tiger and Irrawaddy dolphins are the inhabitants of Sundarbans. The animals keep facing a lot of problems due to environmental issues. The Earth has been changed by the climate change which is reflected in the novel. Due to climatic disorder in Sundarbans, the species like Dolphins and other fishes are languishing. The number of tigers is reducing day by day. The ecosystem felt at Morichjhapi Island is at alarming level. The Sundarbans are running under dangerous conditions in view of ecological change. Submersion of Islands in real ecosystem are the prominent part of the environment. The people of the Sunderbans, their history, and their struggles with natural world are well focused by the novelist.

Amitav Ghosh depicts the cruel cycle of nature. The cyclone had taken place in the year 1970. All the characters keep struggling to survive in the hostile environment. The characters in the novel are Nirmal, Nilima, Kanai, Piya and Fokir. The story revolves around the said characters. The adverse situation is constantly faced by them. The nature stands against them in different situations. Life for them has become meaningless. The impact of natural disaster has been felt globally. The climatic crisis in Sundarbans has put the lives of humans and non-humans into hopeless condition. Fokir, Piya and other islanders have faced the severe cyclone. It has brought destruction and turmoil in Sundarbans at immense level. The extreme alarming rate of climate crisis has undergone chaos on the chest of Sundarbans.

Somewhere Ghosh cautions the Islanders to carry the decorum of life. He suggests to bring change in our life style. Nature is on the way to take its revenge. It is caused by man in the name of tiger reservation for making profit. Ghosh wants the people to be well aware regarding the change of natural calamities of environment in future. It is the consequence of man's reckless decision towards nature. The inhabitants of

Sunderbans keep searching for the proper place in the world. In view of frequent cyclones, the human lives are under threat.

Amitav Ghosh creates a hostile environment. The novelist has set the novel in Sundarbans where every character is in equal struggle to survive in the hostile environment. It dominates the novel from the very beginning to the very last. People in Sundarbans become the prey of tigers daily. No strong action is taken to sort out this menace. According to Ghosh, the tide raises in mind of people of the Sundarbans, the beautiful forest. Ghosh reflects the environmental issues of the conflict of conservation of natural world and human rights meant for better living in the novel.

The complex depiction of the Sundarbans in Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* goes beyond only geographic and ecological details. The novelist gives readers a comprehensive understanding of the area by showing socio-cultural and historical themes. It is a testament to the ability of literature to highlight the areas like the Sundarbans, which comes to the front of current environmental and socio-political concerns in spite of being grown in natural beauty and cultural legacy. **(Roy, Bidisha., 2015)**

"The Hungry Tide" by Amitav Ghosh presents intricately the interactions between nature, and man. The novelist here exposes the real picture of so-called feminist society. He makes a long conservation for the women's welfare and talks about equality with her counterpart. In a conversation with with Konai, Nilima says about the miserable condition of women. The dire poverty of tide country becomes remarkable when Kanai had chosen to dedicate his life for the betterment of the people. Kanai is owner of a successful translation business. He comes to the Island of Lusibari to visit his aunt, Nilima. He also lives in a hostile environment. Geeta Chhabra pasturizing the scene of Sunderban described in Ghosh's "The Hungry Tide" regarding losing of many species in order to protect the one particular race.

In Amitav Ghosh's fourth work of fiction, it is clear that Piyali Roy is a young marine biologist in America. She has come to study over the extinction of Irrawaddy dolphins. She arrives at Sundarbans, the archipelago of islands where the Ganges merge into the Bay of Bengal. She comes to conduct an ecological survey on dolphins. Piya is fully westernized and does not know any Bengali. She is an efficient researcher who confidently sets about her task. A drowning accident leads her to become reliant on a boatman as a guide and protector in the violent sunder bans. An interaction between them has taken place. At the end of the novel, Fakir is also killed in a cyclone, while guiding piya on one of the tide country's many remote waterways. In an odd resolution, Piya decides to continue her aquatic research in the tide country, asks Nilima to help her set up a research trust, as memorial to Fokir. She also asks Kanai to be her partner in this venture.

In this novel, Ghosh has illustrated the miserable condition of people living around the Sundarbans. The novelist shows that the people become a prey of wild animals like Tiger. Their voice is crushed under the tyranny rule of Government. The inhabitants become the prey of Tiger. Life is tremendously insecure in Sundarbans. Attacks by deadly tigers are common. Turbulence and deportation are regular intimidation. The land has been ruined by tidal waves. The lives of the people have been highly affected due to unexpected climatic disorder.

The inhabitants live in apprehension because they feel that they may be dragged and drowned by tides. The tigers will kill them at any moment. Piya Roy takes the help of Fokir to continue her research. Fokir saves her from drowning her from the Irrawaddy dolphins as the boat overturns. Piya immediately gets rid of the guard. She decides to engage Fokir's services even though they do not share a common language. They communicate through gestures. At the end, Fokir has lost his life on the Island of Garjontola due to severe cyclone.

Norwegian philosopher **Arne Naess in his Deep Ecology (1973)** has viewed that humans are neither the rulers nor the centre of the universe, but they are embedded in a vast living matrix. This novel focuses on man's indomitable struggle with nature. Life is precarious in the marshy land of Sunderban, an archipelago of islands. It is spread between the sea and plains of Bengal.

The main objective of the study is to focus on ecological issues pursuing to Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide*. This paper will give a new insight to the readers about the untouched parts of this novel. The Study also deals with human centric nature interconnected with the environment which has completely damaged the environment. There is struggle for survival in natural struggle. due to excessive human greed. It has resulted ecological disaster. It also tries to analyse how there is a never falling bond between man and nature in the light of Deep Ecology. We have nature literature. Literature is consciously dealing with ecological environmental issues. This paper is portrayed to study ecology as a new cultural consciousness in *The Hungry Tide*.

*The Hungry Tide* considers not only the issue of environmental conservation but also the issue of diversity of the human. It is a readjustment between different kinds of human societies and values, the rich, the poor, the developed, the under developed, the articulate and the silenced. Amitav Ghosh's "The Hungry Tide" stands out in the intersection of literature and environmental discourse as a moving story. It offers profound insights into the complexities of human-nature relationships. It is particularly in the vulnerable ecosystem of the Sundarbans. The text is used as a weaving of stories about ecological, cultural, and human resilience rather than just as a storytelling tool. The novel's eco-critical examination reveals the breadth with which Ghosh examines the environmental challenges for survival of human existence.

According to the philosophy of dualism, a female nature is always dominated and exploited by 'the master subject'. Thus, women and nature are intricately connected in modes of oppression. In order to find a kinship between women and nature, Greta Gaard asserts in her book *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature* that ecofeminism "explores the links between androcentrism and environmental destruction" (18).. The interconnectedness of women Amitav Ghosh too is abundantly depending on his life experiences and the living space to supplement his narrative space. Here my attempt is to analyse the novel *The Gun Island* by Amitav Ghosh through the perspective of the displaced individuals and how truthfully the fiction discusses the issues faced by the dislocated people in a society. Amitav Ghosh is a well known writer in historical fiction whose exuberance in it made his fiction memorable monuments to reader community. Amitav Ghosh, being an Indian by birth knows Indian culture, rituals religious beliefs and so on in a much unconscious way which obviously reflected in his narratives as well. While he was a traveller in his time he also knows what life was going on in other countries like Sri Lanka , Bangladesh, London and so on. Indeed, Ghosh was the most excellent person to talk about rootlessness, expatriation, identity crisis, home sickness, alienation, isolation etc as because he was a person who lived in New York and married a foreigner. So far he travelled a lot around the world and his investments are his indisputable life experiences and in-depth historical awareness. Indianness in his fiction is an inevitable feature which is come together with a comprehensive perspective. It's a journey through spaces- western as well as eastern landscape is the focal point of his narration. His journeys are triggering his characters as well. Obviously, his narration is a mixing of what all things happened in and around the world. It's not talking merely what happens within India but it talks much more than that.

Generally his historical fiction deals with the themes like displacement, dislocation, colonial segregation, nationalism, homesickness, globalisation, post colonialism etc .To engage in his narration means the readers are literally made familiar with a physical space and how he was taken to the world created by the



writer. His fiction talks in detail about the life of ordinary men and women like Horen Naskar and Moyna in *The Hungry tide* kings and queen as in the characters of Queen Supayalat and king Thibaw as in *The Glass Palace*, westerner like Antar in *Calcutta Chromosome*, natives like Alu in *The circle of reason* and so on. So it is not giving a single perspective but instead it provides a wide range of characters ranging from common man to even people who are having utmost power in the power structure of the society. His fiction provides glimpses from the lives of slum dwellers, black slaves, proud Indians, sex workers; refugees etc. such marginalised and repressed section of society is represented very poignantly by him in his fiction. His perspectives regarding homeless refugees and their existence are visible in his novels like *The Hungry Tide*, *Ibis Trilogy* and *Gun Island*. Here through this paper the focus is on the spatial dimensions of the *Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island* which was really a blending of legends and the beliefs of the people. Sundarban islands which was obviously a promised land for the depressed and marginalised section of the society.

Indeed Sundarbans is a mangrove area in the delta formed by the confluence of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna Rivers in the Bay of Bengal. It spans the area from the Hooghly River in India's state of West Bengal to the Baleswar River in Bangladesh's division of Khulna. It comprises of closed and open mangrove forests, land used for agricultural purpose, mudflats and barren land, and is intersected by multiple tidal streams and channels. Obviously, nobody will be there with their desire. Almost all the people who lived there were once wretched homeless refugees. They were haunted in their native mainland. As a final resort they escape themselves to this tide country Sundarbans which is having violent climatic conditions. There are many odds and oppositions to face in the country whether it may be natural hazards or from animals.

His novels provide plenty of information regarding the poor people of Sundarbans and how they lead a miserable and were a victim for the perennial torment from the nature of the tide country. It is not as easy to lead a life in the tide country as it was frequently attacked both by awkward climatic conditions and from the cruel attacks of violent animals as well. So, Life becomes really precious for them as they have to face all these issues on a daily basis. Poverty due to terrible weather and dreadful cultivation and poorer harvest made their life so miserable. And subsequently they were forced to either leave the place or they can have to get meagre salaried jobs within the island itself. Child labour is too common among islanders as they are really lacking educational facilities in the locality. Women were accepting sexual work in various other places just to nurture the remaining members in their families. The reason is that they cannot find any other jobs for the uneducated and marginalised women of the island.

Ghosh through his novels like *The Hungry Tide and Gun Island* portray the life and struggle of such people who live their life in the islands of Sundarbans. *Gun Island* talks mainly about global migration crisis and the effects of climate change through the focus of Bengali Folklore. Both the above said issues are predominantly visible in the contemporary society. Hence his novel reflects life and society around him truthfully with an amalgamation of elements of imagination as well. Space represented by him in the novel reflects the accurate depiction of events that took part in the narrated space.

The novel begins with a chapter called *Calcutta* the space with which he is too familiar. Its culture, social and ideological framework economic and political milieu and so on are so familiar for him to portray. The writer proudly took advantage in mirroring the nook and corner of his life-giving space in his narration and the variety of characters and incidents born out of such space gives a candid scope for the ingenuous portrayal. The novel beyond doubt highlights the importance of tradition, legends, and beliefs and so on

of one place and how it makes a deeper mark on the psyche of people. How far they have gone it will be in their unconscious mind without losing its lustre.

Moyna, the mouthpiece of Amitav Ghosh talks about the life of the young generation of island and how they were forced to flee from the land just to escape the cruelties of Nature. Sometimes, said Moyna, it seemed as though both land and water were turning against those who lived in the Sundarbans.

When people tried to dig wells, an arsenic-laced brew gushed out of the soil; when they tried to shore up embankments the tides rose higher and pulled them down again. Even fishermen could barely get by; where once their boats would come back loaded with catch, now they counted themselves lucky if they netted a handful of fry.

*What were young people to do? Making a life in the Sundarbans had become so hard that the exodus of the young was accelerating every year: boys and girls were borrowing and stealing to pay agents to find them work elsewhere. Some were slipping over the border into Bangladesh, to join labour gangs headed for the Gulf.*

*And if that failed they would pay traffickers to smuggle them to Malaysia or Indonesia, on boats. The only way to avoid this fate was for the young to get an education. But how could boys and girls who had been brought up in mangrove country, studying by candlelight and sharing old textbooks, compete with city folk with their tuition centres and easy access to the Internet? (P 49)*

Tipu, son of Moyna had a different perspective regarding everything in Sundarbans. He happened to be separated from all other children of the tide country only because he was given whatever he wants by an educated American woman named Piya. In fact Piya had contributed for the upbringing of Tutul whose father had been killed while working for Piya. This prick of conscience made Piya to do a lot of charity activities within Lusibari in association with Nilima Bose and her Borbadon trust. Tipu happened to be a well-educated Youngman who even visited United States once for his education with the help of Piya. But due to circumstances he could not continue his education and returns to Lusibari which culminated in a kind of identity crisis for him. Tutul or Tipu as he calls himself can't belong neither to America nor to Lusibari. He had to face caste discrimination when he was admitted for higher education in a well-known boarding school of Kolkata. For Tipu to go to school in Lusibari was clearly impossible so Piya had admitted him into an expensive boarding school in Kolkata. But that too had turned out badly. The attitude that Tipu had brought back from America had not sit well with his fellow students and teachers.

*Things had become worse when his schoolmates discovered that he was a Dalit, from the Sundarbans. One day a classmate had said to him that only servants and whores came from the Sundarbans. Tipu had lost his temper and given the fellow the beating he deserved. But the other boy was from an influential family and they had ensured that Tipu was expelled. (P 51)*

Tutul, a native of the island talks about the plight of the people in Sundarbans which was basically decided by the place itself. In fact the land decides the fate of the people. He knows the prose and cones of whatever is happening in the tide country. And as an educated person he had his own perspectives regarding everything.

*The frustrated youth of the island is symbolically represented here through his character. He simply says about the life in Sundarabans as He laughed again. 'Whoa there, Pops - you sure like those big words! What I'm doing is I'm offering an essential service. In these parts, there's a whole bunch of dirt-poor, illiterate people scratching out a living by fishing or farming or going into the jungle to collect bamboo and honey. Or at least that's what they used to do.*

*But now the fish catch is down, the land's turning salty, and you can't go into the jungle without bribing the forest guards. On top of that every other year you get hit by a storm that blows everything to pieces. So what are people supposed to do? What would anyone do? If you're young you can't just sit on your butt till you starve to death. Even the animals are moving - just ask Piya. If you've got any sense you'll move and to do that you need someone who can help you find a way out. (P 60.)*

Apart from the depiction of poor rustics of Tide country Amitav Ghosh finds interest in portraying well educated and scientific Indian characters and some very interesting foreigners too in his narration. This will add a juxtaposition of east and west in all his novels. And no doubt the gun island also have such portrayal of rich affluent enlightened Indian characters; like Piya , Kanai Dutt, Dina Nath, Tipu , Nilima Bose and so on. These characters prove how efficient Indians were during that time even in such an underdeveloped island like Sunadarbans. These characters reached the island not out of their bad life conditions but with a vivid intention in their mind .For Nilima Bose, her entry into the tide country and her subsequent growth as the most influential persona of the island is noteworthy to mention. She, Kanai's aunt moved to Lusibari after marrying an impoverished school teacher. Later she had founded a women's group that had since grown into the the Badabon trust, one of India's most reputed charitable organisation. Now runs an extended network of free hospitals, schools, clinics and workshops. She proved to be instrumental in guiding the natives of Lusibari to enlightenment from darkness through establishing proper educational facilities and health facilities within their reach. Piya like any other well educated Indian researcher reaches Lusibari to study about a rare variety of Gangetic dolphin but soon she turns to be a part of Lusibari from which she can't go away forever. She is a supporting pillar for the people in total and special attention is given to Tutul and his family. Later she was instrumental in opening the wide knowledge of the world to him. It was Piya who found out reasons behind the climate change that is happening in and around Lusibari. She learns about the life and death of dolphins in the country and as a result she identified the role of chemical fertilizers came out from the refinery nearby. It poisons the Sundarbans, its climate, its flora and fauna, animals, water body and so on. In total this was a cruelty done by man to nature. Polluting water resource is the reason behind all such critical situations. This later created a kind of friction between Piya and Bodabon Trust on one side and the powerful rich factory owners on the other side. So as a conclusion it must be noted that the space represented here in the novel is vividly portrayed by the writer.

Ghosh proves his talent in creating a space before the readers with its multi dimensions – social, ecologic, political, and economical aspects. The life in Sundarbans comprehensively presented to us through characters like Piya, Kanai Dutt, Dean, Moyna and Nilima Bose. The fiction is going through the life of Sundarbans and how they were fighting between oddities in society as well as in Nature. Sundarbans the tide country is deciding the fate of the people who lives there.

It was the place that makes the people orphan, poor and physically handicapped through its vicious natural calamities. Continuous floods and cyclones affected badly to the people. Here is describing a group of people who are tortured and ill treated within the boundaries of Sundarbans and are incessantly fighting with nature. Man versus Nature is an imperative theme discussed in the novel which discusses about long term consequences of natural calamities. Sea had invaded places and fertile land become swampy by salt water. All this create mass evacuations and people were uprooted from their villages. Begging and poverty was the available opportunities for the remaining majority.

The parallel stories of Piya's project on marine mammals in mangrove forests and the school headmaster Nirmal's diary about the pathetic life of the refugees of Marichjhapi, particularly the tragedy of Kusum's

life, exhibit the connection between females and nature and demonstrate “how a ‘female’ nature has been systematically degraded, dominated and exploited” (Coupe 120). Piya, an American scientist, alienated from her ancestral home, Kusum, a local girl of Sundarbans, as well as Nilima, an NGO administrator, all make interesting connections between women and nature. Piya, the cetologist, once came to the Sundarbans to do a survey of the marine mammals of the area as the water of this delta basin was suitable for both Irrawaddy and Gangetic dolphins and many other species.

The unusually varied composition of saline and freshwater is the reason for the proliferation of aquatic life. The pools of dolphins are also a natural habitat of crabs. They are an important part of the Sundarbans. Acknowledging their contribution to the forest Ghosh mentions in *The Hungry Tide*, they keep “the mangrove alive by removing their leaves and litter; without them, the trees would choke and on their own debris”. Thus, they become the keystone species of the entire ecosystem. There are more species of fish in the Sundarbans than could be found in the whole of Europe. The people of these areas earn their living mostly by catching fish and crabs and by collecting honey. But the over excessive amount of fishing and ecological imbalance due to global warming has decreased the number of fishes and crabs. The ecological change is depicted by Nirmal, a headmaster of a school of Lusibari, thus

*“The birds were vanishing; the fish were dwindling and from day to day the land was being reclaimed by the sea. What would it take to submerge the tide country? Not much – a minuscule change in the level of the sea would be enough” (215).*

Such ecological imbalance is going to destroy the flora and fauna of the forest. Wildlife is under threat. Similar to the lives of non-human animals, human beings have also been experiencing catastrophic change. Kusum, a “spirited, tough, and full of fun and laughter” woman of the Sundarbans, becomes an embodiment of the degraded female character of the archipelago. Born in a small village named Satjila had moved to Lusibari after her father’s death due to a tiger attack. She became a target of a local human trafficker who also sent her mother to a brothel. Kusum was brought to Lusibari Badabon Trust by one of her relatives, Horen, who sent her to Canning to get rid of the human trafficker and to find her mother. She was determined to go alone to a new place. Later she was married off to a physically disable person and became the mother of a boy, Fakir. After the accidental death of her husband, she became utterly stranded. One night she met an old woman and her family who were politically forced to leave their country, Bangladesh, in 1970. The old women, along with many other Bangladeshis had moved to Morichjhapi, a small village in the mangrove forest, as it was assigned by the West Bengal Government for the refugees. But later the leftist government decided to evict the refugees to preserve the wildlife. However, the settlers decided not to move.

To evict them the government deployed the gangsters who burnt the houses of the settlers, wasted their fields, and sank their boats so that they could not move. And then they brutally killed people and raped the women of the village. Kusum was one of the victims of the massacre. Like the tragic lot of non-human animals such as dolphins, crabs, or tigers of the mangrove forest who are evicted as a result of human encroachment, the life of Kusum is also dominated and exploited by male-dominated society. Both refugees and the local people of the Archipelago are dependent on the islands.

As a result, they sometimes intrude into protected areas set aside for the wild animals. Similarly, when a wild beast enters the local areas it also becomes a subject of ‘brutal revenge. In order to restore the balance between human and non-human animals, Ghosh presents the folklore of Bon Bibi. The tiger god is worshipped by both Muslims and Hindus. Before the arrival of Bon Bibi to the tide country, it was ruled by the demon, Dokkhin Rai, who harbored hatred and an insatiable desire for human beings. Bon Bibi

defeated the demon and restored peace in the locality by giving one-half of the forest to the demon and its disciple. The rest she kept for humans to restore the balance.

To optimize balance in the natural and human worlds Ghosh prescribes the moral lesson of Bon Bibi which is not to cross boundaries. If nature is systematically degraded and dominated, it will end up with the destruction of the planet by “rational economy and global profit”. Addressing Ghosh as a “socially conscious fashioner” of narrative in *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island* he associates the moral of the myth with the present situation that enhances the possibility of the catastrophic end of the world due to the emission of carbon of some rich countries. He connects the motif of the myth with the present-day crisis caused by the rich who want to be richer and affluent countries of the world who do not want to sacrifice their personal advantage for the greater benefit of the world. This has been the dominant component running through Ghosh’s Sundarbans Trilogy.

Ghosh is deeply involved in the politics of relentless development vis-à-vis climate change. He rejects the kind of development which leads to the devastation of natural resources. Like Alison Hawthorne, an eminent environmentalist, Ghosh believes that economic development should not be measured “in terms of financial loss and gain but in terms of the earth’s biological and cultural loss and gain” (14). Thus, to preserve the earth’s physiology is to further progress. Ecofeminism in *Gun Island*: It is noteworthy that Ghosh’s last novel, *Gun Island*, is a modern-day parable, woven around the legend of the snake goddess, Manasa. It is a story of travel and migration laced with myth and folktales and depicts the crisis of climate change.

In the legend, Manasa Devi represents the natural world or ecological concerns. Being a goddess, she is also the embodiment of mother nature. So, the destructions of natural resources by human beings with profit-making motives are against the interest of the goddess. Like the original myth of Chand Sadager, the Gun Merchant thought himself rich and clever enough not to defer to the goddess of snakes. To establish her rule, Monosha Devi needed the homage of both humans and animals (snakes). She had to plead, cajole, and persuade him to let him do her bidding. In order to run away from the persecution of the goddess Manasa Devi, patron of snakes, and all venomous creatures, he had to travel across lands and oceans and encountered endless trouble.

### **3. An Ecocritical Exploration of *Gun Island*:**

Effects of climate change are directly enhancing its radius for natural environment and human societies. Changes to climate system reflect warming trend, precipitation trends and more extreme weather. The change of climate directly impacts the living planet. The alarming environmental problems for the human and non-human society have created a new platform for literature. It consequently led to the emergence of ecocriticism as a field of study. In this context, Amitav Ghosh's novel *Gun Island* is a monumental achievement as a climatic fiction. This book has accessed much familiarity in the climatic literary world. Ghosh’s treatment of the climate crisis reiterates the imperative for humans to show respect for the natural world, his emphasis on the question of multispecies environmental justice highlights the need for planetary environmentalism. This book is divided into two parts named 'The Gun Merchant' and 'Venice'. The part one focuses on Sundarbans and the second highlights on Venice and the immigrants.

Amitav Ghosh’s novel *Gun Island* is divided into two parts. Part one is named as ‘The Gun Merchant’ and second as ‘Venice.’ Part one focuses on Sundarbans while part two focuses on Venice and the immigrants. In part one through the Dinanath’s exploration of dhaam of ‘Manasa Devi,’ Amitav Ghosh



limns the current situation of Sundarbans. The main focus is on the changing living conditions of the people, aquatic animals as well as the drastic changes in climatic conditions.

Ghosh identifies the reason for the changing scenario in Sundarbans as demonic possession. The demon that possessed human beings is the demon of anthropocentric greed. The demon exercises its freedom to exploit nature for the greed, which in turn converts Sundarbans to a place which can be a home for neither human beings nor living organisms. The greed, Amitav Ghosh mentions, would bring Pralaya which will destroy the entire world. Tipu explains to Deen clearly about greed and his effects.

*Hey, Pops, I got news for you: greed's real, it's big. You got greed, I got greed, we all got greed..., it's not parasites we got inside of us, it's greed! If that's what a demon is, there's no way It's imaginary. Shit no! We're all demons... That's really bad news, because according to Hindu mythology when demons take over is when the world ends. (Ghosh 113)*

The greediness of human beings made Sundarbans a field of war. Ghosh points out this explicitly when he says “...where commerce and the wilderness look each other directly in the eye; that exactly where the war between profit and Nature is fought” (13). Converting everything for one's profit is a psyche of a coloniser. Coloniser never thinks about the other (Nature). In the colonial context, the other which is the colonised is inferior to self. The very existence of an inferior other gives identity to the self, which is superior.

The visit of Dinanath to Sundarbans dhaam of The Gun Merchant reveals the effects of greediness or the materialistic tendencies of the people. In the quest for better living conditions, human beings almost forgot/neglected nature. The bareness of Sundarbans is nothing but the repercussions of the exploitative quest undertaken by the people. The situation in Sundarbans is genuinely alarming. It is no more human who considered himself as the defining factor that controls Sundarbans but nature (other) who is a giver through furious climatic disasters started controlling land and making Sundarbans barren.

The people of Sundarbans started experiencing the cramp; It seemed both land and water were turning against those who lived in the Sundarbans. The staggering impacts reflected in the land of Sundarbans were caused not only by the sole greed of the people of Sundarbans but also by the populace outside the Sundarbans. The water transport and other amenities of Sundarbans attracted industries that fulfilled human greed. The chemical wastes were directly channelised to the rivers causing changes in the banks as well in the diverse population of plant and animal species, both terrestrial and aquatic.

When human beings crossed the limits of exploitation of nature, nature which is generally pictured as ‘giver’ started reacting and thus slowly became a ‘destroyer’. Nature's reaction against the anthropocentric man caused not only barrenness of land but also poverty, migration, human trafficking and thus the displacement of human beings. Tipu puts this situation more clearly as ...I did have a passport back then. But it expired and I haven't renewed it. Who needs to spend all that time in government offices? There are easier ways of getting passport, and if you've got the money you can choose whichever kind you want – Bangladeshi, Indian, Malaysian, Sri Lankan, you name it... The people- moving industry, Pops, he said, grinning. It's already one of the world's biggest and still growing fast (64).

As a result the people end up in situations beyond human understanding not because they loved to be there as immigrants, sex workers or being trafficked but “What would anyone do? If you're young you can't just sit on your butt till you starve to death” (65). The alarming situation is that even nature's fury did not mend the ways of people but instead, they searched for further prospect in technology rather than turning to the Mother Nature. “... And one of them is called internet... the internet is the migrants magic carpet;

it's their conveyor belt. It doesn't matter whether 58 IIS Univ.J.A. Vol.10 (2), 54-62 (2021) they're travelling by plane or bus or boat: it's the internet that moves the wetware" (66).

In the novel, the characters Nilima and Piya are the social activists, who managed the NGO 'Badabon Development Trust' to help the displaced. This Trust, through its workshops and employment generation schemes, tried to rehabilitate people who out of poverty ended up as sex workers and victims of human trafficking but the trust could not offer much monetarily. So the rehabilitated victims started returning to their old conditions. "Unfortunately, Moyna told me, this was a losing battle. The trust's experience showed that many, if not most, of the rescued women, would soon go back to the lives they had been living before" (53). Thus, one thing to be very clear is that when nature turns to be the 'destroyer' no one can stand, even the helping hands like NGO, unless there is a mass movement to protect Mother Nature. While depicting the devastations of climatic changes Amitav Ghosh wanted to give a warning to humanity.

Through the characters of Piya and Nilima Ghosh tries to drive home the message that it is high time to stop the coloniser's attitude of dominating nature and start thinking that human beings are just an iota of the eco-system and not the sole dictator. Nilima's concern for writing about The Gun Merchants' dhaam comes from a fear of dhaams' future. Piya's concern for the displaced people as well as the aquatic mammals shows that human beings are not alone in this ecosystem. Our inordinate thirst for exploring and conquering gravely upsets the lives of other living organisms too. Piya's saving of the dolphin Rani from the nylon net and Rani's expression of appreciation to Piya and her perception of the rivers "Each of these rivers ... is like a moving forest, populated by an incredible variety of life forms... it carries traces of everything that happens upriver" (97 -98), must make our greedy heart melt. "Piya wasted no time in cutting Rani loose and after that, the dolphin had begun to make eye contact with her, ...a manner that suggested something more than mere recognition"(95).

Piya's concern for the aquatic animals and the way she is disturbed when she lost contact with dolphin Rani serves as a wakeup call to care for the other who is suffering by the anthropocentric explorations that would fetch the best to one's self i.e. Other. Human being thinks that they are the sole rulers of the universe and often forgets that they are merely a part of a living matrix and thus subject to the law of reciprocity. The materialistic tendencies of human beings towards 59 Kanjirathingal & Banerjee 2021 nature not only affected human's existence but the existence of other living organisms as well. In Sundarbans, it is not only the human beings who are stricken badly but the living organisms in the river like dolphins, crab and other organisms too due to the creation of river dead zones. Due to the discharge of chemical fertilisers and factory effluents, river dead zones are created making these zones no more habitats for living organisms. The creation of such dead zones causes migration of living organisms that once inhabited the place.

Migration is terrible for aquatic beings, especially dolphins like Rani and her Pod. And it must be hardest on Rani knowing that the young ones depend on her. There she is, perfectly adapted to her environment, perfectly at home in it – and then things being to change, so that all those years of learning become useless, the places you know best can't sustain you any more ...everything she was familiar with the water, the currents, the earth itself – was rising up against her. (100-101) Suffering due to one's own mischievous action could somehow be justified but suffering due to others mischievous and greedy actions can only be looked at with pity and anger. The industry's function for satisfying the insatiability of people affects marine mammals severely. Marine Mammals use echo location to navigate and the manmade sounds from submarines and sonar equipment disorient these mammals which cause the beaching. This has become a

frequent phenomenon in Sundarbans now. The author puts this situation aptly saying “we’re in a new world now. No one knows where they belong any more, neither humans nor animals” (100).

Amitav Ghosh while exploring the anthropocentric attitude of human beings which turns Mother Nature to a ‘destroyer’ from ‘giver’ even suggests how one can revive this fury of nature through the legend of ‘The Gun Merchant.’ In the novel, when the ‘Bhola Cyclone’ hit Sundarbans in 1970, the particular hamlet where the dhaam of ‘The Gun Merchant’ existed protected the people by alarming the people. Thus, even during the ‘Bhola Cyclone’, people who stayed closer to nature were protected. However, it was only an admonition given to the people to come closer to nature and accordingly carry on with the life based on bio-centric mentality rather than being anthropocentric.

Although Amitav Ghosh majorly focusses on Sundarbans, he never forgets the ecological crisis that happens in the west too. Global warming severely affected the West as well; however, it is not as dreadful as in the colonised nations. The attack of bark beetles in the vicinity of Oregon city, the appearance of a yellow-bellied snake in the beaches of California due to warming up of seas in the west and forest fire are all part of the crisis that is being seen in the West too. Colonisers’ aggression although ended geographically but it has taken newer shapes.

In the novel, the Sunderbans is also undergoing various climatic changes. The People of the Sunderbans had to migrate in search of better habitat. The experience of Tippu and Raffi while migrating to faraway lands depicts how horrifying migration can be. When they move illicitly from one place to another, they risk their life from the gunshots of the territorial army “... *you have to run like crazy, over steep slopes. The soldiers on the Turkish side shoot if they see anyone trying to cross*” (93).

The life of Tippu and Raffi in the novel gives us a picture of how climate change brings disruption in the human population. Tippu and Raffi, who migrated to distant lands in search for a better future, suffer badly. They are drawn between ‘daalals’ and hunted as ‘jihadis’. They overcome all this to reach to a safer place.

*“For the next year and half we were beaten, tortured, and sold by one gang to another. They made us work from morning to night, paying us almost nothing and giving us only bread to eat. We were like slaves; what we went through was something that should not happen to any human being”* (195).

The sacrifice that Raffi is ready to undertake for bringing his friend Tippu to an agreeable spot is admirable and should be replicated in our relation to Mother Nature. Human beings need to do certain sacrifices to keep Mother Nature safe even to the extent of killing the demon called ‘greed’. Tippu’s gesture of keeping his mother happy by sending photoshopped group photos of Tippu being happy in Bangalore awakens in the reader the love and responsibility for keeping Mother Nature safe and happy. Both Raffi and Tippu is concerned more about the other and others safety and happiness. The mindset of Raffi and Tippu to keep the other happy even if they are going through difficult times of their life is something to be copied by every individual in their relation to Mother Nature.

Amitav Ghosh is known for his commitment to addressing environmental and ecological issues in his works. One of the central ecological concerns highlighted in "Jungle Nama" is the impact of human actions on the natural world. Ghosh's retelling emphasizes the consequences of these actions on the ecosystems and wildlife of the mythical landscape. Ghosh often weaves themes of climate change, deforestation, and the exploitation of natural resources into his works, and it's likely that "Jungle Nama" incorporates these themes to some extent, even in the context of a retelling of an ancient myth. Through his narrative, Ghosh encourages readers to reflect on the contemporary ecological challenges facing the world and the need for responsible stewardship of the environment.

#### 4. Ecological concerns in *Jungle Nama*:

Ghosh's "**Jungle Nama**," published in 2021 by HarperCollins India, is a return to poetry, offering a poetic retelling of the central folk narrative of The Sundarbans, the Bon Bibi Johuranama narrative has two late 19th-century versions, one by Munshi Muhammad Khatir and the other by Abdur Rahim Sahib. "Jungle Nama" is intertextually connected to the 17th-century "Raymangal" by Krishnaram, which introduces the tiger god Dokkhin Rai, who is eventually reconciled with Gazi Khan and Gazi Kalu. This reconciliation leads to an agreement to share human homage. This syncretism and interfaith solidarity, amidst the backdrop of clashing fundamentalisms, are particularly notable within the context of the inhospitable environment of the Sundarbans.

Ghosh's "Jungle Nama" represents his robust return to poetry and highlights the unique cultural and religious aspects of the Sundarbans and convey the message of balance between human needs and nature through its retelling of the myth - Bon Bibi Johuranama. Amitav Ghosh's most of literary works consistently reflect his deep concern for the environment. He highlights that the ecological imbalances and crises faced by humanity today are largely a result of human actions, as people have disrupted the delicate balance of the Earth's land, water, and air. This disruption has led to a range of alarming consequences, including the shrinking of the Arctic, mass displacements of people and animals, extreme weather events like abrupt cold spells and intense heat waves, and an increasing frequency of climate change-related effects. In his exploration of environmental issues, Ghosh brings attention to the often-unnoticed world of plants. He reveals that plants have their own universe, characterized by intricate behavioural and emotional patterns that were previously unrecognized by humans. Deforestation, in particular, has played a significant role in causing climate change. The removal of forests has contributed to problems such as flooding, the release of more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and a host of environmental challenges that threaten the planet's well-being.

"Ghosh's 'Jungle Nama' begins with a captivating tale that paints the deep mangrove forest as the dominion of a menacing demon king, Dokkhin Rai, who once terrorized the wilderness and preyed upon innocent villagers by taking on the guise of a tiger. Hearing the desperate pleas of the frightened villagers, the legendary figures Bon Bibi and her warrior brother, Shah Jongoli, embark on a journey from distant Arabia to rescue the people from the horrors of Dokkhin Rai. In an epic showdown, they defeat their formidable adversary and establish strict boundaries for his forest domain. Following this heroic legend, the locals of the Sundarbans, including woodcutters, honey collectors, and fishermen, invoke the blessings of Bon Bibi for protection before venturing into the forests.

In "Jungle Nama," Amitav Ghosh rekindles his reverence for the natural world as a wellspring of artistic inspiration. This work is Ghosh's poetic rendition of the medieval Bengali legend centered on the Forest Goddess of the Sundarbans, Bon Bibi. The myth of Bon Bibi is deeply ingrained in the folklore of the Sundarbans' villages and holds a special place in the hearts of the local populace. According to the legend, Bon Bibi is the daughter of a sultan who becomes lost in the impenetrable wilderness of the Sundarbans. Raised by the animals of the forest, she learns to communicate with them. As she matures, she assumes the role of protector of the forest and its inhabitants, particularly the humans who venture into the forest to gather honey, fish, and wood.

Bon Bibi is revered as the 'Lady of the Forest' and is regarded as a guardian and guide for those who venture into the woods. The name 'Bon Bibi' is a linguistic amalgamation, bridging two distinct regions: 'Bon' in Bengali signifies 'forest,' while 'bibi,' rooted in Urdu, translates to 'queen.' This name aptly encapsulates the duality of the Sundarbans' identity, where land and water, forest and rivers, and linguistic

religious influences converge. Notably, it also reflects the confluence of the Hindu and Islamic faiths, as both religious communities in the The Sundarbans venerate Bon Bibi with a shared belief in her ability to ensure survival and livelihood in the face of the region's challenging natural environment. The aesthetic elements in "Jungle Nama" are unparalleled. The sheer beauty of nature is celebrated as one of the most enchanting aspects of the world.

At its core, "Jungle Nama" narrates the tale of a young and melancholic lad named Dukhey, whose name reflects his disposition. Dukhey is offered the opportunity to amass a fortune in a single night, courtesy of his brothers, within the forbidden territory of a man-eating tiger-infested forest. The narrative is deeply intertwined with the people's history of salvation by the forest goddess, Bon Bibi, whose benevolence has ensured their survival in the face of the formidable forces of nature. Additionally, 'Jungle Nama' weaves the story of a greedy merchant named Dhona, a poor boy named Dukhey, and Dukhey's mother. Consumed by his insatiable desire for wealth, Dhona sets his sights on exploring the enigmatic mangrove jungles in search of legendary treasure.

Accompanied by a fleet of seven ships arranged by his brother, Mona, who declines to join him on this perilous journey, Dhona embarks on an expedition to the southern jungle, which is the realm of Dokkhin Rai. The narrative also delves into the tale of the impoverished Dukhey, who is persuaded to accompany his affluent uncle on the quest for valuable resources, including wax, honey, and wood. As the story unfolds, it explores the intricate relationships between these characters and their adventures within the mystifying and unpredictable wilderness of the Sundarbans." Dhona, whose name means "the Rich One," is driven by greed and the desire for more wealth. He intends to lead a fleet of seven ships into the forest to exploit its resources. However, his brother Mona, whose name means "heart," refuses to accompany him on this expedition.

With the crew short of one member, Dhona persuades a poor relative named Dukhey, whose name means "the Sad-Lad," to join the expedition. Dukhey is the only child of a widow, and he agrees to sign up. Unfortunately, they enter the realm of Dokkhin Rai without performing the necessary propitiatory rites, leaving them at the mercy of this powerful forest deity. As they journey through Dokkhin Rai's domain, they experience surreal and mystical encounters. Eventually, Dhona strikes a deal with the tiger god: in exchange for shiploads of valuable wax, he agrees to leave Dukhey behind to be devoured by Dokkhin Rai. In a critical moment, Dukhey recalls his mother's advice and appeals to Bon Bibi using the Johurna, a magical verse form. This plea for help, with its meter and rhyme, carries magical power. Bon Bibi and her brother, Shah Jongoli, intervene and once again humble Dokkhin Rai, compelling him to release Dukhey and provide Dhona with immense riches. Dukhey returns home to find his mother in deep grief. He uses the magical verse form to call her, reviving her, and their joyful reunion is followed by Dukhey's happy wedding. Ghosh alters the roles of Dokkhin Rai's mother, Narayani, and Gazi Kalu to provide a more focused narrative.

In the afterword, Ghosh emphasizes the significance of this tale in the context of climate change, suggesting that Bon Bibi's wisdom and teachings, which emphasize a harmonious coexistence with nature, hold a timeless message that humanity should pay attention to. The story underscores the importance of respecting the natural world and living in harmony with it, especially in an era marked by ecological challenges. In a fine conceit, the discipline of verse comes to represent the sense of proportion that conduces to contentment; as Bon Bibi lectures Dokkhin Rai: Count your syllables, it'll help rein your appetites in, the yoke of meter will give you discipline. It's the chaos in your mind that unbridles your desires, by measuring your thoughts you'll learn to quench those fires.



In the The Sundarbans region of Bengal, there is a rich folklore and mythology centered around Bon Bibi and Shah Jongoli, who are revered as the defenders of the forest and its inhabitants. They play a crucial role in the mythology of the The Sundarbans, and their stories are often invoked to underscore the importance of living in harmony with nature and respecting the forest. Bon Bibi and Shah Jongoli are twins born to the second wife of a Meccan.

The folklore of Bon Bibi and Shah Jongoli highlights the deep connection between the people of the Sundarbans and their natural surroundings. It reflects the understanding that the forest is not just a resource to be exploited but a complex ecosystem that must be preserved and respected. These stories are a part of the cultural fabric of the region and continue to influence the way people interact with their environment in the Sundarbans. Bon Bibi propagates a perennial philosophy that humankind would do well to heed:

All you need do, is be content with what you've got; to be always craving more, is a demon's lot. world of endless appetite is a world possessed, is what your munshi's learned, by way of this quest. Ghosh underscores the impact of extreme warming, which has led to devastating wildfires in various regions of the world, resulting in the destruction of thousands of hectares of land. Greenland has experienced rainfall for the first time, pointing to the profound changes occurring in the Earth's climate. Additionally, many islands in the The Sundarbans, a critical mangrove forest area, are rapidly sinking due to the rising sea level and the increased occurrence of extreme weather events like cyclones and storms. Throughout his work, Ghosh has consistently voiced his concern about the eroding ecosystem of the The Sundarbans mangrove forest and its potential consequences for both the environment and humanity. His writings serve as a compelling call to action, emphasizing the urgent need for addressing environmental challenges and recognizing the profound interconnectedness of the natural world.

"Jungle Nama" is a retelling of an ancient Bengali saga set in the Sundarbans, where the Ganga and Brahmaputra Rivers merge and flow through dense forests into the Bay of Bengal. The story begins with the forest under the dominance of Dokkhin Rai, a fierce tiger avatar who terrorizes and preys on humans, taking whatever he pleases. This leads to a state of constant fear and suffering for all the forest's inhabitants. As Dokkhin Rai's rule instills fear and despair, the forest's inhabitant turn to prayers, seeking relief and protection from his tyranny. These desperate prayers reach the ears of the powerful goddess, Bon Bibi. Filled with compassion, Bon Bibi, along with her brother Shah Jongoli, makes their way into the forest. Bon Bibi and Shah Jongoli confront Dokkhin Rai, ultimately subduing him and ending his reign of terror. They confine him within a specific boundary, thus restoring a sense of safety and harmony to the once-dreaded forest.

Bon Bibi and Shah Jongoli's arrival and their actions symbolize the triumph of compassion and protection over fear and oppression in the Sundarbans. They drew a line, to mark a just separation, between the forest, and the realm of human. Every creature had a place, every want was met, all needs were balance, like the lines of a couplet. Thus, through the myth we perceive that human need should not exceed to the limit where it leads to exploitation and destruction as the same case is with the today's world where human's excessive needs lead to earth's exploitation and destruction. Dhona's greed leads to the exploitation of natural resources have relevance in today's world. And Bon Bibi's lesson to Dhona conveys the world the message of balancing between needs and nature that leads to co-existence of humans and non-human.

"Jungle Nama" is a testament to the power of literature in raising ecological awareness and inspiring change. Through its eco-aesthetical lens, this extraordinary work invites us to explore the intricate tapestry of nature, culture, and human existence. It reminds us that the preservation of our planet is not only an

ecological imperative but also a moral obligation. As we conclude this remarkable book, let us carry its messages forward and take meaningful steps toward a more sustainable and harmonious future for all.

**Jungle Nama** is a graphic verse novel written by Indian author Amitav Ghosh and illustrated by Pakistani-American artist Salman Toor. It is a verse adaptation of the medieval Bengali tale about the Sundarbans Forest goddess, Bon Bibi. The book was first published on 12 February 2021 by Fourth Estate India and then in Great Britain on 11 November 2021 by John Murray Press. It is Ghosh's first book in verse. The story explores themes of greed and ecological misadventure. (1,3) Ghosh states that the story is an allegory for human caused climate change. Jungle Nama is a retelling of the traditional Bengali folk story of Bon Bibi. The first print version of the legend was produced in the 1800s and was written in a Bengali verse meter called *dwipodipayer*. *Dwipodipayer* (the payer cadence) was the primary cadence of Bengali literature during the Middle Ages and is an alteration to the *aksharvritta* which uses 8/6 syllables.<sup>[1]</sup> Jungle Nama is a loose reworking of this legend, translated to English and written in a payer-style meter which replicates the flow of the original myth.

In many of his works, Amitav Ghosh sets his story in the Sundarbans, which are the largest mangrove forests of the world. His award winning 2005 novel, "The Hungry Tide", set in these mangrove jungles, describes vividly its culture and ecology through sumptuous prose. His novel, "The Gun Island" is also set in the wetlands of the East. "The Sundarbans is a very powerful landscape. It just works its ways into your head, so that you cannot escape it even when you want to." Ghosh says. "When I started writing „Gun Island', initially I did not intend to start it in the Sundarbans. But somehow it just happened. The Sundarbans itself pulled me back into the landscape, so that I had to engage with it. Clearly, it just keeps pulling you back," he further elaborates.

In "Jungle Nama" Ghosh adapts verse to narrate an episode from the legend of Bon Bibi, which also forms the basis of the book "The Hungry Tide". The Legend of Bon Bibi was first published in the 19th century by two poets, namely Munshi Mohammad and Abdul Rahim Sahib, separately, in „Bon Bibi Johurnama" (The narrative of Bon Bibi's Glory). They appeared in the Bengali verse meter called "dwipodipoyar".

Ghosh has written a Jungle Nama in poyar like style where the culture and ecology of Sundarbans have been captured vividly. Collaborating with New York based artist, Salman Toor, the writer has been able to create a book that we can both „see" and „read". Words, says Ghosh, are partly responsible for the crisis facing us and our planet. Our desire to express everything in words leaves us with no alternative but to be preoccupied with a life and culture that is predominantly human. We need to recognise the existence of non-human agency. "The Great Derangement" written by Amitabh Ghosh, suggests that writers should invent new forms to address climate change.

Dokkhin Rai, the jungle lord, spins "a web of illusions", "conjuring up visions laden with temptations" (p32) and Dhona is lured to strike a deal with the evil spirit: in exchange for the riches of the forest, he must sacrifice Dukhey to the tiger. On the farmudbank, when Dukhey catches sight of the beast, all seems lost for him. Then finally, he remembers his mother's words: "Use the meter of wonder, call Bon Bibi" (pg53), and carries it out truly. Sure enough, Bon Bibi arrives with her brother, Shah Jongoli to rescue Dukhey and subdue Dokkhin Rai. The story ends with poetic justice; all ends well. Dukhey is rewarded with lots of wealth and he is reunited with his mother. He lives happily ever after as he is contented with what he has. His teacher, Bon Bibi had „,taught him the secret of

Words, says Ghosh, are partly responsible for the crisis facing us and our planet. Our desire to express everything in words leaves us with no alternative but to be preoccupied with a life and culture that is

predominantly human. We need to recognise the existence of non human agency. “The Great Derangement” written by Amitabh Ghosh, suggests that writers should invent new forms to address climate change. The non human voice is the one that has been completely suppressed by modern literature though it always found a very significant place in every culture of the past. Previously, Ghosh wrote fiction to make the people aware of the climate crisis. But he is now increasingly writing non fiction to address the grave crisis of our times, that is, climate catastrophe.

In “Jungle Nama”, Ghosh’s first ever work in verse, he has “tried to use the moral compass that lies within folktale to arouse environmental consciousness among the people of the area”<sup>1</sup>. Since it is difficult to write stories about the climate, Ghosh believes folklore can fulfill that purpose: “In these stories, we find an interconnectivity between people and the land that sustains them”<sup>2</sup>. It is in the lives of farmers, fishermen, herdsman and those who live attached to the land, that we can renew our Earth. Ghosh says that the locals of Sundarbans believe in a culture that requires a balance to be maintained between the needs of the natural world and those of humans. Their practice and belief system emphasizes the importance of limiting greed which Ghosh states is an important lesson for the rest of the land in the times of climate change. Bon Bibi, the forest goddess, is the protector of all, irrespective of religion, caste and community.

The local people who depend on the forest for their livelihood respect her and pray to her in times of need, and she is benevolent to everyone. Ghosh begins his storytelling by saying that the deep mangrove forest was once the realm of a demon king, Dokkhin Rai who haunted the wilderness and preyed on innocent villagers in the guise of a tiger. Hearing the prayers of the terrified people, Bon Bibi and her warrior brother, Shah Jongoli came from far off Arabia to rescue them from the terror of Dokkhin Rai. They defeat their rival and set strict limits to his forest constituency.

Following this legend, all the locals of Sundarbans -woodcutters, honey collectors and fisherman evoke her blessings to safeguard themselves before entering the forests. “Jungle Nama” also tells the tale of the greedy merchant, Dhona, the poor boy, Dukhey and his mother. Not satisfied with his own wealth, Dhona decides to explore the mangrove jungles, looking for legendary treasure. Accompanied by a fleet of seven ships, arranged by his brother, Mona, who refuses to go with him, Dhona sets for the southern jungle which is the realm of Dokkhin Rai. The story tells the tale of poor Dukhey who is coaxed to go with his rich uncle in his pursuit of wax, honey and wood. Dokkhin Rai, the jungle lord, spins “a web of illusions”, “conjuring up visions laden with temptations” (p32) and Dhona is lured to strike a deal with the evil spirit: in exchange for the riches of the forest, he must sacrifice Dukhey to the tiger. On the farmudbank, when Dukhey catches sight of the beast, all seems lost for him. Then finally, he remembers his mother’s words: “Use the meter of wonder, call Bon Bibi” (pg53), and carries it out truly. Sure enough, Bon Bibi arrives with her brother, Shah Jongoli to rescue Dukhey and subdue Dokkhin Rai.

Dhona’s desire to plunder the forest symbolises man’s greed to get more and more. It is this demand to get more that results in unending exploitation of the earth. Amitabh Ghosh says, “Capitalism only survives in circumstances of discontent. It makes people want more, more and more. And now, you know, we are the endpoint of that wanting more. It has brought us to this planetary catastrophe that is going to end human civilization as we know it.”<sup>2</sup> „Jungle Nama“ is an allegory and you only need to look at the couplets in isolation to unearth bigger meanings: “You must stay within your bounds and never transgress; with what you have you must make do, don’t seek excess.” (Pg56)

The theme has a universal appeal. It emphasizes the necessity for limits, for humans to recognise boundaries. In the end of the story, when Bon Bibi rescues Dukhey, she reinstates both moral and

ecological balance. It was the blessed meter that came to Dukhey's rescue when he needed the help of Bon Bibi. Ghosh says, "the story of Jungle Nama is about the necessity for limits, for humans to recognise boundaries. And meter does exactly the same things with words. It forces you to recognise the basic forms of expression and the need for boundaries." 3

In his works, Amitabh Ghosh has always been concerned with the environment. "Man is transgressing where he should not. He is wreaking havoc on the land, water and air" 4 . The ecological disbalance that man keeps facing today. A shrinking Arctic, uprooted people and animals, abrupt cold spells followed by intense heat waves—these are all effects of climate change that, sadly, are now happening more frequently. The world of plants seems quite stationery to humans, with little movement that meets the eye. But in reality, it is a separate universe of its own, characterised by behavioural and emotional patterns that were previously unknown.

Deforestation has led to climate change, flooding, increased greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and a host of problems for our planet. Extreme warming has contributed to a spate of wildfires in different parts of the globe and thousand hectares of land have been destroyed by these wild fires. Greenland recorded rain for the first time. Quite a few islands of the Sundarbans are sinking fast due to the rising sea level and extreme weather disasters like cyclones and storms. The eroding ecosystem of this mangrove forest has always been the concern of Amitabh Ghosh.

**Jungle Nama** is a Story of the Sundarban – Portrayal of climatic imbalance As per the observation of critic Dr. Marufha Ferdous The rivers named Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Meghna together have created a huge delta area called Sundarban in West Bengal plunging the sea Bay of Bengal. This delta area comprises so many residential lands spreading over thousands of square kilometers between India and Bangladesh.

**Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee** mentions in his book that "It is one of those areas of the world where the lie of the land mocks the absurdity of international treaties, because it is virtually impossible to enforce border laws on a territory that constantly shifts, submerges and resurfaces with the ebb and flow of the tide. Most of these islands support mangrove trees." (Mukherjee, 2021, p.108) To describe this delta area Ghosh writes. 18 "Many great rivers rise in the Himalayas The Ganga among them, and Brahmaputra. ... Thousands of islands rise from the rivers' rich stilts, Crowned with mangrove, rising on stilts. This is the Sundarban, where laden waters give birth; To a vast jungle that joins Ocean and Earth. (Ghosh. 2021.P.1)

**Jungle Nama: A Story of Sundarban** by famous author Amitav Ghosh is a retelling of the story of the conventional legend of Sundarban, The Bon Bibi Johurnama which is about Bon Bibi, Dokkhin Rai, and Dukhey, was written by Munshi Mohammad and Abdur Rahim Sahib. In the story, the reader gets that Bon Bibi, the Goddess, and her brother Shah Jongoli, a warrior sent by Allah from Arab to save the people of Sundarban from the attack of a nonhuman agency called Dokkhin Rai who is a demon-like creature that hunts people in disguise of a tiger in the Jungle of Sundarban, he doesn't allow any stranger in his realm so he tried to show his rage to them but ultimately got defeated by Shah Jongoli who draws a line between the Dokkhin Rai's area and the area of human beings to save to locals. As Ghosh mentions- "What they wanted to end his tyranny, This they did by confining him to a boundary. They drew a line, to mark a just separation, Between the forest, and the realm of humans" (Ghosh.2021.P.6)

But later we find greedy rich Dhona wanted to become richer so he thought that he will go to the jungle to collect the wild treasure he asks his brother Mona but he rejects his words and asks him not to show much greed because wild treasure one should get as per need and when they have enough wealth why is he showing much greed? He also makes him aware of the mighty spirit Dokkhin Rai that if he gets the smell of greed, it could be dangerous –" Those who enter the forest should go out of need/ or they'll court

danger; tigers know the smell of greed”(Ghosh. p,10). But greedy Dhona was determined to go to the jungle so Mona arranges everything for him there was a shortage of one Laskar on the ship so Dhona takes one of his distant nephews with him luring him that if he goes with him, he will get the money that will help to improve his impoverished status.

Poor Dukhey gets tempted and without listening to his mother’s words goes into the jungle with Dhona but there in the jungle, Dokkhin Rai asks Dhona to Offer Dukhey as an oblation. The thought of getting rich made Dhona so provoked that he agrees to Dokkhin Rai’s proposal and leaves Dukhey in the jungle to become the prey of Dokkhin Rai. Helpless Dukhey chants the ‘Dwipodi-Poyar’, the prayer of Ma Bon Bibi. After listening to his poor cry, she comes and saves poor Dukhey from the Mighty spirit of Dokkhin Rai and taught him a good lesson. Dokkhin Rai here presented as an oppressive landlord who demands soul in offerings; to get something from his realm people have to give some offerings to him. Bon Bibi is here the protector of the living beings, who came from Arabia to Sundarban with her brother to save the people. The fight between Dokkhin Rai and Shah Jongoli represents the fight for the land which metaphorically suggested the fight between the exploiter and the leader of the Exploited class.

In this book, we find a kind of interconnection between human beings and the land. Ghosh has given vivid imagery of the people who live in the delta area of Sundarban by portraying how their sustaining in this land of forest and river depends on fishing, collecting honey, woods, and wax. The forest of Sundarban is known for Royal Bengal Tiger, venomous snakes, and so many creatures, in the rivers also there are crocodiles. The locals have to deal with all these creatures to earn their livelihood.

Many people die even in this jungle while collecting wood or wax etc by the attack of tigers. It is the belief of the people here that Goddess Bon Bibi is their saviour. If someone chants the “Dwipodi-Poyar” while attacked by a tiger she will come to save the person, as we find Dukhey here got saved by Bon Bibi after chanting the mantras. Intellectuals may call it a kind of superstitious belief but for the people of that area, it is the only way through which they can get saved from the carnivorous animals as well as from the rage of natural disaster. While reading Jungle Nama: a Story of Sundarban one can discuss Bon Bibi’s character from the point of view of ecosophy.

For thousands of years, man has been indulged in making a better society through developing industrialization, carbonization, and urbanization but the world of nature often rejects this Western ideology. It is a notable fact that everything in this world is related to the ethics of the value of human beings. Social thinkers always prioritize the “social, emotional and economic behaviour of humans.” (Anantrao, p.116) Dr. Banerjee mentions in her article that “It is in the lives of farmers, fishermen, herdsmen and those who live attached to the land, that we can renew our Earth. Ghosh says that the locals of Sundarbans believe in a culture that requires a balance to be maintained between the needs of the natural world and those of humans.

Their practice and belief system emphasize the importance of limiting greed which Ghosh states is an important lesson for the rest of the land in times of climate change. Bon Bibi, the forest goddess, is the protector of all, irrespective of religion, caste, and community. The local people who depend on the forest for their livelihood respect her and pray to her in times of need, and she is benevolent to everyone.” (2022, V.9). But there are also people like ‘Dhona’, out of their greed who always wants to suck the jungle to become richer. This metaphorically suggests the exploitation or destruction of nature by men in the name of economic development, which affect the human-nature relationship and that is the ultimate cause of climate change as well as ecological imbalance.

As Ghosh writes : “An uncanny feeling, a bristling in the air, a section that caused a prickling in the hair.



All at once the levels began to move and tremble, As if shaken by a force, potent yet spectral;” It is suggesting the sudden climate change, the advent of a powerful storm for which the level of water is uprising and shaking everything. This is a dangerous thing that people in Sundarban have to deal with. Due to climactic imbalance anytime the water level rises higher and as the Bay of Bengal is nearby so most of the cyclones pass through this delta region which often destroys the households of the inhabitants here.

As Ghosh mentions in “The Hungry Tide” “The tides reach more than two hundred miles inland, and every day thousands of acres of mangrove forest disappear only to re-emerge hours later. For hundreds of years, only the truly dispossessed and the hopeless dreamers of the world have braved man eaters and the crocodiles who rule there, to eke a precarious existence from the unyielding mud.” (Harper Collins, 2004). By connecting this myth with today’s situation somehow the author is trying to alert us about the impact of the exploitation of nature which can be devastating. Although in this particular novel, he is giving a slight imagery of climactic imbalance through the character of Dukhey and his mother he has presented the lifestyle of the locals here. How they have to fight with both man (upper-class people so to speak the capitalist) and nature’s fury.

## 5. Conclusion:

The present study attempts to illuminate four novels of Amitav Ghosh from an eco-critical perspective. The fundamental premise of the study is to explore Ghosh’s treatment to nature vis-a-vis the historical changes/Postcolonial trends in literature and treatment to nature. Ecocriticism covers a wide range of theories and areas of interest, particularly the relationship between literature and the environment. The thesis has been written by proper examination of language and metaphors used by Ghosh to describe nature, as ecocriticism investigates the terms by which one relates to nature. The actual essence of these issues regarding climactic imbalance can get in another novel *The Hungry Tide* by Ghosh. Where due to the sudden change in the climate the central character of the story Piya gets thrown from the boat in the crocodile full of the river when a fisherman named Fokir comes to save her. This is very common among the fishermen living in Sundarban. Natural disasters can occur anytime anywhere for which they have to stay prepared always, sometimes they survive and sometimes lose their lives. According to Donald Worster, “We are facing a global crisis today, not because of how ecosystems function but rather because of how our ethical systems function. Getting through the crisis requires understanding our impact on nature as precisely as possible, but even more, it requires understanding those ethical systems and using that understanding to reform them. Historians, along with literary scholars, anthropologists, and philosophers, cannot do the reforming, of course, but they can help with the understanding.” (Worster. *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and The Ecological Imagination* 1994,27).

While speaking in the context of Bon Bibi in her ecocritical work regarding “The Hungry Tide” by Ghosh Sumati A. Yadav mentions that “What Ghosh tells of the myth of Bon Bibi holds for the various mythological elements permeating the whole narrative: “the Bon Bibi legend uses the power of fiction to create and define a relationship between human beings and the natural world. Nowhere does a term equivalent to ‘Nature’ figure in the legend of Bon Bibi, yet nowhere is its consciousness absent.” In quest of progress and development, we should not lose our empathy and respect for our environment. If we waste and destroy the resources of nature, and unsustainably exhaust the land, then the consequences will be disastrous. It is still not too late; we can come together and collectively choose a more sustainable future

where nature and people thrive together. There should be a balance between human urge towards prosperity and the needs of other creatures. Man cannot prosper by snatching everything from Nature. Climate change and climate migration are the two important components in climate fictions. Intolerable extremes and threatening the livelihoods of millions of people are imposed by climate change on many parts of the world. Extreme events like floods, heat waves, droughts, and wild fires as well as slower-moving challenges such as rising seas and intensifying water-stress are the focal reasons that force people to leave their homes. This has been caused by ecological imbalance. Amitav Ghosh's 'Gun Island' is a climate novel which highlights migrations, myth, folktales. and the deepening crisis of climate change. The novel connects human and non-human, past and present, natural and super natural. Island projects unprecedented climatic conditions as the primary cause for these natural disasters. It becomes a clarion call for climate induced migrations as it skillfully portrays people and entire communities being uprooted from their native land and the drastic changes in the migratory patterns of different species due to changing climates and warming waters. Instead of projecting warnings of impending doom and apocalypse Gun Island focuses on giving the readers hope for a better tomorrow.

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