

**ECOCRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS AND
COLONIALISM IN AMITAV GHOSH'S *SEA OF POPPIES* AND *THE HUNGRY TIDE***

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Declaration

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Abstract

The present study is on Amitav Ghosh's novels *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide*, in which the novels are analyzed using an ecocritical approach in order to reveal how literature portrays severe environmental problems emerging from the influence of colonialism, displacement, and migration along with identity crisis. However, the novels also show that nature can be helpful to people in most situations. The novel carefully presents how people and nature in some ways are dependent on each other for their own needs. There is no doubt that people take advantage of the environment's resources for their own benefits quite often. In *Sea of Poppies*, the vulnerable Indian people were being dominated by the British colonial powers forcibly. The British colonial powers requested the Indian farmers to stop growing food crops and replace them with opium as a means to make a profit by selling opium. In *The Hungry Tide*, it portrays how delicate the condition of the Sundarbans is currently because that place is open to many dangerous natural disasters, which will rapidly ruin the Sundarbans and the people taking shelter. The theory of ecocriticism will support these novels as a means to analyze how Ghosh portrayed colonialism only had the ability to leave behind permanent damages in the lives of people and the environment. The environment was used to demonstrate how people represented the significance of power, survival, and recognition through analyzing both of the novels.

Keywords: Nature, Migration, Colonialism, Displacement, Environment, Identity, Mistreatment

Chapter 1

Introduction

This research plans to precisely analyze the urgent environmental concerns represented in *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide* which is written by the remarkable Amitav Ghosh, the novels revolve around how certain people's activities directly impacts the environment along with the subsequent ecological outcomes, including the theory of ecocriticism as the main theoretical framework. In the first place the concept of ecocriticism largely concentrates on the prevalent relationship between literature along with the environment, finding out how the nature is being revealed to the readers and how people treat the environment around them when it comes to making profit. At the same time this study will look into the specific strategies incorporated by Ghosh as a means to thoroughly represent the intricate relationship between migration, colonialism along with environmental transformations, it is more related towards the situation of India in the time of the colonial era and followed by the upcoming years.

1.1 Background

Not long ago, literary writers started becoming fascinated with the relationship human beings possess with nature. Gradually, writers took the initiative to emphasize the contemporary concerns taking place within the ecosystem. There is no denying we are repeatedly faced with unanticipated environmental crises, which makes it appalling for people in society as they do not want to lose their lives. Plants, animals, and human beings consist of a major influence over one another. Amitav Ghosh has written the novel titled *Sea of Poppies*, where he discusses the consequences

left behind through colonialism and how the environment deals with the outcome. The novel brings recognition to the planting and growing of opium and how its consumption inflicts negative reactions on residents' lives.

After the emergence of opium farming, things took a conflicting turn. Immense adjustments occurred within people's lives, as opium is known as a drug that can persuade people into addiction. The addiction of opium made the protagonist Deeti's husband Hukum Singh an addict, causing him to lose his life. The British deliberately coerced Indians to develop opium in their territory, knowing opium contributes to aberrant attitudes and manners. The novel represents how during the nineteenth century, the nation's atmosphere was severely damaged after colonialism emerged. Ghosh demonstrates the prime reason behind natural habitat deprivation occurring under colonial rule.

The farming of opium worsened the situation for other crops. Increasing opium cultivation caused people to lose their daily nourishment since opium passed harmful side effects onto other crops. Other consumable crops deteriorated after being grown alongside opium. Daily consumable crops like rice, potatoes, wheat, and plantains provide survival necessities, so if food crop production declines, people face desperate, threatening situations. Deeti mentioned consumable crops were vastly important, providing food and materials for house ceilings. Most people suffered excessively from food crop deterioration, as it was their only food source. Initially, people were satisfied with their meals, but gradually they started losing their lives due to food scarcity and starvation. Deeti recalled her past when life was rewarding, and food crops were healthy, but now everything had changed. Deeti remembered fields overflowing with wheat, producing various

foods for people. Now, with the British demanding opium and poppy flowers, everything became costly for ordinary people, forcing them to sacrifice their needs.

In *Sea of Poppies*, a particular ship known as Ibis plays a significant role in the characters' lives by taking them on a trip. People from different ethnic groups and social classes meet on a ship, each with a purpose that is searching for work or seeking survival. During the trip, the characters worked hard, securing jobs. They acknowledged their past mistakes and tried to transform their lives.

What occurs in the midst of a migratory setting is a lot of moving by much people out of poverty and misery. *Sea of Poppies* makes a foreground on the colonial mistreatment and subjugation of the natives with the use of the British in India, particularly through the opium business. Poppy growing among Indian farmers was requested by the British East India Company to cultivate opium to be sold in China for profit. This made the colonial economy and penetrated into the innocuous Indian agricultural workers. The opium trade destroyed the economy of India and resulted in the poor social consequences. Most local communities were forced into abusive and hard labor.

The reality of migration is the major subject in the *Sea of Poppies*. The characters come together under different races, ranks, and nationalities with the colonial force that bound them, thereby showing how people become a part of the web of tradition and land. There is a broad range of social class represented by characters, from local Indian workers like Deeti and Kalua to stern European colonial officers like Mr. Burnham. Such an array exhibits the imbalances in colonial society and the way different social groups come to form a community under colonial rule.

When all these characters come together, Ghosh presents the complex power pattern that underpinned Indian society and created the wealth of colonialism. Most of these characters suffer severe indignities at the hands of their colonial masters, for whose profits human health is of little value. Most of their exploitative profits came from the merciless opium trade of the East India Company, which forced Indian farmers to grow opium instead of useful food crops and aggravated economic adversity.

Everything was slowly taken away from the villages, and the people came under colonial power for labor. Deeti made a traumatic journey from her village to the ship *Ibis*, misery becoming her inspiration for travel. She had to leave her family behind to escape from harsh conditions. There were different races represented on the ship in one individual person, which faced racial discrimination and cultural conflicts. They had to manage the power structures of colonialism. Men struggled on the day-to-day basis to survive, and life was full of anguish. This impoverishment and absence of money would make it impractical to buy necessities for lower-class people.

This mostly makes the people at the lower end of the social ladder entrapped in a system that exploits them without mercy of their labor and material, paying them miserable wages. The characters did not migrate with willing minds; the pressure forced them through economically oppressive colonial institutions to do so. Colonialism disrupted not only the economy but the environment, as opium farming exhausted soil fertility. The agricultural land, once flourishing with diverse crops, became monoculture poppy fields, devastating biodiversity. Traditional farming knowledge was disregarded as British profit became the priority.

Ghosh was concerned about how local Indian people would be influenced by colonization in India. Even people living in Calcutta were influenced adversely, and British colonizers ruined the environment through careless activities. In a village known as Ghazipur, people worked as farmers raising opium crops daily. Deeti is best known as a local woman from Ghazipur. She knows how to respect and admire nature, which helps her notice the negative changes happening in the environment, particularly when the East India Company convinced Indians to grow opium on their land. People need food to survive, but Deeti did not have to worry because she knew nature would supply her with food. Gradually, nature became a significant part of her life, and she could not imagine life without nature. The novel portrays how strongly she is attached to the natural world, which supports her with awareness. Nature provides Deeti with signs and inspirations through the Ibis, a ship that will eventually transform her life.

It was distressing for Indian society when the British decided to dominate opium cultivation, replacing beneficial food crops and creating a monopoly to strengthen colonial power while exploiting innocent natives. This gives readers a clear idea of how ruthless the British were to Indian people and their resources during colonial rule. The British wanted wealth, so they monopolized every aspect of opium cultivation in India, brutally controlling the trade. This gave them the opportunity to earn immense wealth while ensuring that native Indians remained dominated.

The British would not tolerate Indian people earning money from opium sales. To increase profit, they demanded that needy Indian farmers exclusively cultivate opium. This plan was devised to control the opium trade entirely. China had a large demand for opium, so the British used this chance to sell opium to China for their own profit. They ignored the hardships of local farmers,

who had no choice but to depend on the British constantly. The British wanted to expand the opium trade further, so they established the Ghazipur Opium Factory with help from the East India Company during colonial rule. It became a vital site for preparing opium for export. This factory highlighted the British grip on the opium trade, exporting it to China for wealth. The factory had a profound impact on the Indian economy and community.

Amitav Ghosh argues that the British controlled the opium trade, reaping all profits while negatively affecting Indian land. The British exploited India's natural resources, and the factory stands as clear evidence of this exploitation. They forced farmers to grow poppies, eliminating useful food crops. This caused economic deprivation, soil deterioration, and social distress. Ghosh shows the factory as the root of environmental destruction caused by colonization.

The novel reveals the brutality faced by local workers in the opium factory. The working conditions were harsh, and workers were treated rudely. They had no choice but to work under these vicious conditions, likely for low wages. Workers endured excessive abuse, working long hours. Readers learn how the British deliberately controlled these workers without limits. Upper-class people with power exploited lower-class workers, as often happens. Indian workers, from lower-class families, had to work to survive, regardless of disrespect. Even though their work enriched the British, they were stuck in this system.

The environment became unhealthy as pollution worsened air quality. Upper-class colonizers cared neither for local people's safety nor for the environment. The Ghazipur Opium Factory's waste polluted the cities, harming all living beings. Dangerous fumes and chemicals from factories worsened air quality for both the environment and nearby people. The British could have

considered people's health and the environment instead of causing suffering. Their actions caused rapid air pollution, harming public health. Factory workers' health declined, and nearby residents grew sick from pollution. Living near the factory meant constant exposure to harmful pollution.

Readers see how pollution quickly ruined lives, while British greed for profit was limitless. The colonial system profited by exploiting Indian workers, destroying the environment. With continuous opium cultivation, food crops disappeared, leaving people hungry. Opium cultivation degraded the soil, preventing other crops from growing. As the land underwent drastic cultivation changes, people struggled to adjust. Ghosh highlights how products and materials, though convenient for customers, came at the cost of countless hardships. With food crops replaced by opium, transactions shifted to money exchanges. People lost crop variety because opium farming escalated rapidly. If anyone refused to grow opium, they faced punishment. Many became addicted to opium. Even living things near opium fields absorbed its toxins. People's addiction grew, further harming society.

Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide* discusses the complex relationship between nature and human beings, where they continuously compete with each other. Every living being needs nourishment to survive, but people often disregard nature's need for nourishment. The novel emphasizes this. People portray nature as something that causes disasters like earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and tsunamis, which take innocent lives. However, these disasters are neither nature's fault nor intentional. Natural disasters have the power to destroy everything.

The novel is set in the Sundarbans, where residents constantly face hazards caused by natural disasters. The title *The Hungry Tide* reflects how living beings long for attention and awareness

from each other. We are all responsible for our actions and their consequences. For instance, people are urged to limit plastic use because it harms the environment. Neglectful actions invite more threats over time. Ghosh shows how society's treatment of nature affects the environment around us.

Ghosh placed the novel in the Sundarbans, home to many people, who live in constant conflict with nature. People must be cautious in handling the environment, or they will endanger their own lives. Human needs, like constructing homes, depend on the existence of land. Ghosh highlights the importance of preserving the environment. People rely heavily on plants and animals for survival. The partition of India in 1947 caused East Bengali Hindus to shift locations. They faced persecution from lower-class Muslim residents. Higher-class Hindus, however, had wealthy friends who could offer shelter.

Eco-critical literature connects environmental issues to literature. Its goal is to raise awareness about the difficulty's nature faces. Through *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh highlights the environmental crisis. He urges people to take action. The novel makes clear the destructive effects on the Sundarbans, but the authorities seem unconcerned about improving living conditions.

The Sundarbans is not just a forest. It holds immense beauty, now rapidly decaying. Ghosh highlights how human actions harm the Sundarbans' habitat. Impoverished residents constantly struggle with living expenses and settle in uncomfortable locations within the Sundarbans. Ghosh introduces various characters to reflect differing perspectives on the environment. Characters in *The Hungry Tide* hold contrasting views. Some dismiss environmental awareness, while others are thoughtful and supportive. Each character's upbringing influences their view. Piya, the

protagonist, resides in the United States but values the environment. Moyna understands life in the tide country and admires nature. Fokir also admires nature, while Kanai prefers city life. Despite differences, the characters communicate with each other. Nirmal keeps a diary, recording daily struggles in the Sundarbans. Displaced people face food and water shortages. They feel identity-less because they lack rights in their own country. The salty water expansion destroys soil, worsening malnourishment and famine.

Desperate for food, residents turned to fish farming to survive. However, this caused another crisis. The Sundarbans' temperature worsened because fishermen exploited the sea. They harvested excessive prawns and fresh water, triggering severe environmental damage. This disrupted the Sundarbans' ecosystem and harmed fishing patterns. Ghosh aims to preserve both the environment and the welfare of the people. Society relies heavily on fish and poultry, particularly in Asian communities. However, the environment that provides this food is being destroyed. Fishermen disrupt fish life cycles, damaging the ecosystem further. Ghosh alerts people to the risk of nature collapsing. Many people living in forested areas, particularly the Sundarbans, face constant threats of death.

Postcolonialism plays a significant role in *The Hungry Tide*, connecting with ecocriticism. Colonialism triggered environmental challenges. The novel shows animals' entitlement to protection, often prioritized by Western characters over human lives. This enrages the Sundarbans' residents, who want dangerous animals removed after losing many neighbors to wildlife attacks.

Western characters ignore the natives' welfare, treating them with disregard. Wild animals are glorified, almost taking revenge on humans for neglecting nature. The novel warns that both nature and native people live in constant fear and distress.

In the 21st century, ecocriticism gained recognition by focusing on non-human attributes and environmental deterioration. The term "ecology" highlights the harmful relationship between nature and living beings. All living beings deserve fair treatment and a comfortable home. Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* illustrates interactions between nature and living beings. Plants and animals in the Sundarbans face severe threats of extinction as the environment changes. Ghosh highlights the struggles of living beings seeking a secure place to settle. Piyali Roy opposes the killing of wild animals, advocating for non-human lives. Kanai faces a tiger attack, and Fokir and Piya encounter a deadly cyclone. Sundarbans residents suffer threats from both nature and government eviction efforts aimed at environmental protection.

Refugees face dangers from wild animals and natural disasters. Marginalized characters like Kusum, Horen, and Fokir endure constant risks. Piya, unfamiliar with Bengali culture, adapts and bonds with Fokir. Tragically, Fokir dies saving Piya. The novel reflects nature's cycle of joy and suffering, showing human-nature interdependence.

Amitav Ghosh focuses on the safety of all living beings' people, plants, and animals. He raises awareness whenever environmental dangers threaten life. When environmental changes started appearing, Ghosh warned about famine, climate crisis, earthquakes, floods, and environmental injustice. People gradually became self-centered, focusing only on personal gain. Ghosh

highlighted how people ignored environmental safety and kept harming nature through reckless actions, draining natural resources.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

People and nature have shared a complex relationship throughout thousands of years. Despite scholarly awareness of postcolonial themes and historical factors in Amitav Ghosh's novels, a critical gap remains in exploring the ecological aspects of his works. Numerous studies focus on *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide*, concentrating on colonialism, history, migration, society, and displacement. However, the way Ghosh represents the environment in these novels remains under-analyzed.

The primary aim was to explore solutions for protecting nature, but the novels themselves offer no clear solutions. There is also limited research on how colonialism influences the environment. My research will address this gap by examining how Ghosh portrays environmental damage caused by human negligence. Applying ecocriticism, readers will understand how literature presents the complex bond between people and nature. Nature itself resists domination and fights back.

This becomes controversial as colonial powers dominate India, but little is revealed about why Indian society failed to resist. Ghosh highlights the colonizers' harmful actions through environmental damage. Simultaneously, nature plays a decisive role in shaping characters' lives. In *Sea of Poppies*, the environment suffers from opium farming. In *The Hungry Tide*, people

exploit natural resources in the Sundarbans. These concerns help readers understand the central environmental issues in the novels.

Both novels depict how greedy individuals prioritize profit over environmental safety, ignoring the impact on future generations. The British colonizers aimed for wealth through opium cultivation in India in the *Sea of Poppies*; so were local men in *The Hungry Tide*, who exploited nature for survival. But life in the Sundarbans exists in constant threat of natural calamities.

The novels stress how the environment is not just a setting but an indispensable character in the landscape that traces the onset of ecological crises. Polluted waters from factory waste, rising sea levels, and ecosystem destruction pose threats to the local people. The environment shapes how the characters will live, while nature's very unpredictability becomes a force that determines their fate.

Ecocriticism helps readers understand how literature reflects environmental struggles. Each character's relationship with nature varies, reflecting their unique experiences. Nature itself retaliates with disasters, showing its power. Colonialism harmed the environment, leaving innocent people to suffer. For development, forests are cleared to make space for industries.

Ghosh's works explore displacement, migration, colonialism, and identity crises. Scholars often focus on social and political impacts, neglecting environmental consequences. This research highlights how nature functions as a character, shaping lives and reflecting colonial abuse. By applying ecocriticism, this study reveals how Ghosh's novels portray environmental struggles, filling a crucial gap in postcolonial ecocriticism.

1.3 Research Questions

- Are humans failing to care for the environment, and is nature responding with disasters as revenge? How does Amitav Ghosh show this in *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide*?
- How did opium cultivation ruin the ecosystem's stability?
- In what ways do *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide* represent displacement struggles and the search for identity?
- How does Amitav Ghosh describe human-nature relationships in *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide*? What message does he reveal about the outcome of environmental change?

1.4 Theoretical Framework

For this study, I will be using ecocriticism as the primary theoretical framework. Ecocriticism explores the connection between literature and the environment, focusing on how natural settings and ecological issues are portrayed in literature. In the novel *Sea of Poppies* by Amitav Ghosh, the forced production of opium leads to turmoil in the lives of local people, who are against it. Some individuals, driven by greed, exploit the situation for wealth, power, and benefits, disregarding the

harm it causes to both local and global communities. This reflects how people often take advantage of opportunities without considering the consequences for the environment.

One of the research questions centers on why individuals, particularly from the upper class, fail to prioritize the safety of nature before exploiting it for their own benefit. The two novels highlight the continuous ecological threats caused by colonialism and migration. This thesis will analyze how these concerns endanger the characters' lives. Ecocriticism also examines how historical and cultural factors have shaped environmental awareness. Ghosh's work highlights India's socio-political situation, particularly the way ecological destruction is tied to historical events. People's careless actions are rapidly deteriorating the environment, which should prompt urgent actions to protect it.

Ecocriticism has recently gained attention as a literary theory linking ecology and literature. For example, Lawrence Buell's *The Environmental Imagination* (1995) and Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm's *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996) provide a thorough discussion of the approach. In literature, ecocriticism examines the association between human and non-human entities, showcasing how human beings depended on animals and nature for their very existence. Many are blind to the harmful effects of their exploitative behavior against nature-their lust for profit-is threatening ecological balance.

Colonialism, more specifically Britain's demand for locals to plant opium instead of food, greatly contributed to some environmental problems in India. The novel *Sea of Poppies* deals with instances of environmental racism involving the unequal sharing of pollution and health risks, especially against marginalized communities. This convergence of ecological concerns and social

and economic inequalities is concealed amid the dark colonial exploitative acts by the characters in the book. The warning that the book seeks to tell is that it should awaken the consciousness of the reader about the environment and take responsibility for its conservation.

The novel further tells the cruel tale of colonization whereby the local people were gripped with the unkindest of forced displacement from home. Forced displacement of people and loss of cultural identity is a prominent theme in postcolonial literature. Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* raises the agonizing story of migrants whose displacement deprives them of their homes and identity. Displacement coercively makes leaving a home, along with losing the essence of self, to strive to create a new identity in an unwelcoming new environment. Such emotional tearing from the homeland and breaking into a new life find it almost impossible.

The Hungry Tide vividly chronicles the plight of a displaced persons. Again, the storyline points to the very essence of nature. In the Sundarbans, for example, the migrants deal with the complexities of relocation but face the more unforgiving challenges of life in a bizarre, hostile environment. They inhabit an area where tigers are protected, and that certainly should not cater to human life. Government apathy and disregard to support the most vulnerable communities portray neglect in the region.

The experience of displacement is not an experience merely of the body. It is also emotional and psychological. The two migrant figures, Piyali Roy, a marine biologist, and Fokir, a local fisherman, are unsettled by dislocations of communication and culture. Piyali's inability to digest local food and customs represents the disconnection between migrants and their new surroundings. Moreover, threats such as tigers against the villages in the Sundarbans are left unprotected, as per

the governments that talk about the conservation of animals but not of humans. The discomfort of this alien environment adds to Piyali's dislocation and, with that, adds to her feeling of alienation from what one goes through due to forced migration.

In *The Hungry Tide*, it is portrayed that dislocation and a sense of belonging are not just terms; they are an experience tied very much to an environment where the migrant finds himself at sea trying to cope with a new environment. Environmental hazards such as tidal waves, cyclones, and floods complicate the condition of a new environment, opening up another loophole those already devastated by displacement are going through alongside more natural difficulties. The environment, thus, becomes hostile to any attempt they make at getting their lives in order since the weather is extremely unpredictable, in addition to that of the tigers' threat and a host of other dangers making survival in Sundarbans almost impossible. Such showcases a human life precarious with nature because humans most often come up against punitive coffers while colluding in this via colonial exploitation or environmental degradation.

As global environmental crises are preached out, ecocriticism has garnered support as being established at the deeper intrinsic bond between humans and the world of nature. According to Greg Garrard, this bond is viewed in terms of ecocriticism as a bond between humans and non-humans, with literature as how it communicates the very same. In the present world, it is massive all over, pillaging the earth through profit motives. This is what ecocriticism investigates; it seeks to see how literature and the environment relate, that is, human activities affecting the natural world yet will be brought home through literary insights.

In *Sea of Poppies*, Displacement of people was therefore structured in such a way as to drive them to work in the opium plantations, nakedly and without a remnant visible label of nature. An example is thus set such as migrants who are torn out of their reality of once being a community with an expected balance in life now spend their existence as laborers to benefit the British colonizers. They have destroyed their land when they destroy themselves; they lose their identity, paralleling what has been done by colonial practice toward nature. Monoculture is imposed and, in that sense, monoculture is cultivated in opium. The ecological balance of the region suffers degradation rate wise and leads to long-term harm to both the environment and the people.

It is a major factor that natural resources would be made to exploit for capitalism, a theme fairly applicable to both *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide*. Indiscriminate environmental devastation happened as a result of British colonizers' battle for India's resources; perhaps the most striking among these damages was loss of agricultural land to opium cultivation. Local ecosystems were disrupted and natural resources were detrimentally impacted, with long-term effects on human and non-human communities in the area. The novels register impact of colonialism not simply on human beings but also duress's in natural environments.

Thus, ecocriticism opened up significant possibilities to reveal the ecological and socio-political implications embedded in the text of *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide*. The novels stress that something human action is never-action is completely dispersed with the environment for environment exploitation collides with colonial agenda and migratory resilience posing difficult dilemmas both to the individual and the ecosystem. Doing it, this study will analyze whether literature can sensitize to environmental issues that readers should introspect their terms with the world of nature.

1.5 Literature Review

The dislocation from the home lands emanates a whole series of adverse consequences for many individuals. The laborers and indentured laborers mainly worked without pay for the heavily organized masculine class, suffered tremendously from gender discrimination, oppression, and mental trauma. Amitav Ghosh has illustrated in several ways the cruelty inflicted on these displaced migrants by substantiating his portrayal of their sufferings with references from his novels. Ghosh considers migration to be an aid to the annihilation of minorities, which, in *Sea of Poppies*, becomes important since it is the plight of Indian laborers that takes precedence. As the novel shows, Indian laborers from the northern part were subjected to the most rigorous conditions in order to leave their homeland and resettle in foreign lands under British colonial rule.

In *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh examines themes of identity and displacement, especially with respect to Sundarbans, where environmental challenges confront the very being of the inhabitants. Kanai and Piya are their protagonists who suffer from the consequences of colonialism and ecological degradation. The toils go one step further, like the ones portrayed in *Sea of Poppies*, wherein ecological alterations spurring market instruments have hit them the hardest. Henceforth, in both novels, the assertion of the survival of marginalized communities trying to reclaim their own identity against all odds is amplified. Environmental displacement and migrations are the prevailing themes, too, with the labors in *Sea of Poppies* being forced into relocation without consent. *The Hungry Tide* juxtaposes environmental factors shove people to migrate towards a new habitat.

Indentured labor workers were encouraged by the British colonial forces with a kind of slave initiation; this very historical fact bore witness to the dawn of capitalism wherein the indentured worked in tea plantation, cotton, and indigo, very much to the profit of the British. In their paper “Postcolonial Ecocriticism in Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies*,” Dr. Cheryl Davis and J. Vency Jasmine analyzed the way British colonizers forced Indian farmers to substitute food crops to grow opium poppy, destroying the agricultural practice in India.

Often the indentured workers were only given empty promises of land or a better life, leaving them perpetually uncertain and exploited. Although slavery had been abolished, the British colonialists kept up their labor exploitation through the indenture scheme by maintaining control over the natives. The colonizers used free labor to speed up the capitalist efforts while escaping accountability for the act.

Shruti Soni emphasizes in “*Sea of Poppies: A Portrait of the Waves of Ecocriticism*” that ecocriticism and people’s relationships with nature and animals are closely linked. The author uses the work of Ghosh to reflect upon the effects of further environmental degradation on things created by colonialism on both nature and those who depended upon it. The novel, in fact, reflects the same notion that survival of humans depends on a harmony with nature, a concept threatened by colonial exploitation. In contrast, Ghosh uses characters to show how it is human actions that affect the environment; especially through poppy cultivation that creates disruptions in this balance.

Similarly, Jasmine and Davis refer to how India’s colonial policy of growing opium instead of food crops resulted in widespread famines and economic downturns. N. Karpagavalli further

includes, in “The Degradation of Nature: An Ecocritical Study of Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies*,” further impact of British colonization on soil degradation due to monoculture poppy farming in such systems. Notably, destruction of land resources impinged considerably on India’s agricultural wealth, while indentured laborers who were bound in these exploitative systems made artificial contributions to an international economy that rarely benefited them. Experiences of indentured laborers epitomize the exploitative nature of colonialism whereby capitalist interests outweigh what humans and the environment deem as necessary. Ghosh’s novels articulate the problems of the migrated people, which remain at their core identities stripped from them and treated as slaves in both post-slavery systems. They, thus, remain marginalized and fight for survival in a world where their labor feeds a system very little for them.

In his essay “Ecological Crisis in Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies*,” Darshan Lal elucidates the basic tenet of ecocritical theory concerning human-nature interaction. He laments the use and abuse of the environment by human beings throughout history, finding it noteworthy to stress-exploitation of the environment motivated by greed to promote industries, cut trees, and give land for industries and urbanization. Such rivers and water resources are not only essential for survival but are actual sources of life for Ghosh’s characters like Deeti and Kabutri, who depend on the water from the Ganga River. This clearly illustrates how economic greed can destroy the environment-the forced cultivation of opium in preference to food crops. Exploitation became the order of the day with merchants engaging in opium trade and even more with the resistance being put forth by Indian farmers who’d rather grow food crops.

Ghosh mentions how the commercialization of opium had consequences that severely compromised food production on the very lands in which they were produced; starvation spread

across the land. Whatever bitterness that followed is portrayed in the poverty-stricken condition of the laborers under British rule. In contrast to laborers' struggle for survival were British traders whose bulk of interests goes to achieve profit maximization. In the gloomy shadows cast by the exploitation in the agricultural system, the peasant farmers were drained of every ounce of physical energy and mental acuity, only to be rewarded for their futile efforts. The exploitative practices led by opium commandeered the commercial scene, benefitting only the elites, leaving those bottom-waged laborer's in utter difficulty.

Prabakaran G, in his article "Ecocriticism in Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*," goes on to illustrate how the opium trade has had environmental implications and the role of colonialism in destroying India's natural resources. The cultivation of opium caused even worse effects, according to his opinion, because the opium substituted for necessary food crops. The level of opium production disturbed agricultural cycles, giving rise to certain deprivation of food ones. The concern over opium as a cash crop, to fill the British merchants' pockets in profit, is what really led toward poverty and environmental degradation. The exploitation of workers, forced immigration of laborers, and transformation of land from food to cash crops, these exemplify the terribly destructive consequences of colonialism. Ghosh's retelling, his narrativization, shows a callousness on the part of the British merchants, who prized profit above all else, including the suffering of their Indian laborers. Their colonial onslaught wrought long-term enduring impacts, as Ghosh shows in this novel, with the destruction of both environment and humans in the greedy pursuit of profit.

P. Tharani and E.G. Hima Bindhu in their article "Ecocriticism in *Sea of Poppies* by Amitav Ghosh", mentions the fatal impact of opium as a curse on all living beings. They further enunciate

how the opium plague is a curse not only upon mankind but also on animals and insects. For example, a small bug becomes an addict and dies when found near opium. Rising demand for opium was a major cause of suffering in every part of nature. Fishermen now use opium to catch fish, getting tainted river water because of contamination. Even though this is the case, statements made by anthropologists about how good opium was for the laborers are contested, for they had not been found getting much return. Scholars expose the miserable treatment of the indentured laborers-abuse, harassment, and oppression-and call for equal treatment to all, irrespective of their contract duration. Hugh Tinker contrasts indentured servitude, being a temporary arrangement, with permanent slavery to spell differences. However, both systems worked very hard without having regard for the health of the worker. He narrated how recruiters instigated migrants by convincing them that the toil was for his upliftment.

Harsha Eswaraiah, J.G. Ravi Kumar, and S.V. Narasimha Murthy in their article “Colonial Landscape Navigation: Postcolonial Ecocriticism in *Sea of Poppies*” focus on these poppies cultivated in profusion on either bank of the Ganges River, mirroring the carnage such growing would wreak along the lines of opium farming. They assert that imperialism traumatized common peoples, who lost their tradition and freedom. It also created many tensions in social and ethnic cases when the local population revolted against the empire’s rule. This novel depicts how the environment’s degradation becomes heightened agony in lives that are already marginalized, dependent on the land for survival. Colonizers ruined the environment to extract wealth from India and left it so deplorable while doing so. Migrants sang songs of their ancestors, having been traumatized by the experience of exploitation. The character Deeti recalls her captivity on the ship and the cruelty that was meted to her.

In her article, “Ecocriticism in Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies*,” Priyanka Maral analyses how opium farming is ecologically reflected by damaged food crops and pollution of the Ganges River. The propagation of opium has been a curse not only for human life but also for wildlife since animals, birds, and insects were affected by the opium's presence. The destruction of food crops rendered the local people scorched and suffering. Degradation from pollution caused by opium factories rendered the river water undrinkable and added to the agonies of the dependent people.

The author Vishwa Bhushan, in his article “An Ecology and Eco-Criticism in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide*,” discusses how climate change could endanger human and animal life, particularly in the Sundarbans, where the mangrove forests provide buffers against floods and tsunamis. The greater the absence of eco-awareness amongst inhabitants, greater is the ecological imbalance. In the novel, the character Piya tries to protect wildlife, even if it means harming human life in the attempt to rescue tigers. Dr. A. Anitha Sree in “Eco-Critical Study of *The Hungry Tide*” examines how nature, quite indifferent to the social classes, can take lives whenever there is a natural calamity. Nature is thus presented as an unimpeded force that would overpower human strength and resilience. With the construction works moving in relentless pursuit of human profit, Sree draws attention to the increasing encroachment of human life into the natural world, e.g., the mangroves, further aggravating environmental crises. Ghosh shows that the ecological balance survives as long as man stays in cooperation with nature.

Different ethnic groups create a unique culture in the Sundarbans, a rich range of traditions. But threatening the Sundarbans exist natural calamities like cyclones and rising tides, thereby causing further hindrances to survival. In fact, these calamities are aggravated by human intervention, such as tree-felling for urbanization, which weakens the land; hence, frequent catastrophes. With the

1947 partition of India, another refugee influx into the Sundarbans bears the weight of constant danger and loss of identity. In their study “Awareness on Environment: An Ecocritical Study of *The Hungry Tide*,” T. Geetha and K. Maheshwari emphasize the need for environmental sensibility. They argue that the exploitation of nature, for purposes of profit, induces environmental harm, including pollution and permanent disruption of natural habitats.

Dr. S. Alexander and K.A. Kasthuri, in “Ecocriticism in *The Hungry Tide*,” discuss how intertwined are nature and humans. They accent the need for considering the advance of environmental deterioration as a major issue that merits prompt attention. Piya and Fokir, as representations in Ghosh’s work, vouch for mutual survival against natural calamities based on mutual help and understanding. Dr. Suddhojit Chatterjee in “Ecocriticism and Postcolonialism in *The Hungry Tide*” examines the political landscape impacting the Sundarbans under postcolonial influences. He notes the willful neglect of the region by the government and the various incursions of Western culture. Ghosh’s protagonists present opposite faces of the environmental conflicts such as Piya, with a Western view, and Fokir, with a view steeped in intimacy with the land.

Geeta Sahu, in “Ecocriticism-Understanding the Relationship Between Literature and Environment in Indian English Novels”, correlates the plunder of colonialism on the environment with the need for environmental consciousness. She states that nature responds to human attitude toward it, which suggests that a life without nature is bereft. The continuous disruption of ecology in the Sundarbans due to human activities puts pressure on restoring ecological balance to continue survival.

1.6 Methodology

Now is the time when fast emergencies happen, it becomes important for human folks to protect the environment. Humans are gradually becoming entangled in the ethics pronounced by nature, making it all the more necessary to explore the reasons behind environmental problems between them. *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide* both composed by Amitav Ghosh are excellent examples of two novels filled with plenty of rich narrative where social actions towards nature can be seen particularly in relation with colonialism and displacement. I selected these novels for their strong ecological settings, which reflect the characters' way of living. Both novels focus not only on nature but also on the challenges faced by the local people in the Sundarbans. The primary sources for this study will be the narratives of these two novels, while secondary data will include critical essays and scholarly articles on ecocriticism. Additionally, Ghosh's significant works will provide context.

This study aims to analyze the author's techniques for illustrating how nature is deteriorating due to economic greed. Marginalized communities are particularly impacted by these environmental changes. Following British colonization, the exploitation of India's natural resources was initiated by the colonizers with little concern for its consequences. The focus of this research is to analyze the question, "How do the greed-driven actions of people, along with their disregard for ecological stability, lead to environmental degradation in both novels?"

Ecocriticism provides a useful framework for exploring the interaction between nature and literature. It is essential for people to recognize how their actions are destroying the environment and begin to think about ways to protect natural resources. Using Ghosh's works in this theoretical context, the study aims to emphasize the need for ecological awareness and responsibility. Through close readings of the two novels, this research will examine themes of environmental decay and

the displacement of native people. The negative impact of colonialism is also highlighted, showing how it endangered both lives and nature. The British colonizers introduced monoculture agriculture, specifically opium poppy cultivation, which severely altered natural resources and impacted Indian society.

Ecology, from an ecoregion perspective, focuses on a geographical region and its associated climate, which supports ecosystems and various species. The life of people once depended on nature's stability, but over time, people have abused nature for profit. In *The Hungry Tide*, the character Nilima warns that fish will soon be gone due to pollution. In 1930, a storm devastated Morichijhapi, causing the loss of lives and homes. Ghosh illustrates how people struggle against natural disasters, such as storms and earthquakes, which threaten both human and animal lives. Despite these frequent natural disasters, no solutions to prevent them have been found.

The research addresses the destructive actions of people driven by domination and greed, believing that nature cannot resist their exploitation. While nature strives to maintain ecological balance, human actions pose significant threats to its stability. The British colonization of India represents this issue, as colonizers exploited India's resources, especially through opium cultivation. Nature seeks to be left undisturbed to maintain the ecosystem's stability, but human interference causes harm. The biased treatment of India's resources during colonization, particularly through monoculture opium farming, had disastrous effects on the environment.

This study will employ a qualitative method to analyze the themes of human-nature relationships portrayed in *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide*. It will also explore how human actions, driven by greed, lead to severe environmental degradation, using ecocriticism as the theoretical lens. The

research will focus on how these novels represent the tragic interactions between humans and nature, and the outcomes of those interactions. There are numerous incidents in the novels that reveal deeper meanings, such as the representation of the environment and how people continuously abuse it. This study will examine themes and symbols in the novels to better understand how Ghosh depicts the connection between people and nature.

The qualitative methods facilitate a more penetrating study into themes and symbols dealing with both environmental abuse and colonization. The primary goal is to understand how the novels illustrate the impacts of resource extraction on native communities. Close reading focuses primarily on in-depth textual analyses, mainly concerning the complicated human-environment dynamics, particularly in terms of the effects of colonialism and environmental destruction. Ecocriticism explores how human deeds have led to swift degradation of the environment.

Amitav Ghosh uses literary texts to set forth the contentious and difficult relationship between the human and natural environments. Putting forward a qualitative analysis allows an in-depth search for symbols such as the opium cultivation and riverine activities-in relation to ecological death and human suffering. In the close readings of the two novels, this study shall elaborate on the prominent effects of colonialism with their contributions toward environmental destruction as regarded by the native communities. *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide* demonstrate how selfish acts engendered by colonialism and economic exploitation triggered an environmental disaster. Ghosh identifies opium cultivation as an epitome of actions taken by colonial masters inspired by greed, who did not care about the environmental consequences.

The Hungry Tide, set in a location that never came under colonial rule, highlights the severe residual effects caused by colonialism on its land. Nevertheless, the major question lies in the contemporary environmental problem, with an emphasis on climate change here. The Sundarbans are rapidly degrading, and this is a matter of urgent concern. The delicate ecosystem of the Sundarbans is exceedingly fragile, threatened by pollution and human-induced deforestation. If only humanity would be more compassionate and control those desires, our nature would not be in this condition.

The relationship between Amitav Ghosh's novel with the characters and the natural world is evident. Many characters struggle to offer what little prayer they can to save the world around them in their daily lives. These people earn their livelihoods in the Sundarbans by using such natural resources as farming and fishing. That same land, however, is being over-exploited for their own whims, which eventually disturbs wildlife habitat and ruins the environment. These environments deserve admiration from us, which these people provide. On the other hand, people from the Sundarbans are ever so close to nature, with the imminent danger of sea encroachment and devastation threatening their very existence. Finding a way to adapt or flee is thus the natural response, one which represents the interdependence of people upon their natural landscapes.

The Hungry Tide and *Sea of Poppies* discuss how colonial powers exploited nature for its wealth. The extent of the damage that colonialism inflicted upon the environment is truly long-lasting. Nominally, in *Sea of Poppies*, the British sought to persuade local Indian farmers to stop growing food crops and start cultivating opium. The reckless farming practices ruined the land's fertility, making it unfit for the cultivation of food. The local population suffered alongside the land, which had provided for them as their incomes earned through farming were taken away. In *The Hungry*

Tide, colonial rule may have ended, but the scars on the environment are still clearly visible. The settlers who moved into the Sundarbans, with their own unique sets of pressures, may have similarly created problems for both the local peoples and the nature. The undeniable imprint of colonialism upon this land is written in the tears of its residents and the cries of its ecology.

The nature in both the novels is personified. Its character changes according to the human treatment it receives, thus impacting these very human beings and nature. Ghosh makes it clear that neglecting the environment can bring disaster to humanity's door. In *The Hungry Tide*, nature is represented through the tides, rivers, and mangroves, which are vital to the survival of the people. The environment provides shelter, food, and resources, but it can also pose danger through natural disasters like earthquakes and floods. Characters may think they are more powerful than nature, but in reality, they are vulnerable compared to its strength. The novel highlights how people, driven by greed, damage the environment in pursuit of wealth. With the rise of capitalism, environmental destruction accelerates, leading to Ghosh's concern about the current state of the environment.

As cities grow and technology advances, new challenges arise. Increased demand for resources, pollution from cars, and the loss of natural habitats threaten the environment. In *Sea of Poppies*, the exploitation of nature continues, with the British using the river for profit, further harming the environment. Both novels highlight the dependence of people on nature, even though people often take more from nature than they give back. The poor and marginalized communities, with no stable homes, rely on nature for survival. However, if the land and environment are not protected, the survival of these people is at risk. This reflects the relationship between social issues and environmental damage. People in third-world countries are often promised opportunities to escape poverty, but the real goal is to enrich the western world.

Both novels depict the tragic consequences of colonialism, with both nature and local people suffering under foreign domination. Ghosh presents the environment as a character, showing its struggles and attempts to survive, just like the human characters. The relationship between the colonial experience and environmental degradation has been addressed by Ghosh in these works wherein he urges the readers to examine and take due care of the environment, understanding its vital role in the very survival of humankind.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

The work centers around the two books of Amitav Ghosh bringing to light important ecological concerns highlighted in them. Thus, the study would investigate the convoluted relationship between humans and nature especially under colonial and postcolonial conditions. In addition, while nature would provide such solutions as those under food, materials, safety, and comfort, humans would always tend to misuse it.

Both novels *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide* discuss how much humans impoverish and destroy their environment. In the *Sea of Poppies*, Indians are forced into growing opium for the British at the expense of the environment. In *The Hungry Tide*, the wildlife of the Ganges Delta suffers due to human activities and colonial exploitation. Both books discuss environmental justice and the detrimental effects of colonialism on natural resources. Resources are drained without caring for the mother's welfare and eventually challenge deep ecology. Ghosh brings out the conflicts that are generated where the environment has undergone a spontaneous change. Hence, the Ganges Delta in *The Hungry Tide* and the opium-growing areas in *Sea of Poppies* become more than simple settings for the denouement of colonial and environmental histories. *Sea of*

Poppies brings together two distinct historical times, the British colonial era and the postcolonial era in *The Hungry Tide*. The legacy of colonialism goes far and deep in lives, even of the people in today's world, who still feel its negative impacts on their environment.

Ghosh, concerned about the environment's current state, uses nature as a character in his novels, urging readers to perceive it not as a mere background but as an active participant in the narrative. The study employs an ecocritical approach to examine how nature relates to broader themes such as migration, colonialism, displacement, environmental destruction, and climate change.

While the study primarily focuses on the environmental themes in *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide*, certain limitations are acknowledged. The research is confined to these two novels, as other works by Ghosh or different authors discussing similar issues (e.g., environmental deterioration or colonialism) are not considered. Ecocriticism is the main framework, but it does not address all themes in the novels. Issues such as social class, identity, gender, and tradition are present but are not the primary focus. This research centers on the environment's condition and the impact of human actions on it, specifically in the Sundarbans of *The Hungry Tide* and the opium-producing regions of *Sea of Poppies*. It does not aim to cover the current environmental situation in India, as the novels are set in the colonial and postcolonial eras.

Though ecocriticism is the central lens for this analysis, other perspectives, such as migration theory and postcolonial theory, are briefly explored if they relate to environmental concerns. However, the study will not delve into gender, tradition, or migration in detail, as they are secondary to the environmental issues. The novels convey a powerful message about the

importance of respecting nature. Ghosh indirectly criticizes the exploitation of the environment through irresponsible actions, highlighting the consequences for animals, plants, and local communities. The characters reflect on the loss of their traditional way of life, particularly before the arrival of colonialism. Marginalized communities are often excluded from decision-making, and powerful groups exploit both the environment and the people with little regard for the long-term consequences.

The study looks at the injustice wrought upon the environment under colonialism and capitalism. The mercenary exploits continue to wreak havoc on the environment. The study demonstrates how ecocriticism can enable the readers to appreciate the reasons for the aggression against the environment itself. More than anything else, pollution and environmental defilement are the two thematic poles in *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies*, reiterating the destruction meted out to its fellow beings by humanity, driven by greed and colonialism. They portray the conflict between profit and protection of the environment and intensify the discussion regarding whose life is deemed superior: human or animal. While the environment continues to deteriorate at the hands of unending human motivations for profit, respect for nature is forgotten.

This research will focus on the extent to which the settings in the two novels frame the lives of characters and how they try to tackle the environmental issues posed to them. In *Sea of Poppies*, the environment was in dire need of care, whereas in *The Hungry Tide*, the Sundarbans are open to destruction at the hands of the callousness of men and the havoc of natural disasters. Both novels stand testimony to the plight of the world in the case of a neglected environment, pleading for the well-being of future generations

1.8 Conclusion of the First Chapter

By and large, this chapter summarizes the primary intent of the study which is to probe the complicated relationship of people with the environment in Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide* through and by the means of ecocriticism. These novels provide insight into the long-term effects of colonialism on nature and marginalized people who would depend on their natural resources to survive. The study focuses on the manifestation of colonial powers destroying the environment, which will have consequences still on people today. The setting of both the novels refers equally to the context that impacts the life of a character and also illustrates the environmental degradation due to colonialism.

The research emphasizes the message about the environmental degradation that is brought about by colonialism and the terrible effects on the local people who depended on the land for all their sustenance. The lands that were once teeming with fecundity have turned into clay under colonial rule, and this will perpetuate itself to the generations of today. Ghosh's works exemplify the whirlpool of destruction wrought by colonial powers through the exploitations of nature and suppressed populations. The study also reinforces the cause for saving the environment for future generations by drawing attention to the dangers posed by ignoring nature.

The problem statement deals with the disputed environmental effects of colonialism as the local people would bear the brunt of such evil under British rule and later the land would also succumb to degradation. The Sundarbans, a vital resource, faces environmental threats from human abuse, which may lead to conflict if not protected. The research aims to analyze the harmful consequences of colonial exploitation, which put the lives of marginalized populations at risk. Ghosh's portrayal

of British exploitation exposes the brutal and unethical treatment of local populations and their land.

The research questions guiding this study include: How does Ghosh portray the connection between human negligence and natural disasters in *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide*? Does nature seek revenge through its harsh responses to human activity? How does the cultivation of opium in *Sea of Poppies* accelerate environmental damage? How are local communities and their environments harmed in *The Hungry Tide*? How do the novels highlight the environmental degradation caused by colonialism? How are native populations displaced by colonial rule and changing landscapes? What message does Ghosh convey about the potential threats from nature in the future?

The methodology combines ecocriticism and postcolonialism to analyze Ghosh's portrayal of environmental issues. The novels illustrate the devastating impact of colonial activities on the environment, such as the opium trade in *Sea of Poppies* and the harm to the Sundarbans in *The Hungry Tide*. Both novels depict how Western greed and exploitation have long-lasting negative effects on the environment, urging readers to take responsibility for preserving it.

This thesis addresses the continuous negative impact of colonialism on both the people and the environment, as seen in Ghosh's works. The second chapter will focus on environmental damage caused by human negligence. The British colonizers aimed to cultivate opium in India, replacing food crops to increase profits. Even after colonial rule ended, India continued to suffer from the lasting effects of these changes. Chapter three will examine how the environment influences

characters' lives and decisions. Local populations were displaced as nature, through natural disasters, sought to reclaim control.

The fourth chapter will summarize the complex and controversial relationship between people and the environment. It will emphasize the importance of protecting the environment, which remains essential for survival. Both people and nature depend on each other, but humans often exploit nature for profit. This exploitation leads to displacement and environmental harm. Despite the end of British rule, India continues to suffer from the colonial legacy.

Chapter 2: Ecocritical Themes in *Sea of Poppies*

The novel *Sea of Poppies* by Amitav Ghosh begins with the historical events surrounding the First Opium War of 1839. As with all tragic narratives, so with this, it established the treasured and fertile lands of India all over the world. Opium by British colonizers is cultivated and create a huge fracture in the native society. Ghosh, who is popular among Indian writers for the work they do with English fiction, is known for a specific interest in the effects of colonialism on both people and nature. In one sense, the present novel elucidates the impact of colonialism during the 19th century on the environment and mankind.

It was after the introduction of opium cultivation that people's lives began to deteriorate the most. The environment, too, faced rapid degradation. People exploited nature to gain benefits for themselves, without caring about their long-run repercussions. The environment was ignored, leading to ecological destruction. While a few claimed that they were only there for improving the environment and releasing it from its exploitative conditions, which is the crux of ecocriticism-it became an uphill task with the imposition of colonial forces upon it.

Ecocriticism, a relatively new literary theory, has gained popularity, especially among literary scholars. It connects ecology with literature, examining their interrelationship. Ghosh's novel demonstrates the environmental damage caused by colonialism, particularly through the cultivation of opium. Throughout his work, Ghosh addresses the relationship between people and nature, highlighting the adverse effects of opium farming and the suffering it caused to innocent people.

The main character, Deeti, has a husband addicted to opium. Her situation, and that of others, exemplifies the helplessness people felt as they lost control over their lives. They were dominated by the British colonizers, unable to live freely. The British took advantage of India's fertile land to force farmers to grow opium. The novel reveals how colonialism led to the destruction of food crops and the subsequent misery of the people, who could no longer grow crops that provided sustenance. By introducing opium farming, farmers could not sustain a livelihood anymore, and the country has since lost the variety of its crops. To add to that, one observed that it had dire consequences on both the people and the environment.

Besides these direct and obvious negative impacts on the human health and environment, opium farming had a direct negative effect on the health of the people addicted to opium. Poor people who become addicted also suffer severe health complications, and even the dust of the opium plants damages the health of the people. Moreover, insects are attracted to the scent of opium plants and thus fall victims. The negative impact of opium farming is not limited to humans; animals and ecosystems around the plants are also affected.

One of the prime resources for a lot of India, today, is dirty because of the opium factories. The waste of the factories polluted the river and made it unfit for drinking. People have now lost this source of fulfilment for their daily needs, which they had once depended on. Opium cultivation was directly responsible for this negativity in Indian society. It caused environmental harm and loss of biodiversity. Trees were cut, and opium brought further destabilization.

Ghosh's novel showcases the adverse effects of colonial rule on environment and society. The British colonizers were more concerned about profit than the well-being of Indian people, and so

they made their subjects cultivate opium instead of food crops. It was a cataclysm. People were destructed along with their land and the environment as well. Opium cultivation impoverished India's agricultural diversity, and the welfare of people suffered severely. As Ghosh wanted to indicate, monoculture is dangerous and injurious to the environment.

Priyanka Maral's article "Ecocriticism in Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*" elaborates on how environmental legacies of colonialism made severe contributions to the degradation of India's ecosystem. She examines how opium replaced essential food crops in the agriculture of India. Opium had minor medicinal properties, according to Maral, but the health complications resulting from addiction rendered it worse. Apart from this, Maral also emphasizes how opium farming affected animals and insects, in addition to people, along with the degradation of environmental quality.

The opium factories polluted the river Ganga, which had religious and utilitarian significance for the people. From being originally a resource that nourished lives, it developed into an emblem of the wanton destruction of the environment with which colonialism came. Thus, those careless acts of the British colonizers, as represented by Ghosh, are not only morally condemning but legally dubious. Besides, the incessant hunting for profits through the opium drug trade led to severe ecological and social consequences in India.

The novel also talks about the exploitation of the marginalized, especially women. In the time of colonialism, women's lives became worse as they were doubly oppressed-first by patriarchal norms and second by colonial rule. Deeti, the protagonist of the female sex, finds herself entrapped

under oppression, prejudiced by both racial discrimination and patriarchy. She has come to symbolize the agony of women in colonized India.

The *Sea of Poppies* recounts the tale of how the colonizing British exploited the resources of India in their economic interests; they forced the Indian farmers to grow opium, disturbing all agriculture practice in the land, and resulting in starvation across the nation. The colonizer had crushed food crops and made opium a cash crop, which was exploitation in addition to the lands and people. This was part of a larger strategy to make profit from the opium trade as that opium was to be sold in China. Hence profit gained by the British from opium allowed England to indulge in costly Iran luxuries like silk and porcelain.

Ghosh's depiction of colonial exploitation does more than simply burning up economic fields. It reveals the environmental and social imprint of the same. The novel attempts at nuances of a colonialism that entered deep into the lives and land itself being colonized and critiques the ways colonial powers exploited such people and environments for the sake of profit.

From ecocriticism, *Sea of Poppies* are made to examine the interrelationship between literature and the geographical environment. It espouses the argument that the environmental impact of colonialism was not mainly through agricultural practices. Pollution caused through industrialization was also culpable. The chemical pollutants released by opium factories were dangerous substances that contaminated both land and water. And the Indian people had their life fountains poisonously turned sour through industrial waste in the Ganga, which used to run so fresh and clear for the people. As it polluted heavily, this waste was very detrimental to the aquatic ecosystem and rendered it scientifically unfit for consumption.

Also, the novel shows us a portrayal of the city of Calcutta, which gets overburdened and polluted because of the colonial misuse of its resources. The formerly green city has become a patch of sewage and dust. The researchers started doing environmental studies in the 1960s, which introduces ecocriticism in literary studies. Scholars began investigating how such texts narrated the decline of the environment and the way it has affected other living beings. Ghosh's novel was also entered into the discourse by giving instances of the deterioration of natural wealth of India under colonial rule. The narrative, however, concentrates on the knowledge on the tenderness of the environment and the long-lasting effects of exploitation through opium trade and its impacts. It describes the basic elements of opium trade and their impacts.

Last, but hardly not the least, the growth of ecological imperialism is shown in *Sea of Poppies* in the way the British colonizers would put profit over environmental conservation. *Sea of Poppies* is a critique, from an ecocritical standpoint, of the colonial environmental and social consequences of the demolisher of peoples and nature. It connects literature to ecology quite directly. Its narrative highlights the darker aspect of colonialism through the discourse of opium cultivation, pollution, and social injustice regarding the destructive efficacy.

Chapter 3: Ecocritical Themes in *The Hungry Tide*

In the novel *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh presents two stories, one telling the plight of this displacement, but they are displaced, not by their own doings. One must understand very well that humans have always been very close to nature. Farming is important because it is part of survival and a very important tie formed between man and nature. Ecology is the study of the relationship existing between living beings and their environment, showing this kind of close bond. Literary ecocriticism shows the relationship of literature with the environment along with how the writers tackle this with respect to nature. In today's world, these are serious issues.

The Hungry Tide is set in the Sundarbans, a region of extraordinary ecological significance. The novel addresses the environmental issues faced by this unique landscape, emphasizing the declining biodiversity due to human exploitation. The Sundarbans, home to rare species like the Bengal tiger, is being ravaged by human activities, which prioritize profit over preservation. Ghosh highlights the tension between conservation and development, particularly in the way the government prioritizes the protection of wildlife over the needs of local human populations. This is the most spot-on sentence that very aptly and lucidly summarizes the present government view regarding the people who lived in the area: they are being "more important" than the wildlife protection itself, such as tigers. This inconsistency is seen as divides of interest. The characters in the novel like to talk about trapping wild animals like tigers using nylon nets for their safety, as it shows the way, complexly intertwining human needs against environmental conservation. However, it actually does the opposite and harms the environment and biodiversity.

Sundarbans is not just an ordinary forest; it is one of the greatest and heaviest assets among forests around the globe. But these have come in the hands of humans and have endangered these assets. The native population thinks it has the right to use the natural resources such as plants, fish, timber, etc., as it wishes without thinking anything about sustainability. The government has tried to intervene by removing refugees, including locals, because of their dependence on natural resource exploitation for their survival. Ghosh criticizes this role of the government, as it drives out refugees along with the violations of their basic needs or rights.

Clear protection of human rights in relation to animal rights is thereby depicted in the novel where actions are protective for wild lives while neglectful for displaced people. Refugees in Sundarbans express the strong comment on human rights as addressed by Ghosh to the plight of marginalized populations. Most of these refugees, poor and uprooted, come to be treated with indifference by a government whose priorities obviously favors conservation over their essentials. The novel transcribes Ghosh's apprehensions regarding the even-handed equation in the treatment of people and nature. He questions the premise that humans are higher than animals, demonstrating how, in very many cases, humans abuse that high status to harm the environment and other beings. It thus criticizes the human tendency to exploit those who are weaker and less powerful, usually for individual gains.

Although natural disasters are normally viewed as natural responses of ecosystems, Ghosh contends that they may very well be another of nature's ways of paying back for human misdemeanors. In this sense, natural resources are tapped by human beings, after which nature pays back with disasters, as though reminding human beings to accept their vulnerability and dependence on the environment. The novel by Ghosh would thus capture the relationship between

people and the degradation of the environment, calling into question the nature relationship among people regarding the planet.

Vishwa Bhushan discusses the aspects of ecology and eco-criticism in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*. This comprises the frightening climate change that influences species, especially dolphins, whereas carping against the human society at large expectedly has an impact on marine life too, but due to their nature, such species as these are generally ignored as 'not here, not there'. They, nevertheless, are truly essential species to be safeguarded for complete ecosystem health. Need for space and care for such species is also reiterated by Bhushan underlining their survival and contribution to environmental goodness. The novel also maintains that humans are trading nature less with benefit because exploitation hurts most, not for current generations but for future generations as well.

One of the issues emphasized in *The Hungry Tide* is the message of environmental conservation, especially in the Sundarbans, where tigers, for example, are essential to the equilibrium resident in an ecosystem. It is interesting to note that species such as tigers are indicated to be essential in stabilizing the ecosystem by regulating populations of other species so that the ecosystem remains balanced. In the absence of such predators, the situation would lead to an ecosystem being disrupted with problems such as lack of clean water and food. According to Ghosh, here, Human activities may disrupt the delicate balance that nature has, which can have disastrous consequences for both the environment and humanity.

The novel also represents other Sundarbans' harmful and suffering transformations like submergence of islands as a result of huge sea-level rise which again is simply on human-triggered

activities. Kusum understands from Ghosh how nature can provide for human need by using that character. A fisherman father could feed his family from his fishing trips, thus demonstrating how nature makes provision for human needing. But at the same time, it also projects how people take advantage of nature's generosity and therefore develop an eventual backlash from the environment.

In his article Ecocriticism and Postcolonialism in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*, Dr. Suddhojit Chatterji deals with the displacements that were brought in by actions of the government and the role this novel plays as an ecological narrative. While the environment has more people displaced from the extreme conditions in Sundarbans, the other government-conserved negligence comes having human welfare in focus. Ghosh writing particularly on environment issues together with the plight of marginalized populations reemphasizes the fact that human rights are closely tied up to environmental justice.

The contrast between the various shades with which characters view the environment does bring people's approach closer to conservation in some and survival of humankind in others. Such depictions make one of the main attractions of the narrative nature feature as a character, called Bon Bibi, and thus highlights the relationship that humans share with mother nature. By employing various such viewpoints, Ghosh actually moves from presenting a one-ended scenario into reality and quite a good challenge for a reader to reflect in terms of micro and macro environmental as well as human rights issues.

The Hungry Tide should be read as a powerful probe into human-nature relationships, where balance and respect are emphasized. It is an indictment against environmental and resource

exploitation, hinting to the readers a consideration of their long-term unborn consequences. By painting the beautiful portrait of this Sundarbans and its people, Ghosh taunts readers into rethinking their attitudes toward conservation, human rights, and the environment. It reminds us that our actions today are likely to create the world we live in tomorrow.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

In his works- *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies*- Amitav Ghosh provides deeper insight on Anthropocene and nature, which can be viewed through ecocriticism, the theory of ecocriticism. Both studies revealed the impacts of nature and the environment on the way humanity identifies itself and relates to others. The characters in the novels tell stories of their natural surroundings that provide for them, nurture them, and challenge them with their destruction. The powers of nature are unleashed through people's action, and when that seems uncontrollable, they face the consequences. The two assumptions underscore the realities that biodiverse themes play in the basements of cultural identities and socialistic relations, especially in moments when ecological issues devastate the lives of individuals. The novels prompt the readers to deliberate on their relationship with nature and simultaneously raise issues of environment through urging a more harmonious living with the natural world.

In *Sea of Poppies*, a central aspect of the story is the suffering due to the opium trade, which destructively affected the land in the colonial times of the nineteenth century. The British colonizers forced the Indian farmers to grow opium, for example, while being thus deprived of food crops. Resultantly, it degraded the environment as much as it agriculturally made the India colony an opium producer. The novel follows the effects of local disruption that followed colonial policies, with particular reference to the effect on the Ganges River, polluted by opium factories. Some of the subjects in the novel suffer ongoing hardship as they face the consequences of economic pressures caused by colonial policies, together with suffering from the same due to the impact of changes in the opium trade, whose impact was widespread and reverberated into the lives of local economies and social structures.

The Hungry Tide is located in the Sundarbans, a very big and very delicate mangrove forest, and throws light on the problems faced by people living there. This particular setting is significant to the novel because the forest acts as a character influencing the lives of its people. The Sundarbans are known for its biodiversity, but the balance is precariously threatened by human interferences such as fishing and deforestation. Its vulnerability is also aggravated by the series of natural disasters such as cyclones and floods, which pose a tough life for the people residing there. The other aspect of nature-human conflict emphasized by this novel is that of the humans trying to subsist in an area where the most fearsome threat comes in the form of wildlife.

Piya, a researcher studying the endangered Irrawaddy dolphins in the Sundarbans, personifies questions of human intervention in the plight of endangered species and the displacements of local communities. Her research has also highlighted the threats from human activities, which include fishing and pollution, against the plight of the dolphins. Piya is not very familiar with the languages and surroundings of this area, thus Fokir, a local fisherman, proves to be helpful to her in navigating within this region. While watching the dolphins and how they interact with their environment, she is aware of changes in the ecosystem intervened by human activity. These changes help in the understanding of the mutuality that exists between Piya and Fokir, dolphins and fishermen, nature and humans.

In both novels, the characters' struggle against their environment reflects the edifying themes of ecocriticism. The theory emphasizes on the interdependent nexus between humans and nature, requiring readers to constantly consider the impact of human activities on nature and vice-versa.

Under the ecocritical approach, Amitav Ghosh further articulates destruction due to colonialism, economic exploitation, and environmental degradation, which upset the local ecosystem and teach the relation between human beings and nature in an imbalanced fashion.

The Sundarbans is depicted as a place of beauty and danger. It abounds in species of animals and plants and is constantly under some encroachment from humans, as well as from natural calamities. For instance, construction of dams tinkles the habitats of the Irrawaddy dolphins, who's already dwindling population has been further threatened through human intervention. Dams serve the interests of man by way of having water and hydroelectric power but also do harm to the natural environment, epitomizing the contradictions between human advancement and ecological conservation.

The question of human-wildlife conflict comes out as yet another dominant theme in *The Hungry Tide*. The Sundarbans shelters the tigers, which for now form an endangered species owing to the loss of habitat. The communities residing in the vicinity have to live under the peril of tiger attacks but also succumb to losing their livelihoods by environmental changes. On the other hand, Piya, a strict conservator of the tigers, conflicts with the human population, who are more concerned about their well-being despite the undercurrent of an animal conservation aspect. This situation demonstrates the tussle between balancing needy human and the environment, especially in areas both are endangered.

The novel *Sea of Poppies* uses the fate of Deeti and some other native Indian characters to argue about the destructive effects of colonialism on the environment. The colonization is basically impacted towards the women with such illness. They fall prey to the British colonial system that

was formed for the economic advancement of profits at the cost of environmental and social well-being. Deceptively, opium was made mandatory by the British colonial rulers for cultivation among Indian farmers. The net result was soil depletion and deteriorated roots. The other natural resources exploit across the board in the formation of effective economic advances with reference to how colonialism would do at the periphery level depletion of environment.

The novels of Ghosh exemplify how much broader would be the changes in ecology wrought by globalization and economic prosperity. The exploitation of natural resources in order to secure profit causes depletion in fish stocks and disrupts the entire ecosystem such as in Sundarbans. Damage and destruction further continue with infrastructural developments such as construction of dams and roads which worsen the plight of local communities and wildlife.

In conclusion, Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* and *The Hungry Tide* are two ecocritical masterpieces of Ghosh, offering strong and profound messages about the relationship between humans and nature. These novels look into the impact's colonialism, economic exploitation, and environmental degradation have had on the local ecosystems and the identities of humankind. It makes a case for reflecting on the way human acts carve the natural world, and might urge the reader to think of ways in which we might coexist more harmoniously with the environment. These struggles of the characters are critically challenging as to how we manage personal relationships with nature and the necessity of protecting the world around us.

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