

**NATURE: THE INDOMITABLE POWER IN AMITAV GHOSH'S,  
*THE HUNGRY TIDE***

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**Abstract:** India is a country with variety of ecosystems which ranges from the Himalayas in the north to the plateaus of south and from the dynamic Sundarbans in the East to the dry Thar of west. India is not having homogenous physical features having different types of ecosystems. However these ecosystems are under threat due to increasing population and avarice of mankind. Nature plays an indomitable role in our everyday life. It gives all the essential and inevitable things, for our successful survival in this planet. Even though, the materials given by the nature, are more than enough for a healthy and peaceful life, we, the human are becoming so selfish and are developing a parasitic attitude towards everything, to lead a sophisticated lifestyle in this temporary world. The humankind wants to overpower nature by exploiting the nature. Nature tolerates all the exploitations against it by the human race, not fully, but to a certain extent. But man is unaware of the intensity of the wrath of nature.

**Keywords:** Sundarbans, Nature, Tide Country, Mangrove Forests, Survival, Parasitic, Indomitable, Life giver, Fury of tide, Salty and Marshy lands, Manhunt by Tigers.

**Introduction:**

Nature plays an indomitable role in our everyday life. It gives all the essential and inevitable things, for our successful survival in this planet. Even though, the materials given by the nature, are more than enough for a healthy and peaceful life, we, the human are becoming so selfish and are developing a parasitic attitude towards everything, to lead a sophisticated lifestyle in this temporary world.

Amitav Ghosh symbolizes the wrath of nature in the title of the novel itself. The title, *The Hungry Tide*, which literally speaks volumes about the wrath of nature, that the people of the tide country experiences as the part and parcel of their life. Mr. Ghosh meticulously portrays the wrath of nature, in the form of famines, floods, cyclones, fatal attacks from the scavengers and so on in his novel, *The Hungry Tide*.

### **Review of Literature:**

Divya Anand in her article titled *Locating the Politics of the Environment and the Exploited in Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide*, says that Ghosh focuses on the socio - environmental politics of the environmental conservation, raises voice for the existence of the human and non-human species, and how one-dimensional environmental conservation policies, detrimental to the socially, economically, backward classes like indigenous people, forest dwellers, tribals and nomads. Dr. Mathew P. Joseph and Riya Susan in their article titled *Bioregionalism and Ecoconsciousness in Amitav Ghosh's novel The Hungry Tide*, observes that how bioregionalism helps in building the ecological consciousness. Ghosh focuses on the Sunderbans as a territory of bioserve and a domain of consciousness. *The Hungry Tide* has a strong appeal for preserving our own bioserves and restoration of watershed.

Alessandro Vescovi in his article *Fear and Ethics in the Sunderbans: Anthropology in Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide*, observes that the people of the tide country worship and follow the myth of the Sylvian deity Bonbibi, and of her counterparts the demon Dakshin Rai. They believe that the Goddess has the supreme power in protecting them from the dangers of the forest, especially from the dangers from the Bengal Tigers.

### **Results and Discussions:**

*The Hungry Tide* is a fascinating adventurous story pitted against the backdrops of the Sunderbans, the largest and the dense swampy Mangrove forests at the mouth of the Ganges. This story revolves around three main characters, Piya Roy, a Bengali girl settled in the United States, a Cetologist, doing her Ph.D in an endangered species called 'Orcaella Brevirostris', otherwise called the Indo-Gangetic dolphins. Kanai Dutt, a forty-three years old bachelor, a Bengali businessman residing in New Delhi, and Fokirchand Mondol, an illiterate fisherman, who helps Piya in her research inside the swampy forests of the Sunderbans. Kanai acts as the translator between Fokir and Piya.

The whole story takes place in a village called Lusibari. The people of Lusibari when they begin to settle down by encroaching the marshy lands of Sunderbans, they too had a bitter experience in the form of famine. The great famine which divested Bengal was revealed to the readers through Kanai, when he begins to read the diary of his deceased uncle Nirmal, who was a teacher in Lusibari.

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One of the leading characters of this novel Piya, also experienced the hostile character of the nature thrice in this novel. In all the three incidents, she was saved by Fokir. In the beginning of this novel, when Piya was searching for the Indo-Gangetic Dolphins in the brackish water of the mighty Sundarbans, with the help of a local guide, unfortunately she fell into the dangerous marshy and the swampy waters, where crocodiles are common. She was nearly drowned before saved by an illiterate fisherman, Fokir, who is the central character of this enchanting novel.

This incident of Piya's fall, provokes the feeling of indignation in the hearts of the readers. The plight of Piya will definitely create a wiered feeling about the nature in the hearts and minds of the readers. During the course of her research inside the dense forests of Sunderbans, Piya was rescued by Fokir for the second time. Piya, while doing a survey for her research, inside the swampy forests, she is about to get a surprise attack from a crocodile, but she is lucky enough to get a timely help from Fokir. He uses his oars against the mighty jaws of a crocodile, which is about to attack.

As the Sunderbans are located in the estuary of the Ganges, and it is very closer to the Bay of Bengal, it becomes a regular custom for the mangroves to receive a copious amount of rainfall, because of it the land lost its fertility and farming becomes very hard, and people came to know it after many centuries. This makes the people to shift their occupation from farming to other realms such as, hunting, collecting honey, wax, firewoods and so on in order to overcome their starvation.

Death has become very common in the lives of the people of Sunderbans. Everyday they receive a minimum of one death news of someone being killed by a tiger, a snake or a crocodile. The lives of young women of Lusibari are so pathetic, because they begin to practice widowhood everyday when their husbands go for hunting daily. Most of the young women in that village undergoes this kind of psychological sufferings.

The reason for this strange practice is, there is no certainty for the return of their husbands in alive. Most of the people face their death inside the dense forests in the form of fatal attacks from the ferocious animals like tiger, crocodile and so on. Though they know that death is inevitable for them, they could not escape from it, because of their futile precautionary steps. All the leading characters in this novel experiences the wrath of nature in their own way. As for as the leading characters are concerned, the worst affected victim of the wrath of nature is, Moyna, the wife of Fokirchand Mondol. Because, she loses her husband Fokir in the end and the death of Fokir is an unpredictable one and it shakes the minds of the readers for a minute.

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Ghosh uses Fokir as his mouth piece. He delivers his ideas through the character Fokir. Because as a fisherman he led a cordial relationship with nature. Whenever he goes for fishing he took his little boy Tutul with him as his companion as well as to teach him about nature, and catching crabs is his pass time activity. He knows every nook and corners of the forest and Piya knows this very well during her first meeting. The death of Fokir is a huge loss for Moyna, because he is her husband and for Piya it is a nightmare, because she loses her friend, companion and guide who has helped to finish her research in a grand manner, before her eyes. Piya is more inconsolable than Moyna, because she loses a man who has saved her thrice in the forests, and in rescuing her for the third time he loses his life.

In the end that horrific incident was explained by Piya to all. When Piya and Fokir are set to return to Lusibari, after completing their research, a huge cyclone attacks the village. Hence, they are inside the forest and the sunlight also fades away, they are completely detached from the mainland. And another reason is, they are in the eye of the cyclone, so they are unable to sense the danger which approaches steadfast. Once they come out of the eye of the cyclone, they begin to experience the worst of their life. During that time also he gives more importance for the safety of Piya. While helping her out, he was struck very hard by a huge wood, which proved fatal. During his last minutes, he slowly whispered the name of his wife and little son, that shows his love towards his family. When this was told by Piya, Moyna completely breakdown and remain inconsolable so as Piya.

### **Conclusion:**

For Piya, the death of Fokir is intolerable, and it is very hard for her to return to normal life. She feels that, a state of vacuum is created in her life after Fokir's death, and she knew that the vacuum will never get filled. She know it very well that, it is Fokir's selfless, timely help, which saves her life thrice and also her career. This paper clearly explains, that the ultimate destiny for the humankind is death. No one can evade death. It will come on time. This paper, with this novel also explains that, the nature will give all the necessary things for the human existence in this world, and it will allow humans to control it to certain extent, when it exceeds the limit, it will reciprocate in the form of natural disasters. Man thinks that, he can tame nature or he is taming nature. It is only his assumption, not real. The truth is, nature is always superior to man.

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