

Original Article

Eco-Critical Perspective in the novel of Indira Goswami and Mamang Dai

Sheetal Yogesh Badwaik¹, Dr. D.V. Naik²

¹Research Scholar,

²Principal, Dr. M.K. Umathe College, Nagpur

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Abstract:

This research paper examines a relative eco-critical study of selected works by Indira Goswami and Mamang Dai, two prominent authors from Northeast India. Both writers have shown the sense of significance of the nature in the human's life and history. North-East India is abundantly bestowed with forest, animals, river, mountain and beautiful nature. This paper explores Indira Goswami's and Mamang Dai's work through eco critical lenses. Indira Goswami's novel The Moth-Eaten Howdah of the Tusker and The Man from Chinnamasta explores the ongoing stress between human prevalence and the ecological world through patriarchal customs and rituals of sacrificing animals. Mamang Dai's The Legends of Pensam and The Black Hill provides an account of rivers, forest, mountains and nature are indivisible parts in everyday life. Moreover, it reflects the predicament and inconsistency of modern society's commitment with environmental concerns. The paper concludes that both authors are concern about 'nature' and 'human life.' Mamang Dai is more connected with the Adi community. She emphasizes the importance of old culture, their own tribal language which becomes endanger in this modern world, their folk, stories, and their existence. On the other side, Indira Goswami's work for the very human rights, liberty, peace, survival, women's identity, society and so on, all embracing both writers literary work reveals human-nature relationship and their deep connection with culture and tradition.

Keywords: Eco-criticism; Northeast India; ethics; Indigenous culture; Human-Nature Relationship, Northeast Indian Literature

Introduction:

Indira Goswami's and Mamang Dai's narratives portray the involvement of nature in the human's life. This picture of nature associated with the nature and emotions of human beings. Both writers have shown their concern with the geographical region which offers different perspective towards nature. The flora and fauna of North-East India, rivers, forests, mountains of Arunachal Pradesh elevate the natural world from only scenery to a vital force within their narrative. It becomes integral part of their characters, development and literatures. The culture of the Seven Sisters is deeply rooted in the heart of nature. For Goswami, Assam comes alive through the strong Brahmaputra River, the green landscape of paddy fields, and the age-old paths of elephants, made struggle between change of age-old traditions and modernization splashes into the natural world, impacting on both people and environment. On the other hand, Dai's concern towards Arunachal Pradesh reflects in her narrative. Through the literature both writers gives equivalent importance to the natural world, presenting it as an active agent in the developing plots. This variation is an evident in their respective action is taken to preserve the natural world and support the environment. Both writers' work not only exhibits a unique ecocritical perspective but also offers ecological consciousness. This research paper aims at inspecting the Mamang Dai's literary works *The Legends of Pensam* and *The Black Hill* through an ecocritical lens, examine the complex relationship between humans and nature in the setting of the Adi community in Arunachal Pradesh. The study offers an impact of modernisation on the human nature relationship. By examining Dai's work through ecocritical lenses, this paper contributes to the expanding nature of ecocritical in Northeast Indian literature also foregrounding the distinctive position of local narratives in universal environmental discussions.

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Address for correspondence:

Sheetal Yogesh Badwaik, College, Nagpur Research Scholar, M.K. Umathe College Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University, Maharashtra

Email: sheetal.badwaik2007@gmail.com

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Eco-criticism:

Eco-criticism is a literary and cultural theory that explores the relationship between literature and the environment; it aims at how text represents the nature in act with human nature. It is a depiction of nature, where nature acts as an active participant in the narrative structure. The geographical presentation of the Seven Sisters finds its roots straight into the lap of nature. It gives different touch of companionship to its literature. The writers from North-East India have sensibility towards environmental issues and they often present their writing in the tone of eco-critical aspect.

Text Analysis:

Indira Goswami's work *The Moth-Eaten Howdah of the Tusker* and *The Man from Chinnamasta* frequently dealt with socio-environmental issues. In this paper, both novels shall be examined through an eco-critical lens. The novel gives an account of the plight of widows in Assamese society and the melting relationship between humans and environment. The title itself reflects the decaying howdah and the aging tusker indicate old age tradition weighting on widow women's life. The elephant is not only animal but a liveliness that mirror the ecological shifts in Assam.

The Brahmaputra River and the surrounding landscape become an active agent in shaping human lives. Goswami put forward idea of how disregard for the ecological world, whether by pushing elephants out of their ancient pathways or overusing the river side land for necessity of human being, it results in disturbance and destruction. The novel has another angle of eco feminism where the strict rules of Hindu tradition compel widow women to live in dominated world. Here Goswami revealed the condition of widows and put her thought forward as like widows are silenced and marginalized, like animals and natural landscapes are shaded, controlled, or disregarded.

Indira Goswami's *The Man from Chinnamasta* is an influential novel that represents the issues religious reform, ecological awareness and gender inequality. This novel set upon the sacred backdrop of the Kamakhya temple in Assam. The narrative questions the age-old practice of animal sacrifice and pointing out the relationship between people and the natural world. This novel highlights the eco critical perspective, how strict and rigid religious traditions always justify brutality against nonhuman life, killing of animals in the name of faith and worship compel us to ask question on humanity.

Mamang Dai's *The Legends of Pensam* is presented through an eco critical lens. It relate with the landscapes and traditions of Arunachal Pradesh,

presented through a series of interconnected stories. This novel throw back light on how human life, spiritual world and nature are the same, closely connected with the everyday existence of the Adi community. This narrative confronts the trend to separate 'nature' from 'culture.' Nature and geographical settings are powerful forces in forming memories and identity. The Siang river, serves as both observer and life source, signifying persistence and change. The novel gives the signs of myths, oral traditions, trees, birds, river – serves as ecological lessons. The narrative reveals the pressure of adapting modernity which disturbs the harmony between people and their environment.

Mamang Dai's *The Black Hill* presents the histories, landscapes, and spiritual worlds of Arunachal Pradesh. This narrative take us back in nineteenth century, showing how imperialism unstable the balance of nature and human. The novel reveals the meeting between Indigenous communities and missionaries, traders, and explorers who appeared with their own agendas of mapping, changing, and control. The narrative highlights the harmony between people and nature. The forests, rivers, and mountains in the novel are living presence. Through an eco-critical lens, people daily practices like farming, hunting, and honoring rivers reflect a moral of balance and respect. But with colonial powers, this harmony begins to disrupt like forests are turned into traced resources, rivers into commercial routes, and sacred landscapes into accessible land.

Conclusion:

This research paper explores the emerging field of eco-criticism in Indian English literature, examining how literary texts address environmental issues within postcolonial and cultural frameworks. Indira Goswami's novels framed through an eco-critical perspective, revealing the inter connections between the human actions and natural world, mainly in North-East India. *The Moth-Eaten Howdah of the Tusker* suggests considering the social reform, it cannot be separated from ecological reform. *The Man from Chinnamasta* proposes a major change in human consciousness. It reflects that true spirituality lies not in cultural or religious violence but in recognizing the togetherness of all forms of life

Mamang Dai's *The Black Hill* is showing both lament and reminder for what was lost and true coexistence lies in favour for land, spirit, and all forms of life. Connecting with the tradition and culture gives you immense pleasure to live life long. The narrative of *The Legends of Pensam* visualise an ecological belief based on humility, coexistence, and respect offering a gentle critique of rampant urbanisation. This novel offers deep contribution to

ecocritical literature. Through both novels, Dai challenges dominant mirror of human nature, relationships and presents a frame of mind that is both locally grounded and widely applicable.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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