

# The Reflection of Ecocriticism in the Stories of Gobinda Prasad Sarma: A Critical Analysis

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## Abstract

*At present ecocriticism has become an important branch of study as the people have been destroying the nature for their own needs. As a result, the pollution of our environment has been increasing day by day and it has become very much necessary to take right step to save nature. Global warming, climate changing are some of the results of our deeds. In this situation the role of ecocriticism is very much important. The literary criticism has the potential to save the nature. In this regard, the writers can play a vital role. Gobinda Prasad Sarma, a renowned Assamese author, has been highly influenced by this theory. His short stories carry the glimpse of this. In this proposed paper, we are going to discuss the meaning and importance of ecocriticism and its reflection in the stories of Gobinda Prasad Sarma.*

**Key words:** - Ecocriticism, nature, stories, preservation of nature

## I. Introduction

Eco-criticism is one of the recent trends of literary Criticism. Etymologically, the word 'Ecocriticism' is derived from two words - 'Ecology' and 'Criticism'. In simple words, eco-criticism is the study of the changing relation between man and nature. If we through light on the present scenario of the nature, then it can be easily traced that most of the natural elements are polluted due to the deeds of the human beings. It is obvious that the growing deterioration of the nature will surely become a threat to human lives. Many people, who have taken this seriously, have started to raise their voice against this growing matter. It has also affected the trend of the literature. Many renowned writers have begun to display this ecological problem through their writings. As a result, environmental studies have become an important aspect of literature.

In England and America, in the middle of the nineteenth century, Thoreau and several other writers composed some serious articles on the growing urbanization and industrialization and its negative impacts on the environment. In his book, 'A Sand Country Almanac' (1949), Aldo Leopold drew a similar kind of picture. Similarly, in the book 'Silent Spring' (1962), Rachel Carson threw light on the various environmental anecdotes and tried to make

the readers aware of them. Another well-known critic, Joseph Meeras, stated in his essay 'The Comedy of Survival' (1970) that the main reason behind the growing environmental calamity was the recently developed human culture which demanded the discontinuation of the relation between human and the nature. In the year 1978, William Ruiskart used the term 'ecocriticism' for the first time in his essay 'Literature and Ecology :An Experiment in Ecocriticism'. Although several articles and essays were published between 1960 and 1970, focusing on the downfall of the condition of the environment, but the writers failed to unite and turned this public opinion into a movement. Hence, it can be said that the actual literary trend of ecocriticism was started from the last decade of the twentieth century. Publication of the mouth-piece named 'Interdisciplinary studies in Literature and Environment' (ISLE) by the 'Association for the Study of Literature and Environment' (ASLE) actually set the trend of the study of ecology and its criticism.

Here, it should be mentioned that, literature has an ancient tradition of portraying the nature and its elements. However, as a result of the immense population growth, destruction of greenery, urbanization, industrialization, ecological criticism has turned out to be a separate and important branch of the literature. Hence, ecocriticism is totally different from the nature writing. Unlike the nature writing, the eco criticism has a certain aims and objectives. Ecocriticism urges the writers to display their obligation towards maintaining the balance ecology through literature. The book 'The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology', edited by Cheryl Goltfelty And Lawrence Buell, has played a vital role in establishing the branch of ecocriticism as an independent trend of study. In this regard, the contribution of 'The Environmental Imagination' and 'The Future of Environmental Criticism' by Lawrence Buell, should not be underestimated.

## II. Objectives of the Study

- To discuss the importance of ecocriticism.
- To establish Gobinda Prasad Sarma as an environment conscious person through his short stories.
- To portray the deteriorating condition of the nature and its impact on the human lives.

### III. Methodology

This study is an attempt to show the importance of ecocriticism through the short stories of Gobinda Prasad Sarma. The sources of the data will be both primary and secondary. The primary data will be collected from the short stories of Gobinda Prasad Sarma. On the contrary, the secondary source of data will be acquired from various articles and essays published in several journals and newspapers.

### IV. Research Problem

The growing destruction of the nature is one of the severe problems of the present world. However, unlike human being, nature cannot protest against it. Hence, it is very difficult to express the nature by personifying it. It is the writer, who can thoroughly examine the situation and display the hidden truth. He is the only one who can feel the pain and temperament of the both (i.e. the human being and the nature). That is why their writings can easily catch the readers' attraction.

### V. Discussion

Like other countries, in India also, the readers have witnessed a developing trend of ecocriticism. The Assamese storytellers and narrators have also been influenced by this newly emerged trend. Gobinda Prasad Sarma, a renowned critic and a creative writer of Assam, has been a flag bearer in this regard. He has enriched the Assamese literature by composing novels, short stories and travelogues. His book 'Kachar Dore Heerar Dore', published in 1968, is the first trilogy of Assamese literature. The book contains nine short stories. Notably, the nine stories can be segmented into three parts, containing three short stories each and interestingly each segment can be read as a single novelette. It means, the book provides the taste of novel and short stories at the same time. While composing short stories, he has been influenced by Sigmund Freud, feminism, ecocriticism, stream of consciousness and socio-realism theory. The prime objective of this paper is to discuss the reflection of ecocriticism in his short stories.

The importance of ecocriticism is growing day by day as the people have refused to stop their act of destroying the nature. Gobinda Prasad Sarma's short story book 'He Aranya, He Mahanagar' is based on ecocriticism theory. The never-ending conflict between man and nature is the central theme of this storybook. In this book, the author has condemned our act of destroying the nature to fulfill our own needs. In fact, in his opinion, it is one of the poorest outcomes of globalization.

We have been unnecessarily knocking the nature and its elements down for our own purposes. Even sometimes, we do not hesitate to demolish the nature to gain cheap satisfaction. But, we, the so-called best, have reached this point of success

because of the contribution of the nature. Without nature, the human civilization would have been stagnant. Sarma describes such a serious situation in his short story 'He Aranya, He Mahanagar'. Two elephants namely 'Jaymala' and 'Jaymalya' are the central characters of this short story. They have been caught by the humans and hence they have failed to live a normal life amidst the

nature like the other animals. The concrete world creates many difficulties in front of them. At last they have died in a road mishap. The story is a reflection of how the natural elements get disturbed due to the massive advancement of the science and technology. Gobinda Prasad Sarma has deeply observed all the ecological problems created by men and has expressed his observations through his writings. Due to our cruelty, we have lost a major portion of our vegetations. Sarma has drawn this sensitive picture in various short stories like 'He Aranya, He Mahanagar', 'Ei Bandorbor' and 'Parbatara Patmadoi'. The writer clearly describes the serious situation.

Besides many people have a tendency of keeping birds or other animals for pleasure by ignoring their basic needs. Gobinda Prasad Sarma has portrayed this sensitive issue in his short stories 'Laikaloi Monot Pore' and 'Moromor Bokocha Bobo Moi Nowaro'. In the story, 'Laikaloi Monot Pore', the author depicts a picture of a dog 'Laika', which is kept forcefully in a house. The dog has been compelled to live in an artificial environment by its owner. The dog has no other option than controlling its physical needs and at the end of the story, Laika has died pathetically inside the house. Similar pictures can be found in 'Moromor Bokocha Bobo Moi Nowaro' and 'Baat Buli Buli Bhagari Porile'.

Besides this, people also sacrifice animals in the name of religion. The writer has seriously dug into this matter and has skillfully portrayed how all the religions make animal sacrifice for the fulfillment of the human desire. He has condemned this kind of brutality in his short stories. He has opined that this kind of cruelty towards animals is a scar on human civilization. The writer has also described the relation between people and nature. In his short stories 'Gos Aru Manuh' and 'Herowa Swarga', he has expressed his deep concern over the slumping relation between human and nature.

In another story, 'Ushar', storyteller Sarma has taken a dig at the heedless and careless works of humans that have caused a huge loss to our environment. Because of these incautious activities, at present we have arrived in such a situation where we have nothing to do but face the karma of our own deeds. In this story, the narrator has narrated a burning issue which is being faced by almost all the inhabitants of the urban areas; i.e. the scarcity of the

drinking water. The author selected the city of Guwahati as the plot of his story. He has described how the people of Guwahati greedily acquiring the ground water. Hence, the ground water level is going down day by day and as a result, lots people are facing drinking water problem. According to a survey, in India, since 1951, the ground water level has been constantly decreasing, especially in the urban areas and if this continues in the near future also, The author has explained this difficult situation in his story. With the help of his story, he has tried to make all the readers aware of this burning problem. Otherwise, in future, we will not have any other option than to vacate our own inhabitations.

It is a well known fact that the nature can't protest directly against any deeds. But it should be noted that the nature is a silent protestor. Massive increase of global warming, declination of ground water level, reduction of the fertility of the soil are some of the outcomes of our deeds, which can also be accepted as the indirect protest of the nature. Though in maximum stories, the writer has expressed deep concern over our future, but he is optimistic too. According to him, if we become conscious and work together for the betterment of the environment, than one day we will be able to live in a world free of natural calamity.

'Powar Malaya' is his another short story where the author has depicted the negative impact of the polluted environment on a new born baby. The writer has also described the mentality of some irresponsible citizens. He has drawn a familiar picture of the urban areas – roads full of garbage and waste materials, drains blocked by the plastic bags and bottles, places full of household debris. This are the results of the deeds of some irresponsible persons and because of them, we are losing our environment day by day.

Protection of nature is the main theme of his book 'He Aranya, He Mahanagaar'. In this book, he has tried to express how the environment has been badly affected by our dominating mentality. He feels that every people should take the matters related to the environment seriously. Moreover, they should take necessary measures for the protection of the nature and the animals. Otherwise one there will be nothing to signify as nature and that day will be the end day for all the human beings. Gobinda Prasad Sarma is pretty serious about the worsening relation between human and nature and hence he has tried his best to make the people aware by depicting the present scenario in his stories.

## VI. Conclusion

In order to save the nature and make the people aware of its importance, the study of ecocriticism is very important. The findings of this study are as follows :

- The importance of Ecocriticism is increasing day by day in the field of literary criticism.
- Due to the irresponsible behavior of the people, the condition of the nature is declining is day by day and the massive study of ecocriticism can play a vital role in making the people aware of the need of the nature.
- Storyteller Gobindo Prasad Sarma's love for the nature is reflected through his stories.
- The writer has wanted that every person to become conscious about the health of our nature and to try their best to save its quality.
- The dominating mentality of human is very dangerous for the nature. The writer has strongly condemned this kind of mentality and wished for a better world.

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