

Ritualistic Nature and Environmental Attitude of Indian Life

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Abstract. A culture has its own recognition and concerns about life style and traditions; India is different in this way to centralize not only on anthropocentric behavior of human life. Indians has developed a deep relation with living and non living organs what are part of sphere. The Vedic texts have many times recite the values of tree and ecological system, still Hindu life style practices worship of rivers, trees, mountains, seas and that practices and tradition makes them different in concerns about environmental and eco system. However modern consumerist culture has destroyed its primary aesthetics and behavior but in villages the tradition of worshipping nature is in practice that shows their connection with nature and its relation of human life and future. Many tribes in India are still serving the natural organs as god's symbol and they are protecting trees, rivers, mountains as their ancestral part and hereditary things but in order of development and industrialization they are cursed to migrate and ecosystem is being destroyed to ashes and uprooted to set mines. This paper evaluates the ritualistic behavior of indian life against ecosystem of saving environment and current issues of global warming problems what should be prevented from meetings and organizations or setting a proper practices of serving and nurturing the nature as worshipping it in the way of ancient Indians and applying ritualistic traditions and customs on such applications

Keywords : Women; Nature; literature; environmental concerns.

Literature has seen hundreds of social issues and has developed many discourses and theories in literary criticism and academics and every time it updates with new discourses. In early 21st century we have started to suffer with a new catastrophic problem that is created by human self which is called global warming and environmental issues. It is caused by industrial revolutions in European countries and later American and Asian countries too. They have called developed countries in this sense to occupy the market and leveled the others as market to consume their products. This competition of global market and production rivalry has created unstoppable situation to destroy the layers of natural boundaries of

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protecting the ultra rays of sun. Thus we have to face new environmental issues and these issues have not only the part of study in labs, scientific bodies but the writers too started to raise their voices in their works. Like Kingsolver Barbara fiction *The Flight Behavior*, Anita Desai's *The Fire on the Mountain*, Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and many others speak about the change of weather, the mountain sliding, sea typhoon is problem, deforestation of natural catastrophes from which we are suffering. These industrial attitude has changed social mentality to use the natural organs as resources and has created the materialistic approach in them that is not only dangerous for coming days but it would be main reason to destroy the whole geographic scenario in future. For looking these issues in literature, few critics and writers have found the roots of salvation of these issues to look back in our traditional way to living and practicing of the natural relation with their practicing the religious rituals. These rituals have power to gain again the natural environment in its pre shape. It is said that literature and environment is new literary field of study but as traditional followers the writers are still busy in writing fiction of love, relationship. Old world wilderness and Indian attitude to nature is different. Indian behaviour towards nature is like mother and son, serving olds in Indian culture which means it's not a responsibility, it's more than that. It means for them to earn the pious blessings for the next birth. The present always left a legacy to its coming generation of a beautiful environment, culture, tradition and nature so that their children enjoy their life happily, this is called a civilized culture. The concept of rebirth has roots so he is responsible for a good or worst nature for his next birth. The environment is changing very drastically and its effects are causing many skin and other disease not only to human but to all kinds of species. The global warming is not only a research thing in scientific labs or in bio environmental studies but in literature too that has started writing in this field. However the term eco is new in this form of literary criticism but it can not be said that before it literature was unaware of it. Poets and writers had used nature in their works. Nature has been presented and represented in literature in many ways of poetic imageries in the poems of Wordsworth, Keats, and other romantic poets.

Critics like Westling criticize the old and new world wilderness and in the early period of human civilization the nature was worshiped as 'magna mater' or 'the great mother'. The worship of nature is still exists in Indian culture. However, western critics and socialists says that Indian

society fundamentally practices the patriarchal mindset. Both connotations are contrastive in the sense of nature worshipping as mother; not only women but men also worship the rivers, tulsi, the trees, mountains, ponds, other natural organs as their local deity.

Romanticism and nature as romanticism cries to return to nature but in Indian context Indian context means Sanatan way of life, however many other religious believers follow it healthily and try to be part of its beautiful path, they never go away from nature, if nature is meant not only a wild place in as associated in old world wilderness and new world wilderness. Indians were never away from nature because if they go away it means they are going away from their worshipping activities. If modern industrial attitude is left for a minute behind and it assumes that there is not a single unit of industrial place in India we can see the life of Indians as worshipping all kinds of natural organs. *The Upanishad* says violence is an unhuman behaviour and has affected budha and jains too. Jain saints have a small piece of fan with them made of peacock feather to swipe away the insects and small souls so that they may inhale in them. They say non-violence is the great religion. The tree of peepal is a symbol of abode to lord Vishnu and it provides oxygen twenty four hour which means Lord Vishnu is god of life and the saviour of humanity.

Indian religion and nature scientifically proved that the five elements amalgamation of nature burnt in fire is very helpful to purify the poisonous air or polluted air. It can be asked that those time when these things were in practice, the environment was polluted. No, it's not polluted but they create an environment of peace and more odorous so that they can meditate and can search new things valuable. The nature of The Hindus was always of receiving and return policy not only consuming the things to make an unbalanced situation. They were true nature lover and preserver in this sense as having understood of it is not a matter of sources but a place where they can gain energy.

From the Vedas and the Upanishads, Indian sacred texts and poets have presented the nature as realistic organ, not an imagined one. Kalidasa has written *Meghadoot* and *Shakuntala*, both works are highly description of natural elements. In *Meghadoot*, Kalidasa has used the clouds as the messenger of an yaksha to his beloved, and beautifully made the nature as ecological connection with human. Nature as the feminine principle Women in India are an intimate part of nature, both in

imagination and in practice. At one level nature is symbolized as the embodiment of the feminine principle, and at another, she is nurtured by the feminine to produce life and provide sustenance. From the point of view of Indian cosmology, in both the exoteric and esoteric traditions, the world is produced and renewed by the dialectical play of creation and destruction, cohesion and disintegration. The tension between the opposites from which motion and movement arises is depicted as the first appearance of dynamic energy (Shakti). All existence arises from this primordial energy which is the substance of everything, pervading everything. The manifestation of this power, this energy, is called nature (Prakriti). Nature, both animate and inanimate, is thus an expression of Shakti, the feminine and creative principle of the cosmos; in conjunction with the masculine principle (Purusha), Prakriti creates the world. Nature as Prakriti is inherently active, a powerful, productive force in the dialectic of the creation, renewal and sustenance of all life. In *Kulacudamim Nigama*, Prakriti says, ‘There is none but Myself who is the Mother to create. Without Shakti, Shiva, the symbol for the force of creation and destruction, is as powerless as a corpse. ‘The quiescent aspect of Shiva is, by definition, inert . . . Activity is the nature of Nature. (*Prakriti*, 3. 38) Prakriti is worshipped as Aditi, the primordial vastness, the inexhaustible, the source of abundance. She is worshipped as Adi Shakti, the primordial power. All the forms of nature and life in nature are the forms, the children, of the Mother of Nature who is nature itself born of the creative play of her thought. Hence Prakriti is also called Lalitha, the Player because Lila or play, as free spontaneous activity, is her nature. The will-to-become many (Bahu – Syam-Prajayera) is her creative impulse and through this impulse, she creates the diversity of living forms in nature. The common yet multiple life of mountains, trees, rivers, animals is an expression of the diversity that Prakriti gives rise to.

The creative force and the created world are not separate and distinct, nor is the created world uniform, static and fragmented. It is diverse, dynamic and inter-related. The nature of Nature as *Prakriti* is activity and diversity. Nature symbols from every realm of nature are in a sense signed with the image of Nature. *Prakriti* lives in stone or tree, pool, fruit or animal, and is identified with them. According to *the Kalika Purana* : rivers and mountains have a dual nature. A river is but a form of water, yet it has a distinct body. Mountains appear a motionless mass, yet their true form is not such. We cannot know, when looking at a lifeless

shell, that it contains a living being. Similarly, within the apparently inanimate rivers and mountains there dwells a hidden consciousness. Rivers and mountains take the forms they wish. After becoming market hub on global panorama, Indians become more objective in sense of consuming the natural organs.

Epilogue to Introduction

Indian life is still beloved in nature; they want to live closely in its lap. But only in countries the city's life totally depends on plastic and industrial products. Today we are suffering from a lot of natural catastrophic situations like, typhoons, global warming, heat, land sliding in mountains because of encroaching there with building up of skyscraper, industrial bodies, hotels and highways that causes river routes change and mountain sliding. untimely raining, winter fall and there is no sign of spring and autumn, the trees have no fruit at time, rivers are withering, fertile land is turned to barren land with use of pesticides and creating disbalance with nature. Wild animals are taking shelter in cities and are being killed because of deforestation and industrialization, use of air condition, in house and material production house produce very dangerous gas called CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons). It destroys the Oz layer that protects the earth with the of ultraviolet rays, ...the machines that change the natural condition according to human pleasure through machine is not fair, these things are cause to bring the situation to think about ...human encroachment in wilderness for their enjoyment and pleasure is disturbing to nature. What is the need of thinking about preservation of nature and concerns about environment, so that we and coming generation have good life ? Looking at nature as amalgamation of resources we must be a consumer of deep level, but if we nominalize natural organs as gods we started worship them, honour them and stop to see through the lens of object.

In capitalist and industrial attitude nature is only a grand source of resources to utilize it that leads environmental issues but when we have an attitude towards nature as gods, semi gods or other metaphysical form we started to see it another eyes. *In the Rigved* nature is like different gods who have their own part to do for the sake of not only human but other all living non living organs so the eco balance should be maintained. Thus, at present time what we human are suffering with environmental issues of global warming, typhoon, tides, earthquake, land sliding, sea

tides, we have to look back in our past rituals what we have forgotten, to worship the rivers so that we keep them clean and pure for water resources not only for human but animal and rivers too. We stop deforestation as we started worshipping the trees. Through this project I will bring some ritualistic approach of Indians to serve the nature and their concerns about environment. We have to look back for better global ideology about nature and environment. In this project I will discuss Professor Bandna Shiva and her book in which she talks about rituals and relation to environment directly. If we have to fund the nature and environment green and suitable for not only human but for all kind of flora, fauna and animals. The early lives on earth was eco friendly as the critics have applied the term for new literature and discourses in academics and concerns. It's reaching to use wild human has grown up and has developed to give term in filled of studying environment and ecology in science and now in literature to. the science studies how to preserve it and literature studies its concerns in human relations. Science can restore the environmental issues as global warming, but industrialization has destroyed that all ethnic lives have connection with nature and environment as they have its knowledge or they have a sense of its sources of life as herb, shade, grains, air, woods for fire, and other daily uses materials but they had used it in its limitations. I suspect the word wild, it has human centric approach as everything belongs to human and remains worthless or desert. What is not used for human is worthless so wild is a place that is either a useless place or it should be changed for human concerns and use. From Indus civilization the worship of Pashupatinath and contemporary rituals of worshipping the trees are proof how Indian are eco friendly to nature and its elements as they are symbolized as gods, goddess and demi gods. Environment and rituals of worship as natural elements show the relationship of human and nature here. In Indian culture there are various traditions of worshipping the plants like peepal, tulsi, neem, banana tree. Banyan, and rivers are not only the source of water for life but they are symbol of life, still thousand of villages are on the bank of rivers surviving and thousands of people are living on rivers base. They generated life and culture "not only in designing demographic geological map of a land but nourish the lingua ethnicity and we recognize the natives with their rivers demography not land, The Ganges, Yamuna, Narmada, all rivers of India are pious and have power to make pure the sins done by humans". (Lal, 63) It's a not a matter of only sin and baptism but it's a matter of environment and ecology. Life depends on nature and it's the trees and plants like tulsi,

peepal which are not only the fruit producers but their significance in Indian life is more than that its primary usage. The people of this land are totally influenced by Indian cultural religious tradition.

The Ramayan and *The Mahabharat* are still practicing the norms and rituals. From the ancient times our saints, sharmans and sadhus are meditating under trees, banks of rivers, on mountains and received knowledge of salvation, and become ascetic's life in shadows of nature. There may be some modern rational and objectives and materialise theories and their admirers criticise these rituals as a hypocrite mannerisms but this kind of action have environmental approach that don't want to harm the ecology and their surrounding. They find the plans as their son, as father, as family members. their presence in jungle or van was not encroachment. However, it is considered in West to destroy the wild life for human beings, the saints live in wild life, never killed for their food, they use tree plants leaves, roots, and rivers or stream water for their surviving. It was not an encroachment by saints, sadhus or shramans, even they create an eco friendly (I suspect this word too because it smells human centric and biased not good enough well for wild) the tree of *peepal* is believed as an abode of Lord Vishnu and her his supremacy all gods live in that tree. the last cremation of dead persons there is ritual of heaven river *vaitarani* and the soul have to pass but under the shadow of peepal tree it is believed that there is a symbolic river and soul passes there with offering the sacred animal cow to a brahmin. It's not only a matter of soul and salvation but the importance of trees and animals are very important in next life too. Use of mango tree leaves for ominous symbol and decoration of doors at the time of light festival with other rituals at birth, marriage and cremation are totally natural concerning the nature and environmental perspective. The festivals like welcoming the season of rain as *Ganga Dashahara*, the festival of basant season, *madhu parv*, the six seasons are described in Indian literature as *vasant*, *grishm*, *versha*, *sharad*, *shishir*, *hemant*, all have festive moments and have reproductive qualities in nature, not a single season has destructive nature or painful way to living beings but all have joy and fest but these days because of industrial effect that causes global warming reduced the warm qualities of these seasons and they are disturbed, nature praise in sanskrit literature as Kalidasa has used the natural environment as beauty of nature created by god. He symbolizes always as they are very much like humans, a heroine of his poem tender and beautiful. He writes in

Meghadoot the natural element as a messenger to love and be loved. Hindi poets as Sumitranandan Pant has written lots of poems in praise of flowers, plants and Indian nature as *basant*, *varsha*, *magh*, *sharad* rituyon or autumn seasons.

Ecology, Literature and Indian Approach and Perspective

As Kalidas has written *Ritusamhara*, the beauty of nature lies in the field that is barren or fertile, the rivers small or big, mountains high or low, various trees, birds, butterflies, insects, animals, flowers, plants, the changing seasons and chattering of birds that give a powerful tolerant surrounding to the tree of peepal is believed to be not only the worshipers but also modern scientific researches that it is a great source of oxygen; it never produce carbon dioxide. The romantic poets in West like Wordsworth, Keats, were too romantic with nature too but there, the revolution of industry and industrialization has destroyed not only the theories of writing style but also environment and ecology. All kinds of plants and trees have healing power of ailments and humans can use them as the gifts of God. Before the plucking of the leaves, its roots or dry twigs, the herbs and its use to the patients or vaidyas always pray of nature to give such kind of boons upon human beings. Now when humans have received many calamities of nature and environmental issues upon, they started to find out the problem and they are trying to restore the environmental loss.

In modern days there are many ways to make humans aware of their environment and ecology through cinema, painting, theatre and contemporary devices so that we can have a fresh air sources and ecological profit for personal sake. A new trend in literature we can see here, a new writing style is developed as environment and literature where we see the concerns of writer about ecology and in India the environment is destroyed by population or industrialization and deforestation for growth of fields and setting up new buildings to settle in. In western countries it was destroyed by full harvesting and exploitation of natural sources for profit. Shiva Bandana has observed, "The artificial natural healing by Chinese scientific innovation, is this the final solution of being actual picture of nature and has destroyed environment what we had two hundred years before". (41) Does any scientific and technological invention complete the space of destruction of humiliation of nature? Does artificial plantation and artificial environmental surrounding can help and full the

space of cutting the trees and destroy the earth as mines, the mountains can fill the space of destruction ? How an artificial sun would be efficient alternative to natural crisis and disaster. The eco concept of Indians as worshipping all ghataks of environment, as animals, cows, dogs, birds as they are used in mythology, gods' abodes too. Do these beliefs give us the perspective of natural concerns about Indians. Goddess Sarasvati as known as goddess of knowledge and learning is abode on the fine and beautiful bird 'hans'. The Ganges abodes on crocodile, Laxmi abode on the finest flower, the lotus, she never harms them. Lord Shiva is the first and last symbol of asceticism, abode on ox called Nandi, Lord Vishnu abodes on eagle, the finest flying bird. the mystic qualities of Lord Shiva who have the aura of sky, Ganges his hair, the moon decorats his head, the neck and arms are decorted with king Kobra, he likes the *belpatra*, the sacred three in hinduism. he likes milk and Ganges water means a lord symbol of eco friend of nature. Indian civilization, on the other hand, has been known as an 'eco-friendly' civilization. At least in the past it did express a profound awareness of the need to evolve a balanced pattern in the man-environment interaction and certainly not work towards 'denaturing humanity.' In order to celebrate this man-environment interaction, ancient Indians divinized nature and layed down well formulated guidelines to define and nurture this relationship free of exploitative propensities. Examples abound since its early history; it would be relevant to take a look at some of them.

The *Rigveda* establishes the symbolism of this close kinship when it says, 'Heaven is my father; my mother is this vast earth, my close kin.' Taking forward this environmental tradition *the Atharvaveda* contains the hymn - Bhumi Sukta – in praise of the earth and invokes a balance upon the immutable, vast earth supported by the law, the universal mother of the plants, peaceful and kind, may we ever walk forever. The elaborate Vedic ritual of 'Athiratram' had, as its precise objective the generation of a positive impact on man and the environment and continues to be performed to this day with the same fervour and faith. Surapala's *Vrikshāyurveda*, for example, discusses in detail trees, tree planting and various other topics connected with plant-science including the treatment of sick-trees. In one of its profound ecological perceptions *the Mahabharata*, in the *Bhisma Parva*, refers to the earth as an 'ever-yielding cow' provided its resources are developed and managed with balance and control, "if Earth is well looked after, it becomes the father, mother,

children, firmament and heaven, of all creatures". *The Mahabharata* also compares the tree to the universe; it says that he who 'worships the ashvattha [peepal, holy fig tree] worships the universe.' The tree was seen as a symbolic representation of the universe with a single trunk and its multiple branches of manifestation. The Bodhi tree (ashvattha or peepal), under which the Buddha achieved his realisation has always been seen as the symbol of 'the universal consciousness.' The wish-endowing symbol was that of the tree –the *kalpavriksha* or *kalpataru* – the mystical tree that granted every wish just as nature showered its bounty on all. Tree worship, as findings reveal, was in fact known even in the Harappan culture. Trees and plants continue to play an important role in Indian rituals and customs to this day, especially in rural India. This deep ecological consciousness pervaded the entire Indian civilization mindscape and saw expressions from across the land. The legendary philosopher of Tamilakam, Thiruvalluvar, talks of nature as man's fortress. If he destroys her, he remains without protection. Even in the affairs of the state, the administration and the ruler were directed to preserve and promote environmental welfare.

In *the Arthasastra*, Kautilya suggests, "the need to develop abhayāranya or abhayavana, forest and animal sanctuaries, where trees and animals would both dwell free from the fear of slaughter". (Shamasastri, 73) Kautilya also prescribed the post of a forest superintendent and penalties for poaching and causing damage to forests, especially productive ones. The sacred grove tradition was an intrinsic part of the Indian ecological imagination and tradition. There was the kovilkādu in Tamil Nadu, kāvu in Kerala, nandavana or daivavana in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, deorai in Maharashtra. Preserved for centuries in the outer precincts of the village these sacred groves gradually grew into rich ecological repositories and are facing threats of decimation today because of population pressure and neglect. The Indian environmental tradition was conscious of the need to protect nature and to harness it within prescribed limits. Harappan sites at Dholavira, for example, demonstrate the elaborate techniques employed for water harvesting and storing. The initial structure of the Grand Anicut on the river Kaveri, erected by the great Chola King Karikala who ruled around 180 C.E. diverted the Kaveri waters without 'impounding them' and is believed to have irrigated 30,000 hectares during that period. Temple tanks served the dual purposes of 'ritual ablution' as well recharging of the groundwater level. The *Arthasastra's* directives on water indicate that

it was regarded as a 'collective, not a private commodity' and was considered extremely precious. Tanks were built through joint efforts of all stakeholders and the period that saw the construction or renovation of tanks received tax reprieves. Fines were also prescribed for a number of acts that adversely affected water bodies, 'for obstructing or diverting a water course', for 'damaging embankments' etc. The river in Indian civilization was also endowed with divinity and was a cosmos by itself with ecological, social and spiritual dimensions. They were classified according to their sacredness and capacity to spiritually elevate man. The seven sacred rivers of India continue to remain a vibrant symbol signifying Indian civilization continuity as well as unity. Like the sacred forests and groves, rivers too in the Indian context assured the seeker of spiritual height and perfection. The concept of give and receive for survival of life not being a consumer of nature. The attitude of Indian way is different to that of western in this mode; the nature is mother for them, not a box of materials to use it for their pleasure as western attitude to nature they believe. Kalidas wants to send his message to his beloved by the clouds, he was true nature poet as in *Abhigyanashakuntalam* he introduces the girl nourished by birds as she is given the name by them saved by birds as Shakuntala, 'shakun' means birds who brought the girl from jungle to a safe place and guard her. Nature as woman in West as object as they can harvest deeply from soil, river, jungle, forest, mountain and other resources the term here resources.

Conclusion

The world should learn the concept of preserve the nature as worshiping its elements as rituals not only as deity but as the organ of nature to live eco culture ideology. Here having my views on eco-feministic approach of nature and environment and discussed the nature and Indian attitude having an approach of their connection with nature and their concerns of environmental issues in modern times in perspective of Vedic culture to worship nature. In their nature connection, the project would discuss their life which depends in nature and how they maintain their own ecological approach through their religious practices. What is the way seeing the nature, the natural organs, how and in what role they play in their life. I will discuss the problem of modern Indian attitude to environment and global issues. And here is their ancestor's legacy of preserving surroundings in form of deity and the natural concept of receive and return. Indians have concerns with environment and ecosystem so that they

believe in eco existence and they are aware of changing circles of nature so they are not consumer of natural things, they worship like they offer human for their living and human receive their offering for survival. both are part of nature.

For the Indians, nature is not a source of consuming materials because in Indian way of philosophy they are not materialistic, they believe in nature is a way of redemption from human difficulties in future. In Indus civilization, there was an idol called by historians as Pashupatinath, a god in form of animal means they believe in eco-existence. In Vedas and Upanishad there are several hymns on nature to serve the human and human worship them for their boon on them. The academic discourses, symposia and seminars have capacity to discuss environmental issues and natural problems, Literature can raise the issues like humiliation, feminist discrimination and it would be reached to few readers and academics but what about general people; to make them aware government has to establish such syllabus for institutions and public awareness programs so that they can be able to understand the main problem of global warming, typhoons, untimely raining, changing seasons, and government and other social foundation have to play their role in field of general knowledge of rituals and traditions so that they can reach and start practicing it, The films would play bigger role in this field, filmmakers have to come forward to make such films on environmental issues to aware public. The public awareness is important, to use plastics bags, avoiding chemical preserved goods, highly stored and freeze material to use in their daily lives. It is very harmful to their health but very harmful to environment too. These factories and cold storage have produced CFCs that destroys KE layer. Literature is working in its field at academia but in general level to inform a public one is difficult. Looking back to rituals and practicing not only in traditional way of life we can preserve the nature. Ancient Indian civilization had a deep understanding and reverence for nature. It recognized the importance of maintaining a balance between humans and the environment, and even divinized nature to emphasize this relationship. *The Rigveda* and *The Atharvaveda* contain hymns that praise the earth and invoke a sense of balance in our interactions with it. *The Mahabharata* compares the earth to an ever-yielding cow that must be looked after with care, and the tree to the universe, representing the interconnectedness of all things. The importance of trees and plants in Indian culture continues to this day, particularly in rural areas where they

are still used in rituals and customs. Overall, ancient Indian civilization can be seen as an eco-friendly civilization that recognized the importance of preserving and nurturing the environment for future generations.

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