

**Ecological perspective in *The Hungry Tide***

**Mukta Singh**  
Research Scholar

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For a very long time, the human perspective on nature has been based on the Western approach, which is known as Marxism. Man thinks that they are the master, and nature is their slave. He exploited natural resources for his greed and needs. This overexploitation of natural resources disturbs the natural balance of our biosphere. The adverse result comes in the form of climate change. Climate change is not only an environmental and political crisis but also a cultural crisis. Despite this urgency, this problem is still unattended on the ground level. People have no awareness of their own surroundings. A catastrophe is following the worldwide failure; an anthropocene situation has occurred in the present era. In order to bring awareness, Amitav Ghosh is seriously devoting and dedicating his works to the hazards and the outcomes of climate change. He is working hard to ignite a beam of hope. In his novel *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh raised several issues related to one of the largest mangrove forests found in India, named Sundarbans. These mangrove forests play a vital role in balancing the natural climate conditions. Amitav Ghosh sheds light on the threat and challenges of the poor people living in this region. He also shows the challenges hidden in the policies of the government, which make rules for guarding the mangrove forest and the wildlife. The present paper explores the ecological perspective in *The Hungry Tide*.

**Keywords:** Ecological, Climate Change, Nature, Sundarbans, Wildlife.

**Introduction:**

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* is among the best-known novels related to ecology and the environment. In this novel, we came across anthropology, environmentalism, migration, trip, and ethnography, the foliage and fauna of Sundarban, the relationship between the rich and poor, man and woman, knowledgeable and illiterate, privileged and non-privileged. *The Hungry Tide* uncovers several issues related to life and actuality in the Sundarban delta with its different ecosystems. In this ecosystem, both man, beast, and other vegetation try to maintain a balance for their survival. In *Hungry Tide*, we find the everyday problems of living from a human point of view, and another hand, we see the powerful species tiger has a conflict with man. In this novel, several environmental issues have been covered.

The term “Climate Change” describes a long-term change in temperature and rainfall. These shifts may be natural, but in the moment, script mortal activities have been the main reason for climate change, primarily due to the combustion of fossil energies such as coal and oil paintings and feasts, which produce flame through feasts. We are witnessing for exploitation of timber and coffers in the name of development, the result of this deforestation and the emission of CO<sub>2</sub> is veritably dangerous to the natural world. Climate change disintegrated public husbandry and affected the lives of people, creatures, and vegetation.

Millions of people worldwide are impacted by the extreme and dangerous disruption of nature brought about by human-induced climate change, according to the International Panel (IPCC) report on Climate Change. We are passing the significance of climate change, which includes storms, floods, cyclones, typhoons, landslides, ocean level rises, heatwaves, etc.

Modern artists and writers often ignore the environmental extremes in their works. Only a small, noble collection of writers, including J.G. Ballard, Margaret Atwood, Kurt Vonnegut, Barbara Kingsolver, Doris Lessing, Ian McEwan, and T. Coraghese Boyle, have tackled or at least drawn commodity of the changing world, according to Elizabeth Abbott (Abbott 370). This group is inadequate to make a change. Indian novelist and essayist Amitav Ghosh excels at bringing imaginative substance to climate change in his writing. In his non-fiction book *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and The Unthinkable*, published in 2016, Ghosh argues that ultramodern pens are responsible for ignoring the problem when it needs to be discussed.

Ghosh’s novels and non-fiction works examine the problem of decaying biodiversity materialistic perspective that exploits our natural resources for our materialistic fulfillment. It is not difficult to demonstrate that, in literary fiction’s geography, erudite, climate change is far less prominent than it is in reality in the public sphere.

#### **Ecological elements in *The Hungry Tide*:**

Amitav Ghosh is one of the first Indian authors to address environmental concerns in his fiction and non-fiction. Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* examines the world's largest mangrove forest in the world, the Sundarbans, which is known for its rich biodiversity. The wrath of nature is depicted in this novel. Amitav Ghosh tries to depict how nature will reply when man tries to disturb the harmony of nature. The novel unfolds with two narratives, one from the past and one from the present. The history is evolving through Nirmal’s Journal, chronicling the Marichjhapi prevalence and the alternative through Piya’s trip, which reveals the contemporary situation of the man, the foliage, and the fauna of Sundarbans. He claims that the environmental extremity is the result of particular social relations of the mortal and inhuman and natural coffers.

The story revolves around an American cetologist, Piyali Roy, who comes to Lusibari for her exploration check on the Irrawaddy Dolphin, and Kanai Dutt, who is a translator who came from Delhi to visit his aunt Nilima in Lusibari. The title of the novel

presents not the fascinating beauty of nature but the destructive side of nature, which appears as hungry for human blood. The tidal region is a place where attacks of tigers, crocodiles, and other raptorial beasts pursue humans all the time. In his novel, *The Hungry Tide*, is successful in creating a perfect picture of the hostile nature of the tidal country through these lines:

“A mangrove forest is a universe unto itself, utterly unlike other woodlands or jungles. There are no towering, vine-looped trees, no ferns, no wildflowers, no chattering monkeys or cockatoos. Mangrove leaves are tough and leathery, the branches gnarled and the foliage often impassably dense. Visibility is short and the air still and fetid. At no moment can human beings have any doubt of the terrain’s hostility to their presence, of its cunning and resourcefulness, of its determination to destroy or expel them. Every year, dozens of people perish in the embrace of that dense foliage, killed by tigers, Snakes, and crocodiles. There is no prettiness here to invite the strangers in: yet, to the world at large, this archipelago is known as “the Sundarban”, which means, “the beautiful forest”. (Ghosh 2004, 7-8).

Sundarban is a place that is known for its unity in diversity. Mother Nature nurtures everything very beautifully. The natural beauty of this region is decorated by nature itself. Climate change is the lens through which the novel *The Hungry Tide* examines its setting. Situated in the delta of the Ganga and Brahmaputra at the mouth of the Bay of Bengal in the region of India and Bangladesh, the Sundarbans are home to the world’s largest mangrove forest and the setting for the story. The world’s largest mangrove forest, a distinctive tidal aqueduct ecosystem, and an island with a diverse range of flora and fauna, including a sizable tiger population, are all part of this archipelago. In their work “Climate Change Impact on Sundarbans: A Case Study,” Mayank Vikas and Kankasha Mahadevia explained climate change-

Sea level rise, island disappearance, and rising soil and water salinity have all put mangrove forest health, soil quality, and crop quality in grave danger. Fishing patterns have also changed and hydrological parameters have been seriously disturbed, which has had disastrous effects on fishermen. Variable monsoon-raising patterns and frequent cyclones are harming both the environment and people. (Mahadevia7)

Climate change is directly responsible for rising ocean levels. This is a significant problem in the Sundarbans. Beyond the lush verdure that supports the man-eating Royal Bengal Tiger, the forest must be protected primarily for its ability to protect against extreme weather events. Following its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997, the Sundarbans were designated as a 'Wetland of International Importance' under the Ramsar Convention on January 30, 2020. As refocused in the composition of *The Hindu*, protecting the Sundarbans Wetlands. The primary reason for guarding the area is that it acts as a shock absorber for natural disasters such as cyclones and tidal waves, but it is also an important biodiversity hotspot.

Piya observes the rich biodiversity of the Sundarbans, noting that it has more fish species than all of mainland Europe combined. The ecological significance of the area is highlighted by its constantly shifting geography, which changes daily with the tides; the currents are so powerful to reshape the islands almost every day (Ghosh, 7). Ghosh depicts the Sundarbans as a unique, peculiar, and ever-evolving ecosystem renowned for its diverse wildlife. It is evident that human structures struggle to withstand the environment, and life for humans is often harsh; in Lusibari, hunger and catastrophe are a way of life (Ghosh 2004, 79). Hunger is a recurring theme in the novel, as indicated by its title, "*The Hungry Tide*." The rising waters of the Mohona threaten to engulf both the jungle and the rivers (Ghosh, 2004, 36). Additionally, it is hunger that compels settlers to fish, often with tragic outcomes, as many drown or fall victim to other dangers. It is also hunger that drove the settlers to stalking fish, and the results were frequently disastrous. 'Many died of drowning, and many more were picked off by crocodiles and estuarine sharks' (Ghosh 2004, 79). Hunger is a part of life in the Sundarbans, and it affects both humans and non-humans. More than 4.5 million people live in the Sundarbans and face daily challenges. On the fictitious island of Lusibari, life is manageable thanks to 'its bādh, the tall embankment that encircled its perimeter, holding back the twice-daily flood' (Ghosh 2004, 59). The embankment allows humans to dwell on the island while also safeguarding the occupants, who would otherwise be vulnerable to the topography. In this regard, it can be argued that life in the so-called 'tide country'(Ghosh, 8) presents a certain fragility.

Though the forest is susceptible to deforestation and climate change, it can also be unethical and occasionally corrupt. Readers sense the severity of the water scene many times throughout the book. Most examples start when Piya falls from the guard boat into the ocean and finds that, this window is obscured by silt from rivers such as the Brahmaputra and the Ganga in their occluded waters light loses its directionality within a few centimeters of the surface. With no lighted portal to point the way up, and bottom and up and down become very quickly confused (Ghosh 2004, 54). She is a skilled swimmer, but the Sundarbans' murky waters confuse her so much that she would have drowned if Fokir hadn't come to save her. This ecosystem has a unique mode of waterways. "These micro-environments were like balloons suspended in the water, and they had their patterns of flow (Ghosh 2004, 125), describing this ecosystem's distinctive watery way pattern. By investigating the problems of sustainability and globalization, *The Hungry Tide* provides a fascinating narrative of how suburban and urban life can help to find and link the main ideas of the book. Ghosh deconstructs the contradictions in this story by investigating the relationship between international and smart characters, such as Piya and Kanai, and their connection to local figure Fokir. Though they come from different cognitive and social backgrounds, in Sundarbans, where everyone is fighting for their lives, the severe surroundings shatter all divides among them. Because they will be up against tigers, crocodiles, storms, floods, and a host of other hazards behind the protection of mangroves, life in Sundarbans offers the characters a comparable situation. One chapter of the book especially reveals the social gap between the Fokir and Kanai. Kanai and Fokir, at some point, visit Garjontola, one of the numerous islands of the Sundarbans. There, Fokir senses a tiger nearby, and the two of them

fight as Fokir argues that “it is his fear that tells him (Ghosh 2004, 322) that a tiger is nearby. Because he knows that “fear was not an instinct,” as opposed to common belief, Fokir’s assertion is questioned by Kanai, who has a rational, “educated” mind. Something that developed in the mind” (Ghosh 2004, 322) is something learned via expertise, experience, and study.

When the storm is on its way, Piya and Kanai are separated, which provides two different perspectives on the cyclone. On the one hand, there is Piya, who remains outside with Fokir, and on the other hand, Kanai, who returns to safety with Horen and the others who are hiding in the hospital where Nirmal had built a shelter. What happens is that Kanai, Horen, Piya, and Fokir are together on the Bhotbhoti; also, Piya and Fokir decide to go to explore on a lower boat. After a while, they realize that a storm is coming their way. Unfortunately, Horen and Kanai have no choice but to allow Fokir and Piya to go in the mercy of God. Piya also worries about a storm that will indeed come, ‘needed some stretching of the mind to imagine that bad weather could be on its way’ (Ghosh 2004, 344). Piya’s remark stresses the unlikely nature of similar events ever happening. Coupled with the word “to claw,” which evokes images of fierce animals, the wind seems to show its force. The sense of insane inhumane agency becomes stronger as the storm goes on. As the storm goes by, the sense of insensible inhuman agency is farther amplified. Fokir decides to ‘tie them both to the tree trunk’ (Ghosh 2004, 378), a ploy that will allow Piya to survive. As the storm advances, Piya and Fokir lose control of the situation, and the wind begins to resemble a monstrous character: ‘it sounded no longer like the wind but like some other element – the usual blowing, sighing and rustling had turned into a deep, ear-splitting rumble as if the earth itself had begun to move’ (Ghosh 2004, 379). The wind, like the sea is depicted as unnatural. The tidal surge became relentless, ravaging everything else, including the highest trees. Tigers, which are notoriously dangerous, are also struggling to survive, Piya sees ‘a tiger pulling itself out of the water and into a tree on the far side of the island. It seemed to have been following the storm’s eye, like the birds, resting whenever it could’ (Ghosh 2004, 389). On the other hand, the animals must cope with changes in the climate. Thus, each and every individual be it human and non-human are “left dumbfounded and defenseless against the fury of nature. One of the main characters died in this cyclone. One of the main characters of the novel, Fokir, dies while saving Piya’s life. Piyali decides to stay in Lusibari for a few more years to continue her research and also tries to help the poor people of Lusibari in order to improve the quality of their lives. This ending gives the hope to reader that if people like Piya from a privileged world take action to help the inhabitants of Sundarbans, then their life will get improved. Ghosh tries to suggest that if people from the poor and rich come together, there will also be a prosperous future for the poor.

### **Conclusion:**

The Hungry Tide provides multiple aspects of the Sundarbans ecosystem. Amitav Ghosh portrays the climatic goods on its tenant in this novel, nature has an essential role in every individual's life. The struggle of both humans and non-humans is depicted in double opposition. Climate change is not directly addressed in this novel. The contexts of *the Hungry Tide*, in terms of biodiversity, the mangrove forest is truly unique, but it is also

negatively impacted by climate change. In this novel, we came across several weather events similar as cyclones, storms, and tidal swells. The *Hungry Tide* is a reflection of the human and non-human worlds, contrasting global and local culture. Ghosh emphasized that we should be wary about the relationship between humans and the natural world and be attentive about these conditions that have been smashed or exploited by our natural coffers in the processes of industrialization, globalization, and development. The result of this impregnable deforestation is veritably dangerous to its natural world. Climate change is disrupting public husbandary and affecting the lives of people and animals etc. We should also think about the natural terrain, also our place on this earth, because on this earth we are not alone. Our planet earth is in our hands and we ought to talk and realign our relationship with it. As Piya and Kanai in Ghosh's text make deliberate opinions to conserve the peoples and terrain of the Sundarbans with commitment by shifting themselves to the place. *The Hungry Tide* is a source of creating mindfulness ecological knowledge s and sensitizing the readers to the unique mangrove forests of the world. It's high time to think about our natural terrain on ground level. We have to control on our greed and needs so that we can conserve our environment for future generations.

In *The Hungry Tide*, Amitav Ghosh presents ecology not as a backdrop, but as an active, shaping force that influences lives, histories, and identities. By portraying the Sundarbans as both a natural wonder and a perilous frontier, he emphasizes the deep interdependence between human communities and their environment. The novel challenges simplistic binaries — nature versus civilization, conservation versus survival — and instead presents a complex ecological vision where science, local knowledge, and lived experience intersect. Ultimately, Ghosh urges readers to recognize that environmental issues are inseparable from social justice, making *The Hungry Tide* a powerful narrative of ecological awareness and ethical responsibility.

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