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ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION : ECO-ISSUES & OUTCOME



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ABSTRACT:

Something has terribly gone wrong somewhere. Even nature is benevolent to humanity in a number of ways, but still man is cruel to nature. Plato, Aristotle enlightened us with the knowledge of good and evil. It has brought out the solution of sensible problems. In the twenty-first Century, there has been a tremendous growth in the field of Science. The modern technology has truly enabled us to get material prosperity. No writer feels like neglecting the pitiable environmental situation frequently happening all around. That is why; the glimpses of their deep concern about environmental degradation become crystal-clear to the readers. Ruskin Bond proves no exception to this. He has a very deep concern about environmental imbalance and constant degradation at large in India. His anxiety of environmental preservation is portrayed through his writings. In a

number of his short stories and novellas, he points the situation and gives us applicable solution of the problem. Environment is an integral part of Eco-criticism. It is, of course, a literary criticism from the perspective of an environmentalist. In this context, the texts are to be analyzed first and then interpreted thoroughly wherein the causes and effects of environmental imbalance is studied in detail with undertaken remedial measures. This present paper entitled Environmental Degradation : Eco-Issues & Outcome focuses on deep eco-critical concerns portrayed in Ruskin Bond's short stories and novellas.

KEYWORDS:

Environment, negligence, Himalayas, beauty and nature

Research Paper :

Ruskin Bond opines,

The India I Love, does not make the headlines, but I find it wherever I go – in field or forest, town or village, mountain or desert – and in the hearts and minds of people who have given me love and affection for the better part of my lifetime.¹

The issue of environmental degradation is a ubiquitous note in the writings of Bond who came to live in the hills in about 1964. He had been to Delhi and London before. Reading his writings, one can understand that he is very close to nature, which has played a crucial role in his life. He finally came to live up in the mountains and witnessed the degradation of environment. Truly, nature plays a vital role in his stories and all writings. Nature fascinates him a lot. And his genuine love to nature made him a naturalist, experimentalist and environmentalist in a real sense. He is environmentally conscious which is expressed through all his writings. His writings consciously or unconsciously promote environmentalism as he certainly emphasizes the ongoing destruction of forests and destruction of wildlife. He is a lover of nature as his evocative writings reflect a deep kinship with the majestic Himalayas. Nature in the lives of children is reflected in To Live in Magic: A Book of Nature Poems (1985) and Granny's Tree Climbing and Other Poems (2000), collections. Readers naturally contemplate the significance of the humblest aspect of nature in his works.

Bond's belief in mystical unity is embodied in images of a mountain pool, banyan tree, cherry tree, or an island of trees that have become small ecosystems representing the universe in a microcosm.

However, his child protagonists do not just revel in their idyllic surroundings, they also face Nature as an antagonist in their efforts to survive floods, forest fires, earthquakes, or predators.²

Man acts in a specific environment. His actions are controlled by his mind that determines what is right or wrong. Many times his actions become harmful to nature that naturally causes ecological imbalance. Bond talks about human values where causes and effects of human actions lead to the rightness and wrongness of man-made actions and problems. Every action is a reaction in turn that decides the motives of our actions where moral philosophy or principles surmount. Man thinks of his own benefits and neglects the consequences of his actions. He should follow a set of rules of his conduct. This is very crucial to shoulder environmental responsibility, which saves life. All we need is human welfare and good life. Life depends on nature, which is an ultimate source of human survival. Today, the world progresses with its up-to-date technology. Most of the times, we are unable to interpret our own scientific growth and development. People do not have time for other things. They simply do their work and just walk off. They seem to be blind towards Nature and natural surroundings because of their negligence. This finally is resulted in ecological crisis and all this generated man-made dangers prove to be very fatal to life on the planet. Bond makes readers aware about more responsibilities regarding developing ecology and environment. First, the limits and the consequences of human actions damaging the planet's fundamental life support system are to be taken into our serious consideration. We all need is environmental restoration and perpetual preservation. For instance, in *Angry River* (1972).

Bond explores the protagonist's changing relationship with a river, from a deep love and gratitude for its many boons, to an awareness of its destructive force when in flood, to an understanding of its transcendental nature. The ending gently prods the protagonist (and readers) to contemplate the transience of everything that is created—a continuous process of creation, preservation, and reabsorption—and to accept the benign and destructive aspects of nature.³

First, we should take care of nature, and then the nature bestows love upon us. We are dependent on nature, which is truly our teacher. Nature is always complete in herself spreading octopus like tentacles of love and sacrifice. It is holistic that is wholeness and therefore the study of eco-concerns should be given priority in syllabus and life as well. Bond makes us conscious and teaches us the basic notions how we need to be with nature. Her disastrous consequences affect lives on the earth if we break the laws of nature. A work of arts always conceals the concern of the words on the page, which has to be deconstructed first to get the heart of the true meaning. It gives a notion of environment as he stayed at Darjeeling, Dehradun where a dweller naturally communicates with the nature. In addition, Bond is no exception for all this. He pens whatever he observes; perhaps an outsider's perception of Indian reality seems to be questionable to the critics. However, he is an insider to us who peeps into reality that he has observed and experienced during his span of his life. Reality is a relative term; it differs from person to person. Apart from any other critical perspectives of his writings, he truly belongs to India. Environmentalism took shape in the second half of the twentieth century. We should be conscious about how dangerous environmental damage affects our lives. It causes a number of problems to us in the coming future. The basic needs are to be fulfilled as health, food and shelter.

Bond says :

But the trees seemed to know me. They whispered among themselves and beckoned me nearer. And looking around, I noticed the other small trees and wild plants and grasses had sprung up under the protection of the trees we had placed there. The trees had multiplied ! They were moving. In one small corner of the world, Grandfather's dream was coming true and the trees were moving again.⁴

Environmentalism is a critical analysis of industrial modernity. The industrial pollution is a threat to human existence in the present era. According to the 1980's report, climate changes because of increasing levels of carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere. The consequences are flooding, famine, eco-wars over diminishing resources making millions of environmental refugees in the future. Truly, environmentalists are the defenders of nature. They do protect the nature from man-made problems. We should respect natural ecosystems and agree with the notion that our dependence on them is so natural. We must not forget that nature is to be worshipped for human welfare. Man-made things can surpass nature because it is artificial and destructive. Ruskin Bond says : To return to my own trees, I went among them often, acknowledging their presence with a touch of my hand against their trunks.⁵ Eco-critics very often motivate creative writers to think seriously about the environmental issues. Language and literature always teach values of deep ecological implications. It teaches us to love nature preserving beauty of it in the eyes of the beholders. We all need at first to restore the pristine aesthetic beauty of the earth forever. The present ecological threat is to be studied in detail. The study of ecology leads us to the new emergence of the school so-called eco-criticism. It studies the relations between writers, texts and the world that is, ecosphere. It talks of the use of ecology and ecological principles to the study of literature. It also has a theoretical approach to the inter-relational web of natural, cultural and supernatural phenomena. The awareness about environmental degradation helps us take serious actions against cruel men who are always in contrast with the nature. Her restoration is what we all are to share today.

In the meaningful words of David Orr,
"When we heal the earth, we heal ourselves."

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