
**CONSCIOUSNESS TOWARDS FLORA AND FAUNA IN THE
SELECT NOVELS OF O.V. VIJAYAN: ENVIRONMENTAL
PERSPECTIVES**

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Paper Received on 23-08-2024, Accepted on 21-09-2024
Published on 23-09-24; DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2024.9.3.544

Abstract

O. V. Vijayan, a prominent Indian author is widely recognised for his literary works that often tackled social and environmental issues. Through his works, Vijayan highlighted environmental issues and human connections with nature, demonstrating a consciousness towards flora and fauna. The Legends of Khasak is Vijayan's most well-known novel and brilliantly captures his awareness of the surroundings. Set in a town named Khasak, the novel portrays relationship that exists between people and the natural world. Vijayan shows his environmental concerns in The Saga of Dharmapuri. Novel explores the environmental and sociopolitical issues that Dharmapuri's characters deal with. His novels frequently speak to a wider environmental consciousness and advocate for the peaceful cohabitation of people, animals, and plants. The present study focuses on O.V. Vijayan's consciousness towards flora and fauna in his select novels.

Keywords: Environment, Consciousness, Society, Conservation and Characters.

Introduction:

O.V. Vijayan is renowned for his literary achievements and has a prominent place in modern Indian literature, particularly in Malayalam literature. Numerous distinguished honours and distinctions, including *Akademi Award (1990)*, *Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award (1990)*, *Muttathu Varkey Award (1992)*, and *Mathrubhoomi Literary Award (2004)* were bestowed upon him. He observes internal struggle,

Research Journal Of English (RJOE)

An International Peer-Reviewed English Journal Impact Factor: 8.16(SJIF)Vol-9, Issue-3,2024
Indexed in: International Citation Indexing (ICI), Cite factor, International Scientific Indexing (ISI),
Directory of Research Journal Indexing (DRJI) Google Scholar, Cosmos and Internet Archives.

loneliness, agony, and suffocation in human mind. He uses the idea of Grotesque Realism in his novels to describe social, political, and economic conditions in India. "O.V. Vijayan reigned supreme in the world of Malayalam letters while he was alive, and continues to be the guiding force of Malayalam fiction even after his death."¹(PP, 7).

Vijayan has made a magical world, as a "trans creator" of his creations. He searches for the everlasting truth buried inside words by delving into their essence. His characters are presented in a way that seems they are rebelling against society. He has translated majority of his works from Malayalam to English and has written numerous volumes of short stories ranging from comical to contemplative. *The Legends of Khasak* is Vijayan's debut novel, and his other famous novels are *The Saga of Dharmapuri*, *Madhuram Gayathi*, *The Path of the Prophet*, *The Infinity of Grace*, and *Generations*.

Environment in Vijayan works has a deep impact on people's lives and societal institutions. His constant attention to the fragile balance that exists between human activity and the natural world sheds light on how human activity affects the ecosystem. Vijayan has a great concern for environmental conservation and sustainable living practices. He urges us to re-evaluate our interactions with the natural world, place more importance on peace, and to give environmental management more careful thought. Vijayan's *The Legends of Khasak* explores existential and spiritual concerns of Khasak. In the town of Khasak, the protagonist Ravi faces many challenges to protect nature and surroundings.

He also addresses environmental issues in *The Saga of Dharmapuri* by showing how industry and unrestrained urbanisation are damaging the environment. This story shows how Dharmapuri's once pure natural environment is changing due to industrial complex growth, urbanisations, and deforestation. This change results in the removal of green places, pollution, and the devastation of the local ecology. Water and river pollution are ubiquitous problems and the story skillfully tackles these problems that existed in the Kerala region when the novel was written. *The Saga of Dharmapuri* primarily focuses on the complex relationships between politics, society, and individual relationships in Kerala during mid-20th century.

Research Methodology

This research work relies on Primary and Secondary data. Primary information has been taken from the original writings. The secondary data had been collected from research journals, magazines, newspapers, and Internet. This research study is descriptive and analytical in nature.

Literature Review

"The main goal of ecocriticism is to look at how people in society relate to and interact with the natural environment and its components. Rather than adopting a utilitarian attitude towards nature, it is imperative to reevaluate the interactions

between humans and their surroundings.” (Nimisha, 2016:63-65).

“O.V. Vijayan's book *“The Legends of Khasak”* powerfully illustrates the subject of accepting and giving in to the forces of nature. The story in the book illustrates the idea that the world is shaped by vast, unstoppable forces and that even the smallest aspects of nature are not immune to them.” (Lalitha, 2017: 122-132).

“*The Saga of Dharmapuri* a novel, depicts India as being symbolically enveloped in a variety of demonic manifestations. The narrative explores how the President makes use of people's sense of nationalism to maintain his power and accumulate fortune, even if it means carrying out immoral activities like the export of dead bodies.” (Saraswathy, 2019: 492-498).

“Vijayan's literary work was published more than fifty years ago, it still manages to vividly depict the characters and the finely described natural and occasionally otherworldly settings.” Aasha 2020: 20-24).

Concept of Natural Harmony in The Legends of Khasak

“*The Legends of Khasak*” describes the valley of ‘Khasak,’ which is tucked away at the base of the Chetali hill. Khasak is a place of phenomenal beauty that is made more real by the detailed descriptions and close links to the local people. The beautiful surroundings act as an implicit reminder of how crucial it is to take care of the environment. The novel gently imparts the lesson of respecting nature and keeping a healthy balance. As the narrative illustrates, upsetting this equilibrium can have negative effects on people as well as the society.

“*The fictional genius whose 1969 masterpiece ‘The Legends of Khasak’ shot him into fame as a legendary storyteller, the harbinger of a version of modernism that heralded a radical change of sensibility in Malayalam*”.² (PP.9).

“*The Legends of Khasak*” centers on the journey that two spores take. The younger one kept going, inquisitive, while the older one halted as they came to a verdant, lush valley. Natural disasters such as food shortages, terrible droughts, deadly floods, earthquakes, and more have been used by nature to repeatedly demonstrate its dominance over human beings throughout history. Human existence and nature are inextricably linked, humanity cannot survive apart from nature's impact.

Ecological Concerns in The Saga of Dharmapuri

Vijayan's *The Saga of Dharmapuri* revolves around the themes of deforestation, biodiversity loss, pollution, land degradation, and the conflict between industrialization and sustainability. Through this novel, he likes to highlight

environmental issues that exists in the society of Dharmapuri. The conflict between the necessity for environmental consciousness, and sustainable development is presented by major and minor characters in the novel.

Vijayan skillfully integrates the contemporary political climate in India with the universal human experiences of oppression and exploitation. The novel depicts a corrupt society that leads to deterioration in all facets of existence. The novelist's moral perspective is symbolised by the figure of Siddhartha. "*A great Benediction has come upon Dharmapuri*".³(PP.93-96). Siddharth felt a deep connection to his land and found solace in the whispering winds and the murmur of the streams, but when he grew older, he felt disappointed that ancient forest disappeared and rivers became polluted, Siddharth emerges as an advocate for protection of the environment. He has personal bond with Mother Nature. Through this character Vijayan expresses his concern, care, and profound love for the natural environment and he also shows us how human beings have drifted away from nature, and this has made their lives miserable.

Concluding Remarks

Through the prism of environmental consciousness for flora and fauna, O.V. Vijayan's novels offer deep insights into how human beings are intertwined with the natural world. In addition to illustrating the beauty and fragility of nature, Vijayan also shows the effects of human activity on the delicate balance of ecosystems through vivid storytelling and subtle character studies. The lush forests of Kerala and the environmentally deteriorated metropolitan areas found in Vijayan's novels serve as dramatic illustrations of the pressing need for sustainable living and environmental stewardship. Thus, Vijayan's *The Legends of Khasak* and *The Saga of Dharmapuri* discuss environmental degradation, conservation, and the value of all living things, prompting readers to reflect on their connections with nature and the moral implications of their decisions.

"In a very broad sense, Vijayan belonged to the mainstream of modern Malayalam novel, the foundation of which was laid by the unrelenting realist".⁴(Karim,8).

His writings are not only literary classics but also catalyze the promotion of environmental awareness and wildlife conservation as well.

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Research Journal Of English (RJOE)

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How to cite this article?

Simran Yadav, Dr. Naveen Kumar Mehta"CONSCIOUSNESS TOWARDS FLORA AND FAUNA IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF O.V. VIJAYAN: ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVES" *Research Journal Of English (RJOE)*9(3),PP:540-544,2024, DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2024.9.3.544