

ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVES IN FIREFLIES IN THE MIST BY  
QURRATULAIN HYDER

Shaista Malik

Assistant Professor (English) Hazara University, Mansehra

[shaistamalik2010@gmail.com](mailto:shaistamalik2010@gmail.com)

**Keywords**

Agency, Agentic Locus,  
ecocriticism, postcolonialism,  
Haider's Fireflies in the Mist,  
Female character

**Article History**

Received: 01 January, 2026

Accepted: 15 March 2026

Published: 31 March 2026

Copyright @Author

Corresponding Author: \*  
Sohaib Shakeel

**Abstract**

This study explores the concept of agency through an eco-critical and postcolonial lens in Quratulain Hyder's Fireflies in the Mist. It examines how the novel constructs "agentic spaces" that challenge oppression, marginalization, and the distorted status of locality. Central to the narrative is the emergence of female agency, particularly through the protagonist, who navigates social constraints to become an autonomous subject. The research highlights how ecological elements in the novel serve as symbolic shelters that support this transformation, culminating in the formation of an "agentic locus." Ultimately, the study reveals how environmental and social contexts intersect to empower marginalized identities.



**INTRODUCTION**

The history of Sub-continent its partition into Pakistan, India and Bangladesh with the colonization of British and its aftermath were the central issues of her writings. As Haider was herself a part of British colonization so she exhibited the effects and issues of colonization on the multiple cultures of India and the exploitation of the land by the British in her novels. Being a diasporic writer her center of attention was the issues of feminism in her novels. She received countless awards for her novels. Her outstanding novel *River of Fire* (1959) deals the history of Sub-continent from 4<sup>th</sup> BC to the partition of India into three states. The long stretches of history makes this novel one of the most complex novel in Urdu literature. The complexity of novel, its controversy and language makes it the icon in South Asian literature.

Haider covers the same story of human being but with different faces, the constant flux in time but with the same pangs of sufferings. Postcolonial issues of hybridity, identity, ambivalence and diaspora were artistically woven in the narratives of the novel. She has translated this novel from Urdu to English. She is vibrant and impetuous in describing her imaginations into literary form.

She received so many awards because of her unique style, great knowledge and marvellous contribution in the history of South Asian literature. In 1967 she was conferred Sahitya Akademi Award for *Patjhar ki awaz*. In 2005 she was awarded *Padma Bhushan* from Indian Government. In 1967 she was awarded with *Soviet Land Nehru Award*. In 1989 she was awarded *Jnanpith Award*. She was also the recipient of *Ghalib Award* in 1985.

Mughni says (1994) about the skills of Haider in Urdu Fiction by comparing her with Premchand who is regarded the unmatched writer in Urdu Fiction.

The next phase of development in these two literary genres has received momentum from Qurratulain. She broadened the artistic horizon. Second, Qurratulain had the stratum of cultural and human studies which Premchand lacked. His imagination is very simple but Qurratulain's imagination is very complex and far-reaching. Moreover, in her writings, there is a reflection of vast global life which is deficient in Premchand's writings. In brief, Qurratulain's artistic and imaginative experiments and expertise are wider than that of Premchand (P. 14).

Her novel *My Temples Too* shows the story of colonization in which both countries, India and Pakistan suffer a lot. The people of Sub-continent who belonged to different religions but share the same culture of Sub-continent were also marginalized into two nations. Her notable short stories include *Hasbe-Hall*, *Patjhar ki Awaz* (1995) *Carman*, *Agle Janam Mohe Bitya Na Kijyo* and *Housing Society*. Haider wrote six novels *Mere bhi Sanamkhane* (1949), *Safina-e-Ghame-Dil*, *Aag ka Darya*, *Aakhire Shab ke Humsafar* (1979), *Kare Jahan Daraz Hai*, *Gardish-e-Rang-e-Chaman* (1990) and *Chandni Begum* (1990).

The researchers have selected her novel *Fireflies in the Mist* (1994) for the current study to explore the combined approach of Ecocriticism and Postcolonialism to give agentic position to women. Haider has fine perception to delineate the characters and the surrounding in the same thread. In the selected novel she has portrayed the beauty of the land of Sub-continent particularly of Bangladesh in the context of agentic locus.

Firstly, she has written this novel in Urdu with the title of *Aakhire Shab ke Humsafar* (1979) and afterwards she herself translated it into English as *Fireflies in the Mist* (1994). The novel covers the history of Sub-continent from Second World War to the partition of Bangladesh in 1971. It spans four decades in which her characters see the movement for nationalism and after the partition of India into three independent countries and the bloody heart-rending struggle for the freedom of Bangladesh.

The novel is a historical epic by Haider in which she paints the nostalgia of the pangs of colonization and

past. Her narrative techniques are artistically fabulous because of presenting the story of natives, colonizers, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, farmers, artists, the dislocated, exiled, displaced, and marginalized and whose identity became a question for them. She executed the story through dialogues, diaries, monologues, historical references and letters. Her novel represents the history of India before and after colonization of Sub-continent in which the characters specially the women suffer in various ways.

The impacts of colonization not only shatter the boundaries of the countries but also the hopes and dreams of the characters. The land of Sub-continent in general and of Bangladesh in particular is alluring that fascinates the senses because of its magical natural beauty that not only attracted the attention of the natives but also of the British.

The selected novel *Fire flies in the Mist* (1994) has been set mostly in Dacca and the story revolves around various families of Muslims, Hindus and Christians. The central characters are mostly women as Deepali and Uma are Hindu, Rosy a Christian, Yasmeen and Jehan Ara are the Muslim girls, and they all stand in good relation of friendship with one another. Rehan a Muslim likes Deepali who is a Hindu girl. Jehan Ara and Rehan belong to the same family. Most of the female characters are working underground for the movement of Marxism and they are members of communist party.

The episodes of Bengal independence bring tremendous change in the lives of not only the people but also in culture because of colonization. The elite Muslim family of Nawabs, the middle class family of Rosie and Deepali and Yasmeen with rigid Muslim background all undergo the process of colonization and are swept by its crucial thunder of identity loss and diaspora. Dr.Sarkar, Mr.Bannerjee and Nawab Qamar individually represent the whole Bangladesh with its cultural, political and social turmoil.

The people of Bengal hate British because of their unwanted ruling over Indians. The momentum for independence takes strength to divide Sub-continent into India and Pakistan. The Bangalis are separated into two parts, one supports Pakistan and other opposes it. The lives of the central characters are badly affected by colonization they are exiled like Yasmeen a dancer. Deepali is also exiled who was a famous

singer. Deepali and Yasmin suffer the endless miseries being in exile. Their own country does not remain the same for them after diaspora." Migration is a one way trip. There is no "home" to go back to" (Hall, 1996, p. 115). Jehan Ara remained marginalized in the boundry of her rigid culture, Rosy's identity becomes a question. Rehan, a Muslim boy cousin of Jehan Ara truns to an active political member of Bengal from a communist party. But the colonial powers snatch the right of freedom from every individual leaving their desires into the chaotic world where their existence and identity becomes a question.

Deepali leaves her country in the turmoil of colonization to Tirindad and marries to an aged man, Yasmeen goes to Europe to materialize her dreams of a famous dancer but in exile she suffers the pangs of identity loss. Rosie a Christian whose parents embraced Christianity who was once Hindu, gets marries to a Hindu and fluctuates between the identity crises. The Nawabs faced downfall because of colonization. Rehan goes back to his roots of feudal lords.

Haider has weaved the long stretches of history into the beauty of her style. The characters try to contribute to make their land and its culture in one thread of unity as the Fireflies contribute a little in the darkness but all go in vain because of the unrest and turmoil due to effects of colonization. The selected novel is brimmed with the postcolonial issues with the fine techniques of narration to give agentic position to women. Haider has great interest in nature and she involves all the natural surrounding to create compatibility between the characters and environment. The land of sub-continent is richin natural beauty with the charm of changing seasons.

Ecology with the human interaction is artistically intertwined in the novel. Postcolonial issues also affect the lives and land of the colonized people. Colonial powers exploited not only the human world but also the non-human world by deteriorating the land to gain their material benefits. The destruction caused by colonization was on great level in terms of the exploitation of land, animals and human being. Sundarbans is a fascinating area in Bangladesh which remains the center of greed of the British because of the tigers which they wanted to gain for their economical pursuits. Graham Huggan and Helen

Tiffin say that "the proper subject of post colonialism is colonialism, and to look accordingly for the colonial imperial under pinnings of environmental practices in both 'colonizing' and 'colonized' societies of the present and the past" (P. 3).

Haider's skill in capturing scenes and making its compatibility with the ubiquitous situation is fabolous. The complex situation of Bengal its politics and the phantoms of British rule are reflected by the clouds which have occupied the trees of the sub-Continent to make its roots hollow with the rain of their colonization. The description of landscape and the love for land can be observed through the description of the scenes of the subjugated land. The charcters lose their land, culture, and identity because of the colonizers that destroy the land and ultimately the people.

The study aims to be conducted to analyze the text Ecocritically in the perspectives of Postcolonial issues, focusing on the trajectory of female subjective. The selection of the text is favourable to apply this combined approach because the South Asian writers remained the victims of colonization. Qualitative mode has been selected for the study to trace the issues from the selected novel.

### Available researches on Haider's works

Dr. Khanam (2016) writes about the novel of Haider *River of Fire* with historical background of Sub-continent in which the plight of the people during colonization and its impacts after colonization has been described by the novelist. According to Dr. Khanum the imperial powers' cunning intentions were not only to colonize the people but also to exploit the land with its natural resources and to enslave them by referring as uncivilized. She explores the writer's intention of pointing out the aftermaths of colonization in which they were exploited by the British. She emphasizes the fact that the time goes on as it happens in the novel but the suffering of humanity remains constant and same as the case of Haider's female characters. She finds out hybridity in the novel which causes countless issues regarding postcolonialism uprooting the cultural heritage from the within of a society to lose one's original identity. She describes the character of Neelumber who is a

victim of colonization whose identity remains an unanswered question.

Usman and Salahuddin (2017) write in their article about the women writers from Pakistan with their concept of feminism. They trace out the feminine aspects in the works of Pakistani writers. They write about the novel of river of fire which is a historical novel comprises of centuries. According to them all the female characters *champak*, *chaupa*, *champa bai*, *champa Ahmed* belonging to different age and way of living but with same basic issues of feminism in colonization period (P. 230).

Dr. Khanum (2016) discusses in her article about the novel *Fireflies of the Mist* which presents colonialism in Subcontinent including Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. According to her the Indians were marginalized as *others and inferior* because of their being uncivilized for the superior. She believes that the writer wants to make it clear that the British think of themselves superior to others

Rajan (2017) writes about the novel of Hyder My *Temples Too* (1948) which is about the scenario of India and Pakistan independence and their plight during colonization and decolonization. He describes the basic content of instability of the once-sujudated land.

The above discussion exhibits the gap of the selected research which shows that the research has been done in a different and new perspective. There are various similar works on the novels highlighting the Postcolonial issues presented in the novels. However this present work is the first of its kind highlighting the postcolonial and ecocritical aspects presented in a different novel *Fireflies In The Mist* by Quratul Ain Haider.

## Methodology

The section deals with the research methodology and theoretical framework. The research is qualitative. Close textual analysis has been selected for the analysis of the data. The research methodology for the recent study is qualitative and technique used for the selected and particular text has been done through close reading. The current study has been conducted by analyzing a postcolonial text by Quratul Ain Haider *Fireflies in the Mist* (1994). The *Ecocritical* analysis of

the text will be conducted in the postcolonial perspective.

Methodology plays a vital role in conducting a research project. P. Sam Daniel describes in his book *Research Methodology* (2011) about methodology in the following lines.

Methodology is the procedure of research technique. It is the logic of scientific investigation. It is not a research model employed in a particular project but is a technique which entails theoretical principles as well as a framework that provide guidelines about how research is done in the context in the context of a particular paradigm. It translates the principles of a paradigm into research language and shows how the society can be explained and studied (p. 41).

The Post-colonial text will be analysed through close reading. The interpretation of the text highlights the underlying meanings within the text. "The canon selection suggests that the meaning of the text is closed, contained in the work with the sole purpose to transmit a message from author to reader within a 'transfer-conduit perspective'" (Reddy, 1993, P. 171).

Close reading emphasizes the deep interpretation of the text highlighting the soul essence of its time through the text. Through the research methodology not only the soul meaning of the text is known but also the historical, social and cultural background are brought over the surface. Close reading of the text will help the researcher to comprehend well the postcolonial novel to be analysed under the aspects of identity crises, diaspora, Us and Other in the lap of physical environment of the colonial land influencing the situation and character's life. Qualitative research will interpret the text through close reading that will highlight the under study issues.

Martyn Hamerasesly writes in *What is Qualitative Research* (2013) about Qualitative research.

Qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that tends to adopt a flexible and driven research design to use relatively unstructured data to emphasise the essential role of subjectivity in the research process to study a small number of naturally occurring cases in detail and to use verbal rather than statistical form of analysis (p. 12).

## Theoretical Framework:

The human culture is studied under the shadow of *Ecocriticism* where nature perches within the roots of the literary text and emerges as a significant living character sprinkling its predominance in the text. *Ecocriticism* “as a critical stance, has one foot in literature and other on land; as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between human and nonhuman” (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xix).

Ecocriticism is a multi-dimensional theory which ranges and covers the study of all the living beings and things that affect and interact one another. The Ecocritics identifies it as a whole ecosystem and take the whole environment a web of life in which all the non-human things are intermingled with the human beings.

Shah, Riaz, and Khan (2020) examine the eco-critical perspective in their study, investigating various phases of feminism and how these phases illuminate diverse thematic concerns. Shah, Riaz, and Khan (2020) examined the poetry of female poets addressing various aspects of women's experiences. The central aspect of the research conducted by Shah, Riaz, and Khan (2020) examines the eco-critical perspective in Maya Angelou's *Women Work*. The emphasis is placed on an eco-feminist viewpoint aimed at addressing the marginalisation and oppression of women, with a shift towards nature. The study also paves the way for exploring Angelou's work on women through a postcolonial lens from various viewpoints.

In a similar vein, Riaz and Hussain (2015) identify postcolonial spaces that are conducive to an eco-critical context, as their study is situated within Afghanistan. The postcolonial lens is effectively applied, and the various literary genres produced in this context closely relate to environmental asylum, assisting the marginalised and oppressed in their quest for refuge.

Ecocriticism finds its roots flourishing in 1991 as MLA *Modern Language Association* in 1992 ASLE *Association for the Study of Literature and Environment* and journal *ISLE Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* to promote the exchange of ideas and information between human beings and the natural world” and to encourage “new writing, traditional and innovative scholarly approaches to

environmental literature, and interdisciplinary environmental research” (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xviii).

Ecology as *Eco* relates the connection of living beings fabricated with the natural environment exhibits in the blend of natural sciences with the prevailing human culture and discipline. Ecology finds its roots in Greek where *Oikos* is home and the earth and *Logos* means study. Then *Ecocriticism* intertwines the nature and place into a criss-cross unity in literary study, marginalizing the text into the framework of natural environment.

Glotfelty's concept of Ecocriticism (1996) is not narrow in its application rather it includes the whole universe to involve non-human entities in the guise of human powers to influence the culture in literature.

Glotfelty emphasizes the importance of nature and environment in literature as a separate theory which according to her was ignored in the past. Movements regarding environment were rare rather other disciplines like religion, philosophy, sociology and also other movements like “civil rights and women's liberation movements” (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xvi).

Glotfelty (1996) clearly points out the dimensions of *Ecocriticism*.

Ecocritics and theorists ask questions like the following: How is nature represented in this sonnet? What role does the physical setting play in the plot of this novel? How do our metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it? Are the values expressed in this play consistent with ecological wisdom? How can we characterize nature writing as genre? In addition to race, class, and gender, should place become a new critical category? Do men write about nature differently than women do? In what ways has literacy itself affected humankind's relationship to the natural world?” (Glotfelty, 1996, pp. xviii-xix)

Glotfelty's raising such questions in the perspective of *Ecocriticism* opens the new theoretical ecological approaches towards literature which elaborates the text through the vision of physical settings where nature and non-human world put their paradigm impact on literary studies. She distinguishes Ecocriticism from other literary theories which examine the text as *socialsphere*. But Ecocriticism “expands the notion of “the world” to include the entire ecosphere” (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xix).

Ecocriticism studies the human culture with particular reference to *Place* and the surrounding environment. The interpretation of the text on ecocritical edges requires the reciprocity among the species, non human world, characters, place and ecosystem preponderating in the literary text which is analysed through interdisciplinary approaches of Ecocriticism. "As environmental problems compound," describes Glotfelty on the part of academics which are worldwide, "work as usual seems unconscionably frivolous. If we are not part of the solution we are part of the problem" (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xxi). So she raises question that literary text marginalized by Ecocritical frame involves all the ecumenical entities and species to make to analyse the environment to be in congruous with the characters making it a cosmic Ecocritical literary text. "Enviro- is anthropocentric and dualistic, implying that we human are at the center, surrounded by everything that is not us, the environment" (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xx). Glotfelty describes the solemnity of environment by the Anthropologist, Psychologists, Theologists and Literary scholars who now specify the environmental gravity in their respective fields. The text emerges as an ecocritical literary work with a strong bond between the human culture and non-human world which brings out the essence of the text to be an enviro- oriented work which basically pleads for the interpretation of nature and physical settings encircle the literary text. Glotfelty collected the basic views on Ecocriticism by various emerging and significant ecocritics in her book to open a new forum for this new field.

Different critics used the term in different ways with various approaches but all meet at the same point to relate connectivity between man and his surroundings ultimately every approach bends towards the relationship of man with land and earth. Being an interdisciplinary in its nature, Ecocriticism is the amalgamation of sciences and humanities which is the integral part of ecoology for William Recukert.

Scott Slovic the first president of *Association for the study of Literature and Environment (ASLE)* focuses the relevant thoughts on Ecocriticism like Glotfelty to emphasize "Literature that considers the relationship between human being and the natural world" (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xviii).

Ecocriticism finds a sound relation between nature, environment and literary text stamping nature and environment an integral part of literary criticism where literary text and surroundings coexist in a twisted but single thread of theory because issues in a literary text go hand in hand with environmental issues. "How then can we contribute to environmental restoration from within our capacity" (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xxi). Glotfelty focuses the attention of theorists towards ecological concepts to constitute a conceptual base for a strong connection between culture and nature existing in literature. Aesthetically constructed and culturally formulated literature relates to the environmental studies in which culture, traditions, values, nature and environment interact with one another as integral part of text in a single unity. Ecological conceptualization encapsulates the literary text within the framework of ecological consciousness, where the flux in cultural interpretation makes a tangible bond with *Ecocriticism*.

Slovic the professor at Nevada University writes in *Ecocriticism Containing Multitude. The green study reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism* (2000) "I am large, I contain multitude" (Slovic, 160) justifies Ecocriticism's verstality having largeness and vastness in its domain. As he says "There is no single, dominant world view guiding ecocritical practice; no single strategy at work" (Slovic, 160). Slovic's lectures of relating literature and environment with each other through out his travelling to different countries reflect the need of the age to study the culture of a particular place.

Slovic defines Ecocriticism "The study of explicitly environmental texts by way of any scholarly approach or conversely the scrutiny of ecological implications and human-nature relations in any literary text" (Slovic, p. 160). For Slovic *Ecocriticism* cannot be confined to particular area or field but the relationship between human and culture and human and non- human is broadly studied under Ecocriticism. For Slovic ecocriticism "is a global concern" (Slovic, p. 161). Slovic says about Glotfelty "Cheryll Glotfelty neatly defines ecocriticism" (Slovic, p. 160).

Ecocritics emphasize the compatibility of nature and culture in a literary text in which both cast their spell

to run a story. William Rueckert scientifically associate the physical environment with the literary text in which all the surrounding milieu makes a bond of coherency with each other. All the organisms have particular environment which influence their lives.

William Rueckert in *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism* (1996) mentions the first law of ecology "Everything is connected to everything else" (108).

Nature as background settings and imagery in literature is used within the storyline formulating relationship of characters with the every single entity present as non-human. While using both theories together depicts the ecology of a particular land or place influenced by colonial clutches with conspicuous reference to place, geography and animals which divert the focus of colonial powers to deteriorate the environment hence its impact on culture and society leaves unrecoverable prints of its marks.

In this respect the attitude of man towards the cultural and social environment of the whole world has transformed the literary genre towards Ecocritical and Postcolonial theories to run in a homogeneous line in literature. In South Asia the environmental devastation caused by the intervention of British leaves the phantoms of colonial powers in the roots of the land which haunts the culture and environment of the land.

Glotfelty (1996) describes the relationship of man with nature and environment. According to her in literary criticism, the role of environment and nature occupies a significant place because for human, the non-human world, physical surroundings and the place are of great importance. The selected novel *Fireflies in the Mist* (1994) is a postcolonial novel with multiple layers of issues regarding identity and diaspora and binaries of superior and inferior which are the outcomes of colonial exploitation of the culture of Sub-continent along with the exploitation of the land, its environment and all the things which are a part of physical settings. The collective approach of Ecocriticism and postcolonialism merge in the selected novel to highlight the exploitation of both human and non-human world.

## Analysis of Agentic locus from An eco-critical perspective in Quratul Ain Haider's *Fireflies in the Mist*

The Ecocritical analysis of the novel shows the fine perception of the novelist to create a relationship between characters, nature and physical environment in the hovering situation of postcolonialism. This is a historical novel which covers the time from subcontinent to Bangladesh independence. Its geographical location, its landscapes, rivers, mountains and trees with its particular traditions and cultures enhance its magical beauty. The quintessence of Haider's narrative in the novel is matchless. The sketch of the surrounding filling it with the inner flesh of the emotions of characters makes it a fine embodiment of ecology with the uprising issues of colonization.

Firstly, the title of the novel stamps the novel to be an Ecocritical inclined novel by the novelist as the title is based on natural objects. Fireflies emit their little glow in the mist which is of no mean. The characters of the novel are like Fireflies who render little efforts on their part during the journey of reaching their destinations but the dim luster of their achievements diminishes in the chaos of time.

The novel is full of different issues related to Postcolonialism. The novel deals with different stories of various people with various issues like diaspora, identity crises, social issues, migration, marginalization, superiority and inferiority complex, us and other. The text of the novel will be analysed Ecocritically in the perspective of Postcolonialism. The physical environment will be discussed through Cheryll Glotfelty's theory of *Ecocriticism* (1994) and the Postcolonial issues will be analyzed through the concept of Orientalism (1978) by Said and Hall's essay on *Identity and Diaspora* (1996).

Haider's fanciful narration knitted with systematic settings involving nature and environment is matchless. The landscape influencing and predicting human psyche where all the physical world including hills, rivers, mountains, trees, sky, moon, winds, stars, birds and animals put their effect on the characters and situation and depict the natives' passionate feelings towards the land.

The impact of the environment causes the characters to behave according to the terrain. Haider's narration

creates harmony between the physical surrounding and the character's situation. The ecocritical inclination of the novels in its colonial and post-colonial perspective exhibits Haider's authentic knowledge about the history of Sub-continent. The struggle of the people of India for freedom and the unfulfilled love affair between Deepali and Rehan, Rosie and her family with changing religion from Hinduism to Christianity, Yasmin's blind pursuit for fame and above all the their struggle for benefits of their land in diverse ways will be analysed through Ecocriticism combined with particular issues of Postcolonilism.

Mr. Bannerjee father of Rosie changed his religion from Hindu to Christian. But neither of the religion accepted him fully afterwards. Living in his own land the identity issues for Mr. Bannerjee remained unresolved. His inner conflict of being black Indian padre could not brought him up to the level of white padre of England which always used to prick the inner consciousness of Bannerjee. The Ecocritical scenario with the colonial effect to relate the black color of the Sea with the chaotic identity of Bannerjee is evident when he is ridiculed as a black color Christian.

He watched his reflection in the window pane, and tried to recollect the various phases of his life. The indigent Brahmin lad of Rangpur. The solemn black-suited young preacher who toured the countryside on his bicycle. He remembered: Whenever he strayed into a Muslim locality, he was jeered at by the street urchins, ha, ha, ha..Here comes the black padre. Hello Imitation sEnglishman, did you get all sooty when you fell into the Black Sea on your way to India? (Haider, 1994, p. 74).

The British tried to overpower not only the land of Sub-continent but also tried to control them through religion. Monmohun Babua Hindu who embraced Christianity after the British exercised their influence upon the the Indian. The identity of Monmohun as Bannerjee after leaving Hinduism put not only Bannerjee but also his family into identity crisis. The darkness of the religion was basically the darkness of identity.

The Reverend stopped reading and closed his eyes. He found himself in a remote village in the northern district of Rangpur, where nightingales sang in the temple golden and he accompanied his devout

mother to worship the terrifying image of Kali. Ma you remained in the darkness of polytheism and idolatry till last breath. Alas that you died a heathen, a lost, unredeemed soul. Where must you be at this moment? In which darkness of eternity. Alas...Alas... (Haider, 1994, p. 68).

The Arrival of British in the Sub-continent also added a new religion to make the people of Sub-continent deviate from their former religion which not only altered the religion but also the actual identity of the the individual. Mr. Bannerjee himself changed his identity from Hindu to chirstian but he could not resolve the dilemma of his changed religion. The switching over from one religion to another like the changing flow of river could put the generations into identity loss.

The Hindus call it karma; the Mohammedans, Kismet, We Christians would sat ... the grace of God! Nevertheless, it was amazing, he told himself, how like a fast-flowing river, life could suddenly change its course. An individual takes one step in a certain direction and the future of his subsequent generations becomes totally different (Haider, 1994, p. 68).

Colonialism with its illusion enveloped the whole surrounding of Sub-continent where the innocent were made spell bound in the realm of conflict which compelled them to change their actual identity. Monmohun was the prominent victim like other people of Sub-continent, whose fluctuating belief in religion made him change his real identity from Hindu to Christian.

His father had called the Brahmin priest and the witch doctor to appease some local "goddess" whose wrath the poor women was supposed to have incurred. Monmohun was horrified. Barefoot, he ran the nearest villiage where the Lutheran German had opened a dispensary, but by the time he brought Germans missionary doctor back, his mother had succumbed to her illness. And behold! Her idols could not save her. It was a traumatic experience for the young lad. He did not know which way to turn for solace and reassurance. At a time of crises his culture and his society were found wanting. And then he remembered the Bible (Haider, 1994, ps. 68).

Before the arrival of British in India the people with staunch belief on their separate religion could not doubt their religion's truthfulness. But the white man

with its pre-planned policy to create unrest among the people remained successful to create doubt in their religions and they lost their actual identity even living in their own land. The set ecology of the Indian land changed because of intervention of the British. The whole scenario changed with the arrival of the white man.

His doubts were short-lived. Better minds than mine, people like Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Rev. Krishna Mohan Bannerjee, had given up their ancient beliefs and adopted the Western's faith. Suruj-Kumar Chukkerburty went to London to study medicine and had himself baptized. He became the first native to be taken into Hon'ble John Company's Covenanted services. Bholunath Das was assistant Surgeon to company's forces in the Battle of Sutlej (Haider, 1994, p. 70).

The people of subcontinent were facing strange situation because of embracing other religion leaving their own religion. But they were unaware from the fact that their identity was also changing. The reason behind it was material benefits. The poverty, unrest prevailing in their land forced them to change their entire identity which was a big source of charm from the British to rule over the land of India. The British were supposed to have the key for the modern world which would change the miserable plight of the people of India.

There were thousands of young men and women like them who became Christians. Was only because they wanted good jobs that they embraced ruling class's dominant faith? Nay! It was intellectual discontent! The creed was associated with White races that were advancing the frontiers of knowledge and had made all the progress in the modern world (Haider, 1994, pp. 70-71).

The confused black padre had to suffer a lot because of changing his identity as Christian which also remained an enigma for his family. In spite of giving his best as a Padre he could not gain the status of English Padre. For the white Christians the Black Padre of India were inferior because they belonged to the East, "Once he visited a small town in U.P. and the urchins shouted, "Hey Padre -Angrez -log will never accept you as an equal even after you acquire their religion." Meekly he bore these insults for the sake of sweet Jesus" (Haider, 1994, p. 75).

In the course of her tormented journey living in other country Yasmeen finds no one to solace her. Her identity being Muslim and a Bangladeshi entangles her in the snare of chaos and disappointment. Bangal was on fire again. Her Bangali identity becomes problem for her. The combination of postcolonial elements with the natural surroundings of ocean exhibit the inner gloomy situation of Yasmeen, "This morning the Punbi manager gave me notice. My services are to be terminated because I am Bangladeshi. Horrified. I trunk-called London. Maqbool had left for Karachi. Once again Bangal has sunk deep in the ocean of fire and blood. It is Dance of Kali...oh, these are such clichés..." (Haider, 1994, p. 336).

Yasmeen is quite alone. Her husband and daughter have left her. Spending her miserable life in the West no one wipes her tears. Gradually she is getting into the darkness of identity loss. Repenting on her actions, the tormented Yasmeen searches the mark of her lost identity. The East and West have become a place for her where no one recognizes her and her miseries.

I am here in the West-Germany, drifting from town to town doing odd jobs, lost in the crowds of Turkish and Asian workers. Better-off. Bangladeshis avoid me, fearing that I'll ask them for help. The new generation of Bangladeshis does not know me, they have not even heard of me. For the older generation I am an embarrassment (Haider, 1994, p. 337).

The river as a natural setting is the symbol of constant flow to wash away the miseries of the people. Same happened with the Yasmin who could not have compatibility with the atmosphere in which she was living. She moved to the West for the sake of art and glamorous life. But all her hopes were dashed to the ground and she committed suicide. Her Christian daughter writes her about her mother's tragic death of committing suicide in the river to her childhood friend Deepali.

This is to inform you that my mother Madame Yasmin Belmont died in an accident. She was walking along the Elbe, slipped and fell into the water. I personally think that she chose to go into the river. I do not know you, but I knew my Mummy (Haider, 1994, p. 340).

Ecology refers to the land, place and geography of the land with the amalgamation of the natural settings including non-human entities. The culture and value enclosed in a particular environment increase the luster of these settings. Deepali's visit to Bangal after independence seems unfit in this alien suffocated and humid scenario. To her everything is colorless with lack of association with the surrounding because now she was in diaspora and in her own country she was like a stranger. The plight of the expatriate is evident through her visit in her own country. Moving from the East to West leaving the exotic but alien Orient is the only solution of her exile. The shallowness in the landscape of Orient cannot welcome her as she supposes.

She went to a colorless dining hall and ate bad food. The people around her looked old and sad. For the first time since she had come to sub-continent, she realized that having spent twenty-eight years in the western hemisphere, she was stranger displaced at the same time she felt she had turned her into a loner. She was treated as a part of oriental exotica. She was sick of explaining her culture. She winced when her music and her literature were referring to as "ethnic". Here she was back at last in her own Santini Ketan in her own Bengal and she was feeling out of Place. Was this fate of all first generation expatriates? (Haider, P. 383).

The repercussions of colonialism with its positivity and negativity haunt the generation after generation. Deepali's casual view of the students of campus busy in various activities again forces her to think the prevailing situation of Sub-continent people's plight. The hovering environment spells the situation and the landscape associating compatibility with ecology and the gloomy and the warning issues of postcolonialism.

The Sub-continent is a vacuum in which young people hang in mid air, listening to film music on their transistors. Nasira Najmus Sahar and people like her would soon be considered stark raving mad in all three countries India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The Revolution is over; baby. Deepali looked at her wrist watch and pressed her kneecaps. Perhaps the beginning of arthritis, she thought with alarm and stood up. As she passed by the Art College she saw the black-clay statue of the Buddha. Its feet were of clay

too. Dusk fell the sickle-carrying peasants of Santhal Pargana walked by on the Sal Avenue. The moon rose. He vanished like the rainbow. The moon was extinguished (Haider, P. 384).

The gloomy situation of being exile haunts Deepali and Yasmeen. Yasmeen's temporary stay with Deepali takes their memories back to their country from where both of them have migrated to other countries. The mixed physical milieu of the East and West exhibit the fluctuating life style with double identity.

An East Indian woman with real bandanas sat on the grassy bank, washing clothes. A tree top dispensary displayed the signboard: Dr. B.C. Sarkar, plantation Medical officer. Patient waited under the shade. It was a motley group; Chinese, East Indian, Black Man has this knack of creating a heaven for himself when he is exiled from his own. Yasmin said to herself" (Haider, P. 294).

At the last visit of Deepali from Trinidad to Bangladesh she throws the ashes of the dead bodies of her father and aunt on their will, in the river. The throwing of the ashes in their own river depicts her association with the Ganga river where she is going to throw all her associations in the river of India to disconnect from her past. The futile struggle of the past, the sad emotions and the memories of her family all she throws in the river to sail away. The diasporic people actually find no place even for their funeral.

The Festival Committee had offered Mrs. Sen return airfare, which she had declined. This was a ghoulish sort of journey she had undertaken on behalf of her late father, Dr. Benoy Chandra Sarkar and her aunt, Bhavtarni Debi. According to their wills, she was taking their ashes to Hardwar for immersion in the Holy Ganges. They were also exiles like Yasmin, but they would find their own river for their last journey to oblivion. How can one think of immersing one's ashes in the Caribbean"? Hail to thee, O Ganga, O Padma, O Eternal India" (Haider, p. 347).

### Conclusion:

Ecocriticism highlights the issues regarding surroundings including natural environment, physical settings and everything which is in concern to man. The literary texts which are nature-oriented, definitely depict the significance of the environment

for man because the physical milieu always reflects the inner world of the characters. In postcolonial literature the natural environment occupies prominent place because it depicts the exploitation of the non-human by the human.

Through interpreting the novel on different levels it has been found that Haider's novel *Fireflies in the Mist* (1994) depicts the violence by the White man towards man and animals under the label of primitivism and barbarism. The land of Sub-continent is famous for its fertility and rich in natural wealth.

The beauty of Indian Sub-continent and its partition; Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, the effects of colonialism, the suffering of the natives and the expatriates, with the natural effects of the surrounding evince the grasp of intricate style of Haider. Her enveloping the whole environment of Bengal with its pleasurable ring of landscape and the unique strands of her narration in the novel evince her art to interwind the beauty of land with colonial and postcolonial impacts on the characters. The animals, stars, moon, rivers, animals and mist all contribute to the beauty of landscape of Sub-continent which was the target of the British. The ecology of the land in the colonial tenure shows the relationship of man with nature which is inevitable because Haider weaves the story in the net of physical surrounding in the hovering situation of colonial aeon.

The association with the land and its natural beauty with its alluring charm captivate the natives to such a great extent that everything related to life seems to be related with land. That's why the colonized land remains a source of integrity for the colonizers and land is the only source which becomes utmost crucial for them.

The selected novel *The fireflies in the Mist* (1994) after being analysed as an Ecocritical landmark in the perspective of postcolonial issues depicts the wrecked land, spoiled culture and characters in the trauma of their existence both in their own and alien land.

Haider's proficiency to associate the affinity between the terrain and befalling situation of the characters distinguishes her among Asian novelist because of highlighting the issues of the natives of Sub-continent in the enchanting environment. The land of India with its rich seasons effect the surroundings. The land of Bengal enjoys all the seasons, the rain, the burning

rays of the sun, the mournful winter, the thunder, which cast their impact on the land That's why it was a fascinated place for the British to exercise their control and exploit it for their economical benefits.

The researcher has tried to find out the objectives and the research questions in mutual compatibility. The major issue which has been analysed is to tracelink between Ecocriticism and Postcolonialism.

Haider's writings speak for her strong association with the nature and the rainbow of the settings is colored by the enchantment of the surrounding. The ecocritical study of the novel not only presents its immediate effects on the plot but it also attracts the attention towards the natural refreshing ambient but the twist of the novel lies in its colonial settings in which the enchanted ambient is destroyed by the white man, also deteriorating the life of the characters and thrusting them into dilemma of their existence.

The environment hovers over their feelings sometimes romantic, sometimes fearful and enigmatic. The blowing of winds raising tempest in the sea make the surrounding an ecological scenario that associate the characters of the novel during colonial epoch representing the lives according to the waves of the sea and gusts of the winds, fluttering here and there in search of their identity.

## REFERENCES

- Ashcroft, B., et al. (1989). *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post colonial Literatures*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Asghar, J. (2014). Postcolonial South Asian Literature and the Quest for Identity. *Journal of Critical Inquiry*, 57.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Blunt, A. (2003). Geographies of diaspora and mixed descent: Anglo-Indians in India and Britain. *International Journal of Population Geography* 9(1), 281-294.
- Blunt, A. (2005). Cultural geography: cultural geographies of home. *Progress in Human Geography* 29(4), 505-515.
- Blunt, A. (2007). Cultural geographies of migration: mobility, transnationality and diaspora. *Progress in Human Geography* 31(5): 684-694.

- Blunt, A., & Dowling, R. (2006). *Home*. London: Routledge.
- Bonnici, T. (2004). The contemporary post-colonial novel in English. *Acta Scientiarum. Human and Social Sciences*, 1-22.
- Carson, R. (2002). *Silent spring*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Coupe, L. (2000). *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.
- DeLoughrey, E., et. al. (Eds.). (2011). *Postcolonial ecologies: Literatures of the environment*. OUP USA.
- Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Said, E. (1994). *Culture and imperialism*. London: Vintage Books.
- Gamal, A. (2013). The global and the postcolonial in post-migratory literature. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 49(5), 596-608.
- Garrard, G. (2011). *Ecocriticism*. Routledge.
- Garrard, G. (2012). Teaching Ecocriticism and Green Cultural Studies.
- Ghosh, A. (2011). *The Hungry Tide*. London: Harper Collins.
- Glotfelty, C., & Fromm, H. (Eds.). (1996). *The ecocriticism reader: Landmarks in literary ecology*. University of Georgia Press.
- Haider, D. S. (2009). *Qaidi Parindon Ka Izteraab*. (N. Durrani, Ed.) Seep(77), 226-231.
- Haider, Q. A. (2010). *Fireflies In Mist*. Rupa.Co Publishers
- Haider, Q. U. (2010). *Aag Ka Darya*. Lahore: Sange-Meel Publishers.
- Haider, Q. U. (n.d.). *Aakhir e Shab k Ham Safar*. Lahore: Ch Academy.  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/126237/colonialism-Western>. (n.d.). Retrieved Februray 22, 2025, from britannica.com.
- Hall, S. (1996). *Minimal Selves*. In Houston A. Baker, Manthia Diawara and Ruth H. Lindeborg Ed. *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Howarth, W. (1996). Some principles of ecocriticism. *The ecocriticism reader: Landmarks in literary ecology*, 69-91.
- Huggan, G., & Tiffin, H. (2015). *Postcolonial ecocriticism: Literature, animals, environment*. Routledge.
- Kamala, M. (1954). *The Nectar in the Sieve*. Delhi: Penguin Books India.
- Kerridge, R. (2000). Ecothrillers: Environmental Cliffhangers. *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*, 242-249.
- Kerridge, R. (Eds.). (1998). *Writing the environment: ecocriticism and literature*. Zed Books.
- Kar, A. (2014). Nature Colonized: A Postcolonial Ecocritical Reading of Conrad's Heart of Darkness. *New Man International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*. I, 12, 2348-1390
- Kiran, S. (2013). Identity Crisis as Reflected in Selected Works: The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid and the Black Album by Hanif Kureishi. *International Journal of Linguistics and Communication*, 1(2).
- Love, G. A. (2003). *Practical ecocriticism: Literature, biology, and the environment*. University of Virginia Press.
- Laurence, C. (2000). *The Green studies reader: from Romanticism to ecocriticism*. NP: NP.
- Narang, G.C. (1977). Major Trends in the Urdu Short Story (an article), *Indian Literature, Sahitya Akademi's Bimonthly magazine*, vol. xx, No.4, New Delhi.
- Oppermann, S. (1999). Ecocriticism: Natural world in the literary viewfinder. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 16 (2).
- Riaz, W. & Hussain, T. (2015). The Representation of Pashtuns in Alexander Burns' Cabool Being a Personal Narrative of a journey to, and Residence in that city in the years 1836, 7, 8. *Asian Journal of Education Research & Technology*. Vol. 5 (2), July 2015: 124-142. ISSN (Print): 2249-7374. ISSN (Online): 2347-4947.
- Rueckert, W. (1996) "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism," in *Glotfelty and Fromm* (1996): 105-123.

- Rushdie, S. (1996). *The Moor's last sigh*. London: Vintage.
- Sidhwa, B. (1991). *Cracking India*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweeds Editions.
- Shikha, K. (2011). Ecocriticism in Indian fiction. *Irwle* 7 (1), 1, 11.
- Shamsie, M. (2011). Duality and diversity in Pakistani English literature. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 47(2), 119-121.
- Slovic, S. (2010). The Third Wave of Ecocriticism: North American Reflections on the Current Phase of the Discipline.
- Sahu, G. (2014). Ecocriticism-Understanding the relationship between literature and the Environment in Indian English novels. *Journal of Arts & Education. A Peer Reviewed International Journal*, 1(1), 1-4.
- Shah, M., Riaz, W., & Khan, R. (2020). Three Waves of Feminism: A Critical Textual Analysis of the Selected Poems from Greek to Present. *The Discourse*. Volume 06 Number 02. PP: 127-138.
- Williams, R. (1975). *The country and the city* (Vol. 423). Oxford University Press, USA.
- Yaqoob, M. (2010). Human Perversion and Environmental Space: An Ecocritical reading of Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke*. *International Research Journal of Arts & Humanities (IRJAH)*, 38(38).
- Youssooupha, M. A. N. E. (2015). Postcolonial Ecocriticism in the Narratives Strategies of Ngugi Wa Thiong\'. *International Journal of Literature and Art*, 3, 5-11.