

A Depiction of Village Landscape, Natural Setting: Bama's *Karruku*

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'No one can create nature but Nature grants everything for survival'. Human being made the great impact in the universe during twentieth century by expending the innovation of science and technology and accustomed to machineries for hasty growth. The literary critic tries to study how this close relationship between nature and society has been portrayed by the writers in their works. As literature has become a mode of expression about environment and it's important in human life is inevitable. Bama is a Dalit feminist writer. Her emphasis on caste, gender, Dalit feminism, community clashes etc. Since she was born in a village she keenly observed the life of people and their language, culture etc. Bama in her *Karukku* has used nature as a backdrop for her writing. The present paper seeks to analyze her village background which has been surrounded by natural paddy fields, mountains, lake, ponds etc, which Bama has used before her description of Dalit society. This shows her involvement with nature further proves that her love of nature and environment emerged in her writing.

Introduction

Environment deals with all floras and founa. In a human's life nature plays a prominent role. Nature and environment decides a person's behavior, character and his uniqueness. Ecocriticism is regarded as a theory of literary criticism about the study of literature and environment. It also studies the representations of nature in literary works and of the relationship between literature and the environment by authors' experience with nature and environment. As a separate movement or school of literary criticism, ecocriticism started developing in the 1990s. In environment we could find all the living organisms like trees, bushes, creepers, plants, birds,

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animals etc. Nature has been regarded a best teacher for human being, as Henry David Thoreau said “I took a walk in the woods and came out taller than the trees”. Nature gives knowledge and strength to human being. No one can give best as nature gives to one. When the man enclosed with nature he did not experience any natural calamities. After the civilization people began to disturb nature, consequently they meet the natural disasters. Now we are aware about nature and we try to save nature in all possible ways.

In many literary works in English, nature has been a prime role. Colonialism has been a significant factor in the devastation of environment worldwide which reflects in literature. The transformation in the social and cultural environments of the world have completely changed the representations of man's attitude towards nature in literary expressions. Applying ecology or ecological concepts and themes to literary criticism proves to be an enhancing process to literary studies. Ecocriticism is a rapidly expanding area of research covers wide range of texts and theories which study the relationship of man and nature. Environmental studies in literary texts through nature imagery, gender construct, feminism, man-woman relationship, tourism, culture etc have wider meanings than what is portrayed through their literal expressions.

Many writers have become ecoconscious or environment conscious. They have used Nature as Landscape as beautiful atmosphere or lively atmosphere in their writing. Nature always takes great part in people's lives. From the origin of the universe living creatures depends upon nature. Nature's signs attracted all creatures and everything enclosed the nature. Since nature gives the philosophy of life authors imbibe nature's activities and their intimate relationship with nature reflects in their writing. Nature and Literature cannot be separated because authors write from their own experience with the environment they lived. Bama's writing depicts her own culture and environmental settings of her own society.

Bama begins her writing with the charming words “Our village is very beautiful. Even though you don't see much by way of progress or anything like that here, I love this place for its beauty”.⁽¹⁾ which emphasizes her love with nature and her intimation with the indigenous set up of environment around her village. Before describing caste and society she reverences about her village setup. The village surrounded by Western Ghats, bed spreaded green trees which touched the sky. This symbolizes village filled with natural prosperities. People called the mountains by its names. “The mountains right around the village. They are lovely to look at. People say they are the Western Ghats. They have names, too, for some of the mountain peaks. One is called the Marrakkaa puucchi Malai. This mountain, if you look at it properly, is just like a heap of paddy.

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Right at the peak, perches a crag that looks exactly like a heap of paddy measure. That's why the mountain has that name".(1)

While describes about the natural background of her village she depicts the indigenous god called Perumal Sammi Temple which gives identity to naickker's fields. And the Naickers' fields surrounding it are called the perumaara fields. There are many more rocks round about her village such as "...Nari paara, vannan paara, vattala vitthaam paara".(1) It seems that in olden days Narripara was full of crowded with foxes. People used to say that the foxes would come to fields and ruin them. There is a tank at the top of the Vannam paara in the past the vannan boys used to wash the clothes. Vattala vitthaam naickar field is near by the paara so called vattala vitthaam parra. These rocks encircle the village make a boundary to the village.

Bama describes, during the rainy season her village looked more lushly beautiful. The rain water comes from encircle areas of mountains which accumulates plenty of water fills all ponds and lakes. People named the ponds and lakes each stand by side, strung together in a row: "Tammara kulam (lotuspond), Baathraang kulam (named for the priests or podagar who lived nearby), Jeevaneri kamma (the lake of life), Aiyar kulam (pond of the Aiyars), Periyakulam (the big pond)". It helps agriculture and the people dip bath, washes their clothes in lake water. When the big lake is fills with water people will enjoy in fishing. Small children entertain there while the buffaloes too take bath pleurably. Their childhood fills with green and pleasant memories. People have the close intimation with nature. When the pond is full of water people used to sit nearby banyan trees, they are talking of the past while they feel fresh breeze which makes them to sleep. "The wind blew fresh and cool, almost like a sea breeze. Such a sense of comfort there would almost into a slumber".(3)

When the people close with pond they could notice the wind wrinkle the surface of the water it makes endless tiny waves, which is pretty to see by them. As Bama depicts the picture of lake's beauty after the rain it fills with plenty of fish and other water creatures. "You could stand on the shore and watch the fish leaping. The bright fish would leap in to the air, glinting in the sunlight. Water snakes would lift their heads above the water and look about. Little boys aimed their stones at them. Padak! Quick as a flash they would disappear into the water".(3)

During the afternoon the care taker of the pond who held the fishing rights in the pond would go for lunch. That time people would use the earthworms to catch the fish very easily. As Bama describes; "People would light small fires of straw, right there on the shore, and roast the newly caught fish. It used to taste delicious". (3) Small children splash in the water and play like

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the small tadpoles come out during the afternoon. Some children they climb on to a buffalo's back and ride as far as the middle of the pond. Even the small children would dip bath in ponds.

During the summer the water content will reduce in the pond and lakes. As Bama says; "There is a small water source in the middle of the lake, surrounded by banyan trees. Even when the lake dried out, the little water held in centre of the lake. If it is dried fully people used to grow cucumber, millet like (cholan, Kambu). Bama recollects her childhood memories how she has spent the scorching summer with her friends. As she says; "If you went there and pulled off a cucumber to eat, its touch upon the tongue was wonderful on a hot day. In any case there is a special snatched by stealth".(4).

Bama depicts pictures of natural sceneries while she describing about dawn and dusk are splendid to see. Nature attracts everyone; make us to wonder about supreme power's creation. She observes the early morning sun is in bright red and huge and round would wake up in the east and climb in to the sky. "It would make its way, peering between the trees, glowing, its light spilling and sparkling. And in the same way, at evening time, when it went and dropped through the mountains, all the fields roundabout would be luminous with a yellow light".(4) While a cool southern breeze touch through the fields. Then the crops glowing, dancing in the western breeze, which fills the heart in delight. When the western sky was like looking upon a vision of god. And at the time the herons and crows and all the birds would return to their nests. This reverence shows her intimation with nature, her love of nature and her village. Nature created by supreme power, worshipped by man; man obtained all natural resources. Man mostly believed in nature lead his life in accordance with the nature's intimation. He lived happily without hurting the nature. After wards he destroyed nature for his grandeur of life consequently he met natural disasters. When man's activity with nature was ecofriendly, he gained a lot by nature in contrast when he was against nature he had to face all difficulties.

As a human being we cannot create nature but we can save it. If we save nature our future generation will be safe. Ecocriticism creates awareness of nature and apparently it takes the benefits, importance to the people. Despite Bama has been a Dalit writer, her intimation with nature reflects in her writing. As she being a nature observer she could study the human being naturally. Ecocriticism as a distinctive approach to the practice of literary criticism, it gives increased attention to literary representatives of nature and is sensitive to interdependencies that ground the author, character or work in the natural system. Bama's views about ecocriticism and ecology express her desires, shortcomings and emotions of her characters. Her writing strongly expresses her thoughts about nature, her village life style etc.

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