



FROM SCREEN TO SUSTAINABILITY: AN ECOCRITICAL STUDY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN SELECT INDIAN MOVIES

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Abstract

Ecocriticism has developed as one of the most noteworthy approaches in contemporary literary and cultural studies. It observes the relationship between human beings and the natural environment and pursues to comprehend how cultural texts represent ecological concerns. The growing environmental crises such as climate change, deforestation, pollution, and water scarcity are threatening the planet. Movies have become an actual medium for creating environmental awareness among the masses. Unlike literature, which needs sustained reading, films connect ideas through visual and aural elements which can reach audiences promptly and effectively. Indian fiction films have progressively expressed ecological issues and environmental awareness through appealing narratives and realistic portrayals of human collaboration with nature. This paper discovers environmental consciousness in select Indian fiction films from an ecocritical viewpoint. It also deliberates

how movies function as a powerful tool for environmental learning and inspects the representation of ecological apprehensions in selected Indian films. The study claims that cinema not only reproduces environmental realities but also inspires viewers to adopt environmentally responsible approaches. The paper highlights the importance of environmental sustainability and ecological balance in contemporary society with the help of Indian environmental movies.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Environmental Awareness, Indian Cinema, Nature, Sustainability, Ecological Consciousness, Fiction movies.

Introduction

The twenty-first century has observed increasing apprehension about environmental degradation and ecological inequity. Rapid industrialization, pollution, urbanization, deforestation, climate change, over population and depletion of natural resources has created serious danger to the endurance of living beings in any forms. Environmental issues have become dominant topics in various academic disciplines which include literature, cultural studies, social studies and media studies. Among these methods, ecocriticism has increased considerable importance because it examines the relationship between culture and nature and discovers how environmental anxieties are signified in literary and cultural texts.

The term “Ecocriticism” was first used by William Rueckert in his work “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism” which was published in 1978. It examines the ways in which nature, environmental

problems, and human interactions with the natural world that represented in literary texts. It encounters anthropocentric thinking which has taken place as humans at the center of existence and also it advocates an ecocentric perspective that recognizes the intrinsic value of all living beings and ecosystems. Ecocritics inspire readers and audiences to think judgmentally about environmental issues and to develop virtuous relationships with nature.

Initially, ecocriticism engrossed mainly on literary texts such as essays, poetry and novels. Later days, with the expansion of arts, media studies and visual culture, ecocritical analysis has prolonged to films, television programs, documentaries and also with digital media. Cinema has emerged as one of the most powerful forms of cultural appearance in contemporary society. With the help of visual storytelling, films have the power to communicate complex environmental issues in ways that are reachable, expressive, and attractive.

Ecocriticism and Environmental Awareness

Ecocriticism is not just concerned with recounting nature in cultural texts. Relatively, it pursues to comprehend how representations of nature impact human attitudes toward the environment. According to Cheryl Glotfelty, ecocriticism studies the connection between literature and the physical environment. Likewise, Lawrence Buell discusses that environmental texts inspire the readers to identify the prominence of ecological systems and environmental accountability.

The dominant aim of ecocriticism is to encourage ecological consciousness. Environmental consciousness refers to an alertness of environmental difficulties and assurance to protect natural resources in the environment. Ecocritical studies highlights that environmental crises are not exclusively scientific or technical issue,

but also cultural and ethical problems. Human values, principles, and performances play an essential role in shaping environmental outcomes. Ecocriticism challenges the assumption that nature exists simply for human use. It contends that rivers, forests, oceans, animals, plants and ecosystems own intrinsic value independent of their helpfulness to human beings. This view encourages sustainable development and ecological accountability. By examining cultural representations of nature, it pursues to substitute greater environmental awareness and motivate positive action toward environmental preservation.

Environmental realization has become increasingly significant in the contemporary world. Climate crisis, biodiversity harm, water scarcity, and environmental pollution affect societies across the globe. These challenges necessitate not only scientific clarifications but also deviates in cultural attitudes and social behavior.

Movies as a Foremost Medium for Ecological Communication

Movies occupy an exclusive position among present media forms because of its ability to syndicate visual images, sound, conversation, music, and narrative. Unlike books, that require time and concentration, films can convey messages promptly and efficiently to various audiences. An image on screen would often convey environmental genuineness more immediately than pages of printed description.

Films have the ability to influence public view, outline cultural values, and stimulate social change. Environmental concerns that may seem abstract in scientific reports become emotionally engaging when represented through cinematic narratives. Audiences would observe the devastation of forests, the grief caused by drought, the dislocation of wildlife, and the significances of environmental exploitation through clear visual

representation. Such experiences often produce understanding and inspire audiences to reflect upon their relationship with nature.

Another noteworthy benefit of cinema is its convenience. Films influence audiences through different scholastic, linguistic, and social circumstances. With the help of theatres, TVs, streaming boards and digital media, environmental communications would spread promptly to millions of spectators. As a result, cinema has become an imperative tool for environmental instruction and awareness. Environmental fiction films are operational because they combine amusement with ecological concerns. While audiences are involved by captivating stories and characters, they are concurrently exposed to essential environmental issues. In this way, films act as cultural communication that both entertain and educate. They inspire viewers to think judgmentally about environmental problems and motivate greater ecological responsibility.

Ecocritical Films and Environmental Representation

Ecocritical films are movies that discover ecological themes and observe the relationship between humans and nature. Such films often convey issues such as deforestation, climate change, pollution, wildlife preservation, environmental integrity, and supportable living. They encounter anthropocentric attitudes and promote ecological awareness. Environmental films characteristically signify nature not just as a framework but as a vigorous and momentous presence within the narrative. Forests, rivers, birds, animals and landscapes de-

velop expressive foundations that inspire human actions and experiences. By visual storytelling, these movies establish the interconnectedness of all living beings and highlight the prominence of ecological balance. Various environmental films analyze the significances of unrestricted industrialization and economic growth. They interpret how human greed and mistreatment of environment contribute to environmental devastation. Ecocritical films encourage audiences to reexamine dominant expectations regarding progress and development.

The efficiency of ecocritical films focus in their ability to change environmental issues into personal and emotional experiences. Rather than offering environmental problems as distant concerns, they demonstrate how ecological deprivation affects human societies, wildlife, and future generations. Therefore, environmental movies have become a prominent cultural force in encouraging ecological responsiveness and environmental involvement.

Environmental Consciousness in Select Indian Fiction Films

Indian movies have increasingly engaged with environmental concerns over the past two decades. Several fiction movies have emphasized ecological issues and highlighted the need for environmental protection. Among them, films like *Kaadan* (2021), *KadviHawa* (2017), *Jal* (2014), *Shreni* (2021), *Kantara* (2022) deliver significant illustrations of environmental storytelling.

The movie *Kaadan* focuses on the relationship among humans, forests, and wildlife. The film attracts attention to the destruction of natural habitats produced by developmental projects and commercial interests. By portraying the struggle between environmental conservation and economic development, the film highlights the prominence of defending forests and preserving biodiversity. It offers wildlife, particularly elephants, as essential components of ecological systems and promotes melodious coexistence between humans and nature.

Kadvi Hawa talks about the issue of climate change and its effects on rural communities. The film depicts the disturbing consequences of environmental deviations, including drought, crop disaster, and economic suffering. By portraying the lived experiences of ordinary people affected by climate change, the film renovates a global environmental issue into a human story. It establishes that climate change is not just an environmental concern but also a social and economic challenge.

The movie *Jal* highlights the water scarcity in dry regions. Water develops a symbol of survival, power, and struggle. The film illustrates the struggles of communities facing severe shortages of natural resources and emphasizes the urgent need for sustainable water management. The portrayal of environmental challenges in the the film encourages awareness regarding water preservation and responsible resource use.

The 2021 Hindi film *Sherni* reports the complex ecological and socio-political crisis of human–wildlife struggle in modern India. The movie sets in a forested region where a tigress becomes the focus of public fear and political argument, the film offers a nuanced exploration of the tensions between environmental protec-

tion, local maintenances, administrative governance, and political interests. Rather than representing the animal as dangerous, the narrative examines the fundamental causes of conflict, chiefly the constant violation of human activities into natural habitats.

Kantara (2022), can be examined through an ecocritical lens as a influential narrative about the relationship between humans, nature, ethnic traditions, and environmental justice. The film portrays the forest as a living, sacred entity which shapes the traditional identity and survival of the local community. The forest is signified as a space inhabited by divine forces. The spiritual relationship encounters the anthropocentric worldview that indulges nature as a resource to be exploited. Although these films depict various environmental issues, they present a common ecological message. They highlight that human survival depends upon environmental sustainability and that the mistreatment of nature eventually harms both ecosystems and society.

Human-Nature Relationship in Environmental Cinema

A dominant concern of ecocriticism is the association between humans and nature. Environmental movies often disclose the consequences of troublesome ecological balance and establish the interconnectedness of all forms of life. Human beings depend upon strong ecosystems for food, water, climate constancy, and overall well-being. Nevertheless, contemporary societies frequently treat nature as a resource to be misused rather than a system to be protected. Environmental cinema encounters this attitude by emphasizing ecological interdependence. It represents nature as a living object that supports human presence while concurrently pos-

sessing its own value. The devastation of forests, rivers, oceans and wildlife is offered not only as an environmental loss but also as a threat to human survival.

The selected Indian films in the study exemplify this perspective effectively. Whether addressing wildlife conservation, climate change, water scarcity, pollution issues, they highlight the essential of maintaining harmonious relationships with the natural atmosphere. The narratives in the movies suggest that environmental sustainability needs respect, responsibility, and collaboration between human communities and ecological systems.

Findings of the Study

The study classifies various findings concerning environmental consciousness in Indian fiction films. At first, cinema serves as an extremely effective standard for communicating environmental messages because of its visual and demonstrative impact. Films would reach large audiences very soon and create awareness on ecological issues. Secondly, ecocritical movies encounter anthropocentric attitudes by accentuating the intrinsic value of nature and the interconnectedness of all living beings. Thirdly, environmental problems such as pollution, climate change, water scarcity, deforestation, and wildlife preservation are increasingly represented in Indian fiction films. Fourthly, environmental films validate that ecological problems are carefully associated to social, economic, and cultural concerns. Finally, cinema subsidizes meaningfully to environmental education by inspiring viewers to develop environmentally responsible approaches towards the planet.

Conclusion

Eco-criticism delivers a prominent framework for understanding the relationship among nature, culture and the environment. Cultural texts play a vital role in shaping public consciousness and promoting ecological accountability. Among modern media forms, movies possess excellent power to connect environmental concerns because of its accessibility, emotional demand, and visual impact. Environmental films have become appreciated tools for nurturing ecological consciousness. Through visual narratives and powerful imagery, movies encourage audiences to reflect upon environmental issues and reconsider their relationship with nature. An ecocritical analysis of these films exposes that environmental sustainability is not only an environmental concern but a social and ethical necessity.

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