

Portrayal of Ecological Crisis with Interventions in North East India: An Analytical Study from Nagaland Poetic Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

Ecological concerns and crises are the priorities in the 21st century throughout the world, Asian countries, and India respectively. This research study investigates the portrayal of environmental and ecological problems and issues in North East India through an analytical lens and perspectives rooted in the poetic descriptions and expressions of the North East Region. By nature, Northeast India is characterized by its unique cultural heritage and rich biodiversity confronting various ecological challenges. Some of the challenges range from habitat loss and deforestation to climate change influences and loss of tribal ecosystems, indigenous knowledge traditional practices, and so on. In this article, the researcher through an analytical examination of poems from North East Indian poets particularly from Nagaland highlights the intricate connections between ecological literature and traditional identity, shedding light on the North Eastern region's ecological concerns and the ways in artistically expressed through poetic discourse. In this study, the following Naga poetic expressions Monalisa Changkija, Temsula Ao, Nini Lungalang, and Easterine Kire are considered. Throughout this paper, the scholar examines how the poets from the Nagaland region try to understand, perceive, interpret, and respond to environmental problems portraying the role of literature in promoting ecological awareness, lobbying, advocacy, and stewardship.

Keywords: Ecological Crisis, Poetic expressions, Literature, Eco-criticism, identity, Impact

INTRODUCTION

North-East India is a land of biodiversity, ecological richness, and cultural distinctiveness with a mosaic of cultures and varied ethnic groups of people having strong traditions and relationships with nature. Sharma (2019) presented this region of eight states including Nagaland it is part of a destructive zone and it is known for its immense diversities in all aspects such as cultural, geological, ethnic, and bio-system. This article presents the ecological crisis of North-East India particularly of Nagaland state with its four poetic expressions of literature. The Eco-criticism of the poets of Nagaland such as Monalisa Changkija, Temsula Ao, Nini Lungalang, and Easterine Kire reveals their concerns over the ecological concerns in their region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Glotfelty (2015) illustrated that environmental studies respond to the growing awareness of the negative impact of the human mindless and modernized development initiatives that influence the balance of the ecology and its serenity. The impact of nature on the poets of North East can be understood and traced from the views of N. Chandra and Nigamananda Das as depicted in ‘Myth and Mystery: Contemporary Poetry in English from Northeast India’. Chandra and Das (2007) expressed that Northeastern poetry is very rich in manifold aspects of ecology and the poets rejoice and celebrate the glory of environmental awareness. The inhuman activities of deformation and exploitation of mother earth in different ways destroy the peacefulness and serenity of ecological balance; and distort the beauty of landscape and biodiversity. Mary Midgley (1983) promoted animal welfare and the principle of equality through her book known as ‘Animals and Why They Matter (1983)’.

OBJECTIVES

- To investigate the ecological crisis of Nagaland portrayed by Naga poets.
- To highlight the causes and themes of environmental problems in Nagaland.
- To bring out interventional strategies for the sustainable use of nature.

ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

According to Collin’s dictionary, Crisis is a situation or a condition in which something or someone is seriously affected. Ecological means it is the involvement with ecology or concerning environmental realities. The ecological crisis can be a long-term threat to the well-being of the Bio-Eco-System. Human beings constantly use both renewable and non-renewable natural resources.

Man-made activities such as toxic production, consumer lifestyles, industrial production, and so on exploit the earth. Berry (1988) said that human activity has changed the “chemistry of the planet”. According to him some of the ecological crises are ozone depletion, climate change, growth of deserts, and proliferation of toxins (Bertell (1998) and Silver (1994)). The overuse and exploitation of Mother Earth, resources, and nature have affected the class struggles between the poor and rich, between agricultural and industrial units (UNDP, 1998).

Table 01: List of Ecological Crisis in the 21st Century

Earth’s temperature rising continuously	Global warming and the Rising of sea water level
Constant increase in natural disasters	Heat waves and droughts
Loss of species	Loss of biodiversity
Extreme climatic conditions	Food and water insecurity
Deforestation	Economic disruption
Waste management	Air and water pollution
Overpopulation	Ozone layer depletion
Over-exploitation of natural resources	Water supply
Habitat destruction	Climate change
Less rainfall	Groundwater depletion
Acid rain	Volcanic eruption
Violence and terrorism	Urbanization, modernization, and westernization

Desertification	Plastic pollution
Land degradation	Ocean or river acidification

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology of this article is a descriptive design used with selected poems of Nagaland poets in an analytical study. The four poets from Nagaland are selected for this study: Temsula Ao, Easterine Kire, Monalisa Changkija, and Nini Langalang. The approach to this paper has been a textual analysis and content analysis of the poetic expressions and interpretations of nature-oriented and ecological tendencies of the Naga poets in North East India.

THEMES OF NATURE IN POEMS

Table 02: Representation of Nature Themes in Naga Poetry

The Story Teller (2013) Book of Songs	Temsula Ao-Naga Culture given preserving for posterity, the Culture and tradition of her community (Ao, 240-242). Ao states that modernization and Westernization have helped them to abandon their cultural knowledge and identity.
Stone People from Lungterok (2009)	She reveals the evolution of man from stones which are inanimate objects (Ao 1). This poem shows that the ancestors of the Ao-Nagas originated from 6 stones in Lungterok. The themes of nature and man are interwoven and their consciousness of their ethnic community connectedness.
Genesis (2003)	Easterine Kire highlights the abundance of natural resources in Naga areas which helped the ancestors to settle down and helped in their growth and formation of their identities (Iralu, 219). The ethnic group of people depends on nature for food and pleasure and their survival.
Of a People Unanswered (2003)	Monalisa Changkija portrays the ecological crisis that is industrialization and urbanization. She explains how human-induced activities have destroyed nature for their selfish material interests. The problems of overpopulation, colonial modernity, urbanization, transportation, plantation, mining, corruption, technology, and quick mobility have helped man to exploit nature (Changkija, 216).
Lament for an Earth	Ao laments over the miserable conditions of Mother Earth planet and the effects of globalization, modernization, and industrialization. She compares the earlier beauty of the Naga region of primitive earth with the present one and makes the comparison between the forest and woman (Lines 1-10). She presents the devastation of the forest with the girls who are helpless and molested. She warns that human activities as irresponsible, destroying the river, forests, and the connection between man and nature.
Blessings (Songs That Tell, 20-21)	Ao criticizes the advancement and development of human civilization by mistreating natural resources their eco-consciousness and their communities (Lines, 3-10). She warns humans of creating environmental imbalance, soil erosion, drought, flood, earthquakes, and other natural calamities.

The Garden	The Naga poet Ao, emphasizes the need to preserve nature with care and keeping the notion that taking care of earth and serving the garden and nature is serving God.
Bonsai (Songs That Try to Say, 17)	Ao strongly criticizes man for his inhuman attempt to control the earth and its growth for their pleasure and selfish benefits. His hunger for pleasure leads people to dominate nature and interfere with the rules of nature (Lines, 7-9).
MY Hills (Book of Songs, 157 – 158)	Temsula tries to portray the loss of peace, paradise, and more there is a detachment from nature and social unrest and conflicts and violence of human existence in the region (Lines, 19-23).
Prayer of Monolith	The poet expresses that the dejection of a monolith from its beloved is completely uprooted from the deep forest and is placed at the village gate by some strangers for beautification a decoration (Lines, 1-6). She also warns and raises her voice against the exploitative tendencies of human beings towards nature and their lack of eco-sensitivity.
Mist Over Brahmaputra	Changkija portrays the human failures and the filth that are caused and left behind by both literal and spiritual realities of life. She goes on to emphasize the symbolic connection is drawn between the river and the insignificant self.
One of these Decades	Monalisa expresses the condition of violence, battlefield conflicts of dreams gunfire, etc. This reality depicts that humans are being disconnected socially, physically, culturally, and spiritually from nature and land.
Child of Fortune	Nini Lungalang portrays the birth of the child welcoming it and names her the ‘Child of Fortune’ as an essence of hope and courage. In the story, the writer described the birth of the child known as Rokono has been approved with certain murmur of the people particularly of young women. She projected the real truth and bitter situation of mothers who dissent, anguish, and struggle, in confronting the cultural mindset of male society.
Going Home	Nini portrays the simple truth that people of the cities are sacrificing their daily lives for their livelihood earnings of bread and butter and struggle for their continuous existence, survival, and progress in the metropolitan urban cities. The worth, importance, respect, and value of human beings are measured after knowing their wealth, bank balance, position of social status, and profession. People of the city exhibit very poor attitudes, and respect and show less concern over the people who are struggling in life doing hard work and living in the rural areas, and people of the city grow in materialism, greed, sophisticated life, and so on (Lines 6-7).

ENVIRONMENTAL THEMES

Naga poets from Nagaland in their poems, stories, novels, translated works, books, myths, and other literary contributions have consistently and persistently drawn the attention of readers and everyone to their ecological themes, concerns, warnings, and voices. Some of the environmental themes that they have covered in their poetry are detailed descriptions and representations of the beauty of natural landscapes such as forests, mountains, plains, hills, rivers, trees, animals, and so on.

IMAGERIES

Northeast poets also highlighted much imagery of flora and fauna in their writings. Mythical creatures, endemic species, region's wildlife, representation of bio-diversity, agricultural scenes, and activities, vibrant flowers, etc are the imagery used by the poets. Each landscapes and imageries hold historical and cultural relevance often connected to the people of the region.

TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL WISDOM

Naga poetry is very rich with the tapestry of environmental wisdom rendering service to both forms as a preservation and conservation of traditional knowledge and of artistic expression with a call to responsible ecological stewardship. Though Naga poetry is deeply originated and rooted in ethnic traditional environmental knowledge and wisdom of Naga people, often it reveals a deep connectivity to the land, environment, and nature of Mother Earth. Here, the researcher brings out some of the elements of traditional wisdom concerning nature are

- **Sacredness of nature:** showing reverence for nature and their integrity and identity in and through nature.
- **Interdependence:** Naga poetry manifests the notion of man as part and parcel of a larger ecosystem and stresses the interconnectedness of all living and non-living things.
- **Seasons and Cycles:** Poems of Nagas very often show an awareness of seasonal and climatic changes and challenges and natural cycles such as planting, harvesting, rain, flood, drought, etc.
- **Biodiversity and Traditional Knowledge:** Naga poets are thrilled to celebrate the natural biodiversity of the Northeast region as well as Nagaland expressing various animals, plants, and landscapes.
- **Animals and Plants as Symbols:** Plants and animals hold symbolic importance in Naga culture and poetic expression. For example hornbill symbolizes prosperity and protection, the river as a life-giver, flowers of the hill symbolize strength and resilience. Most of the poets use plants, animals, and other objects as characters embodying certain features, messages, and warnings.

ECOLOGICAL THREATS

Poets from Nagaland highlight their deep concerns, threats, lamentations, and warnings facing their land and communities. Their poetry is an instrument to serve as a voice calling to action and planning for their ecological responsibility. Some of the ecological threats of Naga poets are deforestation and agricultural and infrastructural development. They portray the consequences of deforestation such as soil erosion, loss of diversity, ecological imbalance, and disappearance of plant and animal species, unpredictable rainfall, global warming, pollution, industrialization, and megaprojects.

POETIC RESPONSES AND INTERVENTIONS

Most of the Northeast poets have responded well to the environmental problems and challenges of ecology in significant ways through their poetry giving their suggestions and interventions. The interventions deal with the coexistence of nature and human existence and the relationship of all living beings with a sense of sustainability.

1. Celebration of Nature

Temsula Ao, Monalisa Changkija, Nini Lungalang, and Easterine Kire poets represent and celebrate the beauty and importance of the natural world, and Nagaland in most of their poetry. Through their clear descriptions and representations of landscapes, flora, and fauna, the Naga poets raise awareness campaigns

and call the attention of everyone to celebrate nature and preserve the richness and natural wealth of the ecology.

2. Environmental Awareness

The poets from Nagaland often weave themes of ecological awareness into their voices, literary works, and textual and body texts and references. They have facilitated the awareness of certain issues such as deforestation, climate change, and loss of biodiversity. The promotion of ecological consciousness facilitates educating readers and everyone about environmental and natural challenges and issues of ecological crisis confronted by the Naga communities.

3. Cultural Preservation

Not only the Naga poets employ their poetry and other literary works to strengthen the significance of traditional ecological knowledge and cultural practices. By historical oral handing over the cultural and natural practices, knowledge, promote dialogue and customs of nature they contribute to the conservation of indigenous wisdom of Naga heritage.

4. Invitation for Sustainable and Responsible Action

Poetry can be used for advocacy and lobbying to stimulate the readers and others to take action, urging all to take responsible action and initiatives to protect nature and its resources. This demands legal, social, ecological, and all other aspects of human society for sustainable practices and progress, all types of nature preservation, reduction of environmental threats and hazards, improving the present environmental schemes and policies, better implementation of ecological programs, collaborative networks, and co-working with governmental and non-governmental organizations for the preservation of natural resources.

5. Critiques of Development and Modernization

Some of the poems do help everyone to understand the real situation of urbanization and question the relevance of modern development. Naga poets criticize the major developmental projects that harm and destroy the eco-system and so they encourage society to reevaluate modern developmental models and practices.

6. Hope and Personal Reflections with Resilience

Poets' personifications, personal reflections, comparisons, usage of metaphors, and imageries on the human beings connectedness with nature and its elements are seen. In some stanzas and sections of poems, poets express the deep sense of ownership of nature, own emotions and feelings, experiences of nature, and empathy for the environment. Amidst many problems and issues, poets portray and convey a sense of hope and resilience with nature's ability to recover and adapt the efforts to conserve the environment.

CONCLUSION

Poetry of eco-criticism of Nagaland always represents a sense of dialogue, environmental consciousness, ecological activism, depiction of the destruction of nature, modernization and irresponsible actions of humans with their impacts, and so on. This article also highlights their poets' voices and raises awareness for sustainability, conservation, and environmental restoration. Naga poets from the Northeastern region manifested their spiritual connection and rootedness with culture and ethnic identity. All poets focus on the depiction of indigenous communities and their connection with nature, culture, traditional knowledge, crisis, and strategic interventions. This paper brought out the poetic techniques of presenting symbolism, rhetorical strategies, comparisons of themes, and stylistic approaches in the region.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study is limited to the Naga poets and their causes, interventions, expressions, themes, and impacts of their eco poems. Scholars can study the poetry of North East India in an interdisciplinary collaboration with other disciplines. Researcher suggests that thematically comparisons of South Indian against North or North East Indian poems or differentiating the Indian poets from World poets on ecological crisis and the responses of poets can be studied. Another possibility is that scholar can study the beauty of nature and the tribal connectivity for their spiritual well-being and cultural identity.

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