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ENVIRONMENTAL LITERATURE: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

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Abstract:

The environment involves every aspect of our natural surroundings, alive and non-living. Animals as well as humans depend entirely on everything around natural world for their sustenance. It nurtures us. The environment has an enormous effect on how life starts, expands, persists, and the general happiness of everything that exists. The writers and poets have God's inspiration to write and create a beautiful piece of literature. So, environment has been an inspiration for writers as well. The best instances are the literary pieces of Wordsworth, Emerson and Thoreau etc. This paper seems to explore meaning, matter and definition of environment, human-environment relationship and a very short introduction of environmental literature.

Keywords: *Environment, Human-Environment Relationship, Environmental Literature, etc.*

“There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,”

-Byron, Lord. Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.

Background:

The environment in which we live is comprised of all beyond us. It involves every aspect of our natural surroundings, alive and non-living. Animals as well as humans depend entirely on everything around natural world for their sustenance. It nurtures us. The environment has an enormous effect on how life starts, expands, persists, and the general happiness of everything that exists. It gives us access to practically all of the things we need for survival, especially clean water to hydrate ourselves with, sustenance for digestion, and clean air to inhale. Further resources of environment are additionally essential supplied by our surroundings. Natural assets are those that the environment offers to us naturally - not ones that we have nurtured. It consists of elements that naturally occur on Earth, such as sunshine, water, atmosphere, land, plants, animals, and marine life.



The value and significance of it have been neglected by humanity in our pursuit of advancement. We are continuously ruining and deteriorating it. Environmentally unbalanced conditions are primarily caused by human activity. The environment is suffering from a number of problems, including the greenhouse effect, global warming, climate change, and many others. The very sobering truth is that we cannot return to the environment, but we can do something to preserve it. By protecting all natural resources and planting trees, each of us can help the environment. Man has always been living in the lap of nature. The chirping of birds, clouds, mountains, rivers, streams and rainbows is also part of it. Everything has beauty in its own way. All these things incorporate our environment. And we also know that lots of writers and poets have God's inspiration to write and create a beautiful piece of literature. So, environment has been an inspiration for writers as well. The best instances are the literary pieces of William Wordsworth, John Keats and P B Shelley.

Meaning and Matter of the word 'Environment':

The environment surrounds humans. We often use the term environment to refer to the social, economic, political and religious conditions surrounding humans in general. But here we use the word environment refers to the elements associated with natural factors on earth. So, there are different layers of air, water and land on and around the earth. The term environment is used for these different natural coverings. Every organism gets air, water, food and sunlight etc. from the environment to carry out their life. Hence it can be said that the environment is the basis of the entire ecosystem. The main components of the environment include, atmosphere, drainage and soil. In short, the geographical situation surrounding humans and the reciprocal relationship between organisms is called environment.

In the book of *Environmental Studies* published by University Grants Commission, the definition of environment is given as,

Everything that affects living organisms is the subject of environmental studies. The study is essentially a multidisciplinary approach that provides insight into human impact on our natural world and its integrity. It can be called an experimental (applied) science because it aims to answer the increasingly important question of how human civilization can be sustained with the limited resources of this earth. Biology, geology, chemistry, physics, engineering, sociology, hygiene, anthropology, economics, statistics, computers and philosophy all include different elements in the study of the environment (Bharucha, Web).

Life and environment are interrelated. The existence of organisms depends on the environment. Ever since the origin of life on this earth, it has been connected with the environment. Therefore, the environment is a complex of living and non-living components. The environment consists of air, water, trees, soil, mountains, animals, birds and various human activities. That is, the environment in which our life is spent is the environment. Every living being is thus born, grows, lives and is absorbed in the environment. So, there is a close relationship between human and environment or organism and environment. "The



environment is not static. Both biotic and a biotic factors are in a flux and keeps changing continuously” (Gadhavi, Web).

The relationship between human and environment is not present, but from the beginning of creation. When man lived in ancient times and lived a primitive life and was called a primitive man, he lived under the complete influence of nature or environment. The primitive man of the Stone Age arranged his needs and lifestyle under the influence of the natural environment. As a result, the natural environment was a nurturer-protector and patron for humans at that time. The environment has a strong influence on the entire living system, including humans. Environment is a special and unique natural envelope that influences human life directly and indirectly. As per *The Cambridge Dictionary*, ‘Environment’ means, “The air, water and land in or on which people, animals and plants live” (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org>).

The word environment itself is indicative. The envelope of natural components wrapped around a living organism is the environment. Environment is called Environment in English. The clear understanding of which is as follows: ‘The Environment is which we live consists of four major elements land, water, air and living organisms.’ The entire natural system on which it depends can be known as environment. The combination of the air we breathe, the soil that nourishes us, the environment around the earth that makes life possible on earth and the other organisms that exist on this earth with us is the environment.

Elaborating on the concept of environment, environment is the complete natural system on which all living things, including human beings, depend. The whole system that exists is the environment. The environment is the envelope of natural components wrapped around an ecosystem. In this way the concept of environment was clarified by different scholars.

Human-Environment Relationship:

All living organisms and the surroundings on earth are closely interconnected. The presence of breathing creatures on earth is based on the environs. When we count all living beings, human beings are also included in it. There is also an integral special relationship between human and environment. The contribution of the environment to the origin, status, rhythm and life of organisms on Earth has been invaluable. If the environment did not exist on earth, then human life on earth as well as on other planets could not be imagined. At present, humans are making tireless efforts to develop their life on other planets, but the environment on these planets is not the same as on Earth. So, the chances of their life; there are insignificant. If life is to develop there too, the entire link with the earth’s environment and its proper balance has to be developed. Therefore, if we understand it in this way, the standing of the environment on earth is self-evident.

The maintenance and balance of the environment is essential not only for the human race but also for each and every living creature on earth. If we look at the past few decades, we can see how many species of living things have become extinct and are about to become extinct due to human intervention in the balance of the environment. Over the years, the animal and the ecosystems living on this earth are dying and disappearing due to the damage done to this environment. Human life is becoming more and more conflictual due to the manipulation of nature. Even its existence is now threatened in the near future. In such



circumstances, as an intelligent social animal, it is in their interest to take some steps to preserve the environment. The various pollutions that have taken place are making a fatal attack on mankind.

Due to the change in the climate cycle, there is drought somewhere on earth and heavy rain somewhere and thousands of people are losing their lives due to this. Human being is suffering a lot physically, mentally, intellectually and socially due to the environmental damage and pollution. Hence it is imperative that we all wake up early to maintain it. All over the world, various efforts are being made to preserve the environment with full force. As for our India, our culture has already been a worshiper of nature. The purpose behind the worship of various elements of nature has been to protect them. We have given the proud status of mountains as fathers, rivers as mothers. Even, various festivals have embraced the vegetation through the worship of Banyan, Pipal, Tulsi, trees etc. Like trees, we have been worshipping animals and birds as vehicles of our gods. All these things which seemed futile at one point of time are now understood as appropriate when the great problem of environmental pollution has arisen in front of us. Our nature-loving culture is now all set to preserve it again. That is why a lot of efforts are being made at every level to create awareness. Even now the arts created to give pleasure to the mankind. To realize this goal, nature-environment has been given place. The literature, sculpture, arts, such as architecture, painting and film, have become very prominent in this regard. Various works of literature also preserve and protect nature through playful forms which draws our attention toward environs.

Environmental Literature:

The writers take improvement of the suitability of their substantial to create the surroundings more evocative and they can encode natural materials very plainly. They can define the forum of flowers, the croaking of nightingales and the music of the sea. This can bring the same amount of consciousness, the same amount of diversity and the same kindness in the imitation of the sophisticated natural surroundings. In this way, the writers can touch everything from nature freely. From the earliest times till nowadays, the authors of the sphere have specified as spontaneously placetocountrysideintheiretablissement. Thus, environment has been variously described in the literature of the world. Charles Darwin's *on the Origin of Species* (1859) is the magnum opus which illustrating human and environs' ties. This volume enlightens how humans came to be on earth. Darwin explained very nicely how every living thing that breathes on this planet should survive and that even a social animal called a human should show mercy to every living thing and protect the planet.

William Wordsworth was from Cocker mouth in Cumberland among environment which played a very substantial role creating him a poet, sonneteer, priest and prophet of nature. His real improvement came as of the lonely woodlands, through the stream, from tributaries and amid the high lands and peaks. The poem, *Written in London, September 1802* studies with poet's suffering and discomfort to distinguish how the pleasing way of existing natural life has been discarded by the people of his period. "The wealthiest man among is the best / No grandeur no win nature or in book" (7-8). Considering these lines, the poet does not state everyone who would create pleasure out of nature, records and moral values. The three philosophies which man conscious life are rapine, avarice and expense. His other poem



named, *London, 1802* discoursed on John Milton's internal and external features to the natural surroundings. The beautiful lines such as, "Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart: / Thou had a voice whose sound was like the sea: / Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free," (9-11) reflect John Milton's soul was impartial alike an intergalactic – (the sun) which means Milton was a diverse type of personality. Milton's rhythmical plea had a widespread consequence which is conveyed by Wordsworth saying that his power of speech was impartial like the thriving oceanic. His soul and emotion were unrestricted as of some what type of enticement, it was delightful and that is why Milton might be conscious in his life time in a communal mode but then again by spotlessness.

Even, Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market*, published in 1862, is also a marvellous work depicting a different kind of fruit and plant symbolism. *Mansfield Park* is also the one of the best instance or greenery imagination, vegetal allegory and flora. John Keats has also given some delightful descriptions of nature in *Ode to Autumn*. The creator's instinct is to portray nature in a sentimental way. When he is in mourning, he calls the flowers falling from the trees; tears falling from his sympathy. *A River* is a poem on the theme tunes of altogether sundry visualizations of river Vaigai a tangible river. In wide-ranging, poets are originated of working poetry on the river with water in it, because he experienced that the turns out to be penetrating barely when the river is flooded with water. A K. Ramanujan describes a unique delineation of water in this poem.

Ruskin Bond's works display bionetwork as a significant or leading subject and an apprehension for expected reduction compelling residence in fleshly scenery. The expected beautiful mountains of Dehradun and Mussoorie form the locale of his works and reveal his enthusiastic confidence in the curative supremacies of wildlife. His celebrated work, *No Room for a Leopard* is about deforestation and its associated reverberation. This work has offered the tragic condition of the creatures after deforestation. In *An Island of Trees*, he has exposed the bottomless connection between humans and non-humans based on adoration and concern.

Raja Rao Mohanroy's *Kanthapura* discoursed the mounts and streams plays the significant role in beings breathes. In addition to using nature as a stimulant, poets and writers have instilled consciousness in nature. Human beings have thoughts and minds, so even in nature it has created a mood. Indian poets have also had a glorious vision of supreme consciousness in nature. To him, nature has always seemed eternal, immutable and unchanging compared to the insignificance and ephemerality of human beings.

In chapter no. 8 of Sylvia Plath's, *The Bell Jar*, Plath mentioned that, "I felt my lungs inflate with the onrush of scenery-air, mountains, trees, people. I thought, 'This is what it is to be happy.'" In the poem named, *Blind, Deaf Fish*, the poet demonstrates a dense dark cave, the river passing through it, on which sits someone older than the sun, God (Savior of the whole world). The fish floating in the river is a symbol of man. So, if we talk about the literature, there is a lot of depiction of environment in it.

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