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## JUNGLE NAMA: A SHARP FOCUS ON THE PERENNIAL AGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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### ABSTRACT

*Jungle Nama is a captivating and allegorical novel that takes readers to the heart of lush green forest known as Sundarbans. It is a mysterious jungle with so many hidden histories and stories. Written by talented writer the story follows the thrilling adventures mixed with moral thoughts. The novels The Hungry Tide and The Gun Island speak lot about the beautiful islands on Sundarbans and the threats imposed to the eco system by human beings. Readers can view these outstanding literary pieces which pictures a world with teeming dangers, beauty and unrelenting spirit of exploration. Jungle Nama with its unique style and structure will definitely create an impact on readers. Current world is filled with so many ecological threats that leads to slow extinction of human beings. This paper aims to how cruel human beings are than animals. People can deceive and kill anyone without a second thought for their greedy needs. Also it suggests the solutions for all human imposed threats are to control human greed.*

**Keywords:** Myth, Climate Change, Greediness, human borders, Ecology.

Jungle Nama is one of the finest graphic verse novels wrote by Amitav Ghosh. It condemns human greed and its severe impacts. *Jungle Nama* is based on the myth of forest goddess Bonbibi. This novel can be classified as an allegory for human induced climate changes. The story is set in Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest closely loaded with different species and vegetation. *Jungle Nama* is a contemporary retelling of the ancient Indian epic that is the story of Bonbibi – the forest goddess. This verse novel, blended with Ghosh's imagination and interpretation highlights the ecological issues of current world. Ghosh focuses on two themes in this novel. One is human greed which has no change from past to present. Another one is the ecological imbalance created by human beings which haunts the whole planet.

Throughout the novel Ghosh indirectly means how the natural resources are being exploited by human beings and complexities faced by humans and non-humans. He reminds that the impact will be severe which one cannot even imagine. Sundarbans is harmfully used for

human purposes and Sundarbans acts as a backdrop to the issues such as deforestation and climate change. “This is the Sundarban, where laden waters give birth; to a vast jungle that join ocean and earth” (1 JN). It is understood that water is a protector and creator of several things.

It is believed that long time ago there lived a demon named Dhokkin Rai who hunted humans vastly. He is very powerful and can change to any forms and shapes. Bonbibi and Shah Jangoli were two children sent from heaven to accomplish a divine mission. They were born to Berahim a fakir from mecca and his wife Golabibi. Bonbibi and Shah Jangoli fought with Dhokkin rai and defeated him. Out of mercy Bonbibi returned half of the kingdom to Dhokkin Rai, that is deep forest. The inhabited parts of Sundarbans are under the control of Bonbibi. People who go to collect honey and woods will pray to Bonbibi to save them from wild animals.

No human would dare to go near Dhokkin Rai’s boundary and if anyone enters they will lose their lives. “Thus did Bonbibi create a dispensation, that brought peace to the beings of Sundarbans. Every creature had a place, every want was met, all needs were balanced, like the lines of a couplet” (6 JN). Ghosh asserts that every living being on earth should be satisfied with the basic needs, and not for their greed. Nature itself created a boundary for human beings and animals and the boundary brought peace to all. Ghosh reminds that needs should be balanced like lines of a couplet. Whenever the boundaries are trespassed then peace will vanish.

Currently, Sundarbans lacks this balance because the mangroves are highly cut down for firewood and other purposes. “Rising salinity level in the delta is taking a toll on several mangrove species such as *Sonneratia apetala*, *Nypa fruticans* and *Bruguiera gymnorhiza*. Their growth is becoming stunted as they can’t withstand salinity above 20 psu (practical salinity unit). The average salinity of sea water in Bay of Bengal is 33 psu (which is equal to 33 gram of salt in one litre of water). Because of reduced sweet water flow and intrusion of salt water from the sea these trees are either dying or suffering from stunted growth,” said Abhijit Mitra, former head of the Marine Science Department of Calcutta University” ( <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/sunderbans-losing-its-dense-mangrove-cover-govt-report-101642099620808.html>) .The salinity of sea is increasing because of global warming. To be precise every climatic crisis happening in our planet are inter connected.

Ghosh, through his characters highlights two kinds of personalities here. He introduces two characters Dhona and Mona. Dhona was a rich one but a covet and selfish person. Mona was completely opposite to him, he lived a content life with comfort and peace. He worked hard and was happy with whatever he had. Dhona who always wanted more decided to get lot of timber, wax and honey. Dhona knows during spring season mangroves will be filled with hives and he wanted to collect as much as he can. He calls Mona to help him but latter refused to go. Mona advises that already money is plenty with him and it will lasts for a life time. Mona also reminds that whoever enters into forest with greed and selfish thoughts, will be in danger. Advises went futile and Dhona replied that “adding to your income is not a sin”.

Dhona then finds Dukhey a small boy who is his poor relative. He directly went to Dukhey’s house and tempted him. Dhona offered gold coins and a girl to marry only if he accompanies him to an adventurous ride to deep forest. Dukhey felt that it’s a great blessing to become a sailor but his mother refused saying that mangroves are realm of great danger. The young mind is easily exploited with the greedy needs of Dhona. Sundarbans are home to Royal Bengal tigers, estuarine crocodiles and poisonous snakes. No one will dare to enter inside the forest. These animals are actually protecting forest for a long time. As technology develops the

natural world changes.

Ghosh explores the after effects of greed and exploitation. The boundaries are violated and natural world is disrupted which resulted in loss of balance. Through the character Dukhey, Ghosh exposes how young minds are attracted and corrupted easily by the corporate world. The cunningness in the world of business is not familiar for the ambitious young hearts which are easy to corrupt. Dukhey's mother gives a detailed description about the tide land and its dangers. "Oh my son, beware. You are going to the tide land where dangers are legion. In the mangrove forest many strange things happen" (22 JN). Tide lands hides so many dangers and secrets, Dukhey's mother warned him that Dhokkin Rai is a shape shifter hunts humans in the form of tigers. Dhokkin Rai always chooses the irresistible people and he will try to kindle the greedy demon in man. She reminds to call Bonbibi in scary situation.

When Dhona finds the outer forest barren they slowly entered to deep forest that is the abode of the beast. The demon played a many tricks to tempt them. He showed hives but when Dhona touched, everything disappeared at last Dhokkin Rai possessed Dhona and ordered to offer a human in return he promised to give a lot of wealth. The alluring words of the beast made Dhona convinced and he left Dukhey in the middle of the forest. Human greed is very dangerous and blind which destroys so many lives around the world. The world wars happening around are great examples of human greed most of the ecological disasters happening in the corners of world are after effects of human actions.

"The value of wax is greater than that of honey, that's what I give you, you will make much more money. A deal like ours deserves the finest reward, take my offer, let the honey be dumped overboard" (45 JN). These words of Dokkin Rai made Dhona to surrender Dhukhey somehow. When Dhukhey saw the beast's face he called Bonbibi with all his heart and her brother Shah Jangoli came to his rescue. "You must stay within your bounds and never transgress; with what you have you must make do, don't seek excess" (56 JN) These lines spoken by Bonbibi is like a warning to whole mankind. Taking excess resources is actually exploitation of nature which can be easily saved for future. Cutting down so many trees and planting some saplings will not rectify the mistakes. Everyone should learn to quench the fire of greed.

People who easily move according to current situation never cares about any consequences. "According to an analysis by Business Insider, fashion production comprises 10% of total global carbon emissions, as much as the European Union. It dries up water sources and pollutes rivers and streams, while 85% of all textiles go to dumps each year. Even washing clothes releases 500,000 tons of microfibers into the ocean each year, the equivalent of 50 billion plastic bottles." (<https://earth.org/fast-fashions-detrimental-effect-on-the-environment/>) This report is a blow to whole human species. Authorities are acting blind because the common concept is that as Dhona said in *Jungle Nama* 'income is not a sin'. Everyone is only eager about how to fill own pockets instead of caring for Mother Nature.

Story moves like how greed plays unwanted games to avoid trials. Dhona with all his wealth returned to village and lied that Dhukhey was lost in forest. The little boy's mother cried desperately, meanwhile the fortune was better to Dhukhey. "I'll send you one mounted on my own crocodile; your goods will follow behind, you'll go back in style, you'll ride the rivers, with the pomp of a raja" (64 JN) Thus the moral lightens that even nature helps and protects humans if no harm is done to nature. Nature never neglects and hesitates to provide the supplies to living

beings.

Nature not only creates but also destroys sometimes. In his work *The Hungry Tide* Ghosh states that “There are no borders here to divide fresh water from salt, river from sea. The tides reach as far as three hundred kilometres inland and every day thousands of acres of forest disappear underwater, only to re-emerge hours later. The currents are so powerful as to reshape the islands almost daily-some days the water tears away entire promontories and peninsulas; at other times it throws up new shelves and sandbanks where there were none before”. (THT ,7) Nature becomes furious only because of human beings and not of other species.

The concluding lines of *Jungle Nama* remind the readers to live without greed. “All you need do is be content with what you’ve got; to be always craving more, is a demon’s lot. A world of endless appetite is a world possessed, is what your Munshi’s learned, by way of this quest” (70 JN) Ghosh in the ending note clearly states that the immediate urge to protect our planet. Ghosh also examines that the story of Bonbibibi legend is not bound to a single tradition or faith. “The ideas of limiting greed and preserving balance between the needs of humans and those of other beings – do not belong to any one tradition” (77 JN) Ghosh centralizes the idea of eco centrism by claiming that stories like these should be considered seriously by understanding the values. He uses the word planetary crisis to emphasize the prevailing situation.

"Climate change poses a powerful challenge to what is perhaps the single most important political conception of the modern era: the idea of freedom..." (TGD 119) These words in Ghosh’s *The Great Derangement* discloses that while "freedom" in and of itself is not a bad thing, it seriously hinders meaningful action in tackling the climate catastrophe. People do not want to be bound by strong institutions like governments or bureaucracies; they do not want their quality of life to be compromised, nor do they want further restrictions, laws, or mandates. People believe that if they choose to drive recycle compost, or follow a vegan diet, they are doing their part and that should be plenty. Since it infringes upon their sacred right to freedom, they do not want to be told they must take action. This kind of attitude creates most of issues and keeps it alive for long.

This beautiful piece of work discloses that crisis will arise easily but to tackle the issues will not be an easy task. “As the world grapples with rising water use and climate-fuelled drought, countries from the United States to Israel to Australia are building huge desalination plants to bolster their water supplies. These plants can create water for thousands of households by extracting the salt from ocean water, but they have also drawn harsh criticism from many environmental groups: Desalinating water requires a huge amount of energy, and it also produces a toxic brine that many plants discharge right back into the ocean, damaging marine life. Recent desalination plant proposals have drawn furious opposition in Los Angeles and Corpus Christi, Texas.” (<https://grist.org/technology/desalination-carbon-capture-brine/>) This is one of the latest system to the process desalination, but it seems not easy and opens door to another ecological issues. Humans are thus struggling to make their lives safe on this mother earth but they don’t know how far it is possible. So the solutions should be like without creating any more new problems. The *Jungle Nama*, with its style and narration stands unique in the array of eco literature collections.

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