

The SPL Journal of Literary Hermeneutics

A Biannual International Journal of Independent Critical Thinking

Double-blind, Peer-reviewed, and Open Access Journal in English

Vol. 6 Issue 2 Monsoon Edition 2026 e-ISSN 2583-1674 Page no. 106-115



www.literaryherm.org

www.cavemarkpublications.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64846/SPLJLH.2026.6239>

ORCID <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-3541-1539>



Ecofeminist Perspectives in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island*

Arpana Gaur

Corresponding Author: Arpana Gaur, Assistant Professor of English, PMCoE Govt. Hamidia Arts and Commerce College, Bhopal (M.P.), India, gaurarpana@gmail.com

Research Article

Keywords: *Hungry Tide*, *Gun Island*, Sundarbans, Ecofeminism, Environment, Nature, Cultural revolt, Survival, devastation, preservation

Article History

Received: June 4, 2026

Revised: June 16, 2026

Accepted: July 1, 2026

Impact Factor

SJIF 3.975



ISSN 2583-1674 (SPLJLH)



Abstract

Indian Writing in English is a distinctive genre which comprises plenty of themes. Ecofeminism has been always an issue of debate in it. Particularly, the novels of Kamala Markandaya, Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai, and Amitav Ghosh have covered broadly the theme of ecofeminism. Kamala Markandaya's novels focus on rural substance covering the vulnerability of the rural India. Human migration, gender discrimination, women predicament, cultural revolt, environmental crises etc. are the major themes in her novels. Arundhati Roy's novels are also replete with such themes. Her fictional world exhibits the interior and structural marginalization of women. Amitav Ghosh's novels reflect ecofeminism in a very artistic manner. His *The Hungry Tide* is a famous novel which has tackled the issues of ecofeminism. In his *Gun Island*, Amitav Ghosh has presented his critical views about the impending need to improve relationship between the human beings and the natural world. Both these novels have protective appeal for local traditions. Through the mouths of his female protagonists like Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies, and Greta Gaard, Amitav Ghosh has presented his own outlook regarding the nature and human world. He slightly attacks over the expansion of industrialization that is swallowing Environmental phenomenon. The present research paper intends to focus on those elements of Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island* exhibiting the themes of ecofeminism in rural as well as in urban areas.

***Correspondence:** Arpana Gaur, gaurarpana@gmail.com © (2026) All rights are reserved with the author (s) published by CaveMark Publications. This is an Open Access Article distributed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any form or medium, provided that the original work is appropriately cited or acknowledged. This paper is available online at www.literaryherm.org, and CaveMark Publications, India, published it.

The concept of ecofeminism concerns with a critical framework that reveals the linkage of women's oppression and the nature's exploitation. The former is exploited under the clutches of patriarchal system of society and the latter under the clutches of industrialization, privatization and globalization. Both, women and nature are being suppressed and oppressed merely for quenching the thirst and hunger of wealth in capitalists. In the race of so-called progress, the capitalists have lost their sense of sensibility. They are seen ignoring the human values. By hook and by crook, they want to earn money sacrificing the happiness of women and the world of nature; plants, trees, natural resources of water etc. Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2016), and *Gun Island* (2019) are concentrated on this burning issue of ecofeminism. In *The Hungry Tide*, Piyali (Piya) and Nilima Bose are two female protagonists who are seen coming forward to shape the social and ecological landscape of the Sundarbans. Piyali (Piya) tries to break the boundary of language that is hinderance between man and man. She goes to the tide country for her research work on *Orccella Breviostri* (Irrawaddy Dolphins) Piyali is an American Nurtured Indian cetologist (Marine Mammal Biologist) of Bengali background. She has been shown working for bridging language ditches, and safety related protective things. Nilima, another female protagonist in the same novel moves from Calcutta to the Island of Lusibari.

As being a pragmatic social reformer, Nilima Bose makes a local women union, runs a hospital and leads an expedition to protect women's rights and environmental existence. Kusum, another important woman character in *The Hungry Tide* who fights for her survival against the patriarchal social system. Indeed, this is a tragic figure in the novel that attracts the mind of the readers towards the woman predicament prevailed everywhere in the world. On the other hand, in *Gun Island*, Amitav Ghosh has revealed ecofeminism by focussing on the destruction of natural environment and historic operation of women. This novel has revealed a number of historical points that tell us the tragic tales of women; particularly the women of India. The Snake Goddess Manasa Devi has been shown who is a deity. She represents feminine power. She is a symbolical character. She fights against the man's greed that is the root cause of human downfall. This novel has shown us how the patriarchal and capitalist system has bought devastation in the world and society.

Amitav Ghosh's above both the novels are the gateway to understand the ecofeminism in detail. The main motif of this research paper is to highlight those elements that are responsible for the devastation of women's life and environment. Amitav Ghosh plays a vital role in such issues related with ecofeminism. As being a diasporic novelist, he has roamed in human societies equally in home and abroad. He has grasped the nerves of women's plight and the devastation of nature and natural objects. In order to bring the contribution of Amitav Ghosh in the notice of readers, researchers and laymen, this research paper has been prepared. Amitav Ghosh's novels are replete with ecofeminism but this thing is not known to all, so the hypothesis of this research is to explore the things related with ecofeminism reflected in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island*. Both these novels are useful and advantageous to the present generation; particularly associated with research in literature. Unlike the earlier novels, these novels are informative so it is expected that the students, researchers and common readers would go through these novels' study deeply.

In this research, the analytical and descriptive research methodology has been used. The researcher has deeply gone through the both selected novels, consulted with the research papers written by others and the critical books have been consulted. Online websites have been sought to download some necessary study material. The entire study material has been studied and analysed deeply and minutely. "Ecofeminism sheds light on how literature can function as a tool for resistance, encouraging readers to rethink human-nature relationship in the face of climate change and socio-political inequalities. Ecofeminist literature remains a crucial means of fostering awareness and inspiring sustainable, inclusive futures even in an era of growing ecological crises." (Kumar, Senthil)

Despite the lack of a common language, Piya builds a strong bond with Fokir, the local Dalit fisherman who takes her around the Sundarbans looking for dolphins and finally dies while protecting her. This leads her to forming a family of sorts with Fokir's wife Monya and his son Tipu. Despite her efforts, this family is as unsuccessful as her parents had been, with America being equally confusing to Tipu as it had been to her mother. While Tipu finds his own way in life by overcoming the difficulties of his own migration journey to Italy, Piya does not

eventually find the promise of emotional fulfilment through her budding relationship with Deen at the end of Gun Island.

In *The Hungry Tide*, Amitav Ghosh has exhibited the scientific versus cultural issues together. The blending of the both the things is so artistic that it seems that they have natural relations. Piya, the protagonist has been shown viewing the dolphins hopefully being fit in greed to captivate it. There is a set goal of her. She looks at it with the ecological sight. On the other hand, the local islands have been shown through folklores. Seeing them as the parts of the folklores, Amitav Ghosh has expressed the artistic idea. In this respect, it is said:

The Megha had been on the water for some three hours when Piya heard the engine skip a beat. She was still 'on effort' on the upper deck, but there had been no sightings since that one Gangetic dolphin earlier in the day, and this had only sharpened her eagerness to get to the Orcaella's pool: a breakdown now, when they were so close, would be a real setback. Without interrupting her vigil, she tuned her ears to the engine, listening keenly. To her relief, the machine quickly resumed its noisy rhythm. (*The Hunger Tide*- 271)

Amitav Ghosh has portrayed the relations between home and abroad. When he discusses the issues of Kolkata and West Indies, he reveals that he is a diasporic novelist, replete with the feelings of Indianness. As far as the issues of the western countries is concerned, he speaks much more about West Indies. He writes:

Now, our Kolkata may not be as romantic a place as the West Indies, but for the cultivation of Piddington fell in love with storms. Out there, of course, they call them hurricanes and Piddington-Shaheb's love for them knew no limits. He loved them not in the way you might love the mountains or the stars: for him they were like books or music and he felt for them the same affection a devote might feel for his favourite authors or musicians. He loved them so much that he invented a new word to describe them: 'cyclone'. (*The Hunger Tide*-285)

It means that Amitav Ghosh has presented the scenes of India and the foreign country to reveal the things what the things are running between both. This thing indicates that the theme of ecology is replete in this novel. As a diasporic writer,

he has left no stone untouched to reveal. Here, he has revealed the things related Piya, the protagonist; actually, the female protagonist of the novel. He writes:

Piya shook her head as if to wake herself from a nightmare: the scene was so incomprehensible and yet so vivid that it was only now she understood that it was the incapacitated animal that was being attacked with the sharpened staves. She was still absorbing this when the tiger gave voice, for the first time. Instantly, the people around the pen dropped their staves and scattered, shielding their faces as if from the force of a detonation; the sound was so powerful that Piya could feel it through the soles of her bare feet, as it echoed through the ground. For a moment nobody moved, and then, as it became clear the tiger was still trapped and helpless, the men snatched up their staves and attacked with redoubled fury. (*The Hunger Tide*-293)

Piya as being a biologist proves the two things that are- the female is not less than the male in the matter of valour and wisdom. She is an intellectual fellow indulged with the field of research on wild-life conservation. Her task is so risky. As a heroine, she is ready to face any kind of challenges in her path during her field work. On the other hand, Amitav Ghosh has focused on the stream of feminism stressing over the fact that some women prefer to protest against their exploitation whereas some prefer to work, work, and work surpassing all the boundaries in the competition with men and the wild animals are not our enemies. Piya as a biologist and affectionate towards the wild-life is quite cordial towards the animals. As being an American intellect and researcher, she is keenly dedicated towards her job honestly even knowing that she is working on wild-life at the top risk. On the contrary, he is a victim of gender discrimination. She writes: "At the root of ecofeminism is the understanding that the many systems of oppression are mutually reinforcing. Building on the socialist feminist insight that racism, and sexism are interconnected, ecofeminists recognized additional similarities between those forms of human oppression and the oppressive structures of speciesism and naturism. An early impetus for the ecofeminist movement was the realization that the liberation of women -the aim of all branches of feminism -cannot be fully affected without the liberation of nature." (Gaard, "Toward a Queer Ecofeminism" 114)

Amitav Ghosh has revealed the impact of climate change on human beings. When the climate change takes place, the entire gentry is affected. The worse impressions are apparently visible in the public domain. Speaking about the global warming and the global changes, the novelist has shown us that the natural phenomenon take place naturally. They cannot be prevented but what happens within the human society is so vulnerable. Due to the climate change and natural calamities, the life of the million people is affected. Particularly, the life of women is badly affected. They sacrifice their own lives protecting their husbands and children.

Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019) has beautifully interwoven the themes of ecosystem and feminism. This novel intricates the life of women and the life of nature. On the one hand the narrative is concerned with the *Gun Island*, the imaginary place, replete with the beauty of nature, and on the other hand, on the same beautiful place the most beautiful creation of the nature (woman, the human being) is exploited in the numerous ways. In this novel, *Gun Island*, Manasa Devi is an ecofeminist symbol. She is a Goddess worshiped by the men. There is a cordial relation between human beings and the supernatural bodies. Such type of the blending of human beings and the supernatural bodies is quite remarkable.

Women and non-Human agency have been portrayed by the novelist. In this respect, Amitav Ghosh has touched the things of William Shakespeare. As being a diasporic novelist, he has known completely that the supernatural things or elements are not left by the writers of foreign countries. He himself used them in his novels. However, the days have gone when the readers used to believe in each and every thing he listened. Women were marginalized but now she is struggling. She is ready to face any kind of challenge. *Gun Island* is not merely a novel of passing the time. This is an informative novel having the mirrors of modern patriarchal society. Let us see:

Aila's long term consequences were even more devastating than those of earlier cyclones. Hundreds of miles of embankment had been swept away and the sea had invaded places where it had never entered before; vast tracts of once fertile land had been swamped by salt water, rendering them uncultivable for a generation, if not forever. The evacuations too had produced effects that no one could have foretold. Having once been

uprooted from their villages many evacuees had decided not to return, knowing that their lives, always hard, would be even more precarious now. Communities had been destroyed and families dispersed. (*Gun Island*- 48)

Here, the life and struggles of female protagonist, Ailia has been depicted in which she as the victim of the natural calamity faces unbearable challenges for her survival. Her predicament is so high that it cannot be defined in words. In the storm, thunder and flood time, like the other habitats, Ailia's habitat was also at the high risk. There was no probability of the survival she does not lose her courage and the will of living. Even the high risk of survival possesses the valour and wisdom. Amitav Ghosh, through this female character, has revealed an example of the heroic women of the contemporary India. Senthil writes:

Ghosh tries to react Modern Venice through the eyes of the Merchant. In the picture of 17th century Venice, the death toll increases because of the epidemic of plague in 1629 unfolds. The plague begins to recede only after the miraculous intervention of the Blessed Virgin. Cinta cleverly equates the Black Madonna with the A-Sa-Sa- ra-me, the Greek Minon goddess of Snakes similar to the Myth of Manasa Devi. (Senthil)

If we make a comparison between both these novels, it is to say that *The Hungry Tide* reveals Microcosmic and localized description of ecosystem; its emerging scenario whereas *Gun Island* reveals Macrocosmic and translational phenomenon. In *The Hungry Tide*, the novelist has portrayed regional characters, confined up to *Sundarbans*, a particular place in order to exhibit the happenings in the life of Bon Bibi and Shah Jungoli who have been shown as the pioneers of Hindu- Muslim unity. They are symbols of representatives of moral boosters. In *Gun Island*, the novelist has invoked the merchant- folk tale of Bonduki Sadagar who is a Gun merchant, and the snake Goddess, Manasa. In this way, the novelist has blended many things concerning regions and the world-scenario. As a conclusion, it can be said that Amitav Ghosh is a versatile genius. He has blended ecology and feminism together in both these novels discussed above. As being the part and parcel of the Indian society, he has portrayed the things minutely whether they are connected with the ecosystem or feminism. His tone is satirical when he criticises Indian ways of life. Attacking over the gender-discrimination, he has revealed a

number of the things. He has always favoured Indian society. As being a dysphoric novelist, he has visited many countries so on the basis of the foreign experiences, he gets success in this concern. He proves himself to be the real lover of nature and human beings. In order to establish pious relations between nature and man, there have been raised a number of the things that were sometimes ago were treated as the shame. He openly discusses on the sex, love and other type of the changes taking place in home and abroad.

References

- Ashna Francis. Gun Island: A Tale of Myth, Migration and Climate Change
Smart Moves Journal (IJELLH) September 2021 e-IsSN:2582-3574 p-
ISSN: 2582-4406, DOI:10.24113/ijellh.v9i9.11163 vol.9, issue 9, p-
23
- Gaard, "Toward a Queer Ecofeminism" 114
- Ghosh, Amitav. Gun Island.
- Ghosh, Amitav. The Hungry Tide.
- Gope, Vikas. Woman and Nature: An Ecofeminist Study of Amitav Ghosh.
EBSCO.
- K.Senthil Kumar, Dr. D.Franklin Vasee karan . Ecofeminist Perspectives in
Amitav Ghosh's Gun Island. "Advanced International Journal of
Research (AIJFR) E-ISSN-3048-7641.
- Maria-Sabina Draga Alexandru Critical Ecofeminism in Amitav Ghosh's
Fiction: From the Hungry Tide to Gun Island. "March 23 Research
Gate DOI: 10.35562/rma.294ebsite: The Hunger Tide- 271) ww.aijfr.
comVol.7, issue 3 (May-June 2026)

Arpana Gaur

Arpana Gaur is an Assistant Professor of English with 31 years of teaching experience. She holds M.A. and M.Phil. degrees in English and has academic interests in fiction and Indian writing. Her extensive teaching experience and engagement with Indian literary studies reflect her sustained commitment to higher education and the teaching of English literature.

Author Declaration

The authors hereby declare and certify that:

1. **Originality:** This manuscript is an original work and has not been previously published, nor is it under consideration for publication elsewhere in the same or substantially similar form at the time of submission.
2. **Authorship and Responsibility:** All listed authors have made substantial scholarly contributions to the conception, preparation, revision, and approval of the final manuscript. All authors accept full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and scientific content of the work and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the publication.
3. **Research Integrity:** The authors affirm that all data, results, interpretations, figures, tables, and references presented in this manuscript are accurate, authentic, and reported honestly to the best of their knowledge. All sources have been appropriately acknowledged and cited.
4. **Ethics Compliance:** Where applicable, the study was conducted in accordance with relevant ethical principles and approved by the appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Ethics Committee. All applicable ethical guidelines, institutional approvals, participant protections, informed consent requirements, and legal or regulatory requirements have been fulfilled. For studies not involving human participants, animals, or sensitive personal data, ethical approval and informed consent were not required.
5. **Funding:** All sources of financial support have been fully disclosed in the manuscript. Where no external funding was received, this research was conducted without specific financial support from any public, commercial, or not-for-profit funding agency.
6. **Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare that all financial and non-financial competing interests have been disclosed. Where no such interests exist, the authors declare that they have no known conflicts of interest that could have influenced the work reported in this manuscript.
7. **Data Availability and Record Retention:** Data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, where applicable. For theoretical or review-based manuscripts, this statement is not applicable. The corresponding author further agrees to retain the original research records, underlying data, ethical approvals, permissions, AI-use disclosures, and other supporting documents for a reasonable period after publication and to provide them to the Editor upon reasonable request for verification.
8. **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Disclosure:** Any Artificial Intelligence (AI) or Generative AI tools used during manuscript preparation, where applicable, were limited to language editing, grammar correction, formatting, translation assistance, or improving readability. AI tools were not used to generate research data, perform scientific analyses, interpret scientific findings, formulate scientific conclusions, or replace the authors' intellectual contributions. All AI-assisted content was critically reviewed, verified, and approved by the authors. The authors accept full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the manuscript. No AI tool has been listed as an author.
9. **Similarity Index:** The authors certify that the manuscript has been screened for textual similarity and that the overall similarity index is below **10%** (excluding

references, quotations, and standard bibliographic material), in accordance with accepted academic publishing standards.

10. **Copyright and Permissions:** The authors confirm that all necessary permissions have been obtained for any copyrighted material included in the manuscript and that, to the best of their knowledge, the work does not infringe upon the intellectual property rights of any individual, organization, or third party.
11. **Publication Ethics:** The authors confirm that this manuscript complies with internationally accepted standards of research integrity and publication ethics. The manuscript is original, has not been published previously, and is not under consideration elsewhere. The authors acknowledge that, if credible evidence of plagiarism, duplicate publication, data fabrication or falsification, image manipulation, copyright infringement, authorship misconduct, citation manipulation, paper mill involvement, undisclosed conflicts of interest, inappropriate or undisclosed AI use, or any other serious ethical violation is identified before or after publication, the journal reserves the right to investigate the matter and, where appropriate, reject, withdraw, correct, or retract the manuscript or published article and notify the relevant institutions, funding agencies, or regulatory authorities.
12. **Editorial Rights:** The Editorial Board reserves the right to request original research data, ethical approvals, informed consent documentation (where applicable), AI-use disclosures, copyright permissions, or any other supporting documentation at any stage of the editorial, peer-review, publication, or Post-Publication process to verify the authenticity, validity, and integrity of the submitted or published work.

