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A Peer Reviewed Journal

ISSN : 2278-280X

हिमालयन रिसर्च जर्नल
HIMALAYAN RESEARCH JOURNAL

Vol. X

No. 12

November 2022

Published by



Himalayan Scientific Society for Fundamental and Applied Research
Kalimpong



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Subscription Information: Himalayan Research Journal is published annually and the subscriptions are as follows:

Single issue: Rs 300/-

Single year: Rs 300/-

Two years: Rs 450/-

Three years: Rs 600/-

Payment may be made by cheque/draft payable to 'Himalayan Scientific Society for Fundamental and Applied Research' be sent to Chief Editor, Himalayan Research Journal, Kalimpong Science Centre, Post Office-734316, Dist. Kalimpong, West Bengal, India.

All corresponding related to the articles for the publication in *Himalayan Research Journal* may be addressed to the Chief Editor, Himalayan Research Journal, Kalimpong Science Centre, Post Office-734316, Dist. Kalimpong, West Bengal, India. The hard copy of the article may be sent at above address and soft copy by email at himalayanresearchjournal2012@gmail.com



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Research Article

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Can a Poet Save Nature?

Ecocritical Study on Terence Mukhia's Collection

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Article History

Received: 10th January 2022,

Revised: 02 May 2022

Accepted: 25 August 2022

Abstract: Poetry serves two functions- entertainment through its embellished language that consists of rhetoric, imagery, symbols, rhyme and rhythm; and it provides awareness of the surroundings by having a motive to ruminate and even question the things around. This paper aims to explore the contribution of a poet and the relation between a poet and nature. It attempts to study the poems of Terence Mukhia to trace the poetic consciousness about surrounding ecology and its impact.

Keywords: Nature, Ecology, nature and man, responsibility, human development

Introduction

The purpose of literature has been a matter of concern in England prior to 19th century. As a discipline it was not introduced in the universities. F. D. Maurice set down principles where the study of English literature would have the emancipatory function. Peter Barry in 'Beginning Theory' writes that the reason behind teaching English was "a distinctly Victorian mixture of class guilt about social inequalities, a genuine desire to improve things for everybody, a kind of missionary zeal to spread culture and enlightenment, and a self-interested desire to maintain social stability." The other concern was whether to segregate language and literature. English literature saw

a new life in 1920's when the pioneers, I. A. Richards, William Empson and F. R. Leavis began teaching English in Cambridge. Each of them sets the function and aim of literature. And from there the study of literature has never stopped. Prior to this, in the works of classical writers such as Plato and Aristotle one can witness critical theoretical perspective. By the time we reach poetry of the English Romantics we find how the poets expressed their concern about the style, theme, and language of poetry. Dissociating themselves from the Augustan heroic couplet and poetry as a poet like Wordsworth associated common man's life. In the *Pr* Ballads (1800) Wordsworth emphasises

on the use of common language, common man's life and keeping solace in Nature. This kind of poetry was unconventional in the 18th century poetry writing. Blake's mysticism, Wordsworth's Nature, Coleridge's supernaturalism, Keats's escapism, Shelley's defamiliarization, and Byron's Byronic hero were not just poetic expression of imagination but also representation of their age. In such poems one finds the voice for a change. This can be viewed clearly as one of the purposes of literature- to bring awareness about one's surroundings and the self, other than the purpose of entertainment. The language, structure of a literary work along with the content of it makes the work worth anything attention.

Moving along the line of literature as a knowledge provider we may ask what is the function of the writer or how does a writer maintain a balance between an entertainer and a value facilitator? Literature is inseparable from language and language has meaning or receives meaning from its reader or audience. That meaning of any text is shaped by the receiver's preconceived ideological set ups. But this is not to say that the writer uses language without meaning. The meaning given and the meaning received can always vary leading to the interpretation of texts from all aspects. This interpretative quality of literature allows a voice to the author and the reader / audience. Do, then, poets and writers use this voice of expression fused with imagination and save society? There's always an aesthetic as well as pragmatic approach to literature. Poetry, specifically, has language that not only conveys

the poet's thoughts but also embellishes. The lines, rhymes, rhythms are moulded with the expression of the poet. The expression drawn from experiences and observations are strong to cause a change, for they are a call. So literary works in general can be considered a call such as Yeats's the chestnut tree, Eliot's Wasteland, Maya Angelou's caged bird singing, Das's autobiographical Introduction and many more.

An artist is inspired by everything both beautiful and ugly. She/he experiences and observes everything around them. Nature has been one of the primary sources of inspiration and imagination to many artists over the centuries. Nature here can be understood as nature around and nature within. Nature around like rocks, seas, daffodils and nature within like compassion, envy, joyful etc. have been examined well by the poets and writers all across the nations. English Romantics such as Wordsworth considered nature for him to be "The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul / off all my moral being" (Tintern Abbey, 1798). His pantheistic approach toward nature led him to sense a universal connection between Nature and all of humanity. Wordsworth, therefore, made a connection with nature through his appreciation of everything in nature such as a "Violet by a mossy stone" (Lucy). Shelley also urges the west wind to spread his thoughts like it does to the autumnal leaves, only to be born again in the times of spring, giving enough hope of a better future. Shelley by doing so has attempted to express a larger motive of nature. The editor of the book Romantic Poets, Kanav Gupta, rightly writes, "The foremost challenge

before Romantic poetry is not just that of being but also of representation." Romantic poetry therefore has been "a quest for perfection" having a democratic ideal.

Ecocriticism that of the American transcendentalism and the Green studies of the British Romanticism are of significant merit in this study. Romantic poets need to be emphasised upon because they made a call to turn toward nature, to find harmony, peace and life. That call was of great importance in a time where every nation was moving ahead with the material, industrial growth. The greenery that Wordsworth recites has turned dry by the time we read Eliot. Dylan Thomas recalls the beauty of nature like in Fern Hill. If an artist like a poet is so inspired by nature, it would not be wrong to ask, thus, can a poet or a writer save nature? Do poets give back something to nature? In all literatures we find this an intriguing area to explore. This study now shall narrow down to one such literature, Indian Nepali literature specifically of the Darjeeling Hills.

The history of Nepali language and literature in India goes back to the times of migration and inter-ethnic interaction in Darjeeling. This gradually grew into ethno-linguistic unity. Nepali language thus developed as a medium of common communication in Darjeeling. It was only in the last decade of the 19th century that the Nepali language also became the medium of literary expression, after the publication of Bhanu Bhakta Acharya's translation of Ramayana from Sanskrit to Khasbhasa, now commonly called Nepali language. And it was Moti Ram Bhatta who published Acharya's

translation from Benares. Nepalese strongly felt the need to establish the identity of oneself on the basis of language and race. The inclusion and recognition of Nepali language in the Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution on 20th August 1992 played a major role in the identity-politics as well. In the field of literature, literary movement called Ayamik formed by Dr. Indra Bahadur Rai, Bairagi Kaila and Ishwar Vallabh is of great importance. Many Indian Nepali writers have contributed and are contributing to their society's existence by telling the tale of Darjeeling hills. The study now shall be narrowed further and take up Mukhia's collection of Nepali poems as a case study to explore the concern of a poet about nature that of Darjeeling in miniscule and of the world at large.

Abhibyaktiko Prasfutan: Pariwes Bimarsh in discussion

Terence Mukhia is a budding Indian Nepali poet who he is a member of Salesian College Translation and Research Center and has to his credit the translation of Agam Singh Giri's Poem Yaad translated as Reminiscence. His write-up on Agam Singh Giri under the volume Makers of Indian Literature, Sahitya Akademi, 2010 is an important literary contribution. He also has collection of Nepali poems to his credit, titled 'Abhibyaktiko Prasfutan: Pariwes Bimarsh' (*The Speaker's Outburst: Thoughts upon Nature*¹). It would not be wrong to say that Mukhia's outburst is an outcome of his observation and experience of man's treatment of Nature. In the title of the anthology, he uses the

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word 'prasfutan' which in translation becomes an 'outburst'. Dictionary defines outburst as violent expression or explosion of emotions, which happens when the limit or control over suppression gets broken or shattered. It's a loud cry of pain, dissatisfaction, and helplessness literally and metaphorically. The poems that we find in the collection by Mukhia attempts to explore those challenges. His poems are divided into two parts, part one deals with the outpouring of the poet's mind on various issues. And part two deals with the poet's concern with regard to environment. He is well versed in both English and Nepali languages. A scholar, a teacher, a poet and a critic can be found in him. In Mukhia's collection of poems we find poems influenced by politics, inspired by nature and society. His poems are both personal and universal.

We shall take into discussion some of the poems from both sections of the collection. Here he writes more about life as "*Haso-rodan jindagi / Sahro cha swikar garna...*" (Joy filled and sorrowful life / is difficult to accept...) and minutely ponders upon his surroundings that provide meaning to the poet's existence. In his poem, *Kina Tipaew?* which in English would mean Why Did You Pluck, he illustrates that plucking a flower for decoration only destroys the flower as the right place of the flower is its plant, followed by the statement that if one cannot give life why to destroy for one's selfishness at all. Here a flower can be a metaphor of life itself. In another poem, *Goshikhan Dara* (Butcher's Hill) the poet speaks of his visit to a butcher's hill in Rhenock and finds bare trees

where no birds' nests. It is a place where the goddess Laxmi is arriving at a place with a misty view that hides Kangchenjunga and other Himalayan ranges. There's a dry field like a dried river, houses of tin roof, a school huge as a bus and mobile tower huge as a missile-

"Dayatarfa bus jhailamo school

Alik para missile jhailamo mobile tower."

(On the right side is a school as huge as a bus / and a little away mobile tower huge as a missile) nearby hilly places such as Changsing Busty, Neora and Rachel, Kage Busty, Pedong and Damsang can be seen from faraway. Murmuring sound of river Reshi can be heard faintly. At the centre is the Butcher's Hill. The poem speaks in volume about the greenery around that is being overshadowed by the butcher's hill or simply to be understood as the butcher's place. The contrast between the size of a school and the mobile tower is a brilliant way of presenting society's ironic development. Butcher house can be metaphorically related to the society that rises on the flesh / labour of the other.

His *K Sarpaharu Kavita Bujhdainan?* (Don't the snakes understand?) has a strong political connotation. The snake, metaphor for evil, politics, development etc, pretends to understand but do not in reality. He writes- "*Bujheka bhanparchan, tara bujheka hudainan.*" He goes on to speak of different types of snakes to be found these days, especially cobra that keeps coming due to the change in the environment. Here, the environment change can be taken in two ways- the ecological change caused by the development and the political

change caused by rifts between various political parties in the hills of Darjeeling. Due to the loss of reason and labour, one has been forced to depend on the very poison. They rest on the same land which they use to defeat the others. Such snakes have to power to control their very leader. But as they do not have hands they have failed in the weaving of strong basket. As they do not understand poetry, they only pretend to be intellectuals and asks for best places, asks for respect. These snakes that we, the people, have fed with milk have grown into poisonous snakes- "*Hamile nai dudh pilayeka / Bishakt sarpaharu jahityahi chan.*" Mukhia express his distrust in the shallow politics of the hills.

His poem *Chamera Gauthali* has been taken from Guru Prasad Mainali's short story titled '*Paralko Aago*' (A Blaze in the Straw). Guru Prasad Mainali is popular for his short stories. The story deals with husband-wife relationship; how the anger of a husband, gossipy nature of wife and the habit of creating scene out of small issues destroy the house. It narrates the story of husband-wife conflicts and relationship. Chame-Gauthali, are the names of the central characters of this story.

The poet in his poem also highlights the basic things that can create havoc in any relationship, because, when we closely analyze this poem, we come across its significance in a macro level. The poet writes that anger has more heat than the fire and it is this anger that has destroyed Chame: "*Aagobhanda tato yorishle Chamelai / Polera, Pilsayera, Jalayerachodyo*" (More heat than fire, this anger has destroyed Chame). More to this it's Pride that has caused

destruction in husband-wife pride has been regarded to be more than 1000 volt energy and atom bomb, he writes, "*Hazar volt bhanda khatarnakh / Atom bomb bhanda ghatak ghamand...*" (More dangerous than 1000 volt and atom bomb is pride). The gossipy habit of Gauthali has been called more injurious than AIDS which has destroyed everything. The poet uses interrogative lines to express himself clearly because Chame asks himself, "*Koilabhandakalo k hola?*" (What is more dark / black than a coal?) and the answer that he gets is selfishness. On the other hand, Gauthali thinks deep regarding a sin which can be committed easily and on the discovery of an answer she shouts and utters, sloth. And gradually both understand that it's jealousy and hatred that can freeze any relationship. In addition to that if betrayal continues then a fire shall always burn in relationships and even if the fire extinguish the whole house gets burnt. beautifully he writes, "*Paralko aago nibhe pani / Pura ghar nai jalne sambhawana rahecha*" (Even if a blaze in a straw extinguishes, there lies a possibility of the whole house getting burnt).

The poem paints the picture of Chame-Gauthali relationship and the way they look for solution. But the solution that they find speaks volume and is highly universal in nature. The poet has talked about seven deadly sins just as we find in Chaucer's '*Canterbury Tales*' or Milton's '*Paradise Lost*'. Basically Pride, Sloth, Wrath, Gluttony, Lust, Envy and Greed are classified as the seven deadly sins. However, in this poem we find direct mention

of wrath, pride, envy and sloth. Lust has not been mentioned but we cannot deny the fact that the poem doesn't speak of lust, because the moment the poet writes, "*AIDS bhanda khatra rog le / Sabai barbad paryo*" (More epidemic than AIDS has destroyed everything) we get the notion of suggested lust. With such images the poet outpours his heart at the knowledge of the root of destruction of things. Chame-Gauthali relationship and the cause of destruction of their relationship is only a micro picture of the macro canvas and how beautifully the poet expresses it. It is also interesting to see the comparison of things that he makes. On the one hand he brings images from nature and man-made articles like fire, coal, snow, energy, atom bomb, and AIDS. On the other hand, he draws the images from human nature like pride, anger, sloth and jealousy and this appears to be heavier and destructible than the former. Thus, we may conclude that human nature is responsible for one's or others' destruction and not nature itself, as Wordsworth poetically writes, "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her".

The poem is written in free verse with no rhyme pattern and the language used is simple Nepali language. It is written in a narrative form where the characters Chame, the husband and Gauthali, the wife finally are awakened ones. The poem also has many images and has a symbolic significance as it speaks of the morality in a human's life. The last three lines of the poem stands as a moral lesson, "*Abiswas ra dhokako khela jariraha / Paralko aago nibhepani / Pura gharnai jalne sambhawana rahecha*" (If betrayal and hatred continue then

even with the extinction of fire the possibility of whole house being burnt remains). This poem truly expresses the poet's expression and observation of a relationship and the way it needs balance. It's the outcry on the marital conflicts which is ignited, as the poet writes, by one's own nature. The nature within is to be trained to behave morally correct in the case of Chame and Gauthali. Their pondering followed by certain realisation about their nature possibly can function as a cure. In Mainali's story, the wife goes to her parent's house after a fiery fight. Her husband follows her, convinces of his true love, and both promise to behave next time. Both return home with reconciliation. However, the readers are aware that Chame-Gauthali will continue arguing and conflicts will be a part of their life just as it's been a part of any relationship. So, Mainali's Chame and Gauthali signify marital conflicts. Unlike that, Mukhia's Chame and Gauthali are more conscious ones. They raise questions not to others for answers but to themselves, self-musing on the reasons of their conflict. They appear to be more reasoning ones than the former. It's not love that they fight, but it's anger, jealousy and other destructive nature of man. They stand as a symbol of self-awareness, consciousness, and awakening.

The second part of the poem 'pariwesbimarsh' means thoughts on nature. Darjeeling is regarded the Queen of the Hills. Situated on the Himalayan belt with famous hills like Tiger Hill and Sandakphu is immersed in the beauty of nature. The sun-rise and its reflection, cold misty weather, meandering roads, and lush green around are sights to watch.

Centre of tea gardens, religious institutions, academic institutions, and tourism - Darjeeling has her own beauty and challenges. The history of Darjeeling tea plantation is not unknown to the world. History has been recorded in many official books and in literature as well. Many stories center on tea gardens and their life. Mukhia's poems make us to delve deep beyond the technical poetic structure. He qualifies as a poet in his use of rhetorical language, maintaining rhythm, recollecting materials from his observations, use of poetic diction and above all in giving life to his words. As Robert Frost rightly says, "Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words". For a poet, word alone empowers him, as he creates beauty out of mundane things. Even Mukhia has created beauty out of ordinary tea garden life by painting on the canvas of poetry, just as Plutarch beautifully stated, "Painting is silent poetry and poetry is painting that speaks". And this is a very important part of poetry. Mukhia's collections of poems are thus expressive, picturesque, fanciful and triesto keep it closer to truth about man's intrusion and destruction of nature.

This section begins with the poem *Ek Bancharo Das Rukh Saey Bancharo Hazar Rukh* which can be understood as One Axe Ten Trees Hundred Axes Thousand Trees. The title is explicit. The poet expresses trailing into the woods and witnessing the beauty of the hills, rivulets and rivers. Birds like doves, fiesta, spiny blabber have filled the sight. The poet walks further to see more beauty in nature. Instead, he sees the act of deforestation- branches and twigs

scattered everywhere on the ground. The poet stops to think upon the selfish act of deforestation might increase with the increasing human greed. This is a common phenomenon everywhere and a challenge to the ecological balance. Human progress is mapped out against the human greed that causes an ecological disturbance.

In *Maile Yastai Dekhe* (I Saw it This Way) the poet analyses the random construction of buildings against the natural setting which leads to natural disasters like landslide. Mukhia, like Wordsworth, is again suggesting the balance between nature and man that remains missing in pragmatic way. He thus writes-

"Yasbhan daaghi gharharu baniyeko pani dekhe

Thulathula building haru baniyeko dekhe Jhodako yaadai nagari." (I've seen the construction of houses / Construction of buildings / without caring about the rivulets.)

Further the idea continues into the sights of darker houses due to close constructions without leaving enough space between them and due to the smoke, that fill the rooms constructed on the roadside, degradation of health, destruction of roads, landslides, people with high position but low thoughts, and spoiled human in the 21st century. The attack on human nature thus continues.

Chiyabariko Yatharta talks about the life in tea garden. The poet calls the tea garden workers as 'Aatma' because i and computerized world th depend on tea gardens for i work in the heat of summer, in the monsoon

rain by climbing every edge of a hill, yet, the poet sounds to be disappointed when he says, that there's a machine to make tea but there's none to pluck the tea leaves, "*Chiya banaune machine cha / Tarah pattitipne machine chaina*". These workers shed sweat and blood yet they continue loving the earth, the tea buds and everything of the garden. And during evening time they return home exchanging joyful smiles with one another though tired. Then the poem takes a high note when the poet writes, "*Malik rane ta bhanaudaharu le / Dhankomahal ma birajitharu le / Chiyakochuski line haru le / Chiyasitai garib shramikharu ka / Ragatrapasinatahchusirahe ka chainan?*" He raises an important question which requires no answer rather is a kind of a statement. He says that the big owners, leaders, rich ones, and the ones enjoying their tea- are drinking blood and sweat of these workers. He includes people of the respectable class and questions them, which is very significant to note. In the very next line he supplies an answer by saying that the price of tea leaves have increased four times but the condition of the tea garden workers remain the same and the reason for the static condition of these workers are because none, outside the tea garden life, understands their pain and the ground reality of their living, "*Kahabujhe ka chanrashramikharu ka dukha / Kahabujhe ka chanratichiyabarikoyathari*" (Who has understood the pain of a worker and the reality of their living?).

The poem speaks out the true condition of tea garden life here in Darjeeling hills in a picturesque way. In some of the places in the

hills the condition of tea garden workers is truly unhealthy. It may look not so disturbing from the distance but only the one who has lived life in such situation would be well expressive in this matter, as the poet does. How beautifully he says that there is no machine to pluck the tea leaves as it requires the tender touch to pluck it which only human hand can do and the remuneration that they get, Rs. 122.50/- per day and other fringe benefits like ration at the British rate i.e., 45 paise and medical benefits do not suffice in living in a highly technical and globalised world. Poet has thought deep and observed minutely. When he mentions leaders and the rich ones he also indicates at the double suppression, one by the heavy work and less payment, the other having the fear of the big shots who can easily suppress them. Again, tea garden workers have been particularized as tea garden is the staple urn of livelihood for the people of Darjeeling but it can also be the condition of any worker in any field of work. So, it does have a universal touch.

The title *Chiyaka bot haruko Chichyabat* (Yelling of the Tea Plants), itself makes the content clear. The poem begins with the poet telling a story of how one evening while witnessing the beauty of the green hills, which inspired him to pen down his thoughts, suddenly the tea plants started to yell and speak out their pain. The tea plant in disappointment tells the poet not to get lost in the beauty of nature and not only to write poems and books, neither to sing a song nor to give public speech. And brilliantly the plants inform him that a tea plant does not understand poem or read a book. Above all

they tell him not to irritate with their songs and public speeches, "*Besigeetgaiwakkana para / Bhasantahjhanchattdainachatta*". Nothing can give peace to them because; they themselves tell the truth of their existence. The tea plant is infected at the root and is on the verge of death due to pollution. They suggest to feel their pain, to empathize and to come forward, to see and then to understand their poor condition and then to take some right action to save them. And the poet still feels or rather hears the yelling of those tea plants even when he recalls that moment.

The tea plants are being polluted in various ways, be it by throwing wastes everywhere in terms of environment or be it by suppression in a deeper sense. It is infected at the very root which signifies that the span of life is less yet it calls for help. The very lines where the plants ask the poet not to write poems or songs or to give public speech, can be interpreted as having a subtext. Moreover, they say that they cannot read books or poems. Tea plants are images symbolizing people earning through tea plants. It's their root that has been polluted with false promises and high hopes and they look forward to people like poets to help them. But the interesting part is that they do not beg for help rather gives only a suggestion of help. They want others to first understand the matter then come forward with their help, which, in a way, is keeping an open forum for saving the life of tea garden workers in particular and that of the people of the hills in general. And the speaker i.e., the tea plants, speaks in a fearless straight forward manner. The poet shares what he heard from them but has not made it clear whether

he moved for their help or not residing in the tea hills do. The rather screaming venting out their helplessness as well as those of the people around them like the poet.

MulyaShikshakoMahutwa is a short verse where the poet speaks of the importance of learning for the change in society to be in harmony with nature. The 21st century world is addressed as a modern world surrounded by challenges, the time of dangerous nuclear weapons, society bought by fashion and brands where the youths are drowned completely. He suggests to value learning, education for a better world.

Biddhwashko Biuktapatti (Towards Destruction) deals with the conversation of the trees overheard by the speaker here who goes into the woods for woods. He hears the trees speaking of their friends being used for making walls, table-chairs, and some used as fire logs. Those who came are described as unconscious lots who came with axes and some with guns. Many looked educated and respectable ones who led the disappearance of trees like chestnut, saj, magnolia, and pine. Even birds such as Breat Barbet, pheasant, thrushes and myna have scattered and disappeared into faraway places. The trees further question the right of man who loots the bounty of nature, greediness that has no limit, and the destruction that a man causes. They know that a man has been already given much by nature yet they do not stop. Trees believe that man is closely associated with nature like themselves and for the safety of mankind man must stop harming

nature. And thus, the whole forest screams in unity "Towards destruction!" This conversation of trees encountered by the speaker here is a reminder to mankind to maintain ecological balances for the betterment of man themselves as well as that of human need / greed that grows heavily at the cost of nature.

In *Pun: Kathan* (The Tale Told) we find the same issue of human negligence. Here the reference to the wild animals like monkey gathering in the streets of towns and cities has been made, enough for us to understand the misuse of forest land in general. *Mailako Thupro* (The Dumping Ground) is relatable to most of us as we face dumping problem in day-to-day basis. The speaker here has witnessed a dumping ground and the place is hovered around by birds like pheasant. These birds around ten-fifteen are then chased away by a mongoose. It searches rags and plastics looking for food such as rice, chapati, momo and noodles. Then a yellow-throated Marten comes and chases both birds and mongoose. The speaker was enjoying this survival game when he saw birds scattering away after being catapulted by young students. The question that he asks is – "*Ghar ra schoolma thulaha rule / Prakriti-Prem nasikayeko?*" (Don't the elders at home teach/ How to love nature?) Here the attention is drawn to human again and their irresponsible attitude toward nature. It is man who dumps the garbage in an unsettling manner, forcing nature to act otherwise. As there was nothing to watch the speaker leaves the place with a thought that the garbage has increased than the previous year. The heap of garbage that

increases is also a gent that man consumes.

Prakritiko Pukar – Pariwes Bimarsh (Voice of the Nature – Nature in Discussion) is a voice of the nature asking man to think about one's surroundings. Nature thus speaks-

"*Pradushanle gumsiyeka vasthanharuma*

Swach pawan pathai

Naya jeewan dinchu

Sundar phul ra brikcha

Ekai sthan khadagarai

Timro sewama hajir rakhchu

Ma timrai sewama chu"

(In the places filled with pollution / Sending pure air / I give new life / Beautiful flowers and trees / I place at the same place / In your service / I'm at your service.)

At the same time, it also requests not to become the destroyer and pleads to think and see from nature's perspective: "*Socha ma prakritikot arfabata / Hera ma prakritiko tarfabata.*" It complains that man through its reasoning power and inhuman behavior places themselves superior than nature by creating man-centric ideologies, man-centric writings. And warns that destruction when takes place everything that man has made will be destroyed as the connection between man and nature is emphasized again; when the whole world is that of man why do man's greed has no limit: they even try to conquer the moon. The message that nature leaves is-

"*Bacha, bachana deu an*
and let live) as there's a
discuss nature and man's ego
giving voice to the nature Mukhia has attempted

an ecocritical approach to the understanding of nature's perspective. He makes it nature-centric.

Purna: JagaranPradushanko (Again: Comeback of Pollution) expresses the suffocation of the poet to see polluted places everywhere. In the process of making life easy or comfortable human development destroyed the equilibrium of nature. He writes- "*Kagajko paisa badekobadekai / Manavradhartimarekomarekai.*" – meaning, the value of money is increasing whereas life on earth is decaying. He further says that the fashion of mobile phones, tablet, and laptops are only the show business that has detached human from their responsibilities. He suggests – "*Hamrai ho sab tara chalauna sikau / Tatai khajalinamarau.*" (These are all ours but let's learn to use it properly / Let us not take when not ready.). This suggestion is important as the poet not only shows nature in degradation but also tries to aware us of our responsibility toward nature.

Conclusion

The poems have been written in a post-modern era by a postmodern Indian Nepali poet nevertheless by telling the story of the present they do tell us the story of the past. The existence of seven deadly sins is ages old and the life of the tea garden people is also an age-old story which indicates the static state of life. The poet has deliberately selected the common man's language to express and has used free verse technique. The content of the poems is intense yet the poetic touch has not been

disturbed at all. The reality of the forgotten relation with nature is portrayed. Salman Rushdie rightly writes, "A poet's work... to name the unnamable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments, shape the world and stop it from going to sleep". The action may appear to be passive but how viral its message passes on, we must agree on that. Socio-political issues with regard to the life of the tea garden workers are handled carefully. Few words have a greater power than an hour's speech. "*Sahitya le samaylai sadhai jeetcha*", (Literature has always won time), rightly writes Dr. Jeewan Namdung. That could be the reason that a poet offers a helping hand by remaining, most of the time, behind the curtains. To quote Kierkegaard, "What is a poet? An unhappy person who conceals profound anguish in his heart but whose lips are so formed that as sighs and cries pass over them, they sound like beautiful music". The poet's work is to raise questions on the evils of society, to draw people's attention for a change because the poet calls for the change, desires to paint things green. Terence Mukhia has called for that change through his poems not only in the hills of Darjeeling that is gradually turning dry with the rise of capitalist development but also in general. Ecocriticism is helpful in understanding the relationship between the writings of Mukhia and the environment. Mukhia has used nature both as a background and as the presence of our very environment including the human nature that is in contrast to mother nature. Some of his poems are also nature-centric, where nature has a voice of its

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own and doesn't need another subject to define it.

Coming to the question whether or not a poet can save nature, it remains debatable. Writing about nature and doing for nature can be understood as different areas, for action matter most ultimately. However, one cannot even deny the attempt made by our poet here in dedicating his time and labour in writing about nature, bringing sociopolitical issues as the hindrance toward our approach to nature. He pictures the condition of flora and fauna and the lack of human responsibility in making it better or leaving it as it is. The more Mukhia speaks of nature the more he attacks lopsided development. He makes clear about ecological disturbance and the necessity to work for the balance of it. Hazardous effects of climate change and environment can be controlled by a balanced approach. The function of Mukhia's poetry is thus more of a conscious approach with a larger motive of ecological balance.

Note: The translation of Mukhia's verse in this paper from Nepali to English are my own.

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