



Nature's Melodies: An Eco-Critical Journey Through Kannada Literature

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Abstract:

It is important to rethink about nature in these days of environmental crises so as to maintain a better order of things on Earth. Eco-criticism is rather a new method used in the analysis of literature or art works. It is considered an exploring mind theory since it is supposed to increase our knowledge on the environment hence leading eco-critics to read from nature's perspective and eventually encouraging bio-centric thoughts. The study investigates how several authors writing in Kannada have described the richness, beauty, and challenges of the marine ecosystem through selected literary works across genres and time periods. This article draws on theories from eco-criticism and literary analyses to examine the symbolic importance of sea, depictions of marine life and human-environment relationships as mirrored in Kannada literature works. Kannada literature has a long history and cultural significance that makes it worth looking at when one wants to know more about marine preservation or conservation. The main aim of this research article is elucidating themes, narratives, suggestions for a new perspective of its exploration. Through a systematic analysis of selected texts, including poetry, novels, and essays, this study identifies key recommendations and perspectives from Kannada writers on safeguarding the marine ecosystem. By synthesizing literary interpretations with contemporary environmental discourse, this article offers interdisciplinary insights and practical recommendations for ecology conservation efforts. Through a comprehensive review of literary texts, this study aims to highlight the cultural, ecological, and aesthetic dimensions in Kannada literary tradition.

Keywords: Marine-Ecosystem, Environment, Aesthetics, Kannada literature, Aquatic system.

Introduction:

Over the ages, literature and nature have had a very strong relationship. Since the era of ancient Greek and Indian civilization, numerous poetry, dramas, songs, and prose tales have explored this close interaction between literary works and nature. Science and technology progressed, allowing man to take control of nature and taint its unspoiled beauty. Thus, a rebellion against the age of reason was initiated by the early romantic writers. But the rise of a new literary theory subgenre known as ecocriticism—which goes beyond merely describing how nature is portrayed in literature provides its impetus. Over the past three decades, this new movement has taken the world by storm because it encourages bio-centric thinking at a time when the planet is facing serious ecological problems including climate change and global warming. Literature is unable to ignore these problems caused by humans. Reading literature can undoubtedly help readers become more environmentally conscious and motivated to care for the environment. The marine ecosystem faces numerous threats, including overfishing, habitat degradation, pollution, and climate change. Kannada literature, with its deep-rooted connection to nature and tradition, can offer unique perspectives and suggestions for safeguarding the marine environment. India is a country with many diverse landscapes and a wealth of biodiversity. Thus, the nation's physical surroundings have a significant influence on human civilization. The subject of nature has been covered by many authors. Our ancient Veda treats nature beautifully and advocates protecting the natural environment for the benefit of humankind.

This research article seeks to explore the ecological wisdom embedded in Kannada literary works and its relevance to contemporary marine conservation efforts. Kannada literature, with its diverse narratives and poetic expressions, provides a rich tapestry for exploring the intricate relationship between humans and the marine environment. The sea, with its vastness and mystery, has captivated the imagination of Kannada writers across centuries. This research article seeks to unravel the symbolic, cultural, and ecological significance of the sea in Kannada literature, shedding light on the portrayal of marine ecology and the underlying environmental ethos.

Methodology:

Selected texts of Kannada literature in different timelines, research articles, and statistics from the authorities are examined in this study. Lifestyle in different times, socio-economic perspectives, and human life as part of nature, description of nature in different times, connectivity and responsibilities as supplements to the main theme is observed and discussed in this article.

Insights and Recommendations from Kannada Literary Narratives

Adipuranam:

"Adipuranam," written by Adikavi Pampa, is an epic Kannada poem that delves into various aspects of creation, spirituality, and human existence. Within this monumental work, Pampa dedicates a significant portion to the description of the ocean, evoking its vastness, power, and symbolic significance. The poet vividly describes the ocean as an expansive and majestic entity, stretching beyond the horizon with no discernible end. He portrays the ocean's vastness through imagery of endless waves rolling towards distant shores, symbolizing the infinite expanse of creation. The ocean is depicted as a dynamic and elemental force, constantly in motion and pulsating with life. The poet captures the rhythmic movement of the ocean's waves, highlighting their ebb and flow as a reflection of the cyclical nature of existence. He associates the ocean with primordial origins, portraying it as a symbol of life, birth, and renewal. The ocean becomes a metaphor for the cosmic womb from which all existence emerges.

ಲವಣಾಂಭೋರಾಶಿ ತೂಳ್ಳುಚ್ಚುಳಸಲೊಡರಿಸಿತ್ತೀ ಧರಾಭಾಗಮಂ ಪ
ತ್ತುವಿಡಲ್ ಭೂಭೃತ್ಯುಕಂಗಳ್ ಬಗೆದುವು ಜಳಧಿಧ್ವೀಪಮಧ್ಯಸ್ಥನಾನಾ
ದಿವಿಜಾವಾಸಂಗಳಭ್ರುಕೊಗೆದುವು ಭರದೊಳ್ ಕೂಡೆ ದಿಕ್ವಾಲಲಾ
ಬವನಂಗಳ್ ಜರ್ದುವಿಂತಾಯ್ತುಜಳಮಹಿತಕಕ್ಷೋಭಮಾ ಚಕ್ರಿಯಂದ್

Through his portrayal of the ocean, the poet emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life forms and the unity of creation. He suggests that the ocean transcends boundaries and divisions, serving as a common thread that binds together the diverse tapestry of existence.

Kadalterada Bhargava:

Shivarama Karanth, a renowned Kannada writer, is known as "Kadalterada Bhargava" for his significant contributions to literature, particularly for his deep understanding of coastal life and culture. The title "Kadalterada Bhargava" translates to "Bhargava of the Seashore" in English. Shivarama Karanth spent a considerable amount of time living and researching in the coastal regions of Karnataka, immersing himself in the lives of coastal communities, their traditions, customs, and the natural environment of the coastline. Through his writings, he vividly depicted the coastal life, the struggles of fishermen, the beauty of the sea, and the interconnectedness of human life with the ocean. "Marali Mannige" (ಮರಳಿ ಮಣ್ಣಿಗೆ) - This novel is a masterpiece that delves deep into the lives of coastal communities, particularly fishermen, and their struggles. In this work, Karanth beautifully captures the essence of coastal life, as seen in this quote: 'ಕಡಲು ಮುಗುಳ್ಳಗಿದಾಗ ಜೀವನ ಮರಲಿ ಮಣ್ಣಿಗೆ ಅಪೂರ್ವ ಆನಂದದಿಂದ ಸಂಭ್ರಮಿಸಿತು - When the Oceans sparkled with happiness, life rejoiced in unprecedented bliss'. Marali Mannige tells the tale of a family spanning three generations in the village of Kodi, near Mangalore. The story unfolds during the pre-independence era in India. (Karanth, Shivarama. "Marali Mannige." Kannada Sahitya Parishat, 1967). Rama, grandson of Jiva Aitala recognizes the fragrance of earth. Each character here is different the experience of the monotony and chaos of the mind is reflected in the natural lives. Another dimension of this novel reflects upon for environmental stewardship. Through, coastal community description poet presents the symbiotic relationship between humans and the ecosystem, their livelihood.

In Choomana Dudi, The quote: 'Forest breathes like the ocean and stretches out in all direction' presents the deep connect between cattle, agricultural land and forest as the major resource of life is presented. These presentations run parallel supplementing the main theme of the novel.

However, they also address the ecological challenges posed by overfishing, pollution, and climate change, underscoring the urgency of conservation efforts.

Environmental concerns as supplements from few more texts are given in the table 1.

Table: 1 Sample texts and highlights from different timeline						
Highlights	Vividly describes the ocean as an expansive and majestic entity, highlighting their ebb and flow as a reflection of the cyclical nature of existence, with primordial origins, portraying it as a symbol	Basavanna, Akka Mahadevi, and Allama Prabhu contain profound reflections on nature, emphasizing its divine significance and the need for environmental	Contains verses that praise nature and the environment, reflecting the spiritual and ecological worldview of the time.	Contains verses that celebrate the natural world and its elements, emphasizing the interconnectedness between humans and nature.	Themes related to human-nature relationships and the consequences of environmental degradation.	The beauty of nature and the intricate ecological balance in rural Karnataka through the eyes of the

	of life.	stewardship.				protagonist, Mookajji.
Literary Work	Adipurana	Vachana Sahitya	Channabasava Purana	Shivatatva Ratnakara	Hamsa Damayanti	Mookajjiya Kanasugalu
Author	AdiKavi Pampa	Basavanna and other Vachana Kaara	Virupaksha Pandita	Chidananda Saraswati Yogindra	Masti Venkatesha Iyengar	K. Shivarama Karanth
Time line	10th Century C.E	11th C.E -12th C.E	14th Century C.E	17th Century C.E	1918	1968

Apart from the above texts the works of Nagesh Hegde an Indian writer, journalist, environmentalist, publisher and scholar who has written more than 40 books on science and environment in Kannada through his writings is educating the current generation about the environment, concerns and our duties. Nagesh Hegde has worked to popularize science in rural areas and is equally immersed in language and biology.

Concerns and Suggestions

With a 7,516-kilometer shoreline, India's coastal regions are home to some of the most important ecosystems in the biosphere, including backwaters, coastal wetlands, and estuaries. India boasts a varied biodiversity that encompasses a range of environments, including beaches, mangroves, lagoons, and oceanic islands. The coastal regions of India have yielded discoveries of about 11,000 faunal and 800 floral species (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, 2011). However, rising sea levels, coastal erosion, shifting coastlines, and rising temperatures are causing the terrestrial and marine ecosystems in coastal zones to disappear. The loss and degradation of coastal ecosystems frequently leads to rapid sedimentation and frequent meteorological events including storms, floods, and tsunamis. Almost all of the islands are less than two square kilometers in size. Only a few islands are found in coastal and riparian areas of Dakshina Kannada district, while most of the islands in North Kannada and Udupi district occur and partly, fall under Medium Damage Risk Zone 3 (NDMA 2016). Each of the three coastal districts of Karnataka—Udupi, Uttara Kannada and Dashina Kannada districts—has a unique agricultural area. The coastal region of Karnataka is home to a delicate, dynamic ecosystem. There are three different kinds of beaches in it: muddy flat, rocky, and sandy. It is one of the most densely populated coastal zones in the world, with roughly 1,500 people per square kilometer. The coastline of Karnataka is parallel to the Western Ghats. The Ghats are essential because fourteen rivers drain into the Arabian Sea from them. These rivers not only mitigate tsunami risk but also significantly enhance the diversity of coastal ecosystems by distributing energy from waves and supplying nutrients. With 184 different kinds of fish, 59 different types of mangroves, and over 14 different species of coral reefs, the southwest coast of Karnataka is rich in biodiversity (Zacharia et al., 2008).



Except in the vicinity of estuaries, where it is nearly straight but sometimes interrupted by rivers, rivulets, creeks, etc., the entire coastal zone is narrow. It features small crescent-shaped pocket beaches interspersed with rocky headlands, breathtaking spits, estuaries, shallow lagoons, mudflats, and sparse areas of mangroves. It also boasts long, narrow, straight beaches. While the southern shore features long, linear beaches, the northern coast is rugged. Karnataka has long been renowned for its abundant animals and stunning forests. Mangroves are sporadically found in the estuarine regions along the coast of Karnataka. It is discovered that the mangroves in this area are in good condition. Awareness of the Karnataka coast is growing due to the overuse of natural resources, including sand mining and fisheries.

We also observe change in demography and decrease in the rural population as shown in the PCA Data analysis below.

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF PCA DATA BASED ON INSET TABLE 1 to 35

TABLE 1 : DECADAL CHANGE IN POPULATION OF TAHSILS BY RESIDENCE, 2001-2011

Sl. No.	Sub-District	Population						Percentage decadal variation 2001 - 2011			Percentage urban population	
		2001			2011			Total	Rural	Urban	2001	2011
		Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
KARNATAKA		52,850,562	34,889,033	17,961,529	61,095,297	37,469,335	23,625,962	15.60	7.40	31.54	33.99	38.67
1	Kundapura	377,420	348,829	28,591	398,471	357,798	40,673	5.58	2.57	42.26	7.58	10.21
2	Udupi	529,225	376,579	152,646	562,799	302,092	260,707	6.34	-19.78	70.79	28.84	46.32
3	Karkal	205,598	180,482	25,116	216,091	183,410	32,681	5.10	1.62	30.12	12.22	15.12
	Udupi	1,112,243	905,890	206,353	1,177,361	843,300	334,061	5.85	-6.91	61.89	18.55	28.37

Decadal variation in population of taluks by residence is indicated in the above table. Data reveals that overall growth of 5.85 per cent has been recorded in the district during the decade. The growth of population is negative in the rural areas (-6.91 per cent) of the district and it is

very high in urban areas (61.89 per cent). Thus, the population of the district has grown faster in urban areas. Among the taluks, Udupi (6.34 per cent) has registered highest growth rate and Karkal (5.10 per cent) the lowest in total population.

*Source of PCA data analysis table: Directorate of census operations Karnataka –(Census of India 2011, Series 30 Part XII-A)

Conclusion:

In Kannada literature, traditional wisdom and responsibilities towards nature are often depicted through rich imagery and philosophical reflections. A new perspective of observing the literature with keen understanding of nature and human relation is required. The timeless work of Kannada literature reposes on some of the most profound verses that affirm the existence of man in relation to nature. The Gundappa's poetry conjures visualization into the airs of nature through rivers, trees, and mountains that inspire human respect to honor the environment. "Chiguru" in Kuvempu's poetry celebrates the beauty of Karnataka's landscapes—from its lush forests to rolling hills. Through descriptive language and allegorical narratives, he conveys a reverence for nature and is careful not to diminish the importance of a human duty to care for and protect it. (Kuvempu, 2002. Chiguru. Sahitya Akademi.) Works of Jnanpith Award-winning poets like Kuvempu, G. S. Shivarudrappa, and Girish Karnad live evocative imagery that celebrates Karnataka's natural heritage. From the majestic Western Ghats to the meandering rivers and fertile plains, their poetry serves as a lyrical ode to the splendor of the land and timeless wisdom passed down through generations. (Puttappa, K. V., 1994. Kavya. Sahitya Akademi. Shivarudrappa, G. S., 2007. Kannada literature offers a rich tapestry of narratives, poetry, and reflections on the marine ecosystem, illuminating its cultural, ecological, and symbolic significance. From ancient epics to contemporary writings, the sea has remained a central motif, inviting readers to contemplate the mysteries and complexities of the natural world. By engaging with Kannada literature from an eco-critical perspective, scholars, environmentalists, and policymakers can gain valuable insights into the human-environment relationship and the imperative of marine conservation.

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