

# 1 ECOLOGICAL DISCOURSE IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY'S HINDI LITERATURE: 2 AN INTERDISCIPLINARY DIALOGUE FOR RESILIENCE AND 3 SUSTAINABILITY 4

## 5 **Abstract:**

6 The 21st century, marked by the palpable realities of the Anthropocene, has witnessed a  
7 significant and urgent shift in the ecological discourse within Hindi literature. Moving beyond  
8 romanticized depictions of nature or symbolic protests, contemporary literature has begun to  
9 engage directly with the complex, interconnected crises of climate change, resource extraction,  
10 species extinction, and environmental injustice. This paper argues that 21st-century Hindi  
11 literature serves as a critical cultural forum, fostering an essential interdisciplinary dialogue that  
12 bridges the gap between scientific data and human experience to model pathways for resilience  
13 and sustainability.

14 Through an analysis of a diverse corpus—including novels of environmental realism, dystopian  
15 narratives, and non-fictional eco-writing—this study examines how authors and poets like Nasira  
16 Sharma, Mahua Maji, Sanjiv, Anant Kumar Singh, Akhilesh, Jayanandan, Naresh Saxena, Kumar  
17 Ambuj, Rajni Tilak etc. respectively have reframed the ecological debate. Their works do not  
18 merely depict environmental degradation but critically interrogate its root causes: neoliberal  
19 development, urban-rural divides, gendered impacts of ecological loss, and the erosion of  
20 indigenous knowledge systems. Through a close reading of select novels, short stories, and  
21 poetry, this research demonstrates how literature articulates the lived experiences of ecological  
22 degradation, giving a human face to abstract environmental data.

23 Ultimately, this paper proposes that Hindi literature serves as a vital, often overlooked, repository  
24 of knowledge for building socio-ecological resilience. It facilitates a necessary dialogue between  
25 the humanities, social sciences, and environmental sciences by translating scientific urgency into  
26 cultural and emotional intelligibility.

27 **Key words:** Dialogue, Discourse, Ecocriticism, Ecological justice, Hindi literature,  
28 Interdisciplinary, Resilience, Sustainability.

## 31 **Introduction:**

32 Ecological discourse is an interdisciplinary movement that aims to observe and rethink the  
33 relationships between humans, the environment, and non-human living beings. The exploitation  
34 and destruction of nature arise from an attitude of establishing human dominance over it.  
35 Environmental destruction is the dangerous culmination of a consumerist culture. It is the  
36 alienation of humans from nature. Therefore, ecological discourse refers to the consciousness  
37 that demands the rectification of mistakes committed by humans against nature, control over

38 unchecked desires for profit and greed, and, simultaneously, demands the establishment of  
39 harmonious and integrative relationships with nature.

40 The second decade of the 21st century has passed. These twenty years have witnessed many  
41 changes on a global scale. Apart from economic, social, political, and cultural changes, the  
42 change that has most profoundly affected the entire living world is 'ecological change.'By  
43 ecological change, it means the changes occurring in the habitats of living beings. It also  
44 encompasses all those activities carried out in the name of development and civilization, which  
45 include: the rampant deforestation, the arbitrary alteration of rivers' flow and direction, the  
46 increasing infertility of soil and the indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers in a hurry to make  
47 it more productive, industrialization and urbanization, the excessive exploitation of nature in the  
48 name of mineral extraction, environmental pollution, climate change, ocean acidification, ozone  
49 depletion, and the gradual decline of biodiversity, among others.

50 Human activities have excessively exploited various components of nature, bringing it to the  
51 center of discourse. The harmonious relationship between nature and humans has become  
52 conflict-ridden in recent decades. The capitalist mentality has created a conflict between nature  
53 and humans, which is subtle yet filled with dreadful possibilities. The delusion in which humans  
54 are advancing, feeling secure under a blanket of hyper-modernity, is nothing but the barbaric  
55 history of humans becoming 'civilized.'

56 Literature always deeply absorbs its time and society. A writer's imagination, knowledge,  
57 ideological commitment, and sensitivity build an insight that connects them to the problems of  
58 the era. The deepening ecological crisis between nature and humans has emerged as the most  
59 significant problem of the present time, a matter of concern for the entire world. This is why the  
60 perspective and issues of contemporary literary writing have also changed. For a long time,  
61 Hindi literature enjoyed the vastness of nature, its beauty, mystery, and form, making it a subject  
62 of its literature. However, in the last two to three decades, writers have changed their way of  
63 looking at nature.

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## 66 **Ecological Discourse:**

67 **Ecology:**The term 'Ecology' (Oekologie) was coined by the German scientist Ernst Haeckel  
68 (1834-1919) in 1866. The concept of ecology is formed from the combination of the Greek  
69 words 'oekos' and 'logos'. 'Oekos' means enclosure or the surrounding area or environment, and  
70 'logos' means study. Thus, 'Ecology' is the branch of biology that studies the relationships of  
71 organisms, plants, animals, etc., and their interdependence on other living or non-living beings  
72 and the environment. 'Ecology' discusses all aspects of life, from small microorganisms to the  
73 processes spanning the entire planet.

74 The eminent scholar Irfan Habib writes, "Ecology is essentially the science of studying our  
75 relationship with the environment."<sup>2</sup>

76 Ecology is that branch of science within which we study the interrelationships of the biological  
77 and physical units of the environment. Ecology is directly related to the dependence of organisms  
78 on other natural resources, their habitat, and their living conditions within it. In other words,

79 when we discuss ecology, we are essentially talking about the mutual relationships among living  
80 beings, their dependence on the physical environment, and their life and existence in their  
81 habitats such as water, forests, land, air, mountains, hills, plateaus, and poles.

82 Today, due to human activities and their uncontrolled aspirations, the habitats of organisms have  
83 become polluted. Man has forgotten that air, water, soil, mountains, hills, forests, etc., are also  
84 habitats for other living beings, and nature has provided these habitats to all without  
85 discrimination. The symbiosis, equanimity, and mutual interdependence spoken of under the  
86 concept of ecology are now in danger. A specific class of humans has become the master of other  
87 elements of nature and is manipulating those elements according to its own will. This is why  
88 ecology has entered the realm of discourse.

89 The Chipko Movement, India's most celebrated environmental movement, had a world-famous  
90 slogan: "Ecology is a sustainable economy."<sup>3</sup> This wasn't just a slogan; it was a visionary's  
91 warning. The consequences of this lack of awareness have become a significant challenge for the  
92 world as evidenced by the decisions being taken through environmental initiatives and  
93 negotiations in the present world. Even fifty-fifty-one years after the Chipko Movement, the  
94 problem of environment and ecology remains a global problem, awaiting a reasonable solution.

95 **Ecological Discourse:** Ecological discourse is the name for that consciousness which demands  
96 the rectification of mistakes committed by humans against nature and control over unchecked  
97 desires for profit and greed. Simultaneously, it demands the establishment of harmonious and  
98 integrative relationships with nature. One of the world-famous slogans of India's most renowned  
99 environmental movement, the 'Chipko Movement,' was: "Ecology is permanent economy." This  
100 was not merely a slogan; it was a warning from a visionary. The magnitude of the challenge that  
101 has emerged globally due to not heeding this warning is evident from the decisions being taken  
102 through environmental initiatives and discussions in the world today. Fifty-one years after the  
103 Chipko Movement, the problem of environment and ecology, as a global problem, still awaits a  
104 proper solution.

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## 106 Major Literary Genres of Hindi on Ecological Discourse

### 107 **Novels:**

108 'Kuiyanjan' (Nasira Sharma), 'Marang Gora Neelkanth Hua' (Mahua Maji), 'Rah Gayi Dishayen  
109 Isi Paar' (Sanjeev), 'Hidimb' (S.R. Harnot), 'Taaki Bachi Rahe Hariyali' (Anant Kumar Singh).  
110 These novels have prominently raised modern questions related to environmental concerns.

111 **Nasira Sharma's novel 'Kuiyanjan'** gives a new dimension to our efforts for water  
112 conservation and our awareness towards the environment. Emerging as a major global problem,  
113 the 'water crisis' is creating a threat to the very existence of humanity. The author hints at this in  
114 the preface of the novel itself. The rising temperature of the Earth, the uncontrolled, imbalanced  
115 environment is warning of a severe water shortage in the future. Although 75 percent of the Earth  
116 is covered with water but "only 0.5 percent of the earth's water is available fresh water."<sup>4</sup>

117 'The basis of the novel 'Kuiyanjan' is the imminent water problem. The author connects the  
118 water crisis with the daily life activities of common people—birth, death, marriage, etc. and  
119 presents it in such a way that it feels like the reader's own experience. This global problem is

120 also our country's problem. The novel particularly takes Rajasthan in India as the basis of its  
121 story.<sup>5</sup> Citizens of districts like Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Barmer, Nagaur, and Churu constantly face  
122 these scarcities in their daily lives. *Kuiyanjan* is a powerful novel by Nasira Ji. Human existence  
123 is intertwined with nature. Nature gives generously, without discrimination, to all its children.  
124 But greedy humans want to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

125 **In the novel ‘Marang Gora Neelkanth Hua’, ‘Mahua Maji’** depicts the heart-wrenching pain  
126 of the breaking relationship between tribals and nature. The biggest question in the novel is about  
127 humanity's right to live a naturally healthy life. ‘The novel presents the true image of the  
128 exploitation and oppression of tribals (humans) struggling with radiation, pollution, and  
129 displacement, and other components of the environment and ecology. The novel shows how  
130 governments that make grand claims about environmental protection on the global stage are the  
131 same ones that guarantee the loot of our natural resources and human labor by capitalists.’<sup>6</sup>  
132 Extracting minerals from a specific place, deforestation, displacement of people by foreign  
133 companies or the country's own big capitalist houses such events cannot occur without  
134 governmental intervention.

135 **‘In ‘Rah Gayi Dishayen Isi Paar’,** Sanjeev terms the unprecedented achievements in the fields  
136 of cloning and genetics by biologists as distortions developing in the complex world of human  
137 relationships. Sanjeev highlights the importance of living beings and opposes artificiality. In the  
138 novel, the author has raised other issues like 'commercialization of spirituality', 'economic  
139 exploitation of fishermen', 'trade of human and animal meat', 'the condition of abandoned or  
140 orphaned women' and questions related to their labor.’<sup>7</sup> The author has peeled back layer by  
141 layer the intervention of cultural pollution—a byproduct of scientific development—in social  
142 institutions and values. The question of life and death had been accepted almost as a  
143 philosophical object by philosophers and writers alike; for the first time, Sanjeev has looked at  
144 birth, death, life, mortality, gender, God, and infinity through the lens of scientificity. Not only  
145 has he looked, but he has also presented a logical perspective to see and understand their essence  
146 at a bio-scientific level, whose basis is science and whose center is society.

147 **‘In ‘Hidimb’ S. R. Harnot** raises some major questions of its time, centering on an inaccessible  
148 region of Himachal. In this postmodern era, Harnot observes, understands, and unravels with  
149 great patience how family, surroundings, nature, environment, forests, and land are being  
150 destroyed in the storm of globalization, and how man is becoming increasingly helpless and  
151 alone.’<sup>8</sup>

152 **‘Taaki Bachi Rahe Hariyali’** is the life saga of struggling farmers amidst the looming crisis  
153 over Indian agricultural culture and their struggle. ‘The novel reveals layer by layer how corrupt  
154 government systems, the collusion of politicians and greedy businessmen conspire against  
155 farmers and honest agricultural scientists to demoralize them. Senior fiction writer Anant Kumar  
156 Singh in this novel ‘Taaki Bachi Rahe Hariyali’ exposes the violent activities taking place within  
157 agricultural ecology.’<sup>9</sup> The novel begins with the government posting of a young agricultural  
158 scientist, Naveen, who is honest, enthusiastic, and believes in traditional farming methods,  
159 seeking alternatives to chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Naveen was aware of the truth behind  
160 the multi-billion rupee business under the guise of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, so his aim  
161 was to save both crops and people. Naveen would prepare pesticides and vermicompost in the  
162 traditional way as alternatives to these chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

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164 **Stories:**

165 'Kalyan Ka Ant' by Jayanandan, 'Nadi Gayab Hai' and 'Aabhi' by S. R. Harnot, 'Bhram Ke Bahar'  
166 by Pradeep Jilvani and 'Vajood' by Akhilesh, are some of the stories discussing upon ecological  
167 discourse.

168 In writer Jayanandan's story '**Kalyan Ka Ant**' the anguish of a pond disappearing due to the  
169 greed of family and private companies. The modern consumeristic approach of the family  
170 members and profit making private companies jointly cheated the owner of the pond. They sent  
171 him somewhere in deep ocean to find a ship because he was the master of swimming and lover  
172 of water. In his absence the family member and company made a deal and dried up the pond  
173 which was dearest of his owner. This resulted in disappearing of a living water body. This story  
174 show a serious concern for how companies begun a ruthless assault on nature using modern  
175 machinery. **10**

176 The story '**Nadi Gayab Hai**' is about a living river being suddenly dried up. 'At the center of the  
177 story are the river, forest, mountains, glaciers, dynamite, deities, the government, and the  
178 common people. This story, in ecological contexts, is about the connection and disconnect  
179 between humans and the biotic-abiotic components of nature.'<sup>11</sup> Centering on ecological  
180 questions, it also sheds light on human relationships. The author also attempts to lift the veil on  
181 religious faith, the place of deities in the lives of mountain people who live in harmony with  
182 nature, the influence of related beliefs, and myths.

183 'Through the story titled '**Aabhi**', the author draws the reader's attention to the issues of polluted  
184 water sources in mountainous regions, the degradation of natural habitats of animals and birds  
185 due to deforestation, the decline in their numbers from hunting and deteriorating ecological  
186 balance, black marketing of flora, the encroachment of mafias and profiteers into reserved forest  
187 areas, environmental pollution caused by the arrival of outside visitors and their irresponsible  
188 presence, as well as the cultural pollution resulting from their uncontrolled behavior.'<sup>12</sup> The  
189 author also appears to be trying to make readers more aware through the absence and  
190 helplessness of God during times of human destruction in this region, which has immense faith  
191 in deities.

192 'In Pradeep Jilvani's story '**Bhram Ke Bahar**', the author has also expressed the pain of  
193 ecological crisis and the destruction of rivers through the metaphor of a water nymph.'<sup>13</sup> 'In the  
194 story '**Vajood**' (Akhilesh), a glimpse of the plunder of resources has been presented by centering  
195 on the inequality prevalent in society.'<sup>14</sup>

196

197 **Poetry**

198 Contemporary Hindi poetry is that distinctive poetic stream of the modern era which is  
199 connected to contemporary contexts. In it, contemporary consciousness and poetic sensibility can  
200 be clearly seen. This poetry, struggling to protect human values, has encompassed within itself  
201 numerous new human concerns, among which ecological discourse is a central and notable  
202 aspect of this poetry's concern and sensitivity.

203 In truth, forests are our life-saving assets. However, in the industrial towns and metropolises that  
204 are swallowing up greenery, the atmosphere is getting polluted by poisonous gases,

205 consequently, the healthy lungs of the Earth are becoming Contemporary Hindi poetry is that  
206 distinctive poetic stream of the modern era which is connected to contemporary contexts. In it,  
207 contemporary consciousness and poetic sensibility can be clearly seen. This poetry, struggling to  
208 protect human values, has encompassed within itself numerous new human concerns, among  
209 which ecological discourse is a central and notable aspect of this poetry's concern and sensitivity.

210

211 **Naresh Saxena's poem 'Naksha' (Map)** presents a scene of such a toxic environment:

212

213 "There is a forest in the map, not trees

214 There are rivers in the map, not water

215 There are mountains in the map, not stones

216 There is a country in the map, not people

217 You must have understood

218 That we all live in a map...

219 This is no place for leisure

220 Come out of the maps at once

221 I feel that one day

222 Some jester will fold up all the maps and put them in his pocket

223 And walk away." **15**

224

225 **Rajni Tilak** expresses the horror of nature's destruction caused by nuclear war in her poem  
226 **'Buddha Chahiye Yuddha Nahi'** (We Want Buddha, Not War) in this manner:

227

228 "Why did you sow these seeds of death

229 Nuclear war?

230 This banyan tree of hatred-death

231 Will swallow millions in an instant,

232 In the land of Buddha,

233 The vow of Panchsheel will be broken.

234 We do not want war,

235 We want to live

236 We want creation,not destruction

237 We want Buddha,not war."**16**

238

239 Trees have been our friends for centuries, but to build industrial towns and erect concrete  
240 jungles, we mercilessly cut down the reservoirs of oxygen the lush green forests. The inhuman  
241 relationship of humans with nature is the cause of this disintegration, fracture, and collapse.  
242 Consequently, seeing the environment becoming toxic night and day, **Kumar Ambuj writes in**  
243 **the poem 'Kahin Koi Zameen Nahi' (There is No Land Anywhere):**

244

245 "From all sides, the sounds of new construction

246 And only builders are doing the construction

247 The rest are only selling their lands

248 Now all the land is with the builders

249 All the tricks,spirituality, and philosophy are with the builders

250 Earth!An half-eaten fruit

251 Placed on a builder's dining table."**17**

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253 Other prose genres include Lakshmi Prasad Pant's travelogue 'Himalaya Ka Kabristan' (The  
254 Graveyard of the Himalayas) and Amrit Lal Vegad's 'Saundarya Ki Nadi Narmada' (The River  
255 Narmada of Beauty), which express ecological concerns. We find the same concern in the essays  
256 of Vidya Niwas Mishra and Shekhar Pathak. In the ideological literature related to the  
257 environment, we consider the writings of Sundarlal Bahuguna, Anupam Mishra, Amritlal Vegad,  
258 Shekhar Pathak, K. Vanaja, Prabhakaran Hebbar Illath, and others. The theoretical books by  
259 these writers are significant contributions on the relevant subject.

260

261 **Conclusion:**

262 The Geography's textbook of class 11th NCERT states, "The world is a system of  
263 interdependencies."**18**This means the world is a system that operates on mutual interdependence.  
264 The aforementioned literature exemplify how this understanding of interdependence is gradually  
265 becoming blurred. The reality is that the world is being driven by the power of capital, apart from  
266 divine and human authorities. That power, whose first and last desire is capital accumulation at  
267 any cost. Before it, state power bows down, and even religious authority changes its course. As  
268 long as virtual efforts to save the environment and ecology continue through paper claims while  
269 rejecting nature's supreme authority, the world will survive only as much as the tea left in a  
270 teacup. We must understand the anomaly of the wastage of resources; we must accept that  
271 increased purchasing power cannot extend our lifespan. The bread that rightfully belongs to  
272 others creates cysts in a full stomach, not blood.

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