Culture, Creativity and Blue Humanities in the works of Mamang Dai

Shalaka Paturkar (Chandekar)
Assistant Professor of English (CHB)
Department of English, Yashoda Girls' Arts and Commerce College, Nagpur
shalakachandekar2020@gmail.com

Abstract:

The present paper focuses the interrelationship between Culture, Creativity and the newly emerging interdisciplinary field Blue Humanities in the works of Mamang Dai. As Dai belongs from Arunachal Pradesh, she focuses on Adi traditions, oral narratives and ecological ethics in her poetry and prose. Through a close reading of her poetry and prose, the study highlights how rivers, landscape and oral traditions functions not merely as settings but as living divines that shape identity, memory and community life. Blue humanities-a water centered branch, in Dai's work, water bodies are not merely natural setting but as living divine that shapes identity, sustains cultural continuity. Her works emphasize that land, mountain, rivers; forests are not separate from human beings. Mamang Dai's writings ultimately propose an alternative worldview- one grounded in ecological responsibility and cultural continuity.The study further argues that Dai's engagement with nature is deeply rooted in indigenous cosmology, where land and water are inseparable from human existence. By analyzing themes of ecological balance, cultural continuity and environmental sensitivity, this paper reveals how Dai's work contributes to contemporary discussion on sustainability and cultural preservation. Finally, it holds Dai as a key literary figure whose creativity bridges the gap between traditional ecological understanding and modern environmental thought, with enriching blue humanities in the Indian context.

Keywords: *Indigenous Culture, Creativity, Ecocriticism, Blue Humanities, Environmental Consciousness, Cultural Identity.*

Introduction:

Mamang Dai, an Indian poet, novelist, and environmental thinker from Arunachal Pradesh and deeply rooted with her tribal heritage. Her narrative techniques celebrate natural beauty and engage theoretical background including eco-criticism and nowadays emerging interdisciplinary field Blue Humanities. Her creativity acts as a bridge between the oral traditions of her community and the modern literary world. The concept of culture in Dai's

writing expands beyond the tradition, it bounds lived practices, oral storytelling, spiritual cosmologies and community relationship with land and water. Dai presents culture as inseparable from ecological balance, in that way situating indigenous identity within environmental ethics. Dai's philosophy, here, is that of Arne Naess, a founding figure of the "Deep Ecological movement", who advocated the supremacy of natural forms like rivers and mountains: From the mountains, we learn modesty; their size makes us feel small and humble, and so we participate in their greatness" (Naess 17). It is important to mention here that while Eco-criticism tries to unearth the human-nature relationship in literary representation, Deep Ecology takes it a step further where "nature and other life forms are considered as valuable as human beings" (Singha 2). According to Nayar, Deep Ecology proposes "a respect not only for all life forms but also towards landscapes such as rivers and mountains" (247). Dai's work shows strong relationship between human, cultures,and landscape and water bodies that expands cultural imageries which shapes human-water relationships. The study examines how culture and creativity collaborates in Mamang Dai's appears with the principle of Blue Humanities.

Mamang Dai's work and literature acts as a store house for oral history and myth of Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. Her writing style follows the oral tradition of storytelling, mythological elements that tell Adi community's identity. Dai's work highlights her land, cultural, social and emotional life of her people. In her poem "Birthplace" from River Poems, she writes:

We are the children of rain
Of the cloud women,
Brother to the stone and bat
In our cradle of bamboo and vine
In our long houses we slept,
And when morning came
We were refreshed. (Dai, lines 1-7)

She often depicts the tension between traditional life and influence of modernization. In her works rivers, mountains, and forests not portrayed as just setting but as living beings. The relationship between human and nature portray through ecocritical approach and highlight the divinity of rivers and mountains. Mamang Dai emphasizes a spiritual harmony between humanity and natural world. In "The Black Hill" Dai addresses the environment is inseparable from cultural identity; it shows the exploitation of indigenous people through environmental disturbance. The land is not just resources but a living being that shapes tribal

life. Another celebrated writer from the region remarked that 'Mamang Dai is firmly rooted with the soil of her birth place. Her heart was always in consonance with the rivers, mountains, trees, jungle, rituals, legends, mythology, dances, villages, prayers flags of her "dear abode, Arunachal Pradesh'. (Vohra 2013:2)

Now, blue humanities are an emerging interdisciplinaryfield which focusing on the cultural, historical and ecological significance of water in Dai's works. As an indigenous voice, Dai writing highlights the Adi tribes with the nature and water bodies. Rivers and mountains are not merely resources but conscious Divine. In "River Poems" the river is a central image, representing a living force that flows forever, but sometimes destructive for people.

The river has a soul.
In the summer it cuts through the land
Like a torrent of grief. Sometimes,
Sometimes, I think it holds its breath
Seeking a land of fish and stars (Dai 2003: 23)

It represents the flow of life, the spiritual bond between Adi community and their environment. The river represents a cyclical almost mythological, boundary between life and death. River function as narrative medium that connects past-present, myth and reality, human and non-human worlds. In "The Legends of Pensam", water is portrayed as a source of origin. The myths of the "Water Kingdom" are used to explore the relationship between human and environment. It highlights the "Blue" worldview where water is not just a resource to be exploited but an integral part of shared existence. Through her, the "Blue" in Dai's work is essentially a "River Humanities" that defines the soul of Arunachal Pradesh landscape and people. This study positions Mamang Dai as a crucial voice in contemporary Indian English literature, whose works bridge cultural memory, artistic innovation and environmental ethics in this rapidly changing world.

Literature Review:

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MOUNTAIN". *International Education and Research Journal (IERJ)*, *11*(12).https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18105889K C, Monica, and Dr. Amar Kumar Nayak "Eco-critical Perspective in Mamang Dai's *The Legends of Pensam*: bridging Indigenous Knowledge and Environmental Consciousness" journal of emerging technologies and innovative research (JETIR) Vol 11, issue 8, explores the intricate relationship between humans and nature in the context of Adi community in Arunachal Pradesh. (Monica and Nayak f573)Patil, Poonam A, and Sanjay Sanap. "The reflection of River in Mamang Dai's Poem *Small Town and The River"* International Society for Educational Leadership. Vol 13, issue 2. It investigates Indian culture has a strong bond with the rivers. India, the land of river, has always been related to the hidden truth of life, power of mind, and mysticism. (Patil P &Sanap S. 92)Basumatary, Farina. "Ecological vision in the Poetry of MamangDai"journal of emerging technologies and innovative research (JETIR) tries to uphold the value systems traditionally held in high esteem by the people of her ethnicity, the Adipeopleof Arunachal Pradesh in India. She assumes a position alongside Deep ecologists in her belief that human beings are not superior to non-human lives. (Basumatary 2669)Mahanta, M. R. And Anwesha Gogoi "Eco-critical and Ecological Concerns in Literature by North-East Indian Woman: A Reading of Selected Poems of Mamang Dai" Srotaswini: UGC CARE listed Journal, highlight strong ecocritical and ecofeminist themes, showing how women writers like environmental degradation with patriarchal exploitation, using folklore and indigenous knowledge to critique development models, and emphasizing nature's interconnectedness with female identity, land, and cultural survival, moving beyond anthropocentric views to a bio centric understanding. (Mahanta and Gogoi 93) V.C,PriyaDarshini. "An Eco-critical Reading of Mamang Dai's Poems" Dai's International Journal Of All Research Education And Scientific Methods, states that works exhibit the cultural richness of the state. She also sheds light on the ecological changes that this worldexperiences. Her poems beautifully blend the natural and cultural wealth of the place. Akhtar, Raujline S.F. "Landscape and Myth: Towards an Eco critical Reading of the Selected Poems of Mamang Dai" The Criterian: An International Journal in English. Vol. 8 Issue-VIII exploring the representation of natural landscape as well as myths in a few selected poems of one of the most distinguished poets of north east Mamang Dai whose works strongly reflect Ecological consciousness. (Akhtar213) Satapathy, Meghamala and Ipsita Nayak. "The Lioness Defending Her Clan in the NorthEast: A Study of Ecospiritual Elements in Mamang Dai's Fiction" Rupkatha journal on Interdiscplinary studies in Humanities, vol.

12 no.5shows how a slew of eco-spiritual elements are identifiable in the fictional outputs of Dai and yet the theme demands more elaborate treatment due to the advent of new theoretical constructs. (Satapathy and Nayak 1-8)Kaur, Gurjit. "Ecological consciousness in Mamang Dai's poetry" Shodhkosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts, vol 5 No 1, states that Dai's poetry offers an alternative ecological vision rooted in indigenous knowledge system, spirituality and the profound interconnectedness of all living beings.

Culture and Ecological:

The selection of the topic Culture, Creativity and Blue Humanities in the Works of Mamang Dai is both literary and contemporary environmental concept. Mamang Dai, as a writer holds a significant position in Indian English Literature. Her poetry and fiction have received critical attention, the combine study of culture, creativity and aquatic ecological consciousness in her works remains limited. In a time when indigenous traditions face erosion due to modernization and expansion of digitalization, examining her texts becomes essential for understanding how literature can function as cultural preservation. Traditional ecocritical studies in India have often focused on forests, wildlife or climate crisis narratives.Dai, in her works focuses on cultural and ecological realities of Northeast India. Her works praise the environmental consciousness and preserve the traditions and culture of Adi tribes.In this era changes are going on like climate change, ecological degradation, and cultural displacement so there is increasing scholarly interests in Ecocriticism and environmental humanities.

Therefore, literary studies have expanded to explore how Mamang Dai's texts respond to environmental crises. Here, Mamang Dai's work is relevant because it focuses the interconnection between humans and nature. Her creative writings engage with landscape, myth and oral traditions and offer an alternative ecological ethic that challenges anthropocentric perspective. Many scholars have analyzed Mamang Dai's work from feminist, postcolonial or ecocritical perspective, a focused exploration combining culture, creativity and blue humanities remains comparatively unexplored. Blue Humanities, which basically emphasizes water bodies, rivers, and aquatic imagination. "River Poems" depicts water as a living force that shapes identity and memory.

The present paper highlights the role of literature in preserving and promoting indigenous knowledge. Her contribution is deeper which narrates the contemporary environmental

thought. Dai's texts represent how oral traditions can survive and evolve within modern literary frameworks. Her creative adaptation of indigenous narratives shows flexibility and continuity in the face of technological and cultural change. Therefore, this paper introduces a fresh interpretative dimension and strengthens interdisciplinary scholarship.

Mamang Dai and Amitav Ghosh

This study opens up the ecological concerns and clear literary approaches within Indian environmental writing. Both writers engage deeply with environmental issues, their narrative strategies and cultural frameworks differ significantly. Mamang Dai's ecological imagination is deeply rooted in the Adi tribal worldview of Arunachal Pradesh. Her works reflect a cultural relationship with land, rivers, forests and mountains. Her poetry often expresses rivers and landscape as living forces that preserve memory and identity. Her ecological imagination emerges organically from tribal cosmology, where human coexist harmoniously with the natural world. Ultimately her narrative structures presents that ecology is inseparable from culture. In contrast, Amitav Ghosh approaches ecological concerns through broader historical and global perspective. In his works such as The Hungry Tide and The Great Derangement Ghosh focuses on climate change, environmental displacement and globalization. His perspective is shaped by climate discourse, historical research and socio-political analysis. His writings critiques modern capitalism and industrialization. Another important difference is related to water. Both writers strongly engage with water, making them important to Blue Humanities. Dai's river imagery is cultural, spiritual, particularly in River Poems, where she symbolizes water as continuity ancestral connection. She urges that water is not only just setting of nature but living forces that shape human identity.

On other hand, Ghosh portrays water as powerful, unpredictable ecological forces shaped by tides, storms and climate system, especially in The Hungry Tides, here water is dynamic, dangerous, and politically charged. His depiction focuses on environmental sensitivity and impact of global climate change on communities. Dai's writing is rooted in oral storytelling tradition, blending myth and realism. Her creativity lies in transforming indigenous narratives into written English literature while preserving cultural authenticity. Ghosh's narrative is more historical and political commentary and combining scientific discourse. He blends realism with environmental awareness, creating intellectually complex words. Overall, their works emphasize the diversity of ecological expression in Indian English Literature- one

grounded in tribal cosmology and river centered imagination and the other shaped by climate history and global environmental discourse.

Interrelation and Blue Humanities:

The result shows highlights the complex interrelation between culture, creativity and blue humanities in the works of Mamang Dai. This discussion interprets those findings in relation to ecocritical and blue humanities discourse which shows how Dai's writings contribute uniquely to Indian English Literature. This analysis reveals Dai's ecological vision cannot be separate from her Indigenous cultural roots. In contrary, environmental writings often focus on ecological crisis but Mamang Dai's works focus on environmental consciousness within the lived realities of Adi tribes.

Now I know
The forest is my home,
The mist my breath.
Sun and snow land
Call me north again. (2013, 21-25)

Nature, particularly river as s and mountains functions not only environment but living entities. Her writing is the seamless integration of myth, folklore, oral storytelling into environmental representation; it serves as a cultural strategy for preserving tradition and ecological ethics. While other Indian ecocritical writer often address climate change, industrialization, political displacement but Dai's environmental engagement focus on river, landscape and spiritual ecology which sustains ethics and shapes identity. Overall, Mamang Dai's works focus on sustainable ecological thinking must emerge from cultural memory, spiritual connection and creative expression. And Blue Humanities provides a powerful framework to understand how culture and creativity are deeply intersect with the life and meaning of water in human society.

Conclusion:

Mamang Dai's work reveals the interconnection between culture, creativity and environmental consciousness. The present paper finds that Dai's writing deeply rooted in indigenous Adi cultural traditions. Her works consistently reflect oral narratives, myths, rituals and beliefs that shape ecological ethics. Nature is presented as living, sacred which

concerns the identity and ancestral memory. This research confirms that cultural preservation find through poetic language, symbolism, and mythic imagination in Mamang Dai's work. Her works such as River Poems and The Legends of Pensam shows how storytelling becomes a medium for preserving cultural continuity in today's modernization and environmental change.

From eco-critical perspectives the findings that Dai's representation of mountains forests and river emphasize relational care rather than human dominance. This shows her significant voice in Indian eco-critical literature. As applying blue humanities in on Dai's work, the research finds that rivers in her work functions as cultural and symbolic figure that shapes identity, memory and historical consciousness. Water is depicted as not only natural resource but a medium of ancestral voices and experiences. This water-centered perspective expands Dai's contribution to emerging environmental humanities discourse. Mamang Dai's ecological vision is uniquely grounded in indigenous cosmology and river centered imagination. Overall, the result shows that Mamang Dai's work successfully intersect with Culture, Creativity, and Blue Humanities. Her ecological awareness approach contributed meaningfully to Indian English literature and expanding, the scope of Blue Humanities within the Indian context.

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