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Influence of Nature on Human in The Ecological Vision in Edasserri's Poetry

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The farmer's mind had a sixth sense to detect even the slightest movement of nature. Therefore, the farmer had high hopes and anxieties. But Edassery is a poet who enthusiastically observes the black clouds like dark nomad women crossing the eastern hills on the threshold of hope and entering the Tamil market of prostitution. The poet's mind becomes clear that many of the so-called communal values must be rejected through the dark nomad woman. The presence of the river flowing heavily in the middle of the month of Edavam, the presence of the sky through the rainy clouds in the eastern hills and the concept of the nature perceived by farmer through the barren harvested fields lying thirsty are combined like a magnificent form in this poem.

This poem gives clear pictures of the influence and tenderness of nature on human. These are the pellucid pictures of the truth. These same truths can be glimpsed in *Manninde Punchiri* (Smile of the Soil) and *Vadhu* (Bride). In both these poems, we encounter the image of flood created by the heavy rain.

Manninde Punchiri (Smile of the Soil) emphasises the image of flood created by heavy rain. Here the river crosses catastrophically. In this poem, Edassery paints a picture of nature destroying everything. Edasserri's philosophy of nature is based on embracing natural phenomena with the same attitude of tenderness and cruelty. Therefore, Edassery considers any aspect of nature to be the ultimate means of self-actualization. That is why Edassery wonders whether you are the storm that blows everything away and pollinates the whole flowers. But Edassery believes that man's karma and dharma to attain material needs is not to bind creative and destructive elements of nature, but to make it useful. The poems *Vadhu* (Bride) and *Kudam Naraiku Koode Varu* (Fill the Pot and Come Along) showcase the strongest influence of this.

The poem *Vadhu* (Bride) about Bharathapuzha is centred on the idea that man's obedience to nature should be conducive to the well-being of life. The poet's plea to Bharathapuzha to become the daughter-in-law of the farmer is to seek the services of Periyar for the future generation and the poet believes that ultimately everything should be based on human goodness. The Ninapuzha river flowing there is a testament to the nobility of those who made Kerala a heroic figure. The problem of the connection of the river merging with

salt water and the harvested field waiting for the fresh water is an environmental problem related to the ideology of regeneration. The problem with this synchronicity is seen in the poems such as *Vadhu* and *Kudam Naraku Koode Varu* which is related to the ideology of regeneration. Edasseri is committed to the idea of unharmed nature. But the poem *Kuttipuram Palam* foretells the catastrophic changes that will take place in Kerala's environment and human condition in the coming decades.

The presence of the river integrates the cultural diversity of the two villages on both sides with their uniqueness. When a bridge is built across the river, there will be an influx of colonial culture into cultural diversity and cultural diversity will decline. Here, the journey to humiliation embarks. The road behind the bridge and the lorry coming through the road become the symbols of journey. In the language of the new poet, this insulting innovation becomes an everyday occurrence in concrete city life. The visionary Edasseri views man on one side of such humiliation who loses play, laughter and tears and becomes a machine. The laughter that forms in Edassery when he sees the river flowing under the bridge transforms into bewailing that evolves beyond time.

While standing on the bridge that welcomes the civilized world, Edasseri worries that the wealth, culture and humanity of the village will soon disappear.

The hill slopes brimming with various flowers...
the festivals in the sacred grove...

The poet is scared not only by the fear of losing the vitality of village, but also by the fear that something dangerous might happen due to the bridge. The poet realizes that the eradication of good fortune of village is an advancement of science.

In his poem, Edassery warns about the industrial age that is stifling the progress of human endeavour. Poems like *Sarvodaya Mela*, *Kunkuma Prabhatham* (The Vermilion Dawn) and *Nellukuthukari Paruvinde Katha* (The Tale of Paru who threshes Paddy) are examples. In the introduction to the collection of the poem titled *Kunkuma Prabhatham*, the poet scientifically explains from his standpoint that poetry is heroic for those who struggle in life and it is the nectar for those who return wounded.

Nellukuthukari Paruvinde Katha (The Tale of Paru who threshes Paddy) is a poem similar to *Kuttipuram Bridge*. Both poems were written in 1954. The poet wrote in the introductory note of the poem: I am not the one who excessively welcome the advancing industrial age. The poet's ability to ridicule the rice mill that stands as the symbol of the industrial age and the achievement of science, along with the hand-pounder Paru, is brilliant when it comes to thinking on the level of environmental aesthetics.

The standard of living in Kerala after the fifties was the ups and downs of economic growth. In the poem *Pulimavuvetti* you can perceive the average Malayalee who pursues any living standard by giving money. The financial gain of modern man and the neglect of tender human qualities deprive him of eternal pleasures. This idea is embedded in the poem *Pulimavu Vetti*. The mango tree is cut to hold the boards which served for many other fruitful purposes.

Along with nature, green islands are disappearing from the human mind. Man was forced to let go of his natural lusts in order to acquire luxuries. The poem contains the element that motivates each person to get rid of this condition.

In his poems, Edassery reveals that modern life must not be separated from nature but must remain unique in line with changing values. This is how the original poet envisions the growth of Kerala.

In the context of Kerala, the Dravidian culture, which was in harmony with nature, began to perish with the conquest of Brahmanism. The forest was extensively destroyed. Tribal natural worship and the mother goddess were forbidden. Male deities, temples and natural disasters became widespread. The mother Goddesses lived in trees and sacred groves. (Pootham's (poltergeist) residence is under a rock formation on the other side of Parayan hill).

Knowledge helped the Brahmins to subdue the Dravidian tribe and culture. With the advent of writing, the oral tradition became diminished. The hill portrayed in *Poothappattu* (Ode to a Poorham) is rich in biodiversity.

The child climbed the hill top
and saw the cows grazing...

This hill is forbidden for the child in *Poothappattu*. The hill belongs to the parayan. Pootham (ghost) lives on this hill. The lessons of nature are inaccessible to the child as he has a iron-scribe in his hand. The iron-scribe is an indicator of the Iron Age and scientific progress.

It is the scientific consciousness gained through modern knowledge that has alienated man from nature. The legends that were passed down orally from the tribal cultures became Brahmanical when they were written. The Mother Goddess (Pootham) of Parayankunnu asks to throw away this iron-scribe. Pootham (the poet) must have subconsciously realized that writing, literacy, knowledge and science would take away his hill and prosperity.

Edassery thinks that real learning is acquired through nature. When a friend told him about the children who don't go to school, they play in the sea, P. Kunji Raman Nair replied that they were the ones who were really learning about life and the universe. Edassery's Pootham is not different.

(Vandodin Vadivilezhum
Neela kallolalakalil...)

These lines are the poet's conscious attempt to discover nature, morality and humanity. Edaserri's poem *Pallikudathileku Veendum* (Back to School again) states that education that forgets nature forgets humanity.

By the time you learn to go,
you will have forgotten each other...

Edaserri's poems incorporate the fear that new knowledge will alienate man. The bridge does not bring people closer but keeps them away. In this poem, there is a picture of people moving raising walls everywhere and getting separated. In the play *Koottukrishi* (Cooperative Farming), Edassery elucidates that as a part of industrialization the ridges in fields are the limits created by man himself to stop water flow in the fields. In society, there are rifts between individuals in family relationships. Nobody is indebted to anyone. Selfishness and nepotism are the main goals of civilization. This is the vision of the poet.

Conflicts between strangers...
clashes between strangers...

When all connection with nature recedes severe alienation occurs. The poet recognizes that the bridge is one of the dangers that science brings, and that environmental awareness is in fact a healthy answer to the problems created by urbanization, consumerism and alienation. It is an effective antidote found to resist the atrocities of capitalism.

The poet supported science in some contexts of struggle against colonialism. But there was a realization that the bridges (*Kuttipuram Bridge*) and the roads (*Nellukuthukari Paruvinde Katha*) built as a result of urbanization is more dangerous than capitalism. After the road came to the village, the rice mill came along. When the rice mill came, Paru lost her traditional occupation of hand-pounding of the paddy. It is easy to say that it brings profit

for the natives. However, the poet is daunted by the fact that there is no solution to the grief of Paru who becomes the symbol of the powerless.

When thousands of silver coins come...

In this poem which was written in the same year of *Kuttipuram Bridge*, the poet explores the fiery presence of capitalism. Kochejamanan is handsome and also Paru's dream hero. But the capitalist finally knocked over her porridge. This is the nature of capitalism. She is eventually rescued by a street rogue who loves Paru and brings the rice to her door. One can learn from these poems that all roads and bridges are easy ways for capitalism to penetrate.

***Kuttipuram Bridge* and the ethical issues of the environment**

Environmental thinking is not just love for trees. In the 1990s, a new prominent perspective emerged in Kerala that was willing to look at environmental issues in concurrence with political, socio-cultural and ethical issues. *Kuttipuram Bridge* suggested us of this perspective half a century ago. In Edassery's *Kuttipuram Bridge*, it was cautioned that the destruction of nature is also a cultural disaster. The countryside and Sacred grove's festivals, farmers' songs, Anthimahakalan hill and various species of flora and fauna are all integral parts of Kerala's unique culture.

It was the prevention and resistance against the invaders that strengthened the poems of Edassery. The poet's deep roots in Gandhian ideology gave him more firmness in this struggle. In *Nalathekkoru Bimbam* (Image of the future) written in 1913, he praises the soil.

(Mannin vikalamam poonthothile cheru...)

The poet praises the greatness of nature.

In the poem *Onnu urangan* (to sleep), the poet sees his fears about the *Kuttipuram Bridge* come true and wants to escape into a world without rubber, steel and cement. Edassery recognizes that the world of human beings, which has turned into a machine due to consumerism has become a reality.

The poet requests to lead himself to eternal bliss. This poem marks as a forewarning to a people who can forget all the ghosts and immerse themselves in the material pleasures of the present.

(Pinthalla pedugillende nadu snankranthi...)

Behind the environmental interest is the concern of how to preserve the rich nature and grand culture. In the late 1970s, with the Silent Valley agitation, a geography was formed in Kerala. For the first time in the world, an environmental committee headed by a writer was formed in Kerala. Activities were started to convince the people about the need for environmental protection. The environmental warnings of Edassery and P. Kunjiraman Nair were published as poems long before these initiatives.

Carson's *Silent Spring*, was published in 1956 as an inspiration for environmental thinking in the Western world. It is noteworthy that two years before a poem like *Kuttipuram Bridge* came out. *Kuttipuram Bridge* is the first Malayalam poem that casts scepticism on human strength and the endless progress of civilization.

It is not a small matter that half a century ago, like the Prophet, they were able to proclaim the great environmental disasters about to commence in the natural landscape of Kerala. We are destroying our very existence by over-exploitation and without balancing with the environment. With the advent of bulldozers, catastrophic environmental disasters began to take place. All the fields are levelled. As Edassery sang, Kerala is covered with heavy concrete. You can read about all the environmental tragedies that are happening today in *Kuttipuram Bridge*. In the contemporary poem *Katte Kadale* (Wind and the Sea), there is a trembling picture of the hills queuing to board lorries.

Even the last Mahakalan hill
with the help of machine guns
will spin and stand like a spinning top

The rivers of the earth are dying one by one. The observation that the remnants are flowing like toxic sewages and human waste into cities makes sense when compared to the contemporary situation. We did not pay heed to the warning given by the poet half a century ago.

If you're a machine that can play, laugh and cry,
you're going to change.

This concern of Edassery is becoming a shocking reality in Kerala at present. Natural images were the poet's source for expressing human life and visions. Many natural images can be deemed in his poem, such as Thevithanakulam, (Wedding Gift) Lushitamethan Kanyacharitam (*Pengal* or Sister) The long ploughing ditches of history (Veendum Kanyadhanam), Aayiram mulayolla vithallo (seeds of thousand bamboos) etc. The poet's statement that he is a sugarcane farmer and that his workplace is a carpenter's house indicates not only the power of the poems of Edassery but also the poet's distinctive love for nature. Like a breath of fresh air, the poems of Edassery are intertwined with nature.

We can notice that every places in Kerala face environmental crisis. Dry rivers, wells, rising temperature, cold, erratic rainfall, landslides, and tsunamis are all signs of impending disaster. As mentioned in the poems of Edassery, the customs and cultures based on the interrelationship between nature and man are dying as a result of the destruction of the cultural way of life that has existed here for generations. Traditional customs and cultures can eliminate the environmental problem to a certain extent that threatens human beings presently.

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