Neocolonialism, Climate Change, and the Poor in the Himalayas: Examining 'Intra-species Inequalities' in Anuradha Roy's "Drowning in Reverse" (2020)

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Abstract

The present article seeks to establish a connection between neocolonialism and environmental degradation in the current capitalist culture, contextualised in a critical reading of Anuradha Roy's short story, "Drowning in Reverse" (2020). Arguing that neocolonialism in an extension of colonialism, the article interrogates the 'Anthropocene' discourse and critiques it as a homogenised concept, falling short of addressing the problem of unequal human agency in the era of neocolonialism. The article identifies unequal human agency as a critical problem through the analysis of Roy's short story and discusses how the inequity in social strata complicates climate change related adversities, and subject the poor to the vagaries of environmental exploitation and degradation. Also, it shows how the drastic changes in environment due to commercial activities affect the lives of the poor, situated within the fragile ecology of the Indian Himalayas. Further, the article seeks to question the present narrative of development of the erstwhile colonies in the Global South, like that of India, in order to argue that the neocolonialists selectively represent the society in the global scenario, while marginalising the poor.

Keywords: Anthropocene, Himalayas, Climate Change, Environment, Neocolonialism, Poor.

Introduction

The dialogue between postcolonialism and environmentalism has been initiated by Rob Nixon in his essay "Environmentalism and Postcolonialism," anthologised in the volume *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* (2005). The environmental activism and the resistance of colonial environmental exploitation in the erstwhile colonised African, Asian and Latin American countries prompt Nixon's entangled understanding of both the terms 'Environmentalism' and 'Postcolonialism' (Nixon, 2005, p. 233). While, 'postcolonialism' as a theory has entered the literary lexicon for over last forty decades, but the consciousness of environment exploitation within the paradigm of postcolonial politics and theorisation is relatively a recent affair. The theorisation of 'ecocriticism' and the politicisation of 'environmentalism' until Nixon's noteworthy intervention in the theoretical field, has primarily been Euro-American centric. The postcolonial nations with their predicament of prolonged colonial suppression have found little or no space within the theoretical practices directing toward ecology and its degradation. The underrepresentation of the environmental concerns indicates at the marginalised position of the postcolonial nations, assigned the term 'Global South' in 1980s.

Though the era of colonisation has ended, the cultural and economic domination of 'Global North' (the term associated with developed countries) over 'Global South' prevails. As Paris Yeros and Praveen Jha (2020) argue that "historical transition that (has) brought colonialism to an end" has given way "to a new sovereignty regime, full of promise for the peoples of the South. Yet, the limitations and contradictions of this transition (have been) clear from the beginning" (p. 79). Kwame Nkruma calls this transition a 'neo-colonial' situation, which for him is the 'Last stage of imperialism'. Nkruma (1965) views "foreign interference in the affairs of developing countries" as the perpetuation of colonialism in a modern guise, with the same colonial objectives, but "at the same time talking about 'freedom'" (p. 239). Globalisation and capitalism are viewed as tools, extending colonialism through the establishment of foreign interface between the 'Global North' and the 'Global South'. The "reconfiguration of spatial relationships through globalization and the transnationalisation of capital" (Dirlik, 2007, p. 16) do not dissolve the economic inequalities between the two halves of the world. It is important to acknowledge the cultural hegemony of the economically solvents over the insolvents, whether in a broader global perspective or in a localised perspective. The propagation of the ideal of capitalism and the inequal distribution of wealth in the erstwhile colonies aggravate the "severe inequalities in those older colonies", manifesting their "neocolonial reconfigurations" (Dirlik, 1994, p. 334). As Ella Sohat (1992) suggests in "Notes on the Postcolonial", in current times, neocolonialism is more pervasive (p. 106) than postcolonialism, hence complicating the relationship between the economically privileged and the underprivileged. A discussion on neocolonialism, therefore, adds to the postcolonial discourses that continue to embark upon the economic inequalities and unequal agency of humans.

The unequal human agency bears a significant implication in the current (proposed) geological epoch, termed as 'Anthropocene' (Crutzen and Stoermer, 2000, p. 17). Paul J. Crutzen (2002), the atmospheric chemist, suggests that the Earth has surpassed the Holocene (the geological epoch with a considerably stable temperature) and has entered the Anthropocene, 'the geology of mankind' (p. 23). Crutzen (2002) opines that 'Anthropocene' is "human-dominated" which perhaps started "in the latter part of the eighteenth century, when analyses of air trapped in polar ice showed the beginning of growing global concentrations of carbon dioxide and methane" (p. 23). The injection of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases cater to the global warming, eventually increasing the global temperature considerably. This unprecedented increase in carbon emission happens to coincide with the beginning of the European industrial revolution, the most important invention being that of Watt's steam engine in 1784. Thus, the beginning of 'Anthropocene' marks the initiation of the capitalist regime and the rise of "political relations emerging around coal and steam between 1760 and 1830" (Moore, 2017, p. 2). Since, its coinage, the concept of 'Anthropocene' has occupied many scholarly debates and political deliberations, as the term has redefined humanity within the 'web of life' (Moore, 2017, p. 2). The coinciding of 'Anthropocene' with that of European Industrial Revolution, in the Euro-centric vision, indicates the turning point of modern human civilisation. The Industrial Revolution, thereby, establishes human beings as the discernible factor of the epoch, whose presence changes the human-nature relations significantly.

However, the term 'Anthropocene' suffers from the flaw of conceiving the Eurocentric vision of history that deliberately homogenises mankind across the world. The conceptualisation of the epoch along the line of European Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism, inherently overlooks the presence of non-European and indigenous peoples, and precludes the non-European history. Crutzen's overt homogenisation of 'Anthropocene' is subjected to criticism, as Andreas Malm and Alf Hornborg note that the concept of 'Anthropocene' falls short of pointing at the "intra-species inequalities" (2014, p. 1). They offer a critique to the concept of 'Anthropocene' for its homogeneity, overlooking the unequal human subjectivity due to the seemingly economic gap between the capitalist communities and

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their subjects. Later, Andreas Malm in his work *The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming* (2016), designates the term 'Capitalocene' to the current geological epoch and asserts, "this is the geology not of mankind, but of capital accumulation" (p. 417). The concept of 'Anthropocene,' therefore, bears inherent contradictions, recognition of which is essential in understanding the interrelationship between neocolonialism and capitalism in the current epoch. Capitalist system is considered as a neocolonial tool for extending a hegemonic control of one section over the other. On the global scale, there remains a power dichotomy operative between the two halves of the globe – Global North and Global South, an imaginary line drawn to reinforce the economic divide between the two. While in the local purview, economic inequalities persist among the haves and the have nots within developing/ underdeveloped societies. The economic divide is widened with the inequity in wealth distribution, leading to the concentration of wealth among a few. The unequal human agency, prevalent in the postcolonial societies, monopolises capitalism, thereby stirring the wheel of neocolonialism, a tool for establishing hegemony on multiple levels in the modern socio-economic scenario. Rob Nixon (2017) questioning the discourse on 'Anthropocene' for marginalising the "questions of unequal human agency, unequal human impacts, and unequal human vulnerabilities" (p. 45), reinforces the necessity to view beyond the 'Anthropocene' discourse to acknowledge the inequities within humanity. Nixon (2017) further implores us to view the "geological strata and social strata" simultaneously (p. 45).

The present article thus, in view of the preceding discussion, acknowledges the inherent lacuna in the 'Anthropocene' discourse as a homogenised and Eurocentric one. Furthering the discussion on 'Anthropocene' discourses, the present article seeks to interrogate into the implication of 'Anthropocene' within a postcolonial society, primarily India. Also, it endeavours to make a connection between neocolonialism, capitalism and climate change. With the introduction of the term, 'Anthropocene,' identifying human agency as the discernible factor behind climate change, the concern regarding anthropogenic environmental degradation gains greater currency. Therefore, 'Anthropocene' discourse inextricably links the current geological strata to the ongoing climate change. But, the question arises, 'does 'Anthropocene' as the new geological epoch' embody a universal significance, encompassing all humanity around the globe?' The question demands an introspection as the answer is far from obvious. The introspection draws the human and nonhuman habitat within the paradigm of cultural evaluation with respect to the current climate crisis. Given the indication of unequal human agency, it becomes essential to realise the unequal subjection of humans to climate precarity. The unequal human subjectivity to environmental change is aggravated by the unrelenting capitalist objectification of the environment in the neocolonial regime. This indeed is the manifestation of new modes of control and subjugation of the economically disowned communities and indigenous peoples directly reliant on their immediate and fragile environment. Neocolonialism, conceptualised as an extension of colonialism in the postcolonial societies is dependent on the spread of capitalism. It is the perennial crisis in the developing and underdeveloped economies, which complicates the intra-human relationship with respect to climate crisis. Neocolonial regime with the implication of capitalist exploitation endeavours to foster a culture of consumerism, objectifying human and nonhuman entities alike. Additionally, the unequal human relationship is manifested through the (erstwhile) colonial powers' enforcement of 'extraction ecologies' (Miller, 2020, p. 29) since the Industrial Revolution on the economically backward nations for colonising their natural resources. In such "resource-cursed societies" (Nixon, 2011, p. 70) the immediate natural environment is subjected to toxic gases and carbon concentration, thereby, damaging the immediate environment and degrading the lives of the economically deprived local inhabitants. Therefore, such experience of the economically marginalised, necessitates as Kathleen D. Morrison (2015) suggests, a decentring of "European historical experiences and the imagined relationships, these imply about human population, land use, and human impact on geosphere" in analysing the "anthropogenic environmental change" (p. 76). A decentring of the Euro-centric vision

widens the view related to humans and anthropogenic climate change, encompassing those positioned beyond the Western thought structure.

This article thus, seeks to draw upon the discussions on neo-colonialism and climate change in order to shed light on the victimisation of the poor in the neocolonial regime of unequal human agency. For this purpose, the arguments are contextualised in Anuradha Roy's short story, "Drowning in Reverse" (2020), anthologised in a collection titled, *Tales of Two Planets: Stories of Climate Change and Inequality in a Divided World* (2020). The story in focus is based on the fragile ecosystem of the Himalayas, which complicates the lives of the local inhabitants with the environmental exploitation. The story concentrates on the dual victimisation of the local inhabitants of the Himalayas by corrupt politicians and capital mongers. Underprivileged communities reliant on the vulnerable Himalayan ecology are evicted from their land and deprived of healthy living for dam construction and deforestation, which result in consequences such as water scarcity, decreased rainfall, and an increase in climatic temperature. The locals are forsaken for the so-called developmental activities, which in reality, cater to the accumulation of capital. In the course of article, I will investigate the layers of subjugation at work that aid the rich's neocolonial project, rendering the poor and underprivileged vulnerable along with their surrounding ecology. Also, I will argue that the oppression and forcible displacement of the locals from their locale is a form of violence, or what Rob Nixon (2011) calls 'slow violence' that occurs over a time period without any immediate violent visible impact (p. 2). In doing so, I will attempt to draw a relation between neocolonialism, capitalism and climate change.

Neocolonialism, Environmental fragility, and *Slow Violence*

The author sets her story on a Himalayan small town Tehri Garhwal, located in the Indian state of Uttarakhand. The location of the small town on the Himalayas is significant as it indicates at the precarious geographical condition of the town, situated within the fragile Himalayan ecosystem. The seismically dynamic Himalayas along with its rich biodiversity make the region a sensitive and precarious one. An enquiry into the ecological peculiarities of the Himalayas has revealed that "(t)he fragile landscapes of Himalayan region are highly susceptible to natural hazards, and there is ongoing concern about current and potential climate change impacts which may include abnormal floods, draughts, and landslides, loss of biodiversity and threats to food security" (Tewari, Verma, and Gadow, 2017, p. 1). The growing anthropogenic developmental activities on the Himalayas have subjected the inherently fragile ecosystem to utmost human pressure, which is inevitably disrupting the tectonic and ecological balance of the region. Thereby, the region is tormented by increased proportions in natural hazards – earthquakes, flash floods, landslides and heavy soil erosion. Due to the vulnerability of the region, a minor disruption, trigger ecological changes that rapidly assume unprecedented proportions. The author seems to bear the awareness regarding the fragility of the Himalayas, which complicate the conditions of the local inhabitants when subjected to developmental endeavours. Roy's narrative makes a critical interrogation into the human economic activities that apprehend the healthy living conditions of the local inhabitants of this Himalayan town. Rather than making a covert reference to the environmental degradation of the region, Roy states succinctly that a town, named Tehri with a hundred thousand populations was "washed off the map by the waters of a giant dam built there to supply electricity to cities in the plains, such as Delhi" (Roy, 2020, p.15). The lives of the inhabitants in their entirety are engulfed by the water released from the dam. The Himalayas being the potential source for hydropower energy, has allured the policy framers to build dams across the region. The building of dams in the ecologically fragile topography of the Himalayas signifies "more change to ecosystems and more people displaced from submerged settlements" (Pandit, 2013, p. 283). Such rampant construction of dams in "a region with high seismic activity and fragile geology shows that the policy-makers who approve these schemes either do not understand the scientific evidence or choose to ignore it" (p. 283), writes Maharaja K. Pandit (2013), an expert in the field of Himalayan ecology and conservation.

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Roy's story explicates the environmental complication and human-nurtured hazards due to the dam construction. Here, the town-dwellers who are poor and underprivileged bear the burns of dam building. The precarious decision of the policy makers to construct a dam without assessing the environmental impact in the region, thrusts the local inhabitants against the whim of the power holders. Moreover, the problem of economic divide and the deliberate strategy to dispossess the poor is embedded in the project of constructing dam for providing electricity to the city of Delhi in the plains. The policy makers are more concerned with the capital city of Delhi than that of a small town of Tehri Garhwal. The dispossession of the poor through the so-called developmental endeavour enforces the economic divide persisting in the Indian society. The power holders at the centre steer the political and economic wheel at the expense of the underprivileged and marginalised human beings in a geologically precarious region. The story voices the predicament in a society under the clutches of neocolonial power, embodied by capitalists and corrupt politicians. The agony of losing home, in the story, is expressed through Mr. Negi, an inhabitant of the erstwhile town of Tehri Garhwal. The inundated town literally inundates the home, memories and possessions of the inhabitants. The narrator narrates,

> As they were watching their town go under, Mr. Negi said, his uncle realized he had left his typewriter in the house, locked away in a battered metal box, during the town's evacuation. His uncle was an old man, half blind from peering at that typewriter over a lifetime of work as a lawyer's clerk. Black, bulky, outdated, with keys that stuck. Their whole lives were going under, his aunt's eyes red, yet Mr. Negi's uncle kept crying out, My typewriter, my typewriter. (Roy, 2020, p. 15)

The evocative scene is poignant, underlining the haplessness of those displaced communities whose "vigorously unimagined condition becomes indispensable to maintaining a highly selective discourse of national development" (Nixon, 2011, p. 150). The narratives of these displaced inhabitants are precluded from the narratives of national growth and economic ascent, as such 'unimagined communities' within the national borders, "disturb the implied trajectory of unitary national ascent" (Nixon, 2011, p. 150). The developmental project of dam construction in the Himalayan region embeds the paradox of development on the one hand, and the threat of dispossession of the local inhabitants on the other. Rob Nixon assigns the term "developmental refugee" to capture the poignant paradox of desirability and growth, as implied by the term 'development', and "a grave threat" of destitution and geographical dislocation held by the term 'refugee' (Nixon, 2011, p. 152). Projects like that of dam building which promise development in such developing societies multiply the misery of Indians, a thickly populated country. The narrative of development then seems to be a neocolonial conspiracy to marginalise the poor from the 'grand narrative' of development in the era of globalisation and transnationalism.

The reality, in fact, is quite disturbing as presented in Roy's story. The town, along with its history, is submerged under the pressure of neocolonialism and capitalism. The convenient assumption of those involved in the project of dam building that the local people can be securely evacuated to another place highlights their ignorance and lack of fathoming the misery of losing home. The story records the experience of the displaced through Mr. Negi, a former resident of the lost town –

> The last building to drown was the clock tower, Mr. Negi said. An ugly structure he had never liked, but at that moment it felt urgent and necessary that it stay visible, because as soon as its pointed tip slid from view it would feel as if a town where every street and building held meaning for them had never existed. (Roy, 2020, p. 15)

With the drowning of the tower, the last trace of the town slips into an oblivion, washed off the Indian map forever. Here, the abrupt evacuation of thousands of people can be viewed as a

violent intervention of the neocolonialists into the livelihood of the Himalayan dwellers. As Rob Nixon (2011) sees the mass eviction of many from their ecological habitation as a "violent conversion of inhabitant to unihabitant," which has been "a recurrent trauma amidst the spread of gargantuan dams across the so-called developing world" (p. 153). The fatality of such dams is widespread, forcing the disappearance of affected people from their sites of habitation. Such, unprecedented torture is indeed a violation of human living, often ignored as "irrational impediments to 'progress'" (Nixon, 2011, p. 153). This kind of violation, what Rob Nixon (2011) calls, is 'slow violence' - "a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space […]" (p. 2). He explains that the 'calamitous repercussions' of 'slow violence' "play out across a range of temporal scales," therefore, is relatively invisible to that "customarily conceived" as violence, "immediate in time, explosive and spectacular in space," and "erupting into instant sensational visibility" (Nixon, 2011, p. 2). The 'slow violence' of disinheriting of thousands of people from their native land abruptly imposes on them the 'refugee' status in their own country, and intra-migration within national boundaries is an ignored affair, wanting adequate attention. The 'calamitous repercussions' of such 'developmental refugees' often escape the eyes of the policy makers, since these repercussions, in the conventional sense, do not manifest any immediate violent impact, and is spread over an expanded timescale. This systematic subjugation of the poor weaves a web of hegemonic power, implying that human beings can hardly be viewed through the hegemonized lenses of 'Anthropocene'. The neocolonialists are the ones who wield the capitalist power, exploiting the human and nonhuman entities through the perpetuation of commercial activities. The human pressure on the fragile ecosystem of the Himalayas is primarily exerted by the corrupt political authorities and capital mongers. The anthropogenic practices damage the entire ecosystem of the region that includes the human inhabitants dependent on the indigenous ecology.

The exertion of neocolonial power, manifested through the developmental project of dam construction, as depicted in Roy's narrative, is a reminder of the *Narmada Bachao Andolan* (save the Narmada Movement) in the early 90s. The prolific social movement was observed in favour of the river and the indigenous people dependent on the riverine ecology. Social activist, Medha Patkar, the chief face of the movement, investigated the resultant adversity of the dam's construction on the river. The discovered ground reality was startling, revealing the lack of prior information to those people likely to be severely affected by the dam. The investigation also revealed that ground research to check the concomitant environmental problems was hardly conducted. The financing body, the World Bank, overlooked the dam related environmental problems and unfavourable effects on the locals for the mega-dam construction project. This indicates the concoction of reality and the manipulation of the poor for carrying out commercial projects. Mega-dam projects and climate change are directly related as the environmental impact of dam construction on the adjacent ecology is severe. As Phillip M. Fearnside's study on dams in the Brazilian Amazon forests reveals that hydroelectric dams are emitters of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide, methane and nitrogen dioxide. The fuels for these gases are damaging the vegetation, toxifying the soil, and the organic matter flowing into the river is also acidifying the river, heavily damaging the riverine ecology (Fearnside, 1995, pp. 7-19). The toxic gases emitted from the reservoirs inevitably pollute the environment, taking a heavy toll on the health of the local inhabitants. These environmental problems are multiplied when such projects are appropriated in densely populated regions, overlooking the interests of the indigenous people, thriving on the local ecology. Mass evacuation, though seems to offer a viable solution to the problem, but ground reality is a far cry from the seeming solution. Rather, it complicates the situation manifolds, exacerbating their economic inconvenience further, since their economic activities are primarily based on their (now damaged) local ecology. The deteriorated living condition of the people in the Himalayas is exemplified in the short story. The fragile Himalayan ecology, tolerates little or no changes, and reacts immediately in magnified proportions. The

topographical changes meet with unprecedented complications as the dam, on the one hand drowns the town of Tehri, while on the other hand, it turns the town of New Tehri (the town where the displaced people are forcibly placed in) into an island. Roy's sarcasm is clear when she says, "From being hill people, they had been turned into islanders" (Roy, 2020, p. 15). The topographical change of the region alters the mode of living, degrading the lives of the locals. A newly created lake surrounds the town of New Tehri without any "land to grow vegetables, no forests to graze cattle, no streams to fish" (Roy, 2020, p. 16). Those people's misery is intensified with the scarcity of drinking water, inconvenience in commuting for reaching market place and hospital. Boat is the only mode of travel with the drastic change in the topography that isolates them from the rest (Roy, 2020, pp. 15-16). Mr. Negi, a sufferer, relates to his knowledge about the government's plan to capitalise "on the novelty of a giant-high altitude lake" to "develop a new kind of tourism around it" (Roy, 2020, p. 16). The government plans regarding tourism based on the newly formed lake on the mountains –

> Midget submarines would take tourist past the underwater wreck of the old town – the place, the market – all crumbling away, but the state had no doubt that visitors would flock there and pay good money to enjoy this mini Atlantis so far island, a thrill very different from the region's standard menu of mountaineering and bird-watching. (Roy, 2020, p. 16)

This underlines the government's profit maximising policy by capitalising the misery of the displaced people. Instead of formulating policies to minimise the government-borne hazards of the people, it plans to make an artifice out of the wreck, which these displaced people once called their home. The plan of eco-tourism in a way objectifies the environment for commercial purpose, which inevitably victimises the local human inhabitants. The government policies therefore, cater to the capitalist demands, rather than addressing the needs of the poor. The representatives in the government, the power mongers, are mere puppets at the hands of capitalists, together steering the wheel of neocolonial power.

Roy's story is a critique of the lackadaisical attitude of the Indian power holders who deliberately overlook the interests of the commoners and push the lives of the poor to the tipping point, where their existence obfuscates. Contextualised in India, the narrative draws a connection between neocolonialism and climate change. It diligently presents the nuances of the hegemonic social structure that pays no regard to the environmental health and to those people directly associated with the environment. The 'environment' of India forms "the complex web, field, or system – […] – composed of the relationships between human and non-human agents or actors that define the history of the Indian subcontinent" (Mukherjee, 2010, p. 5). The neocolonial cahoots in the name of progress, ignores the complexities underlying the composite environment of India. Their ignorance disrupts the environmental balance, damaging the life and health of millions. The damage of the Himalayan town, the transformation of the inhabitants of the town to ghosts of the town, the violation of their habitat, and the geological morphing of the Himalayas, all contribute to climate crisis. Climate change impacts human life indefinitely for human beings are entangled with their ecology, implying climate change is an intrinsic part of human history. The narrative is a pointer to the oppressive structure operative within India, "where the rulers are oblivious to the needs of citizens, wildlife and landscapes exist only to be commercially exploited," and is "run by politicians who are almost all thugs of different shades" and "the poor know that governments are rich, for the rich, by the rich" (Roy, 2020, p. 19). The exploitation of the poor and the environment is the reality of Indian society that is controlled by the neocolonial "web of plutocrats and corporations" (Roy, 2020, p. 19). This web of power mongers is responsible for the anthropogenic climate change, intentionally heaped upon many who try to evade it. The question asked in the story, "Doesn't it change the climate to wipe out miles of trees and mountains and replace them with water?" (Roy, 2020, p.16), highlights the ongoing climate change is man-made, particularly capitalist-driven. Naomi Klein, in her work, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the*

Climate (2014), opines that the current world of climate change is in "decade zero" (p. 452), implying the human-generated crisis, eventually threatening our very human existence. However, human beings, especially the neocolonialists, deny the reality of the climate crisis to propagate their capitalist ideology of commodifying the environment, affecting humans and nonhuman both.

Conclusion

The present article, therefore, offers an indisputable connection between neocolonialism and environmental degradation through a critical analysis of Roy's story, 'Drowning in Reverse'. The maintenance of a stable ecology necessitates the stabilising of human-nonhuman interrelationship on one level, and intra-human relationship on the other. The homogenised Anthropocene discourse, charging human beings unanimously for the geomorphological changes and climate change, sets forth a human-nonhuman divide. Though the human-nonhuman dichotomy is inherent in our culture, but there is a necessity to identify the intra-human inequalities in a hegemonized society. In today's globalised world, the culture of consumerism plays a significant role in turning the climate wheel. The human interference causing climate change indicates at the massive spread of capitalist practices. The massive influx of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, responsible for global warming, and its accompanying climate impacts, affect fragile ecology like those of mountain ecology, island ecology, forest ecology among others. Most of the fragile ecologies sustain indigenous peoples and other marginalised communities. So, the ongoing anthropogenic climate change impacts their livelihoods more adversely compared to the urban dwellers and the socio-economically advantaged ones.

The conflict between the haves and have nots are stark in a postcolonial nation like India which till date is largely an agrarian society._ Though the post-independent India has envisioned to become a socialist state, but in reality, the government aids the capitalists to represent India as a rapidly growing economy in the global scenario. The neoliberal strategies have often affected the poor adversely, degrading their life and the environment sustaining them. A scathing criticism of the neocolonial Indian society is clear in Roy's story –

> There is a resignation, cynicism, and fury as government after government ravages the country's forests and waters in a tight embrace with giant companies. Nobody can reverse this or stop it: it has been and will be *coitus uninterruptus continuous* until there is nothing left to destroy. (Roy, 2020, p. 19)

The sense of hopelessness is expressed through the statement, as the narrator, identifies with the displaced victim, Mr. Negi. The paper thus, proposes that the neocolonial discriminating structure exploits the environment, depraving the living conditions of those dependants on the natural resources. The discrepancy in the distribution of wealth and governmental exploitation of the poor along with their environment in collaboration with the corporate giants are the present problems in India which need to be addressed. So, there is an urgent necessity to strike a balance in intra-human relationship to minimise the climate impact on those eco-culturally marginalised. Additionally, the narrative of development in the erstwhile colonies of the Global South represents a selective picture of the society sans exploitation of the poor. Thus, there is a necessity to probe into the narratives of the marginalised who are subjected to the vagaries of environmental degradation due to the faulty policies and ignorance of the power holders in a neocolonial society.

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