

## Concept of “Go Green” in O.V. Vijayan’s the *Legends of Khasak*: Growing Consciousness towards Mother Nature

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### Abstract:

In recent years, the global “Go Green” movement has garnered significant attention, serving as a universal call to embrace sustainable living and prioritize environmental conservation. Drawing inspiration from Vijayan's literary masterpiece, this study explores the parallels between the ecological challenges faced by the fictional world of *Khasak* and the urgent issues confronting our planet today. *The Legends of Khasak* intricately examines the intricate relationship between its characters and nature, offering a lens through which we can understand the intricate interplay between human actions and the environment. This paper posits that the “Go Green” movement, with its focus on sustainable practices, conservation, and the safeguarding of Mother Nature, resonates deeply with the themes presented in Vijayan's work. The Present Paper aims to explore the Concept of Go Green in O.V. Vijayan’s *The Legends of Khasak* in the backdrop of growing consciousness towards Mother Nature.

**Keywords:** humanity, crises, suffering, nature, environment, pollution

### Introduction

O.V. Vijayan, born Ottupulackal Velukkuty Vijayan on July 2, 1930, in Palakkad, Kerala, was a prominent figure in Indian literature, known for his contributions as a novelist, short story writer, and cartoonist. “O.V. Vijayan’s novels portray a deliberate submission to the forces of nature” (Lalitha, 2017: 122-132). His impact on Malayalam literature extended beyond crafting compelling narratives; he also emerged as a social commentator and political activist. One of his notable works is the acclaimed novel *Khasakkinte Ithihasam* (*The Legends of Khasak*), a masterpiece exploring spirituality, social dynamics, and existentialism through the character of Ravi, a young

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teacher in the fictional village of Khasak. “O.V. Vijayan in ‘The Legends of Khasak’, conventional practices, local stories, myths, and religious ceremonies play a central role in guiding the community” (Akhil & Geetha, 2019: 375-377). Vijayan’s influence firmly places him among the celebrated novelists in the Malayalam language. “The philosophy of literature is considered in its third sense, where a writer may create books with the intention of substantiating a particular argument. However, when skillfully executed by an accomplished writer, philosophical themes can have a remarkably enduring impact on readers” (Rajendran, 2018: 89-95).

The term “Environment” encompasses the surroundings in which living organisms exist, including physical elements such as air, water, and land, along with social and cultural factors. A positive environment significantly impacts well-being, promoting physical health through clean air and water, proper waste disposal, and minimal pollutants. The quality of our surroundings also affects mental health, with natural spaces correlating to reduced stress and improved mood, while adverse conditions like pollution contribute to mental health issues. Additionally, a conducive environment is linked to economic prosperity, as healthy ecosystems support industries and agriculture, contributing to sustainable economic practices.

The environment’s role in regulating Earth’s climate is crucial, with human activities like deforestation and fossil fuel use contributing to climate change, impacting ecosystems and societies. Maintaining a balanced and sustainable environment is essential for the well-being of individuals and communities, considering physical, mental, social, and economic factors.

Eco-criticism, a literary and cultural theory, explores the relationship between literature and the natural environment. Emerging in response to growing environmental concerns in the late 20th century, it examines how literature represents and influences our understanding of nature, ecology, and environmental issues. Joseph Meeker is often considered the pioneer, exploring ecological aspects of literature in *The Comedy of Survival*. The field gained prominence in the 1990s with contributions from scholars like Lawrence Buell, Cheryll Glotfelty, and Jonathan Bate. Eco-criticism’s importance lies in promoting environmental awareness, advocating for sustainability, and contributing to the ecological dialogue. “Ecocriticism seeks to explore the ways in which people in society engage with and react to the natural world and ecological factors. Instead of adopting a utilitarian perspective on nature, the present emphasis is on reevaluating the relationship between human beings and their surroundings” (Nimisha, 2016: 375-377).

By analyzing how literature reflects and shapes perceptions of the natural world, eco-criticism fosters environmental consciousness.

Incorporating insights from various disciplines, it encourages a holistic understanding of the relationship between literature and the environment, inspiring social and environmental activism. Eco-criticism plays a vital role in cultivating a deeper understanding of the intricate link between literature and the environment, contributing to a more ecologically informed and responsible society.

### **Research Methodology**

This research paper relies on a combination of primary and secondary data sources for its foundation. The original works by the select author is used as primary sources. The selected novel for carrying forward the research work is critically evaluated and analysed. The secondary sources will include the use of Library, Research journals, Magazines, Internet. These sources provide help and guidance for examining the works in depth and for further multiple interpretations.

### **Revisoning *The Legends of Khasak*: Environmental Perspectives**

The re-visioning seeks to delve into *The Legends of Khasak* from an environmental standpoint, highlighting the ecological aspects interwoven into the story. Through an analysis of the complex connections among characters, landscapes, and the natural world, the research aims to uncover the environmental themes of the novel and examine how it addresses, critiques, or anticipates ecological issues. “*The Legends of Khasak*, the narrative revolves around the rural terrain of Khasak, where Vijayan adeptly presents a varied cast of characters and intricately weaves the folkloric spirit of the locale into their lives through his creative storytelling” (Ashwathy, 2020: 198-202).

The fictional village of Khasak, where the novel takes place, acts as a backdrop for exploring the interaction between human activities and the environment. By closely examining the described landscapes, the paper investigates how they actively contribute to the narrative. From the lively meadows to the sacred groves, each component plays a role in the ecological tapestry, providing insights into the delicate balance between nature and human existence. The study specifically identifies instances where natural elements symbolize broader environmental concerns, such as the recurring theme of water bodies, the symbolism of plant and animal life, and the portrayal of weather patterns. The objective is to decode how these elements enhance the novel’s underlying environmental narrative.

Through an examination of these relationships, the research delves into themes of dependence, exploitation, and mutualism. This exploration aims to reveal how these relationships mirror real-world

dynamics, offering readers a nuanced understanding of the intricate connections between humans and the environment.

*The Legends of Khasak* gains significance in the current environmental discourse by bringing attention to its ecological layers. By unraveling these layers within the narrative, the study seeks to foster a deeper comprehension of the complex relationships among literature, culture, and the environment.

### **Awareness towards Mother Nature in *The Legends of Khasak*: Issues and Challenges**

Examining the environmental undertones in *The Legends of Khasak*, the study unveils the intricacies and hurdles embedded in the narrative, presenting a comprehensive insight into the awareness, or lack thereof, regarding Mother Nature. Although the novel doesn't overtly center on environmental issues, it can be interpreted as an exploration of the broader theme of human connectivity with nature and the trials faced by communities in maintaining a harmonious bond with the environment. The novel reflects the deep cultural and spiritual connection traditional societies often have with the natural world.

The ecological challenges confronted by the characters and the community in Khasak encompass issues like deforestation, water scarcity, and various environmental problems. Nature assumes a symbolic role in the novel, a common literary device where it serves as a metaphor for different aspects of human life. The narrative subtly urges environmental awareness and, in some instances, explicitly encourages readers to ponder their relationship with nature and take steps towards environmental conservation.

The enchanting beauty of Khasak significantly contributes to the memorability of the text through vibrant descriptions and its association with the local inhabitants. The legends surrounding Khasak, particularly those linked to the mosque, set the scope of the novel. Vijayan adeptly combines the rustic allure of Khasak with gothic elements to establish the novel's mood, portrayed through the deteriorated Mosque of the King, the captivating waterfall, the eerie gallop of horses during solitary nights, and the depiction of enigmatic creatures concealed within the lush greenery. "Vijayan, renowned for his exceptional creative versatility as a writer, initially composed his iconic masterpiece, *The Legends of Khasak*, with apparent ease in a sphere seemingly separate from the wider historical currents of the era" (Jagdish, 2022: 646-649).

O.V. Vijayan captures the essence of Khasak by emphasizing its distinctive features, such as houses with thatched roofs and the quintessential village teashop, reminiscent of typical scenes in Kerala villages. The novel showcases a deliberate surrender to the forces of nature, emphasizing a harmonious coexistence with the natural

surroundings. “Vijayan employs a range of images in his writing, with a notable recurring theme being dragonflies, frequently associated with Appukili and their significance in preserving memories from the past. Another poignant image involves Ravi’s mother seated on the veranda, indicating the stars in the sky as a symbolic representation of her profound maternal affection for her child” (Sruthi, 2021:58-61).

*The Legends of Khasak* narrates the journey of two spores, with the elder one pausing upon encountering a lush green valley, while the younger one, driven by a desire for discovery, continues the expedition. The novel underscores the omnipotence of nature over humanity, displaying its strength through natural calamities like famine, drought, flood, and earthquakes. The interdependence of human life and nature is highlighted, underscoring the impossibility of separating oneself from the profound influence of the natural world. The challenges faced by the characters in *Khasak* mirror broader global environmental concerns, providing a contemporary context for discussions on environmental awareness. The characters’ personal journeys in the novel are intricately intertwined with their surrounding

### **Concluding Remarks**

Vedic philosophy often views nature with reverence, deeming various elements as divine. In *The Legends of Khasak*, the village is portrayed as a mystical and spiritual place, emphasizing the interconnectedness of the natural and spiritual realms. The sacred grove symbolizes this unity. The cyclical nature of life, a key Vedic concept, is mirrored in the novel’s narrative, highlighting the interdependence of life and nature. This cyclic perspective serves as a subtle reminder to respect environmental cycles. Characters in the story grapple with moral dilemmas, their actions intricately linked to the natural world. The Vedic principle of Dharma, emphasizing righteous living and responsibilities, can be applied to environmental conservation, urging the protection of nature.

Examining the protection of Mother Nature from a Vedic standpoint, it’s crucial to consider Vedic literature, which underscores the interconnectedness of all beings and the environment. In Vedic philosophy, Earth is seen as a living entity deserving respect. Vedic concepts, such as the sacredness of nature, non-violence, and the interconnectedness of living beings, deeply influence Indian culture and philosophy. Author Vijayan likely drew on these ideas, subtly incorporating them into his work. The novel delves into the environmental impact of human actions and the repercussions of disrupting the natural order, conveying a sense of the importance of harmonious coexistence with nature.

Vijayan's awareness of nature and his perspective on Earth as an ideal habitat are evident in the narrative, where the village of Khasak is intimately connected to its natural surroundings. The characters' relationships with the land, river, and ecosystem may signify a broader understanding of Earth as a source of sustenance, emphasizing humans' coexistence with nature. Although Vijayan doesn't explicitly articulate environmental or Vedic themes like a modern environmentalist, the novel reflects broader cultural and spiritual values recognizing Earth as a precious and interconnected entity.

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