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Tribal in Indian English Novels

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INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND TRIBAL MYTHS AS THE
VEHICLES OF ENVIRONMENTALISM IN AMITAV GHOSH'S
NOVEL 'THE HUNGRY TIDE'

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ABSTRACT:

Amitav Ghosh's novel, 'The Hungry Tide' fictionalises the government's environmental conservation policy and its effects on the lives of the local inhabitants and the tribals of the Sundarbans when it was declared as a Tiger Reserve. The novel demonstrates that the officious implementation of the environmental conservation policy, disregarding the local inhabitants' needs of livelihood and their contribution towards conservation of the flora and fauna of the land, through their traditional cultural practices based on the myths and legends prevalent in their community, results in the failure of the state sponsored conservation drives and the dispossession of the indigenous people.

Keywords: Amitav Ghosh, Indian Fiction, Sundarbans, Tiger Reserve, State sponsored Conservation Policy, Indigenous Culture, Tribal myths and legends, dispossession, commercialization of nature.

'The Hungry Tide', a now much famous novel, written by Amitav Ghosh in 2004, breaks new ground in the Indian English fiction by presenting a fictionalised version of the issue of the state sponsored 'environmental conservation policy' and its socio-environmental implications. It demonstrates the struggle for existence, not only of the non-human species but of the human species as well, in as perilous and the ever-changing land as the Sundarbans. The tone of the novel frequently switches between the fictional and the factual. Despite the author's note (Ghosh, 401), about the characters and places described in the novel as being fictitious, many places like Canning, Gosaba, Satjelia etc. do actually exist. And therefore, it is not also difficult to deduce that the characters who find themselves at fight against the perilous surroundings of the Sundarbans which is full tigers, snakes and other beasts, as well as with the state apparatus forcefully implementing the 'environmental conservation drive', are the members of the indigenous communities and many tribes that inhabit the place. Non-fiction studies like the one quoted below reveal that the region is inhabited by such tribes as Santals, Mundas, Oraons etc. along with the other indigenous communities.

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The rendition of the Mahabharata tales through Pandavani has always remained a fresh and new experience for Teejan Bai. She expresses that “Mahabharata has all the *navarasas*. In every Parva there are different shades. Tell me what human emotion you can’t find in the Mahabharata? *Kshama, karuna, krodh, sab kuchh hai.*” Bhima, she says, “is her favourite character and it is he who is at the heart of Pandavani, the art of Mahabharata story telling... He is a bigger hero than Arjun,... He stood at all times like a rock with his mace, and unlike the others, he wasn’t yearning for kingdom or power. His might was for the poor and the righteous.” (Nair: 2017)

Seeking lessons from the selfless Bhima of the Mahabharata, she persuade herself that Pandavani was meant for her and she through her dedication and perseverance emerged as an exponent of this art form and is instrumental in reviving the diminishing folklore at the global level almost single handedly. Her illiterate community, rich in the culture of Pandavani recitations was given recognition by her success; she brought economic stability for her family members who accompany her as her troupe, has taught to believe in one’s abilities and skills that can raise you high against illiteracy and social hierarchy or biases. Today she has around 200 students from India and abroad whom she firmly believes would respect the Pandavani folklore like she does, and spread it with utmost dedication and discipline that she has imparted through her training to her disciples. The best admiration that Teejan Bai ever received is a short film on her life that was made by Bhilai Steel Plant. Her name prominently appears in the cultural books and documentaries and has inspired the mainstream Indian cinema to make a film on her. In short, Teejan Bai’s fascinating character through her pagalpana has inspired us all to take adversities in one’s stride and forge ahead trying to attain what you dream.

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REPRESENTATION OF TRIBAL LIFE AND CULTURE IN HANSDA SOWVENDRA SHEKHAR’S *THE MYSTERIOUS AILMENT OF RUPI BASKEY*

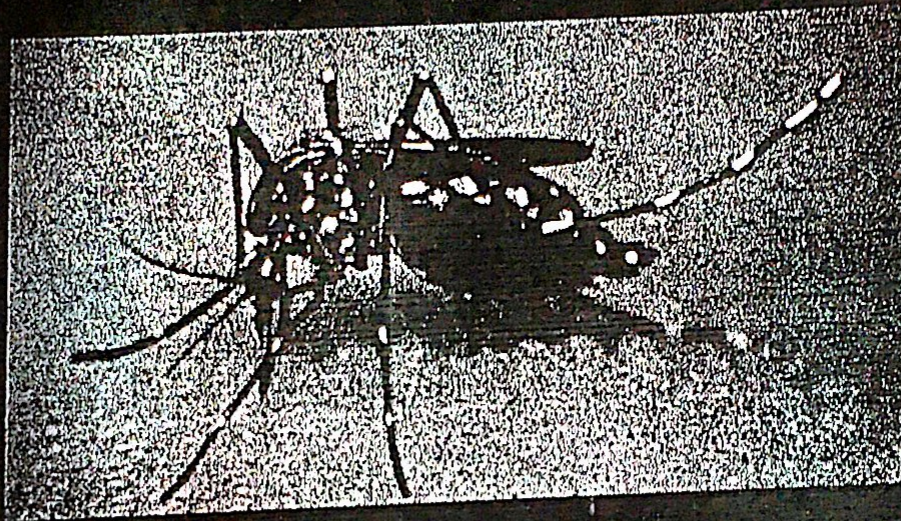
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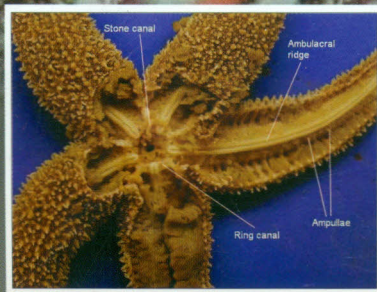
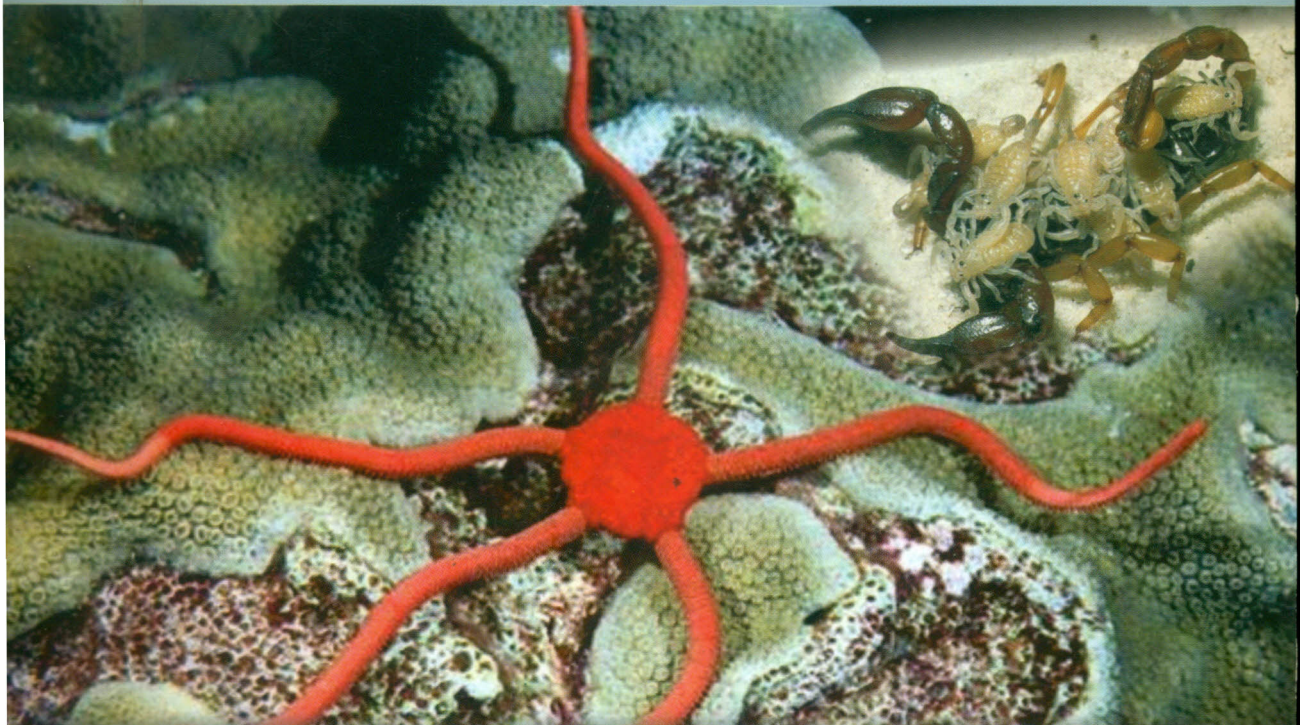
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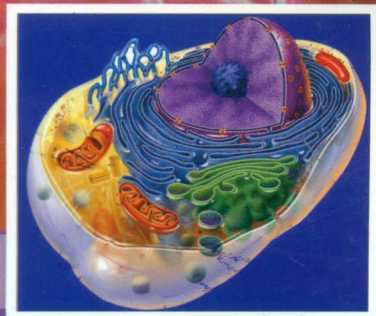
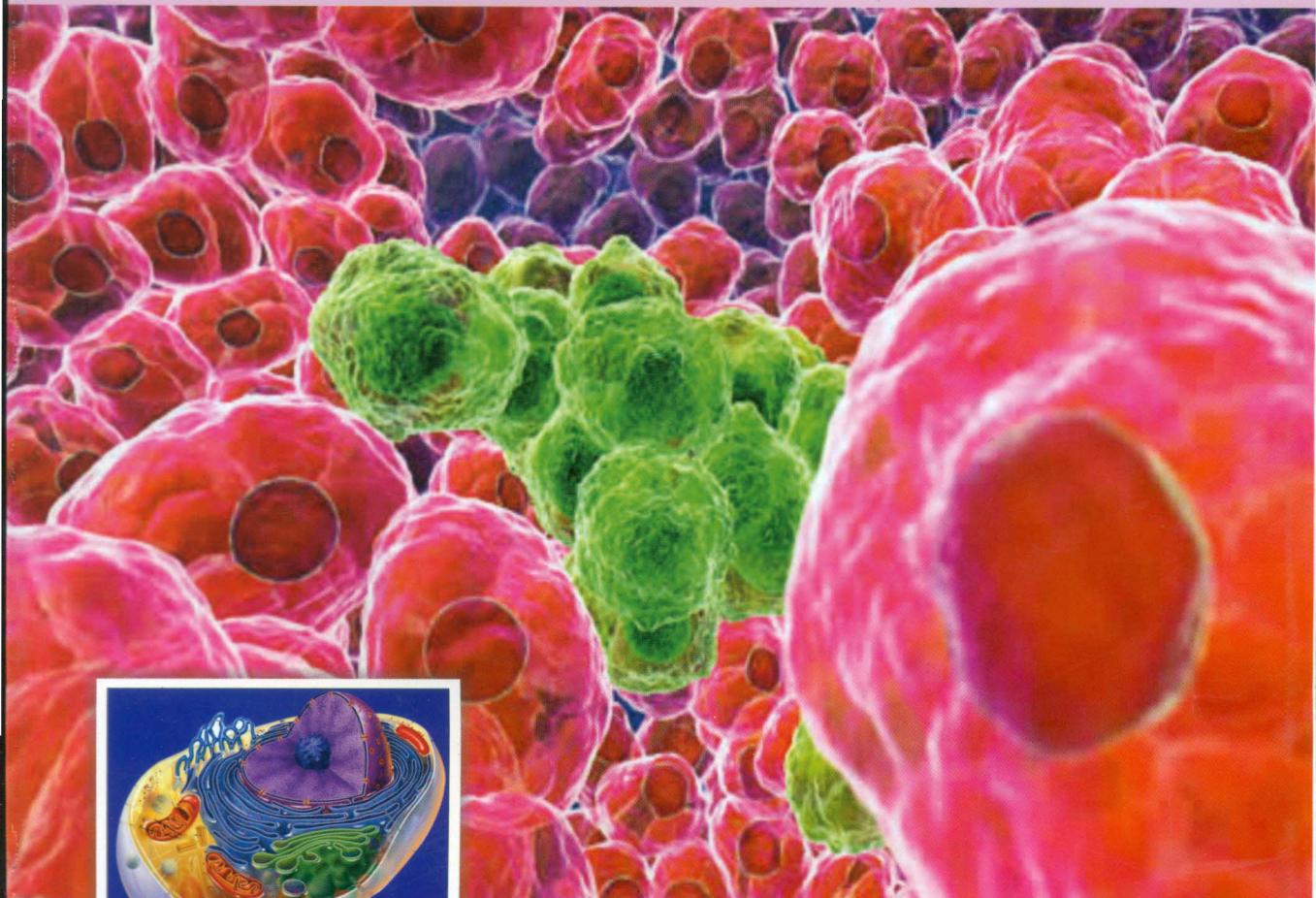
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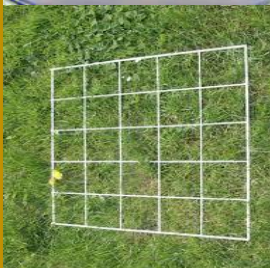
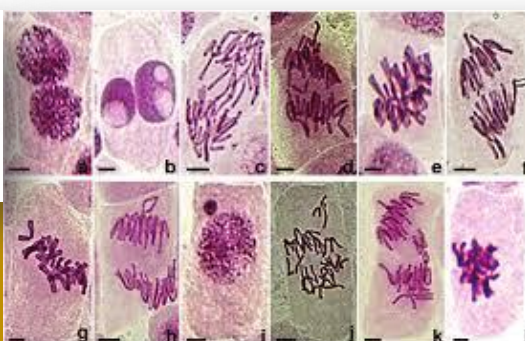
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