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The Voice of Andaman: An Ecocritical Reading of Pankaj Sekhsaria's *The Last Wave*

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Abstract

Pankaj Sekhsaria's *The Last Wave* (2014) is an island fiction set against the backdrop of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Sekhsaria's *The Last Wave* focuses on the Jarwa tribe, exploited by the British during colonial times, and the Inland Indians. It explores how, from colonial times to the present day, outsiders entered the island through government support and corrupt politicians and occupied the land of the Jarawa tribe. They cleared the forest and made houses, fields, plantations, and thus the ecosystem lost its balance, thereby the Anthropocene was seen at its peak. The Jarawas' interaction with mainland Indians resulted in catching diseases and harmful habits like tobacco, which pushed them towards annihilation. It also shows illegal timber extraction and logging by the forest department. The novel ends with the 2004 tsunami, where nature avenged the human beings for the overexploitation. Through a qualitative methodology, this article argues how modernity and globalization alienated man from nature, who are blind in the shade of the Anthropocene, ravaged the Andaman and Nicobar islands; how their overexploitation pushed the indigenous tribes to annihilation and totally disrupted the balance of the ecosystem.

Keywords: Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Anthropocene, globalization, modernity, Jarawa, exploitation.

1. Introduction

Island fiction is a type of fiction where the main action of the plot revolves around an island or the main action happens within the island. The island may be imaginary or real. Lisa Fletcher points out that the island is not just a setting. Fletcher writes, "A theory of performative

geographies grants islands metaphorical agency by acknowledging that islands are not passive players in the stories we tell about them, but rather that they participate in the production of meaning" (Fletcher 640). The account of voyages to the island, tales of sailors shipwrecked on a small island are some of the recurring themes in literature.

The appearance of the island is not a recent trend. It has a long history. The island tropes can be found in classical texts and myths like Homer's *Odyssey* and Dante's *Inferno*. During the Renaissance and European expansion of colonization, there arose new perspectives on the island theme with new literary uses of Edenic, Arcadian, and utopian islands. Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Thomas More's *Utopia*, etc. fall under this genre.

In India, island fiction is a very popular medium for exploring ecological concerns. Indian novelists often explored the ecological and refugee concerns in their novels. Amitav Ghosh, Shubhangi Swarup, and Pankaj Sekhsaria are some of the Indian novelists who have extensively written novels on Indian islands, i.e, Andaman and Nicobar islands and Sundarbans.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are ecologically very fragile in nature. Pankaj Sekhsaria, in the article called "Ecology and history of the Andaman Islands: Bottom up and through the lens of fiction", wrote that the volcanoes, earthquakes, and tsunamis are regular occurrences in these islands. These natural calamities have played a central role in the creation and re-creation of these islands. The Andaman and Nicobar islands are part of the seismic zone V outside the Himalayan belt, which is the Earth's geologically most active and volatile region. The Andaman and Nicobar region provides an ideal tectonic setting for the occurrence of megathrust earthquakes. As a result, earthquakes here are a regular occurrence and the 9.3 Richter scale earthquake that caused the giant tsunami of December 2004 had its epicenter not very far from the Nicobar Islands.

Sekhsaria's *The Last Wave* describes the efforts of Harish, Seema, and other members of the Institute for Island Ecology (IIE) to prevent further encroachment of settlers into the Jarawa lands. They investigate how the Jarawa people are exploited by the settlers with the help of local politicians. They find out that the settlers illegally extracted timber from the Jarawa Reserve Forest. The settlers illegally occupied the Jarawa lands. Moreover, contact with the settlers introduced diseases like measles among the Jarawa people. The settlers also introduced a new habit of consuming tobacco to the Jarawa people. While Harish and his companions planned to show all these injustices to the outer world to prevent the Jarawa people from extinction and preserve the Jarawa Reserve Forest, a giant tsunami came and devoured the islands.

2. Historical background of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands possess a long and complex historical trajectory. According to a widely circulated tradition, the name "Andaman" is derived from the Malays, who were familiar with the islands from ancient times. Historical accounts suggest that Malay seafarers often traversed the surrounding seas, captured indigenous inhabitants, and traded them as slaves. They referred to the archipelago as the "Islands of Handuman," a pronunciation variant of

Hanuman, the divine figure from the *Ramayana*. Over time, "Handuman" gradually evolved into the present appellation "Andaman."

Prior to colonial incursions, the islands were inhabited predominantly by indigenous tribes such as the Great Andamanese, the Onge, and the Jarawa. The trajectory of modern colonial history began in 1789, when the British East India Company established a naval base and penal settlement on Chatham Island, adjacent to Great Andaman, where the present-day town of Port Blair stands. The penal history of the islands became particularly significant after the suppression of the Revolt of 1857, when in January 1858 nearly two hundred mutineers were exiled to the settlement. A second penal colony was formally established the same year. Subsequently, between 1869 and 1870, numerous political prisoners, including Wahabi activists resisting British authority, were also deported to the islands. To consolidate control, the colonial administration commissioned the construction of the Cellular Jail—popularly known as "Kalapani" or the "prison of black waters." Designed to accommodate six hundred prisoners, the structure was completed between 1896 and 1906. Over the following decades, convicts, Moplah rebels, members of "criminal tribes" from the Central and United Provinces, and refugees from East Pakistan, Burma, and Sri Lanka, along with ex-servicemen, were resettled in the region.

During the Second World War, British authorities evacuated the islands in the wake of advancing Japanese forces. From 1942 to 1945, the archipelago remained under Japanese occupation, characterized by a harsh regime and widespread militarization. Fortifications were established through the construction of airfields at Port Blair, Rutland, and Car Nicobar, alongside radar installations, anti-aircraft defense systems, and coastal pillboxes. Following India's independence on 15 August 1947, the islands were formally integrated into the Indian Union and designated as a Union Territory.

Among the indigenous groups, the Jarawa constitute one of the most significant tribes. Historically, the community maintained strict isolation from outsiders, earning the designation "Jarawa," interpreted as "the hostile ones" or "people of the earth." Originally located in the southeastern parts of the islands, they migrated westwards during the British colonial period. Traditionally hunter-gatherers, their subsistence practices persisted relatively unchanged until the late twentieth century. However, the construction of the Great Andaman Trunk Road—a 360-kilometer thoroughfare linking Port Blair with the western territories of the archipelago—brought unprecedented external contact. This road, cutting through Jarawa territory, accelerated interaction with non-indigenous populations and significantly altered the socio-cultural dynamics of the community.

3. An Ecocritical Reading of Pankaj Sekhsaria's *The Last Wave*

Pankaj Sekhsaria is an Indian writer, researcher, photographer, journalist, campaigner, and academic. He has worked extensively in the field of environment and wildlife conservation with a particular focus on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as part of his work with the environmental

NGO, Kalpavriksh. He has written three non-fiction books based on the islands: *Troubled Islands* (2003; a collection of his journalist writings), *The Jarawa Tribal Reserve Dossier: Cultural and Biological Diversity in the Andaman Islands* (2010), and *Island in Flux: The Andaman and Nicobar Story* (2017). His other best-known works are *The Last Wave* (2014), *Instrumental Lives* (2018), *The Great Nicobar Betrayal* (2024), etc. He is currently Senior Project Scientist, DST-Centre for Policy Research, Dept. of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT-Delhi.

Sekhsaria's *The Last Wave: An Island Novel* describes the destruction of the archipelago of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands by the settlers. It illustrates how the Jarawa tribe is on the path of extinction due to contact with mainlanders. It provides the background of settlers who came from the mainland and occupied the island. The Andaman reserve forest is dwindling because of excessive extraction of timber and the introduction of species of orchids. Madhusree Mukerjee praises the author's achievement in articulating the archipelago's unique natural features: "Since the 1990s, the author has devoted himself to defending all that is magical about the emerald isles, their coral-studded waters, and the ancient culture that thrives within its glorious and primeval rainforest" (Mukherjee).

Sekhsaria's *The Last Wave: An Island Novel* begins with its protagonist Harish Kumar's visit to the Andaman Islands with his friend Prasad on a short-term contract for the magazine called InFocus. In Andaman, he learns about the original inhabitants of the island and their exploitation by settlers like the British.

Modernity was introduced on the island by the British, who, as part of their colonial mission, occupied some of the islands to set up colonies. They started ravaging the island. The exploitation reached its culmination when, as part of the Great Indian Railway project, the British brought in labourers from the mainland. They started living in the islands. For this timber extraction in the rich forests on the islands grew rapidly. People from various places were recruited for clearing the land and timber extraction. Thus, the Anthropocene entered the island through the British.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are the territory of the indigenous tribes. But their island was being occupied by outsiders who came there through the British and corrupt politicians. The encroachment into the Andaman and Nicobar islands reached its height in the 1920s when many tribes from various places came into the Andaman islands, like Moplahs, Bhantus, and Buddhists from Burma. Sekhsaria writes that in the 1930s, nearly thirty different languages were being spoken by the 20,000-odd people inhabiting the Andamans, including Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Andamanese, Telugu, Malayalam, Burmese, and even Pashto. "The islands had truly become a cultural melting point" (Sekhsaria 30). This encroachment intensified the practice of the Anthropocene on the islands.

Modernity and globalization reached their peak in the post-independence era. After coming back from Delhi, Seema, the "locally born" who is pursuing a PhD on 'The Socio-economic Evolution of the Andaman's Local Borns', was perplexed to see changes that take place in a few

years. The land Seema's ancestors, the old settlers, occupied was a dense forest where they made huts and wooden houses by clearing the forest. However, it does not remain the same. Seema witnessed that the new roads have been constructed. It is more crowded and chaotic than Seema remembered. There are more vehicles, more movements, and more actions on the roads. Garbage now accumulates on street corners and on the roads. The dogs had multiplied in direct proportion to Mother Nature, the dirt, and filth. "Everything was being replaced by monsters of the modern age, concrete replacing timber with a rapidity that would soon send termites out of business (Sekhsaria 41-42).

Andaman and Nicobar Islands Protection of Aboriginal Tribes Regulations (ANPATR), 1956, reserve some parts of the Andaman and Nicobar group of islands for tribal communities, in which the Jarawa territory comes under it (Farheen 49). However, the rule is hardly followed by the settlers. The island is not free from outside influence as the action of encroachment is on. Seema learnt from Krishna Raj, the secretary of the Local Borns' Association, that the members of the association had become ineffective in protecting their lands. Although the Jarawas are free from the torment of the British, they are now under the colonization of mainland Indians. The outsiders are occupying the island with the help of Samaresh Basu, the most powerful politician in the northern part of the island. This politician helps the encroachers by sanctioning them with three acres of land. Seema learns that "The elections are approaching, and this is the main card he is playing this time" (Sekhsaria 44). The 'local borns' who came to the island in the British era now work as the protectors of the island. They showed concerns over new encroachment and the threat it poses to the Jarawa.

Krishna Raj, one of the locals, explained with the census figures how the island is overlapping with mainlanders. He pointed out that in 1951, the population of the Andaman district was only about 19,000 people, a majority of whom were locally born. But today, this number has increased to more than 250,000. He said that these people are not locally born but the mainlanders, "Yes... Most of them have come from outside, from the mainland – labourers, traders, petty businessmen" (Sekhsaria 46).

The Anthropocene is mainly characterized by three factors: the technological progress that sped up after the First Industrial Revolution, the explosive growth in population thanks to improvements in food, health, and hygiene, and the multiplication of production and consumption (Iberdrola). In *The Last Wave,* the overpopulation of the settlers intensified the Anthropocene, which resulted in the conflict with the Jarawa. Ram Krishna, one of the older settlers, told Harish that he came here from Bangladesh in 1969. They cleared the forest, created the fields, directed the water channels, and started cultivating paddy. He said that "These gently swaying fields here were all forests earlier". When they cut the trees of the Jarawa land "they would attack us with bows and arrows" (Sekhsaria 101).

The Last Wave describes the beautiful way of living of the Jarawa community on the island, which does not pose harm to nature. The old settlers living on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands know this. Felix, an old settler, narrates the way the Jarawas collect Honeycomb from the tree. They applied some juice as a Bee toxin to make them safe from bees. "The Jarawa used the leaves of a plant called tomale, the juice of which works as a bee-toxicant" (Sekhsaria 164) and extracted honey without harming both honey bees and their bodies. The Jarawas know how to coexist with nature without destroying it. Felix has also learned this extracting method from Jarawas and he voices out against the idea of plantations of coconut trees in the forest of Jarawa.

The Anthropocene has been seen through the destruction of the natural habitat of plants and crocodiles. Those large groups of migrants and mainland Indians had been allotted the forestland beside the creeks where the crocodiles live. They made houses and ensured agriculture. It trashed the forests and destroyed prime croc habitat. Many were killed legally by the forest department gun, or illegally by the noose and machete of the recent settlers. In the prologue, David said that when he first surveyed the creeks it was full of crocodiles but now "Everything beyond has been converted to paddy fields and plantations. Little left for the crocodiles" (Sekhsaria 3).

In the concluding sentence of the prologue, David pointed out an interesting fact about the effect of encroachment. He observed that the creeks of the Andamans inhabited by the non-tribal population are nearly empty of crocodiles. "But it's not like this in the creeks of the Jarawa Reserve" (Sekhsaria 3). The Jarawa Reserve, where the Jarawa people live, is full of crocodiles, unlike the creeks where settlers are now living. This statement shows the cruelty of the so-called civilized, modern man who puts so much emphasis on the developmental narrative through industrialization. "It is actually an antithesis to the idea of preservation and conservation of nature, as is evident from the dwindling number of crocodiles in the places where mangroves have been destroyed" (Nayak 1).

The preserver of the Andaman Reserve Forest became its destroyer. The forest department, the preserver, is involved in wood extraction. To hide their illegal act, they introduced new species into the extracted forest, which changed the ecosystem of the forest. In the novel, Sekhsaria used Papilionanthe teres (PT, a kind of orchid) as a metaphor for the changing ecosystem. Along the Andaman Trunk Road, the orchids are covered in their pink hue. PT needs to receive direct sunlight to bloom. Srikumar Kutti, a scholar, found that PT grew extensively only in the extracted forests and "'Not a single one in the original, undisturbed forests'" (Sekhsaria 208).

SK's survey and findings of PT distribution, ecological characteristics of the flower, data from the Forest Department Working Plans, and this satellite imagery – showing the overlaps and the co-relationship – all with scientific evidence, ready to publish in Current Science, India's leading scientific journal. SK believes that this scientific evidence will expose the forest department and somehow stop this illegal forest felling.

The Jarawas are the protectors and preservers of the forest who live in harmony with nature. They are hunter-gatherers who use nature for their survival. They do not cause harm on the island. However, the most shocking thing that happened because of the Jarawa's contact with the mainland Indians is the paradigm shift in their lifestyle which pushed them towards their annihilation. Historically and traditionally, they shot arrows and killed any intruders who tried to encroach upon their territory. David pointed out a shocking paradigm shift that has taken place in the outlook and perception of the Jarawas. The Jarawas first started coming without any bows or arrows and returned with few metal utensils, bananas, and coconuts, if any were lying around. The settlers thus disrupted the fragile balance that the Jarawas had had with nature throughout history.

David fears that their loss of hostility might bring an end to them as happened to the Great Andamanese and the Onge. This implies that the indigenous people are safe as long as they are away from modernity and development. They are not fit for modern life. They should maintain their indigenous lifestyle, i.e, hunting-gathering and hostility if they want to survive amidst the encroachment of the mainland Indians. David said, "I fear for the worst…how the loss of their hostility was their first step on the road to annihilation'" (Sekhsaria 48).

To impose harm on the indigenous and thereby eliminate them from their island is the first step of occupying the island and thereby exploiting it to the fullest to ensure capital and to spread modernity and globalization. In *The Last Wave,* their interaction with the mainland Indians introduced the Jarawas to harmful habits like tobacco. They stopped their hunting and gathering lifestyle and came to the settlers for food like boiled rice and fruits. At Uttara jetty in Port Blair, Harish and his companions come across a group of 72 Jarawa people, unarmed, led by a Jarawa boy named Tanumei. All of the men and women are naked. What shocked them is that the Jarawa people asked for Sukha, a kind of tobacco, and "booze", a kind of alcohol. The Jarawa people did not move from Uttara until coconuts and bananas were served to each of the Jarawaa people and "then taken back along the creek waters to be dropped off deep inside their forest home" (Sekhsaria 81).

Harish's journalist friend, Prasad smells something terrible coming as he ponders over the changed behavior of these people. He told Pintu, one of their companions, "the storm you spoke about yesterday is certainly coming'" (Sekhsaria 82). He decodes it as a step towards annihilation.

The intruders offered gifts to the Jarawa people and befriended them. This act of giving gifts is nothing but a trap. This is a new colonial strategy that went on behind the pall of offering small gifts and befriending the Jarawa. The mainland Indians tempted them with precious gifts and then captured and outcasted them to occupy their land: "It's like throwing grain and then waiting to snare the birds. The Jarawas got snared" (Sekhsaria 153). Anil Tripathy, an anthropologist uncovered two financial scams in the procurement of these gifts for the Jarawa missions. He had also reported two of his colleagues for this touching and groping of the Jarawa women. However,

the scammer ganged up against him like a pack of dogs to stop the protest: "The system that should have stood by him was the one that let him down" (Sekhsaria 154).

According to SK, the Jarawas are a lost cause. "The day their hostility went, when that Tanumei fellow was taken to Port Blair and brought back – the Jarawas lost it" (Sekhsaria 212). In his opinion the Jarawa have no chance to stand. It is the process of evolution. SK compares the condition of the Jarawa with other indigenous tribes, the Andamanse and the Onge who went extinct as they fail to survive amidst conflict with the settlers. In SK's words, "if they get into the mainstream, they perish; if they don't, then perish faster. That's the law of nature – evolution. Only the fittest survive'" (Sekhsaria 219). This mission to annihilate the protectors of the island is the act of destroying the nature of the islands. The Jarawas are sons of the islands, the sons of nature.

The act of taming is a recurring point in the novel. There is an instance of taming the Jarawa as the mainland Indians consider the Jarawas as "wild" and therefore tried to make them civilized. This scene comes when the policeman Haldar's wife forcefully tried to inflict their Hindu identity and culture on a Jarawa woman. The policeman's wife "held up the Jarawa woman's right hand, picked up a bunch of bangles and slipped them effortlessly over the dark bare wrist" (Sekhsaria, p. 76). She even "brushed a little sindoor from the parting of her own hair and placed a small dot on the forehead of the Jarawa woman" (Sekhsaria 76) and to ensure the modesty, the lajja of the Jarawa woman, "wrap a saree around her" (Sekhsaria 76). This act is not approved by the protagonist Harish who thinks this as culturally and morally incorrect.

Postcolonial ecocriticism critiques the conservation projects, policy and developmental projects taken by government and environmental groups who do not consider the participation of the indigenous tribe and 'local borns', old settlers in the project making. These projects are highly human centric where in the name of conservation all the illegal things are happening behind the pall. Resort making, tourist places, Andaman Trunk Road, human safari are some of the prime examples of this. Human safari is one of the things that affected the Jarawa people. Just like the British, the mainland Indians also consider the Jarawas as "savages". They consider the Jarawas as things of entertainment. They consider the Jarawas as things of beauty like other wildlife things. Andaman Trunk Road was created through the heart of Andaman Reserve forest which helps the local tourism operators to promote tourism and get benefitted from it. These tourism operators promoted tourism through the internet and pamphlets. The promotion has catchy words like "'See and feel the primitive dark tribe of the Andaman forests'", and "'A once in a lifetime opportunity of meeting primitive naked people'" (Sekhsaria 250). Although giving food items to the Jarawas, photography and videography, etc were strictly prohibited, it was hardly obeyed by tourism operators. Sekhsaria wrote that it is when "news started filtering out that tobacco and booze were also being offered" that the administration came to take action against these people (Sekhsaria 250).

The Jarawas are treated as sub-human species. Even the "Tribal Officer" who is supposed to be familiar with the Jarawas tribes, understand their customs, behavior, etc. is seen to insist on "police protection" in case "the Jarawas attack". The state whose duty is to preserve the Jarawa from outside influence is on a reverse duty. This is why police are placed to protect the settlers from the Jarawa people and not the Jarawa from the mainland Indians. Moreover, they are busy hunting wild pigs and deers. These policemen even destroyed the huts of the Jarawa people. So those who are placed to make peace increased the conflict between the Jarawa people and the settlers. The old police man Pillai even raped a Jarawa woman. This is the reason why Pillai is killed by the Jarawa. Ram Krishna said, "the Jarawa never forget" (Sekhsaria 104). Thus, Pankaj Sekhsaria exposed the state who in the name of preservation engaged in illegal acts. The authority who is supposed to be protectors become its destructors.

Disease is used as a tool to eliminate the Jarawas and thereby occupy their land. Though the state sanctioned forest department and hospital, they ignored their duty and themselves joined in the exploitation of the Jarawas as well as the pristine Jarawa Reserve forest. Sekhsaria describes how disease which obviously came from confrontation with outsiders destroyed the great Andamanese, a fellow tribe of the Jarawa. They nearly went to extinction. This was the result of their confrontation with the epidemic of measles and with British cruelty. Port Campbell was the root of the great Andamanese which was the worst affected area. During 1858 when the British set up their colony in the islands, the population of the great Andamanese were between five and eight thousand people. But the Great Andamanese were left with a population of under a hundred individuals when the Japanese came visiting less than a century later.

The 1877 epidemic of measles killed at least half the Andamanese population in the Great Andaman islands. Seema explained how the extinction happened. She said that when small, nomadic, forest-dwelling populations come in contact with sedentary, high density populations, there is always a chance that they will be infected with diseases. It might be common in the settled communities. She said, "Measles is a classic example'" (Sekhsaria 142).

The Jarawas are also on the same path like their fellow tribe. Sekhsaria pointed out some cases of measles in the novel. Harish and Seema met a boy when Seema went to PHC hospital for the treatment of her leg. Dr Bandopadhyay replied to Harish's inquiry about the boy as some "heat rash" had caught him. However, after the tsunami when Harish was admitted to a hospital he met three Jarawa women with measles. He noticed "runny nose" and "heat rash" on their forehead, just exactly what he had earlier noticed in a boy at PHC hospital. Harish understood that "'If this is measles,' 'then surely that had been measles too" (Sekhsaria 301). What Dr Bandopadhyay had declared as "heat rash" earlier is nothing but measles. The tragedy happened due to sending the measles affected boy to his community by order from the administration of the islands. Harish was mad to realize "'What a disaster that would have been, to send a measles-affected Jarawa boy back into his community" (Sekhsaria 301). This illustrates that the administration was responsible for

the measles tragedy that affected the Jarawas. The administration wanted to destroy the Jarawas and therefore occupy the land to fulfill their developmental needs.

The Andaman Trunk Road is the metaphor for modernity that was created through the heart of the Jarawa Reserve forest. In the chapter called "In the Balance", Harish told Seema that if the Jarawa have to have a chance, the Andaman Trunk Road has to be closed down. It is through this road that most of the illegal things are happening. In Harish's words, "The road is the most important vector, bringing in all kinds of influences upon the Jarawa from the outside world" (Sekhsaria 264). Its absence might cause discomfort and huge inconvenience to the settlers. But the discomfort and inconvenience of a thousand settlers poses a great threat against the very survival of a vulnerable few. Harish said, 'It's the question of "their extinction. Their annihilation" (Sekhsaria 268). Although the government ordered the road to be closed, it is still there as before. This is why Timothy Clark highlights that the postcolonial nations like India "often sanction the plunder of [their] hills, rivers and forests to satisfy increasing resource needs, in a quest for development, for modernisation or catching-up" (Clark 141).

Sekhsaria emphasized the tragic environmental disaster that strikes due to the lavish exploitation of the pristine natural habitats. The 2004 tsunami shook many islands of the archipelago, drowning both the settlers and the indigenous Jarawas. Munira Salim while pondering on the 2004 tsunami wrote that the "'Mother Nature' turns into 'Mother Catastrophe' in the Indian context, when thousands died, few small islets submerged under water and many coral reefs were permanently destroyed" (Salim 6). The wave is the metaphor for the lavish exploitation and development that happened on the island, obviously caused by the mainland Indians. This is why Salim said, "the giant wave was the wave of 'exploitation', in the name of development imposed upon them and their habitat by the mainlanders" (Salim 10).

4. Conclusion

Pankaj Sekhsaria's *The Last Wave* meticulously describes the Jarawa tribe. tribes are hunter-gatherers. The novel shows how in the colonial era, the Jarawa tribe faced brutality at the hand of the British who captured them, killed them, displaced them and occupied their land. The British introduced modernity into the islands and with it the anthropocene came into action. They ravaged islands by clearing the trees, destroying the habitat of crocodiles. The novel shows how disease was introduced by the British that killed many indigenous people. In the post-independence era, though the Jarawa people make themselves free from the torment of the British, they face more sufferings at the hand of mainland Indians and refugees who came from Burma, Bangladesh, Pakistan. They cut trees, make houses, roads, and everything has been converted into paddy fields and plantations and thereby modernity and globalization come to the fore. They faced first resistance from the Jarawas in spreading civilization and globalization into the islands. Therefore they start exploiting the protectors of mother nature. They tempted them with gifts and ensnared these indigenous tribes. Diseases, alcohols, and tobacco are used as tools to eliminate them. The

Jarawas are truly on the verge to extinction because of all the exploitation they faced from both British and the mainland Indians. Capitalism and modernity make these outsiders alienated from nature who see it as nothing but things of consumption, things to make more capital. They are blind under the shade of globalization, development and no longer possess any connection with nature unlike indigenous tribes. Though the tribe failed to resist the outsiders, mother nature hit back to avenge the human beings with a massive tsunami that washed away the entire islands.

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