CHAPTER-V
CONCLUSION

An ecocritical analysis of the novels of M.T Vasudevan Nair and Mulk Raj Anand has been attempted in this paper. Reading these works focusing on the element of eco-sensibility in them has been a delightful aesthetic experience. The striking presence of three elements make the fictional works of both these writers ecologically valuable. The first is the realistic portrayal of human interaction with nature, the second, a pervading sense of the interrelatedness of all the elements on the earth, and the third, the successful attempt to give voice to the muted others--nature, women and the other underprivileged sections of humanity. The novels studied bear witness to the ecological sensibility and environmental proficiency of the writers.

There is considerable difference in the background, positions, motives and style of the two writers. They belonged to two different historical phases. Anand lived and wrote in a period which was vibrant with the Renaissance spirit of reformism and the nationalist fervour of the freedom struggle. Though he belonged to the middle strata of society, caste wise as well as class wise, he was fully exposed to the misery and deprivation of the underdogs. The empathy for their suffering was in fact the chief stimulus for his poetic creativity. The progressive vision which was fortified by Marxian ideology and Gandhian idealism made him a
committed social reformer. Though rarely, his zeal for the cause does affect
the artistic scheme of his novels and long didactic passages hinder the
natural flow of the narrative. Anand has denied the charges of Marxian
propagandism and deliberate proletarianism. But he shared with his
contemporaries, the Progressive writers the commitment to the ideals of
social justice and equality and their allegiance to the Left political
ideology.

MT belongs to the era of Modernism in Indian literature. Colonialism
had come to an end and the nation was free. The rigidity of caste
discrimination no longer existed as a monstrous social evil. He had no
personal exposure to the extremes of oppression and exploitation as Anand
had seen in his village or in the metropolitan cities which were passing
through the throes of large scale industrialisation. He shares with Anand a
deep sympathy for the oppressed and the suffering. But MT does not
identify himself with any political outfit nor does he openly declare
conformity with any ideology. He shuns moralising in fiction and didactic
passages never interfere with the progress of his narrative.

MT deals with the themes of alienation and degeneration of nature in a
different context and concentrating on a different milieu. He has had little
experience of colonial or racial domination and exploitation based on class
or caste. The conflict that forms the theme of his novels originates within
the family within the community and above all within the individual. The
inner world is of greater interest to him, as he often reveals. But
nonetheless, he is not unaware of the close relationship between the inner world of the individual and the milieu that encompasses him. Anand recognised the anti-human face of capitalism and protested against it. It depends heavily on the exploitation of man as well as nature. But the commodity culture, its offspring has today become a serious threat to the existence of nature in our time.

MT witnesses the indiscriminate and callous onslaught on nature that has become characteristic of our culture. Greedy capitalism turns hills, rivers, back waters and forests into commodities to be grabbed and owned by a greedy and privileged section of the society. MT expresses his concern about nature that is in peril, in number of essays. “Maappu Parayunnu Makkal” (Children Seek Your Pardon!) is an appeal to mother Earth to forgive men for their ignorance and ingratitude. In the article he pays tribute to his predecessor, P. Kunhiraman Nair, who, according to him, ‘was the first Indian poet to weep for mother Earth drained of blood’. The pollution of the river known as ‘Chaaliyar’ became a serious environmental issue towards the end of the last century. The Grassim factory owned by a multinational company was impervious to the misery of the people inhabiting the banks of the river even when their health was seriously affected by the pollution. Inaugurating a public march of protest, MT said:

Writers get involved in issues like the pollution of rivers because they are conscious of the pulse of human life... Human existence on earth will come to an end if we decide that we don’t
want rivers, lakes, nature, trees and native culture. This is a struggle is against an attitude—the inhuman attitude that the capitalist should get his profit even if man’s life is in peril. (Chaaliyarinte Nilavilli 176)

This concern for nature makes him a post-pastoral writer—one whose writings have “gone beyond the closed circuit of pastoral and ant-pastoral to achieve a vision of an integrated natural world that includes the human” (Gifford 148).

Anand’s fiction problematises human-human relationship. Its focus is on the discriminations and inequalities in society—evils rooted in man’s ulterior instinct to dominate and exploit others. His concern for nature springs from his concern for human beings. He shows that the underprivileged are the worst victims of social as well as environmental problems like pollution and commodification of resources. It may be said to be a purely anthropocentric concern for the preservation of nature. He delineates the degeneration of the environment and its disastrous impact on human nature. As a person who knows the benevolent and graceful aspects of nature he regrets the increasing gap between man and nature. The oppressors detach themselves from nature. Their greed and materialistic ambitions make them neglect the nature outside and repress the nature within. In the case of the victims of oppression, the nature within is stifled by suffering and subjectivity and outside nature is often inaccessible to them.
Both the writers strictly adhere to the principle of fidelity in fiction and write only about what they know from personal experience. Anand uses a much wider canvas than MT as his scenes shift from Kangra valleys to London or from Bombay to Assam. MT has travelled far and wide and occasionally chooses a city in far away America (as in his short story, Sherlock”), or a hill resort on the Nainital hills. But the staple locale of his fiction is the Valluvanadan village. A feeling for nature and keen perception enables MT as well as Anand to paint the landscape vividly and with accuracy irrespective of the milieu they choose. The pastoral background and the valuable memories of childhood spent in an idyllic village in close intimacy with nature are the two strongest influences in the case of MT as well as Anand. The latter indulges in elaborate and prolonged scenic descriptions, while the former prefers subtle symbolism and suggestive imagery in landscape portrayal.

Pastoral literature which preserves the ancient wisdom of an indigenous culture is of great value today. The fiction of these writers are valuable records of traditional lifestyle, customs and conventions that have disappeared due to the erosion of the native culture. The culture had its own defects and deformities- superstitions, fetishes, discriminations etc. But it had its merits as well. Many of the traditional beliefs scornfully discarded by modern men had their own justifications. MT refers to the maxim in Malayalam, “Kavu theendiyalkulam vattum” (desecrate the sacred grove and the pond will go dry, and explains its ecological
significance. (*Kannanthali* 59-61). Such beliefs helped preserve the rich biodiversity of the groves. He remembers how his grandmother knew the use of many herbs growing there. There is the need to restore such indigenous knowledge.

Reading writers like Anand and MT, with the right perspective may make us better acquainted with our ancestral culture and help revive its perennial aspects. They are people endowed with more than ordinary power of perception and sensibility who are capable of translating their vision into human interaction. As Reuckert says poems are sources of inexhaustible energy that can reform and revitalize human society. The energy springing from the exalted vision of these writers may contribute to the strengthening of our society.