



Eco-anxiety and Resilience in Indian Children's Climate Fiction: Reading Ruskin Bond and Anushka Ravishankar

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Research Article

Abstract

Climate change is no longer an abstract threat but an everyday reality shaping the lives and imaginations of India's children. This paper investigates how Indian children's literature mediates ecoanxiety—the fear and helplessness generated by ecological crisis—while simultaneously offering strategies of resilience and hope. The central research question guiding this study is: How do Ruskin Bond's nature tales and Anushka Ravishankar's Tiger on a Tree narrate ecological conflict and prepare young readers to emotionally and ethically respond to the challenges of climate change? The methodology combines literary analysis with insights from ecocriticism and childhood studies. Selected texts include Bond's The Cherry Tree, Rusty and the Leopard, and Panther's Moon, alongside Ravishankar's internationally acclaimed picture book Tiger on a Tree. A close reading of these works is supported by theoretical frameworks drawn from Lawrence Buell's concept of "environmental imagination" and Rob Nixon's idea of "slow violence." The study also draws on recent UNICEF and Lancet reports on ecoanxiety in children to contextualize the literary analysis within wider psychological and social concerns. The key findings suggest that these two authors, while writing in very different registers, converge in their attempt to balance environmental fear with imaginative resilience. Bond's works foreground a deep bond with nature, presenting it as both fragile and nurturing. His stories often depict ecological imbalance—the loss of trees, displacement of animals—but he softens the anxiety by framing nature as a companion and moral guide. Ravishankar, by contrast, employs humour, nonsense rhyme, and visual play in Tiger on a Tree to represent the conflict between the wild and human society. While the tiger's displacement generates anxiety, the absurdity of the narrative allows children to confront ecological tension without being overwhelmed. Together, these texts reveal that Indian children's literature does not simply mirror climate anxiety but actively mediates it. By blending fear with play, loss with continuity, these narratives enable young readers to process environmental uncertainty. They highlight a spectrum of child responses—from Rusty's gentle curiosity in Bond's stories to the tiger's chaotic presence in Ravishankar's picture book—suggesting that resilience lies not in denying ecoanxiety but in reframing it through narrative and imagination. The contribution of this study is threefold. First, it introduces well known Indian children's authors into the global discussion of climate fiction, a field dominated by Western texts. Second, it demonstrates how literature functions as a pedagogical tool for climate education, addressing children's emotional as well as ethical needs. Third, it offers policymakers and educators cultural resources for integrating climate awareness into early learning without amplifying despair. In a time when India is ranked among the most climate vulnerable nations, children's literature emerges as a crucial site where ecological trauma is narrated, negotiated, and transformed. By reading Bond and Ravishankar together, this paper shows how storytelling equips India's youngest generation to face a future shaped by both risk and resilience.

Keywords: Eco-anxiety, Resilience, Climate Fiction, Ruskin Bond, Anushka Ravishankar.

I. Introduction: Children, Climate Change, and Literary Responsibility

Climate change is no longer a distant abstraction but a pervasive force reshaping the everyday realities of children across India. In regions like the flood prone plains of Bihar and



Assam, where annual monsoons have intensified into catastrophic deluges, displacing millions, children witness homes submerged and communities uprooted. Heatwaves in arid states such as Rajasthan and Gujarat push temperatures beyond 50°C, making outdoor play impossible and school attendance hazardous, while deforestation in the Western Ghats and Eastern Himalayas erodes biodiversity, turning once lush forests into barren landscapes. Animal displacement compounds these issues; leopards and tigers, pushed from shrinking habitats, encroach on human settlements, creating fear and conflict. These phenomena are not isolated events but interconnected manifestations of ecological disruption, embedding themselves into the fabric of childhood experiences. For Indian children, climate change means disrupted routines, health risks from polluted air and water, and a growing awareness of an unstable future. This lived reality fosters what psychologists' term *ecoanxiety*: a chronic emotional response encompassing fear, uncertainty, helplessness, grief, and stress triggered by the awareness of environmental degradation and its irreversible impacts. Unlike generalized anxiety, *ecoanxiety* stems from the recognition of humanity's role in ecological harm, often amplified by media exposure and personal encounters with disasters. Global studies, such as the 2021 Lancet Planetary Health survey involving 10,000 young people aged 16-25 across ten countries, reveal that 59% feel very or extremely worried about climate change, with 84% at least moderately concerned. Over half report feelings of sadness, anxiety, anger, powerlessness, and guilt, and 45% indicate these emotions impair daily functioning (Hickman et al. 2021). In India, where the Children's Climate Risk Index ranks the country as highly vulnerable, UNICEF estimates that one billion children globally are at extreme risk, with Indian youth facing compounded threats due to poverty, inequality, and rapid urbanization (UNICEF, *The Climate Crisis Is a Child Rights Crisis*). These statistics underscore *ecoanxiety* not as a fleeting worry but as a profound psychological burden, potentially hindering cognitive development, social relationships, and long-term wellbeing.

Children's literature emerges as a crucial mediator in this context, serving as an emotional and ethical arena where anxieties are articulated, softened, and reframed. Unlike didactic texts that overwhelm with facts, literature invites imaginative engagement, allowing young readers to process fear through narrative distance. Stories can humanize environmental issues, fostering empathy for the nonhuman world while modelling resilience—strategies for coping, adapting, and hoping amid uncertainty. In India, a nation with a rich tradition of nature-centric folklore and modern environmental writing, children's literature offers culturally rooted pathways to address *ecoanxiety*. Authors like Ruskin Bond and Anushka Ravishankar exemplify this, blending local sensibilities with global concerns.

The central research question guiding this study is: How do Ruskin Bond's nature tales and Anushka Ravishankar's *Tiger on a Tree* narrate ecological conflict and prepare young readers to emotionally and ethically respond to the challenges of climate change? Bond, renowned for his Himalayan set stories that evoke a gentle intimacy with nature, and Ravishankar, celebrated for her whimsical picture books infused with nonsense rhyme, represent contrasting yet complementary styles. Bond's works, often dismissed as idyllic escapism, subtly embed themes of loss and displacement, while Ravishankar's playful absurdity confronts disruption without inducing paralysis. Both authors, widely read in Indian schools and homes, are infrequently analysed through a climate anxiety lens, despite their relevance to contemporary ecological discourses. Justifying their selection, Bond and Ravishankar are pillars of Indian children's literature, with Bond's tales like *The Cherry Tree*, *Rusty and the Leopard*, and *Panther's Moon* drawing from his Mussoorie upbringing to portray nature as a moral companion. His stories, translated into multiple languages and included in curricula, reach millions, yet ecocritical readings remain sparse. Ravishankar's *Tiger on a Tree*, an internationally acclaimed picture book,



employs humour and visuals to engage younger audiences, earning praise for its innovative form (Kirkus Reviews). Together, they span age groups and genres, from prose narratives to illustrated verse, offering a spectrum of approaches rarely juxtaposed in cliff scholarship.

This paper argues that Indian children's climate fiction does not deny ecological fear; instead, it transforms ecoanxiety into emotional resilience through narrative intimacy, humour, and imaginative engagement. By acknowledging loss while emphasizing continuity, play, and ethical responsibility, these texts equip young readers to navigate uncertainty, contributing to a broader pedagogy of hope in a climate vulnerable world.

II. Theoretical Framework: Ecocriticism, Eco-anxiety, and Childhood Studies

Ecocriticism, as a literary approach, interrogates the interplay between texts and the physical environment, challenging anthropocentric views that prioritize human concerns over ecological ones. Emerging in the 1990s, it draws from diverse fields like ecology, philosophy, and cultural studies to analyse how literature represents nature, environmental degradation, and human nature relations. Pioneered by scholars like Cheryl Glotfelty, ecocriticism posits that "literature does not float above the material world in some cloud of discourse but is embedded in and interacts with the physical environment" (Glotfelty xix). In the context of children's literature, it reveals how narratives shape young minds' perceptions of the biosphere, fostering either exploitation or stewardship.

In central to this framework is Lawrence Buell's concept of the "environmental imagination," which posits that literature cultivates an emotional and ethical orientation toward the nonhuman world. Buell argues that effective environmental texts encourage an "eccentric" perspective, where nature possesses intrinsic value and agency beyond human utility. In *The Environmental Imagination*, he outlines four criteria for environmentally oriented works: the nonhuman environment as a presence implicating human history in natural history; human interests not as the sole legitimate focus; ethical accountability toward the environment; and the environment as a dynamic process rather than a static backdrop (Buell 78). For instance, Buell emphasizes "the dream of relinquishment," where characters surrender anthropocentric control, and "Attentiveness to environmental cycles," promoting humility and interconnection (Buell 143). These ideas illuminate how children's stories can shift readers from dominion over nature to harmonious coexistence, countering ecoanxiety by imagining restorative bonds. Complementing Buell is Rob Nixon's notion of "slow violence," which describes environmental harm as gradual, dispersed, and often invisible, contrasting with spectacular, immediate violence. In *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, Nixon defines it as "a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all" (Nixon 2). Examples include habitat erosion, toxic drift, and deforestation, which disproportionately affect vulnerable populations like children, who inherit long-term consequences. Nixon critiques representational challenges: "The insidious workings of slow violence derive largely from the unequal attention given to spectacular and unspectacular time" (Nixon 6). In children's literature, slow violence manifests as subtle disruptions—shrinking forests or displaced animals—requiring narratives that make the invisible visible without overwhelming young audiences.

These ecocritical lenses intersect with childhood studies, which emphasize children's unique experiences of crisis. Children process climate threats differently from adults: emotionally through heightened sensitivity, psychologically via limited coping mechanisms, and ethically by internalizing responsibility for future generations. As Nixon notes, slow violence exacerbates this, as its delayed effects burden youth with inherited traumas. Childhood studies advocate viewing children not as passive victims but as agents capable of resilience, with literature serving



as a tool for emotional literacy.

Empirical data from UNICEF and Lancet reports ground these theories in reality, documenting ecoanxiety as a global phenomenon. The 2021 Lancet survey found 75% of youth viewing the future as frightening and 83% believing humanity has failed the planet, with 45% reporting impaired daily life (Hickman et al. 2021). UNICEF's 2021 report highlights that in India, children face amplified risks from floods, heat, and pollution, linking ecoanxiety to stunted development (UNICEF, 'The Climate Crisis Is a Child Rights Crisis'). These findings affirm ecoanxiety's tangibility, not mere abstraction. Combining literary theory with real world data enhances interdisciplinary contributions, revealing how texts like Bond's and Ravishankar's mediate anxiety. Ecocriticism provides analytical tools, while childhood studies and empirical insights contextualize emotional impacts, arguing for literature's role in building resilience amid slow violence.

III. Ruskin Bond's Nature Writing: Eco-anxiety as Intimate Loss

A. Nature as Companion and Moral Presence

Ruskin Bond's portrayal of nature transcends mere backdrop, positioning it as a living companion that imparts moral lessons and evokes quiet ecoanxiety through themes of fragility and care. In 'The Cherry Tree', young Rakesh plants a cherry seed on a whim, inspired by his grandfather's wisdom: "Nothing is lucky if you put it away. If you want luck, you must put it to some use" (Bond, "The Cherry Tree"). The narrative chronicles the tree's arduous growth over years, enduring goats nibbling its leaves, grass cutters slicing its stem, storms battering its branches, and fungal diseases threatening its survival. Despite these adversities, the tree perseveres, symbolizing fragile continuity in a volatile environment. Bond's prose emphasizes patience and nurturing: Rakesh waters it sporadically, encircles it with pebbles for protection, and watches it sprout into a resilient entity bearing pink blossoms and ripe cherries.

This intimacy aligns with Buell's environmental imagination, where nature's agency fosters eccentric empathy. The tree is not passive; it "struggled to survive difficulties like being eaten by goats, damaged by grass cutters, and affected by disease" (as summarized in various analyses), mirroring slow violence through gradual threats. Yet, Bond frames it as a moral presence, teaching Rakesh—and readers—about ecological interdependence. The tree's growth evokes quiet anxiety about potential loss: What if the seed had failed? This subtle unease reflects ecoanxiety's anticipatory grief, softened by the narrative's optimistic tone. For Indian children facing deforestation, the story reframes nature as a nurturing ally, not an adversary, promoting resilience through attentive care. Bond's Himalayan setting adds cultural depth; the foothills, once teeming with biodiversity, now face habitat loss, making the tree a microcosm of broader ecological imbalance. Critics note Bond's "celebration of the Himalayan environment, emphasizing harmony between humans and nature" (Dwivedi 45), yet underlying is an intimate loss—nature's vulnerability demands human stewardship, transforming anxiety into ethical action.

B. Animal Displacement and Environmental Unease

Bond extends this theme in 'Rusty and the Leopard and Panther's Moon', where animal displacement signals environmental unease, connecting to Nixon's slow violence. In 'Rusty and the Leopard', orphaned Anglo-Indian boy Rusty, escaping his guardian's oppressive home, adventures in the Dehra Dun hills. He encounters a leopard in shrinking habitats, a dignified yet mysterious intruder driven by human expansion. The leopard's presence evokes tension: "The trees had multiplied! They were moving. In one small corner of the world, Grandfather's dream was coming true and the trees were moving again" (Bond, Rusty quotes). This quote hints at ecological restoration amid loss, but the leopard's encroachment underscores habitat erosion—slow



violence unfolding through deforestation and urbanization. Similarly, Panther's Moon narrates a wounded panther turning maneater in the village of Manjari. Twelve-year Bishnu, walking miles to school through forests, faces the threat after the panther kills his dog Sheru and livestock. Bond describes the panther's plight: impaired by hunters' bullets, it preys out of desperation, not malice (as per summaries). Villagers live in fear, with Bisnu's family vulnerable. Moments of intrusion—the panther entering human spaces—highlight shrinking habitats, aligning with Nixon's attritional harm: "Environmental damage unfolds gradually and affects vulnerable populations, especially children" (Nixon 2).

Bond avoids panic by framing animals as survivors with agency, not threats. The panther is "ferocious" yet pitiable, evoking empathy. For children, this generates unease about imbalance but models resilience through courage—Bisnu's determination to attend school despite dangers. In India's context, where wildlife conflicts rise due to climate induced migrations, these stories mediate anxiety, urging coexistence.

C. Managing Anxiety through Gentleness

Bond's calm tone, simplicity, and nostalgia serve as emotional buffers, helping readers acknowledge instability without despair. His prose, devoid of sensationalism, employs short sentences and vivid imagery: in *The Cherry Tree*, "The tree was a very small plant, young and fragile, vulnerable to all kinds of external dangers" (Bond). This gentleness models resilience via attentiveness, empathy, and memory—Rakesh's nostalgia for the planting moment sustains hope. Critics praise Bond's "optimistic tone, full of wonder for nature" (as in poem analyses), countering ecoanxiety's helplessness. By focusing on small acts—planting, observing—Bond empowers children, aligning with childhood studies' view of youth as agents. In a climate vulnerable India, this style transforms fear into quiet strength.

III. Anushka Ravishankar's "Tiger on a Tree": Eco-anxiety Through Absurdity and Play

Anushka Ravishankar's "Tiger on a Tree" (1997), illustrated by Pulak Biswas, stands as a landmark in Indian children's picture books for its innovative fusion of nonsense rhyme, whimsical typography, and minimalist yet striking visuals. This internationally acclaimed work—winner of the Bratislava Biennale of Illustrations prize in 1999—employs humour, absurdity, and playful language to engage very young readers (ages 3–6) while subtly addressing themes of human wildlife conflict and environmental disruption. In a genre often dominated by didactic environmental tales, Ravishankar's approach prioritizes delight and emotional safety, making it an effective vehicle for mediating ecoanxiety without inducing fear or moral overload.

The narrative unfolds in a circular, repetitive structure that mirrors the tiger's journey: beginning and ending with "Tiger, tiger on the shore." A timid, "scaredy-cat" tiger cub wanders from the shore, swims across a river to an island, and is startled by a small animal (variously described as a goat or deer in summaries), prompting him to climb a tree for safety. Villagers discover the tiger, surround the tree with a net, create chaotic noise by beating drums, blowing horns, and shouting, and eventually scare the tiger down into the trap. Once captured, they debate his fate—"What shall we do now?"—before deciding to release him unharmed. The tiger returns to his original shore, unhurt and perhaps wiser, restoring equilibrium. This simple plot, conveyed through sparse, rhythmic verse ("Tiger, tiger on a tree / Is it true? Can it be? / Did he fly? Did he flee? / Did he fall and hurt his knee? / Did he cry? Did he plead? / If you want to know, read."), emphasizes motion, surprise, and gentle resolution.

A. Humour as a Strategy for Ecological Fear

The tiger's intrusion into human space—swimming across a river and ending up treed on an island—symbolizes environmental disruption: habitat pressure from human expansion forces wildlife into unfamiliar, often dangerous territories. This echoes Rob Nixon's "slow violence,"



where gradual processes like deforestation and land encroachment displace animals, creating conflicts that unfold incrementally rather than catastrophically (Nixon 2). In India's context, where tiger populations face shrinking forests and increasing human tiger encounters in regions like the Sundarbans or Western Ghats, the tiger's displacement evokes real world ecoanxiety: fear of the wild encroaching on the domestic, and guilt over human caused imbalance.

Yet Ravishankar diffuses this tension through absurdity and nonsense. The tiger is not ferocious but timid and comical—a “scaredy-cat” who climbs a tree out of fright rather than menace. Villagers' overreactions—frantic drumming, horn blowing, and netting—parody human panic, transforming potential threat into farce. Lines like “Get him! Net him! Tie him tight!” build rhythmic energy that mimics chaos but resolves harmlessly. As Kirkus Reviews observes, the “minimalist verse follows the little fellow as he intrepidly crosses a stream,” using play to confront tension safely (Kirkus Reviews). Humour serves as a coping mechanism: by exaggerating fear into silliness, the book allows children to acknowledge ecological unease (the tiger doesn't belong here) without feeling overwhelmed or powerless. This aligns with Lawrence Buell's “environmental imagination,” where literature personifies the nonhuman to foster empathy and eccentric awareness (Buell 7). The tiger possesses agency—he swims boldly, climbs instinctively, and flees peacefully—inviting young readers to see wild animals as relatable beings rather than threats. For children experiencing ecoanxiety through news of animal intrusions or habitat loss, this reframing reduces helplessness, turning anxiety into manageable curiosity and laughter.

B. Visual Play and Emotional Engagement

Pulak Biswas's illustrations amplify the text's emotional safety net. Rendered in a striking palette of black, orange, and white on handmade paper, the visuals are bold and minimalist: sweeping brushstrokes capture the tiger's fluid motion, wide-eyed expressions convey vulnerability, and dynamic layouts make typography “swoop and dart” across pages (Kirkus Reviews). The tiger's exaggerated fear—large eyes, crouched posture—contrasts with villagers' comical frenzy, preventing any sense of real danger. White space surrounds sparse text, drawing the eye to movement and rhythm, while orange black contrasts evoke the tiger's iconic stripes without realism that might frighten. These elements function as emotional buffers, per insights from childhood studies: visual exaggeration and rhythmic play allow children to process anxiety through delight rather than dread. The book's format—large font, one sentence or word per page, curving text—promotes print awareness and engagement for emerging readers, while the circular narrative reinforces continuity and safety. Humour here is not denial but active reframing: imbalance (wild in human space) becomes navigable through collective, absurd action and merciful release. In a picture book medium where images dominate perception, Biswas's craft aesthetic lends “pleasing simplicity” that nurtures emotional resilience (Kirkus Reviews).

C. Wildness, Order, and Child Perception

At its core, “Tiger on a Tree” explores tension between wild nature and human order. The tiger embodies ecological imbalance—human intrusion (implied through habitat loss) pushes him into vulnerability, mirroring real displacements. Yet, the villagers' decision to vote and release him (“What shall we do now?”) models' ethical coexistence over domination or harm. This resolution invites children to imagine harmony: the tiger returns home, the order restored without violence.

Ravishankar's absurdity models an ethical response—confront fear lightly, act compassionately—transforming ecoanxiety into imaginative possibility. For young readers, this fosters perception of nature as dynamic and relational, not oppositional. In India's climate vulnerable landscape, where children witness wildlife conflicts, the book nurtures resilience by



emphasizing empathy, release, and circular continuity over conquest.

IV. Comparative Analysis: Two Modes of Resilience

Ruskin Bond's quiet realism and Anushka Ravishankar's playful absurdity offer contrasting yet complementary modes of addressing ecoanxiety in Indian children's literature. Bond's tales—rooted in Himalayan intimacy—portray ecological loss as gradual, personal erosion: the cherry tree's fragile growth, leopards and panthers displaced into human proximity. His narratives employ slowness (patient nurturing over years), memory (nostalgic reflection on bonds), and attentiveness (empathic observation of nature's agency), aligning with Nixon's slow violence by making attritional harm visible through subtle unease (Nixon 2). Resilience emerges from deep, sustained connection—Rakesh's care, Rusty's curiosity—modelling emotional processing through empathy and continuity.

Ravishankar, by contrast, confronts disruption through chaos and energy: the tiger's absurd journey, villagers' frantic yet nonlethal response. Humour, visual exaggeration, and rhythmic nonsense diffuse tension rapidly, allowing safe confrontation of imbalance. Where Bond lingers on quiet loss, Ravishankar accelerates to playful resolution, using absurdity to reframe fear as manageable delight. Both acknowledge ecoanxiety—Bond via intimate fragility, Ravishankar via displaced wildness—but respond on a spectrum. Bond suits introspective readers seeking moral guidance through nature's companionship; Ravishankar engages younger audiences with visual and auditory play, making anxiety accessible. Neither provides simplistic solutions (no magic fixes for habitat loss or conflict); instead, they cultivate emotional readiness—Bond through empathy and memory, Ravishankar through humour and coexistence. Together, they demonstrate resilience as multifaceted: not uniform denial of fear, but varied imaginative strategies blending acknowledgment of uncertainty with hope and ethical action. In Indian children's climate fiction, this spectrum enriches pedagogical potential, offering tools tailored to developmental stages and cultural sensibilities.

V. Children's Literature as Climate Pedagogy

Children's literature functions as a form of climate pedagogy by educating the heart alongside the mind, addressing emotional dimensions often sidelined in factual instruction. While science curricula convey data on rising temperatures or biodiversity loss, stories prepare children to live with uncertainty—processing grief, fear, and responsibility without paralysis. Bond and Ravishankar exemplify this: Bond nurtures care through intimate bonds, Ravishankar through playful reframing, both fostering ethical stewardship.

In India, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 prioritizes environmental education, integrating sustainability, climate literacy, and traditional knowledge across subjects from foundational to vocational stages. It calls for infusing climate awareness into mainstream curricula, promoting global citizenship, resource conservation, and multidisciplinary approaches (Ministry of Education, NEP 2020). The 2023 National Curriculum Framework further emphasizes environmental education's connections to all disciplines, aligning with UNESCO's push for climate responsive schooling (UNESCO State of Education Report 2023). Yet implementation remains uneven: outdated content, limited teacher training, and resource constraints hinder full integration, as noted in critiques (Earth.Org; Forbes India). Eco clubs in states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh engage students in practical activities—tree planting, waste management—but emotional preparation lags.

Culturally rooted narratives like Bond's and Ravishankar's fill these gaps, complementing scientific knowledge by nurturing empathy and hope. They emphasize stewardship drawn from Indian traditions (ahimsa, harmony with nature) while addressing contemporary vulnerabilities—floods, heatwaves, wildlife conflicts. By mediating ecoanxiety through imagination, such literature



equips children for resilience, turning passive worry into active care and responsibility in a climate challenged nation.

VI. Contribution to Indian and Global Climate Fiction Studies

This study intervenes in global climate fiction (cliff) scholarship, long dominated by Western apocalyptic narratives (e.g., dystopias from Margaret Atwood or Kim Stanley Robinson), by cantering Indian children's literature. Indian cliff for youth—emerging in works like Bijal Vachharajani's "A Cloud Called Bhura" or Roopal Kealia's "The Little Rainmaker"—offers alternative emotional frameworks: gentle intimacy and absurd play rather than doom (Sustainability Next; Scroll.in). Reading Bond and Ravishankar through ecoanxiety lenses highlights originality—familiar authors reframed as mediators of climate distress—bridging gaps in ecocritical attention to South Asian texts. The contribution is interdisciplinary: advancing literary analysis of children's cliff, informing education policy (NEP 2020's environmental focus), and supporting policymakers in culturally sensitive climate awareness. Amid India's extreme vulnerability (ranked high on climate risk indices), this work underscores literature's role in emotional resilience, offering resources for educators and parents to integrate hope without despair. By introducing non-western voices, it enriches global cliff discourse with diverse, child entered narratives of care and coexistence.

VII. Conclusion: Storytelling as Emotional Survival

Indian children's literature, exemplified by Ruskin Bond and Anushka Ravishankar, actively mediates ecological fear rather than passively reflecting it. Bond transforms ecoanxiety into resilience through intimate bonds, patient care, and nostalgic continuity with nature; Ravishankar through humorous absurdity, visual play, and ethical release that reframes conflict as navigable. Together, they demonstrate storytelling's power to acknowledge loss and disruption while cultivating imaginative hope—blending fear with empathy, chaos with resolution. In a climate changed world, where Indian children confront daily realities of vulnerability, such narratives serve as emotional survival tools. They equip the youngest generation not with denial but with readiness: to feel uncertainty, process it imaginatively, and respond ethically. As cliff evolves in India, these texts remind us that hope lies in culturally rooted stories that nurture resilience, ensuring future generations face risk with imagination and care intact.

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