



## Indian Climate & Landscape in R. P. Jhabvala's Major Novels

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### Abstract:

*The present article 'INDIAN CLIMATE & LANDSCAPE IN R.P.JHABVALA'S MAJOR NOVELS' is study the study of India as a land of heat and dust. It brings out how negative image of India is presented in Ruth Praver Jhabvala's (a well-known Anglo Indian novelist of Post-independence India) in Heat and Dust and A Backward Place. Heat and dust represent the most characteristic. Physical features of India. The climate of the country is shown as unbearably hot. The weather and the landscape disturb the mental peace of an individual. Dust storms generally blow all day and all night. The novelist recreates the new dominion called India as a land of heat and dust.*

**Keywords:** *Climate, Landscape, Novel*

An Anglo Indian writer named Ruth Praver Jhabvala is a well-known novelist. A critic named V.A. Shahane asserts "India is the real heroine of Ruth Praver's fiction."<sup>1</sup> She presents representative picture of India in her fiction. She captures India in her novels. R.P.Jhabvala's novels Heat and Dust and A Backward Place present India as the centre of her novels. Her presentation of India is really appreciating one. She reveals Indian climate and landscape in these novels too. The novel's title Heat and Dust itself refers to the general climate of the region. These lines refer to hot climate of India. In this climate to be restless, irritable, and uncomfortable are main features. It affects the temper of people in India. Jhabvala depicts Indian climate in the novel. In the title of the novel, she used metaphor of heat and dust. Heat and Dust represents the most characteristic. Physical features of this country. The climate of the country is shown as unbearably hot. For instance, Olivia gets bored in Douglas spacious house. She has been here for several months and it is only in the evenings or on Sundays that she happens to meet a handful of stereo typed Anglo-Indian officials' families in town "The rest of the time Olivia was alone in her big house with all the doors and windows shut to keep out the heat and dust."

Similarly, when the Nawab takes Olivia to Babu Firdus' shrine, they experience terrible heat. Even the writer herself had such experience. In 'Myself in India' she tells us "It is a physical oppression-heat pressing down on me and pressing the walls and the ceiling and congealing together with time which has stood still and will never move again... India swallows me up and not it seems to me that I am no longer in my room but in the white-hot city street under a white-hot sky; people cannot live in such heat so everything is deserted..." The novelist recreates the new dominion called India as a land of heat and dust. For instance, Olivia junior goes with Inder Lal to visit the Nawab's palace at Khatm. Her response to the landscape is similar to her step-grandmother Olivia. For her, once a town is left behind "there is nothing till the next one except flat land, broiling sky, distances, and dust. Especially dust : the sides of the bus are open with only bars across them so that the hot winds blow in freely, bearing desert sands to choke up ears and nostrils and set one's teeth on edge with grit." Later in the novel, she describes the weather and the landscape in India and how it disturbs the mental peace of an individual. She says: "Dust storms have started blowing all day, all night. Hot winds whistle columns of dust and so are all one's senses. Everyone is restless, irritable and on the edge of something. It is impossible to sit, stand, lie, every position is uncomfortable, and one's mind too is in turmoil." The author presents the most important physical feature of India. "In the tradition of Anglo-Indian writing, the climate of the country is shown as unbearably hot. This image of a country is known for its

diversity of climate ranging from tropical heat to arctic cold is intriguing.” For instance, in Douglas' spacious house, Olivia gets bored. She has been here for several months and it is only in the evenings or on Sundays that she happens to meet a handful of stereotyped Anglo-Indian officials' families in town. “The rest of the time Olivia was alone in her big house with all the doors and windows shut to keep out the heat and dust” Similarly, when the Nawab takes Olivia to Babu Firdaus' shrine, they experience terrible heat. “The country they drove through lay broiling in the sun...At one point the Nawab reached across Olivia to pull down the blind on her windows, as if wanting to spare her the sight of all that parched land” In 'Myself in India', Jhabvala herself says: “... India swallows me up and now it seems to me that I am no longer in my room but in the white-hot city street under a white-hot sky; people cannot live in such heat so everything is deserted...” The effect of heat is such that the westerners become irritable and quarrelsome. She presents Indian climate as awful climate.

### **In A Backward Place Jhabvala makes it clear in her words**

“It was a cage that was necessary to her and out of which she would not break even if she could: for out-side lay the dusty landscape, the hot sun, the vultures, the hovels and shacks the people in rags that lived there till some dirty disease carried them off.” Here it is very clear that Indian landscape is dusty one. The sun is very hot. Westerners cannot live in such hot climate. Small dirty houses are located in surrounding areas of her flat. In addition, people are ragged. They live in such a pitiful situation that they also become victim of some dirty disease. Heat and dust of India is unbearable for most of westerners. In Etta's words: 'Don't you know that the Indian sun has been put specially into the sky to ruin our complexion?' The westerners could not adjust themselves in such hot climate. The Indian landscape is invariably presented as dull, drab, and dreary. For instances, when Judy looks out of Etta's parapet, she notices the contrast between Etta's flat meticulously modelled on European lines and the general Indian landscape She reflects: “...this was not Europe...vast barren spaces, full of dust and bits of litter, flowed around and between the smart new houses; there was not a tree in sight, and the only growth to spring spontaneously out of this soil was, here and there little huts patch boards and pieces of sacking.”

Indian landscape is made more unbearable by sweltering Indian heat. The westerners' response to heat resembles Ruth Jhabvala's response to it. Indian road is surrounded by the dry, barren, and anonymous landscape. In countryside, landscape is dry and dusty. The sun becomes hotter every minute, making of sky and earth one vast white bowl of dust. The land is usually parched and ugly except where there are fields. Jhabvala presents India as a land of heat and dust. Heat and dust represents the most characteristic physical feature of India. The climate of the country is unbearably hot. For instance, Etta says: “It (her flat) was a cage that was necessary to her and out of which she would not break even if she could: for outside lay the dusty landscape, the hot sun, the vultures the hovels and shacks and the people in rags that lived there till some dirty disease carried them off” These lines also depict hot nature of Indian sun. There is the dusty landscape outside of Etta's flat. Etta feels restless and irritable in such surrounding area. Really, every position is uncomfortable for the westerners in India. The westerners feel uncomfortable in such environment. Dust storms are usually found in the landscape. Hot winds blow in the surrounding area. It is impossible to sit, stand, or lie in the landscape. In the tradition of Anglo-Indian writing, the climate of the country is shown as unbearably hot. This image of a country known for its diversity of climate ranging from tropical heat to arctic cold is intriguing. The oppression of Indian hot afternoon is intolerable for the westerners. The writer herself says: “...I am no longer in my room but in the white hot city street under a white hot sky; people cannot live in such heat so everything is deserted...” The topographical and physical characteristics of the country affect the nerves of the Anglo-Indian characters.

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