**Ecofeminism: Reconciling the Relationship between women and Nature**

**ABSTRACT**

Eco-feminism is a philosophical and political movement that explores the intersections between the domination of nature and subordination of women. **The paper highlights the importance of ecofeminism in providing a unique perspective on the complex and intertwined challenges of environmental degradation and social inequality.**

Ecofeminism emphasizes the connection between social and environmental issues and acknowledges the importance of marginalized people’s experiences in comprehending and solving ecological difficulties.

In its entirety, ecofeminism provides a distinct viewpoint on environmental concerns that considers the experiences and viewpoints of various populations, especially women, Indigenous peoples, and other marginalized groups.The main message that paper wants to convey is that ecofeminism is a bliss

**KEYWORDS :** Environmentalism, Eco Feminism, Nature, Capitalism, Intersectionality

**INTRODUCTION**

Ecofeminism is a social and political movement that advocates for the protection of the environment and the rights of women. It emerged in the “1970s” as a response to the growing environmental crisis and the feminist movement. The term was coined by “French feminist” in her book "Le Féminisme ou la Mort" (1974)[[1]](#footnote-1), **which argued that “the domination of women and the exploitation of nature are the two sides of the same coin”.**

The fundamental tenet of ecofeminism is the claim that **gender inequality and environmental degradation are inextricably linked** and cannot be understood apart. Ecofeminists argue that both women and nature have been objectified, commodified, and exploited by patriarchal capitalist systems and that these systems perpetuate a culture of domination and control that is harmful to both[[2]](#footnote-2).

The area of ecofeminism is varied and multifaceted, encompassing many different viewpoints and methodologies. While some ecofeminists emphasize the need to challenge the patriarchal structures that underlie environmental degradation, others emphasize the ways in which women's experiences and perspectives can inform and enrich environmentalism. While others focus on scholarly investigation and theorizing, & some ecofeminists place a higher priority on political activism and direct action.

The idea of "ecological feminism," maintains that there is a close relationship between women’s and nature’s dominance, is one of the core ideas of ecofeminism[[3]](#footnote-3). **This viewpoint holds that males have historically considered both women and nature as passive, receptive objects that they can take advantage of and influence them .** The notion of "intersectionality," recognises how racism, classism, and ableism connect with other forms of oppression like the exploitation of women and degradation of environment is another crucial theme in ecofeminism.

On the whole, ecofeminism presents a distinctive and significant viewpoint on the connection between social and environmental issues. Ecofeminism drives us to reconsider our interactions with one another and the natural world by highlighting the connection between oppression of women and environmental damage.

**HYPOTHESIS**

* How does the subordination of women contribute to environmental degradation and how can ecofeminist perspective form strategies for addressing both gender inequality and environmental issues?
* In what ways does ecofeminism challenge dominant gender norms and contribute to a more nuanced and intersectional understanding of gender in relation to the environment?

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

1. To investigate the connection between gender and environmental concerns and to determine how capitalism and patriarchy affect the environment.
2. To investigate how ecofeminism intersects with other social justice movements, such as those for racial, economic, and physical justice.
3. To encourage laws and procedures that address both gender inequity and environmental deterioration

**SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF STUDY**

The scope of ecofeminism is vast and interdisciplinary, including a variety of disciplines such as feminist theory, environmental studies, social justice, and political activity.As for limitation, ecofeminism aims to address the intersection of environmental and feminist issues, it can be challenging to fully account for the multiple forms of oppression that intersect with gender and the environment, such as race, class, and sexuality.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The division of this research methodologies into categories is based on doctrinal research analysis of the legal theory and how it has been produced and used is the focus of doctrinal research, which is theoretical. Hence this paper evaluates a doctrinal approach for carrying out fundamental research. The study was done using several research instruments and is descriptive and analytical in nature**. The main aim of this research paper is to investigate the relationships between gender, the environment, and social justice in order to produce fresh insights that can guide policy and action in the direction of a more sustainable and just society.**

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**1.** Kessler (2008)[[4]](#footnote-4) examines the fundamental claims of ecofeminism along with the ramifications for both ideas and for political theory in general. She focuses on the topic of dualistic thinking in part. She practices how dualism is developed in a patriarchal society. how they are contested and criticised by ecofeminist. And what sort of vision ecofeminist have created to overcome dualism and oppression.

The discussion of ecofeminism and its emphasis on dualisms is continuing and varied. Some proponents of ecofeminism contend that dichotomies like nature/culture, reason/emotion, and human/nonhuman have been used to legitimize the exploitation of both women and the environment. **They contend that these dualisms are socially produced and reflect the ideals and preferences of a patriarchal culture rather than being innate.**

**2** .In his study, Ling (2014)[[5]](#footnote-5)emphasizes that ecofeminism is the most recent advancement in feminist theory and is the branch of feminism that is most concerned with ecology Ecofeminism, a feminist movement led by women from spontaneity to practise consciousness that includes several sub-branches and sub-schools, emerged as an ecological movement.

However**, ecofeminism upholds the fundamental tenet that gender and natural dominance are products of the patriarchy. For the fight against the patriarchy, It is essential to uphold the feminism and environment fusion values.**

**3. Its most considering of Ecofeminism, by Maria Meis and Vandana shiva**[[6]](#footnote-6).

The book which was first released in 1993, as a landmark work in the ecofeminism, which explores thee link between environment damages and women oppression.

This ground-breaking work is still relevant today just as it was then. Two of Zed's greatest-known authors claim that environmental deterioration and industrial disasters pose a direct threat to daily life, whose preservation has been assigned to women in particular. Ecofeminists have serious concerns about the new wars that the globe is currently experiencing, violent ethnic chauvinisms, and the broken economy in both developed societies and developing nations[[7]](#footnote-7). Is there a connection between the mistreatment of women by patriarchy and environmental damage for the sake of advancement and profit? What can women do to combat the violence that these procedures entail? A connection between the women's movement and other social movements might be something to consider.

In "Ecofeminism, “Mies and Shiva make the case that disparities in gender and environmental exploitation have no mutually exclusive relationship and that both are a product of a capitalist system that emphasises profit over the well-being of individuals and the natural world[[8]](#footnote-8). They contend that women and marginalised groups are disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation because the patriarchal system that rules modern society views nature as a resource to be exploited.

The book additionally looks at how women historically took part in environmental conservation efforts and how that knowledge may be applied to create a more sustainable future. By embracing a feminist perspective on environmental issues, Mies and Shiva claim, we may address the underlying structures of authority and seek to establish a society that is both just and sustainable.

"Ecofeminism" has received appreciation for its data-driven examination of the connections between environmental and feminist obstacles as well as for its call to action for a future that is fair and sustainable. The book continues to be a useful tool for anybody interested in learning more about the interactions between gender, ecology, and social justice. It has additionally had a significant impact on the conversation around ecofeminism.

**EMERGENCE OF ECO FEMINISM**

Eco-feminism is a social and political movement that emerged in 1970s and 1980s as a result of the response of environmental issues and feminist concerns, spurred on by the different social movements and protests that were flourishing at the time, including the green movement, second-wave feminism, and attitudes opposing nuclear and war[[9]](#footnote-9). Women were the fore fronters of the environmentalist movements. In addition to criticising the systems of masculinity that have supported both, it aims to look into the connections between the dominance of women and that of nature. Ecofeminism inquires exploitation and degradation of the natural world, are caused by the same patriarchal system that upholds women.

The word "ecofeminism" is said to have been first used by the “French feminist Françoise” d'Eaubonne in her 1974 book “Le Feminisme ou la Mort”[[10]](#footnote-10) (Feminism or Death)’, in which she "blames men's rights activist culture for an unsustainable increase in population, emissions, and other sources of ecological degradation."

Around the world, female-led ecological movements multiplied at this time. The "Chipko Movement" was created in 1973 by a group of indigenous women in India to protect the Mountain woods and the sources of income they supported.[[11]](#footnote-11). “Wangari Mathai started the Green Belt Movement in 1977[[12]](#footnote-12), an NGO and reforestation project **that promoted female freedom and the preservation of the environment”.** In addition to resisting nuclear power and weapons, deforestation, and the use of pesticides and other chemicals that are harmful for the environment and human health, ecofeminists have been active in a variety of environmental and social justice projects. Additionally, they have worked to advance conservation, renewable energy, and alternative forms of agriculture.

Overall, ecofeminism is a call for a fundamental shift in our relationship to nature as well as an acknowledgment of the need to challenge the power structures that have allowed for its exploitation and degradation.

**SCHOOL OF ECO-FEMINISM**

There are several school of ecofeminism, each with their own unique perspective on the relationship between women and environment, some of them are as follows-

* RADICAL ECOFEMINISM: this school sees the domination of women and the domination of nature as two sides of the coin. It makes the case that patriarchal societies have created an untrue distinction between humans and nature, which has caused both to be exploited and degraded. Radical ecofeminists think that removing patriarchy and establishing more just and equitable populations is the only way to achieve sustainable development for the environment.to the end radical ecofeminism is built on the assertion that one must study the patriarchal society with the intension of ending the difference between women and nature.
* SOCIAL ECOFEMINISM: it focuses on woman and mature in terms of or in context with social and economic structures. Social ecofeminists believe that the capitalist system is fundamentally unsustainable and contributes to environmental degeneration because it places such a high priority on growth and profit. They support a transition to more just and sustainable economic systems that put the welfare of people and the environment first.
* SPIRITUAL ECOFEMINISM: this school of thought emphasizes on the importance of connectivity and spirituality in building a sustainable society. It values nature the most and considers environment exploitation to be both an ecological and spiritual tragedy. they support a move back towards more holistic, interconnected lifestyles that value the welfare of all living things and respect the natural world.
* CULTURAL ECOFEMINISM: Because of their genetic makeup, such as menstruation, pregnancy, and lactation, as well as the gender roles they assume as family nurturers and food providers, it is clear that women have a stronger connection with nature. They contend that since it encourages a woman to feel a stronger connection to nature and makes her more sensitive to the environment, which people must coexist with, society ought to cherish this sensitivity. Cultural ecofeminism also has its roots in nature-based religions, goddess worship, and nature appreciation as a way to reclaim both the spirituality of nature and women's vital role in that spirituality. As a whole, ecofeminism is a varied and complex movement, includes various views and strategies. The main goal of the ecofeminist is the removal of the reasons behind the exploitation of women and environment and to built a strong and sustainable society for all.

**Analysis**

“Ecofeminism, also called ecological feminism, branch of [feminism](https://www.britannica.com/topic/feminism) that examines the connections between women and nature.” These concepts are imbued with ecofeminism's obedience to the environment and understanding of the relationships that are made between women and nature. More specifically, this worldview underlines how patriarchal (or male-centred) society views women and the natural world. Women are more susceptible than men to the effects of climate change in the twenty-first century since they make up the majority of the world's poor and tend to be more dependent on local natural resources.

There are numerous literary works in the West that analyse ecofeminism in terms of various ideologies, yet the fight to protect the environment was ongoing in India long before it was documented in the West.

In India, ecofeminist “Vandana Shiva” is credited with laying the foundation for the movement with her firm view that women have always held the key to resolving a variety of societal issues, among them environmental issues. “The nature and form of ecofeminism in India can be evaluated by noting their existence in Indian literature”. **A "Monkey-Man" (2010) by Usha K.R., "An Atlas of Impossible Longing" (2008) by Arundhati Roy, "Riversutra (1993)" by Gita Mehta, "The God of Small Things" (1997), and "The God of Small Things" (2008) by Arundhati Roy.** are just a few examples of literature based on ecofeminism and is written by Indian authors.

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When Vandana Shiva states that "the exclusion of women and the destruction of biodiversity go hand in hand," she is referring to the common knowledge of gendered and ecological oppression as well as the fact that Women are particularly at risk from the economics of the singularity and are well-positioned to save biodiversity. She contends that as they are aware of the diversity of life, women have a special affinity to biodiversity and are the finest custodians of the environment. She believes that diversity is essential to "women's work and knowledge," as performing domestic and reproductive chores in daily life calls for a variety of skills that resist specialism. Typically, women are the ones who engage in direct subsistence work and safeguard the natural resources needed for family sustenance.

**Chipko movement**

In India Chipko movement was the first movement which highlighted eco feminism. In Reni village, Hemwalghati, in the Chamoli district of current-day Uttarakhand, Gaura Devi and a group of village women stopped the felling of trees on March 26, 1974, making it a historical event. These women stopped trees from being cut down by a contractor sent by the State Forest Department from being used to supply wood to an Allahabad sports goods manufacturer by holding a four-day vigil where they hugged the trees. The goal of the campaign was to stop the increasing deforestation of the region, which was in need of fuel, water, and fodder, and to demand the return of their ownership rights to their forests. This had occurred as a result of the numerous civil engineering initiatives that had led to regular landslides and floods in their area.Despite being a movement for survival, many consider it to be the forerunner of ecofeminism in India and the developing world.

**Appiko Movement**

The movement took place in Karnataka In response to the deforestation of forests in the Uttar Kannada area of Karnataka, the word "Appiko," which in Kannada means "hug," was created. Since the 1950s, the state government's policy of establishing plywood industries and hydroelectric forests, which replaced mixed forests with eucalyptus plantations, has led to the drying up of water supplies and subsequent poverty. In September 1983, the men, women, and kids of Kalase Forest hugged the trees to prevent them from being cut down, headed by Pandurang Hegde. Despite being led by a man, the Appiko Movement saw women play a vital and active role in protecting the environment, and as such, it could be considered an ecofeminist movement.

In the Andhra Pradeshn Medak district, Dalit women have started a similar movement. Similar to the Chipko Movement, Dr. P. V. Satheesh and his academic companions started this movement. The women who lived there farmed the land and were aware of its flaws. The women organised a cooperative with Dr. Satheesh's assistance and addressed their financial hardships in order to develop their difficult-to-work-on barren wastelands. They started producing millets instead of rice or wheat and became self-sufficient in their food supply.

The Deccan Development Society, which these women founded, now manages a seed bank, a community radio station, and a rationing programme where millets are given out in place of cash in accordance with a villager's financial capacity. Millets were given away for free in the village by the elderly, poor, and disabled. None of the domestic ecofeminists described had any knowledge of political ideologies and dogmas. The widespread exploitation and privation they observed all around them had an impact on their thoughts, words, and deeds. They made an effort to oppose injustice and ensure that the people could live with dignity by banding together.

Caste, class, and gender physical realities must be considered in order to comprehend women's relationships and connections with nature. Women are the victims of environmental destruction, but they can also be major forces for environmental regeneration, as the success of the Chipko Movement and the Appiko movement eloquently illustrates.

**Conclusion**

As a result, it is clear that ecofeminism is growing in India as well. In a male-dominated country like India, it is a better indication of womanhood for women to assert their place. Different positions will undoubtedly emerge as ecofeminism continues to develop and shift, while other positions and allies will dissipate or be replaced by more crucial alliances. Different perspectives on the nature of the connections between various spiritual/religious traditions and ecofeminism may continue to exist.In conclusion, ecofeminism is a whole that sheds light on the connection between gender , the natural world and the society. It presents a critique between the social and the economic institution and a vision of the future society that is both just and sustainable.

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