

# **Eco feminism in the Context of Modernization in Indian Perspective: A Review**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Since time immemorial the dependence on nature and the environment for survival is common among Third World women which helped them to create a deeply rooted connection with their surroundings. In developing areas like India, women have close association with the natural resources like Land, forest, and water, because they are the ones who are responsible for gathering food, fuel, and fodder in the rural and tribal areas. In due course of time due to many reasons like improvement in literacy, employment, urban sprawl, land conversion to non-agricultural etc., direct association of women with the nature has been degrading. In this regard the aim of this paper is to focus on the Ecofeminism in the context of Modernisation in Indian Perspective.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

"She is the preserver, the treasury of our delights," said S.T. Coleridge about nature. Nature is portrayed as a charming young innocent chased by the nasty old men of Philosophy, Science, and Religion in E.E.Cummings' poem "O sweet Spontaneous." John Keats compares spring and summer to "a pretty damsel who filters through the fields and takes a snooze on the grannary floor" in his poem "To Autumn." Women have been conserving nature by nature i.e., by birth women are great conservators of natural environment. They have the capacity to give life and light. They can take brooms and sweep the earth like cleaners. Throughout many cultures women have historically held the role of primary gatherers of food, fuel and water for their families and communities. Because of this close association, they have also had a major interest in trying to prevent or undo the ill effects of deforestation, desertification and pollution.

## **II. ROOTS OF ECO-FEMINISM**

Eco-Feminism is a word coined in 1974 by Francoise d' Eaubonne. It is considered to be the Philosophy and movement born from the union of feminist and ecological thinking and the belief that domination and oppression of women is directly connected to the abuse of the natural environment. "Eco-Feminism built on multiple perspectives of those whose perspectives are typically omitted or undervalued in dominant discourses, for example-Chipko movement, in developing a global perspective on the role of male domination in the exploitation of women and nature [Datar, 2011].

Recent works by feminists Susan Griffin (1978), Mary Daly (1978), Carylton Merchant (1980), Ariel Kay Salleh (1984), Karen Warren (1987, 1990) and others highlight the The reality that environmental issues are a feminist concern. The connection between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature are highlighted in order to understand "why the environment is a feminist issue" as well as, "why feminist issues can be addressed in terms of ecological concerns" [Goard, 1993].

Eco-feminism is based on certain fundamental claims that point to the existence of important connections between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature. It is a value system, a social movement, a

practice which offers a political analysis that explores the links between andro-centrism and environmental destruction. In order to overcome this oppression, one needs to re-construct and re-conceptualize the underlying patriarchal values and structural relations of one's culture and promote equality, non-violence, non-hierarchical form of organization to bring about social reforms.

The scientific Revolution of the last three centuries has degraded nature by replacing the planet with the metaphor of a machine that can be controlled and repaired from the outside. [Merchant, 1992] [Merchant, 1992] [Merchant, 1992] 'Male-developed and controlled technology, science, and industry will rule the world.' Merchant (1980) describes two pre-sixteenth-century European views of women and nature: The earliest and most prominent image was organic, based on a culturally sanctioned reverence for the earth as a "nurturing mother." The second and oppressive view saw nature as a chaotic mess that needed to be tamed.

### **III. ECO-FEMINISM IN INDIA**

In developing countries like India women living in rural areas or mountain areas used to have special relationship with the environment and they are more close to the nature because traditionally, they have been responsible for gathering the family basic needs of water, food, fuel and fodder.

The forests and village commons provide a wide range of essential items such as food, fuel, fodder, manure, building material, medicinal herbs, resin, gum, honey and so on, for rural households in India as well as in much of Asia and Africa. Further poor, village commons (VC) are a vital source of fuel and fodder. Ninety-one percent of their firewood needs and more than 69 percent of their fodder needs are met by VCs [Agarwal 1992].

Women's perspectives on nature, according to Jiggins (1994), are unusual in that they tie the land to immediate survival and concern for future generations, rather than just viewing it as a resource with monetary worth [Abuz, Janice 1994].

Although in many countries, women mostly can't own the land and farms outright, they are the ones who spend most of their time working on the farms to feed the household. Shouldering this responsibility leads them to learn more about soil, plants, and trees and not misuse those [Jiggins, 1994]. Vandana Shiva, India's most visible proponent of eco-feminism, criticises contemporary science and technology as a western patriarchal system that is fundamentally violent and continually targets women and environment. Following this growth model has entailed a break with traditional Indian philosophy, which views 'Prakriti' as a living, creative process, the "feminine principle" from which all life emanates. She mentions women's experiences in the Garhwal Himalayas' Chipko movement in the 1970s, when they campaigned for forest protection and regeneration. The movement was predominantly led by women, who used Gandhian protest strategies. The 'Bishnois' were also at the forefront of an environmental movement.

### **IV. TODAY' ECO-FEMINISM**

Ecofeminism is still in its early stages today. However, eco-feminist philosophers and writers have made substantial contributions that have prepared the road for grassroots movement and helped spread the word about this emerging subject. Gloria Orenstein, Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies, Starhawk, Charlene Spetnak, Karen

Warren, and Carol Adams were among the many well-known eco-feminists who continued to share the emergence of eco-feminism research, community organising, and international outreach.

As industrial activities push us further away from the environment, it is critical to evaluate how we interact with nature in modern civilizations. Eco-feminism encourages interconnectedness with our environment while also tackling women's and marginalised people's oppression. This enables for the identification of social and environmental injustice from a unique and sometimes overlooked standpoint, resulting in unity and comfort.

## **V. JOURNEY TOWARDS MODERNISATION**

As industrial activities push us further away from the environment, it is critical to evaluate how we interact with nature in modern civilizations. Eco-feminism encourages interconnectedness with our environment while also tackling women's and marginalised people's oppression. This enables for the identification of social and environmental injustice from a unique and sometimes overlooked standpoint, resulting in unity and comfort. Their land rights are handled by their male relatives. The disparity between legal and actual land ownership rights, patrilocal marriages, age, class, and gender segregation of public space and social interaction, female illiteracy, high fertility, and male control over agricultural technology and information dissemination all disadvantage women farmers. (Agarwal 1994,p. 475; Jackson 1993, p. 409).

People have been displaced as a result of big dams, wide-scale deforestation, and other factors, disrupting social support networks within and across settlements. Women, particularly of poor, rural households, who depend to a large extent on such networks for economic and social support, are adversely affected (Sharma 1980). The task is to re-establish the symbiosis between communities, women, and natural resources, as well as to reverse the trend of prevailing developmental paradigms with detrimental consequences. Women have traditionally dealt with the household's non-monetized biomass-based subsistence economy, such as firewood, cow dung, agricultural wastes, organic manure, and so on.

Modern science and technology, according to Vandana Shiva (1988), is a western, patriarchal, and colonial endeavour that is intrinsically violent and promotes violence against women and environment. Pursuing this growth paradigm has necessitated a departure from traditional Indian philosophy, which regards prakritia as a living, creative process, the "feminine principle," from which all life emerges. Nature has been ruthlessly abused under the guise of growth, and the feminine principle was no longer connected with action, creativity, or the sanctity of life, but rather with passivity and as a "resource." Women have been marginalised, devalued, displaced, and eventually rendered obsolete as a result of this. Women's special knowledge of nature and their dependence on it for "staying alive", were systematically marginalized under the onslaught of modern science.

Unequal consumption of resources is one of the basic problems in the society, especially in the modern era. Previously women used to be the home makers by procuring and providing the things to the family but gradually a tremendous change in the life style has been observed due to the improvement in the literacy levels. In today's culture, women choose to work rather than stay at home and raise their children. Water shortage, deforestation, agricultural land conversion for developmental operations, improved employability, enticing urban living styles, and other causes have all caused this significant transformation. In addition, in the urban areas, the value of urban land has increased tremendously which attracted the rural people to the urban islands.

**VI. CONCLUSION**

Women are created for offspring, a woman is the field and a man is the processor of the field. Like the earth a woman has to bear pain. The ground has been ploughed, furrowed, and dug into... A woman pierced and ploughed as well. The unselfish love and care for the environment, for their children, and for future generations manifests itself in women's passion and dedication to work. Women would protect the earth better than men if in power although there is no evidence for the hypothesis, recent movements have shown that women are more sensitive to the earth and its problems.

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