

## Ecofeminism

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### ABSTRACT

Ecofeminism is a viewpoint, a code and a crusade evolved out of the unification and amalgamation of feminist and ecological streams of thought. According to this movement there are similarities and common causes of domination and women's oppression and non-respect of nature, which contribute to environmental destruction.

It is apparent that there is at least a common connection between women and nature, and because of this link, women have started to identify the relation between the oppression of women and the oppression of the earth. The inference of these views causes the expansion of Ecofeminism. The word Ecofeminism is only recently conceived. It was created to refer to the numerous protests that were led by women that arose in the 1980's that protested ecological degradation. One of the main doctrines of Ecofeminism is the acceptance of interrelation of all aspect's life.

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Ecological feminism or ecofeminism is a term which concedes that there is a correlation between the domination of women and the stigmatisation of nature. Ecofeminism is not only a women's movement but it is also a movement for ecological renewal. French feminist, Francoise d'Eaubonne in her book *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* (Feminism or Death) way back in 1974 devised the term ecofeminism and itemized that patriarchy is the source of the current ecological disaster. Francoise d'Eaubonne (1974) specified that the 'Feminist Front' drive was originated in France in 1973. This French movement referred to as women's activity groups. And acknowledged by the French Press in the 1970. Men's control of women's bodies resulted in overpopulation and men's control over nature resulted in the destruction of natural resources. Ecofeminists confirm about a relationship between the subjugation of women and the authority of nature. Ecofeminists believe that human beings are not distinct from nature but they are a portion of the natural world. Ecofeminists mull over that all life on globe are interweave with each other. Ecofeminists believe that patriarchy is the cause of the command over both women and nature. Therefore, the goal of ecofeminism is to eradicate this patriarchal configuration from the society and seeks to liberate women and to liberate nature from exploitation.

Ecofeminism recognizes that there is a connection between the domination of women and the destruction of nature. The goal of feminist movement is to bring an end the domination of women. And the goal of ecological movement is to end the destruction and exploitation of nature. The union of feminist movement and ecology movement stemmed in the emergence of a movement called ecological feminism or ecofeminism, the goal of which is based on the building up of a society that does not promote the domination of women and

the obliteration of nature. Karen J. Warren (1993a) stated that there are eight kinds of connection that exists between women and nature. Karen J. Warren stated that these connections suggest an examination of the types of the domination of both women and nature. These connections between women and nature are historical, conceptual, empirical, symbolical, etymological, political, ethical and lastly, theoretical. In tracing the origin of the domination of both women and nature, some ecofeminists emphasise on the historical connections which began with the Indo-European assault, according to some others, in the positivist tradition and in the classical Greek philosophy, while some trace it during the sixteenth and seventeenth century scientific revolution.

Some ecofeminists assert that the domination of both women and nature is rooted in theoretical connections. that some ecofeminists accentuate on the empirical connections amid the domination of women and the destruction of nature, although on the other hand, some ecofeminists emphasise on the symbolic connections between women and nature in religion, art, literature and theology which diminishes both women and nature. According to other ecofeminists the link between women and nature is abstract. The mainstream views of reason, wisdom, knowledge and the nature of the apprehender were defied by the ecofeminists. So there is need to develop modified views of the ethical and knowing self ,other ecofeminists focus on political contacts between women and nature by taking into account grassroots action and political concerns which consist of the systems of domination and relegation. Ecofeminists emphasize on the ethical links between women and nature by evolving theories that are not male-biased for both humans and nature. Therefore, we come across that these different types of links between women and nature are important for ecofeminism as these connections not

only divulge women's closeness to nature but also disclose the handling of both women and nature in society.

Women and nature are linked as both of them are mothers. Not only in Western culture, but similarly in Indian culture nature is recognized as female. In ancient time the nature that is, the earth was regarded as a living being and was acknowledged as a 'nurturing mother'. In this natural way, the image of the earth as a 'nurturing mother' limits the destructive movements of human beings towards nature and permits human beings to value earth. Another image of nature contrary to the first image also existed as violent and disorderly. This image of nature as chaotic allowed the power and mastery over nature. The rise and the development of mechanism during the sixteenth and seventeenth century gave men authority to curb and dominate both women and nature. Modern science and development as Western 'patriarchal projects' is accountable for the suppression of women and the destruction of nature. Women's dependence on nature for their livelihood connected them with nature. So, the ruin of nature is a threat to their existence. Due to this, women led ecological struggles not only to guard nature from destruction but also to reinstate nature. Hence all the ecofeminists mentioned that patriarchy is the cause of the domination of both women and nature. We find that both women and nature are mishandled, dominated and undervalued in patriarchal society. So, the roots of our existing ecological crisis lies in the split-up of men from both women and nature. To battle the subjugation of women and the exploitation of nature, the patriarchal structure needs to be abolished from the society.

Ecofeminism or ecological feminism is a blend of feminism and ecology. Ecofeminism as feminism purposes to highlight the oppression of women by men and similarly raises its voice against social discrimination, social prejudice etc. Ecofeminism is concerned with the relationship of human beings and nature. Therefore, ecofeminism is not only concerned with the ethical relationship, between women and men but is also affected with the ethical relationship of human beings with the natural world. Ecofeminists believe that the domination of women and the domination of nature are linked. And androcentrism or patriarchy is the major cause of the domination of both women and nature. Men's control and power over both women and nature resulted in their exploitation. So, the goal of ecofeminism is not only to free women from domination and to save nature from destruction but also to eliminate patriarchal arrangements from the society which gives birth to all forms of dominations. Ecofeminists are concerned with the value of all life on earth and focuses on the unity and interrelationship of all life on earth. This relationship between women and nature reveals how both women and nature are ill-treated. Analysis of the views of ecofeminists discloses the cause of oppression of women and the domination of nature and reveals that patriarchy is the cause of the domination of both women and nature. While exploring the relations between women and nature, we find

that both women and nature are mothers because they both hold the power to give birth.

This creative power within women and nature relates them with Goddess. This idea of women and nature with Goddess also relates their creative power as sacred power. Here, a revitalization of this sacred power of women as mothers can elevate their status and respect in the society. On the other hand, viewing nature as sacred raises its value and respect. Deep ecology, social ecology and ecofeminism we find that all of them uncover the source of the present ecological crisis. Deep ecology, social ecology and ecofeminism focuses on the need for an ecological refurbishment. In sustainable development women's development is absolutely necessary today. Here, women's role in preserving nature connects them with nature. In India many village women in their daily lives depend on natural resources to aid their family. But due to deforestation women's effort for supporting their family become more difficult. Also due to paucity of education and knowledge of hygiene women suffer from ill-health and hygiene. However, the government has taken moves to improve the health and hygiene of women due to the progression of science and technology. So, women for the protection and the conservation of nature contributed in the ecological movements. Ecological movement is equally led by women both in India and in the West. These comprise of an ecological movement led by Bishnois. Chipko movement, Love Canal movement and Greenham Common movement. In all these actions women came forward to battle the disparagement of nature. Anti-arrack movement in Andhra Pradesh is a social movement run by women. In analysing the essential standpoints of ecofeminism both the essentialist and constructionist ecofeminism analyse the sympathetic understanding of women to nature. In all these movements women as mothers not only came forward to protect their children and their families but also to protect nature. Hence, women bear the responsibility towards their children, their family, their society and even towards nature. Hence, in these movements women play an important role in pursuing sustainable development for their people. All these movements joined by women for ecological and social solidarity are ecofeminist movements. In India religion plays a substantial role in overcoming ecological crisis. Religious teachings instil in human beings a feeling of regard and concern for nature. As Jainism and Buddhism emphasizes on holism. Both Jainism and Buddhism focus on the equivalent value of all life on earth. Jainism, Buddhism, deep ecology and ecofeminism accentuates on non-violence, love, empathy and admiration towards all life on earth.

Thus, both women and nature are respected. We find that humanism is concerned with the welfare and happiness of human beings. On the other hand, ecofeminists are concerned with the welfare of all life on earth. Henceforth, ecofeminists emphasize on generating a humane society not only based on the principles of humanitarianism but also concentrating on

evolving an ecological sound society. According to ecofeminists, the relationship of humans with non-human nature essentially be based on love, consideration, sympathy, empathy and care. Taking Care is of close significance in human life. Because of care only an individual is related with another individual.

To live in harmony with each other this attachment of one individual with another regardless of race, class, and sex will help in barring an attitude of mastery, supremacy, control, violence and harm. But to live pleasantly with nature, love, care and compassion must be developed towards non-human nature also. Hence, a caring, reverential and compassionate thought towards all life on earth is necessary today because it will help to overcome social and ecological problems. Therefore, at present a change of mind is needed.

To conclude one can, say that ecofeminism is a movement against patriarchy. The goal of ecofeminism is to empower women and to salvage nature from patriarchal subjugation and exploitation, which is the need of today's scenario. Thus, the aim is not to suggest elimination of only

one form of domination instead all forms of dominations from the society. So, to liberate women and nature from further exploitation this domineering androcentric attitude is required to be changed. The domination should not be so fervent as to stifle the weak. History has observed fiercest form of patriarchy in India ensuing into child marriage, burning of the widow or known as sati pratha etc. It happened only after the period of renaissance education extended among the women that helped them to come out of the dark corners of their homes. Education has changed the attitude of both men and women as well. It is only an enlightened self that can change ones attitude towards women as well as nature and back sustainability for the future generation. It is now time to genuinely investigate the need of women at different strata of the social order and come up with solutions as an assistance in order to prevent exploitation. so today's requirement is the enlightenment of women, concern of the society for the women as well as nature and governmental policies to come up with the way out to the problem of women need to be integrated

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