

Representation of Eco-Feminist Themes in the Works of Contemporary Indian Women Writers

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ABSTRACT

There are now a number of Indian contemporary women writers whose works are known for emphasising ecofeminism-related subjects. The establishment of the connections between social justice, the environment, and gender as well as the identification of the effects of ecological degradation and gender operation are central to all of these works. Understanding all of these related facets and viewpoints will make it simple to recognise initiatives that are successful in guaranteeing sustainability in the future.

Keywords: Ecofeminism, Indian women Writers, deforestation, globalization, women, environment, society.

INTRODUCTION

Emphasising the history of India it has been seen that the country has faced significant environmental challenges in the past and is also currently related to pollution, deforestation biodiversity loss and climate change. All these issues significantly affect people belonging to marginalised communities along with women. In this context, the role of women is highly effective as they are associated with representing their perspective and preferences towards environmental issues and contribute significantly to the environment. Considering this particular aspect of women's contribution towards environmental justice, ecofeminism is associated with examining the connection between the environment and degradation and women (Kongre, Balkrishna). The aspects of eco-feminism are also related to developing a critical framework that represents ecological issues, gender-based roles, and discrimination in society. Considering the writings of Indian contemporary women writers, this particular paper is associated with evaluating the way these writers have represented the intersection between gender and ecological issues.

The primary rationale behind these is that utilising different forms of literature can be capable of shaping the consciousness of society and associated people and encouraging them for social change. In this context, Indian women writers are associated with addressing different socio-political issues with the help of their writings and narratives in different literature works. By exploring the writings of these Indian women writers; it will become easy to understand the perspective of ecofeminism and understand the factors and features associated with gender activism and the environment will become easy (Mishra, Indira Acharya). Though there are substantial research works present emphasising the topic of eco-feminism and the writings of Indian pieces of literature there is a lack of comprehensive studies related to examining the eco-feminist themes that Indian women writers represent. This particular gap in this thesis will contribute to developing and expanding knowledge of ecofeminism and literary scholarship as well. The main justification for doing this is to guarantee benefits for the environment and for women who are recognised both nationally and internationally. They have also demonstrated how the current human relations crisis is closely linked to the mind and emotions, and how the fight is directed at long-standing, established structures. The tremendous task of creating a bond between women and nature is attributed to women writers in order to make the processes and changes meaningful and seamless. From the realm of literature, women's lives—particularly those of Indian women writers—are occupied with expressing their unique voices to reflect their circumstances in India. In order to prove the claims, Indian Women authors are connected to exploiting customs and folklore that are connected to engaging in infectious mental stewardship. According to them, one of the most effective strategies for activism is storytelling, which is linked to spreading awareness and motivating people to lead sustainable lives that do not negatively impact

the environment in any way (Nashikkar, Rutwa). People are therefore greatly motivated to live sustainable lives by choosing goods and services that uphold corporate social responsibility and sustainability, both in the past and in the present. It creates a link to and dependence on nature and natural resources while guaranteeing improved management of environmental resources.

This paper aims to identify the effectiveness of contemporary Indian women writers to successfully represent eco-feminist themes emphasising the context of India.

The objectives include:

RO1: To evaluate the way contemporary Indian women writers are engaged with representing eco-feminist themes.

RO2: To analyse the representations of contemporary Indian women writers towards broader ecological and socio-cultural contexts of India.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Past Literature on Eco feminism depicted by Indian women writers

The aspects of eco-feminism are associated with depicting and representing the philosophies and movements that are associated with creating a connection between ecology and feminism. It is believed that the term ecofeminism also develops positive interaction between the exploitation of the environment and the domination of women. Based on the beliefs of eco-feminist writers it has been identified that there is a significant connection between traditional values of females related to reciprocity cooperation and nurturing that are also present in mother nature (Jabeen, Neelam). In addition to this eco feminism demonstrates the connection between menstruation and the moon cycle along with childbirth and creation. Ecofeminism is also recognised as an inter-disciplinary movement which is associated with calling for a new way of thinking about different aspects of nature along with politics and spirituality. Based on the belief of eco-feminist theory there are questions identified that reject patriarchal paradigms and emphasise on domination of women by men (Murphy, Patrick). There is a range of novels written by Indian women writers that are associated with representing different aspects and features of eco-feminism such as "Sieve (1954) by Kamala Markandya, Fire on the Mountain(1977) by Anita Desai, A Riversutra(1993) by Gita Mehta, The God of Small Things(1997) by Arundhati Roy, The Madwoman of Jogare(1998) by Sohaila Abdulali, An Atlas of Impossible Longing (2008) by Anuradha Roy and Monkey-Man(2010) by Usha K.R".

Gender, nature, culture, and society are among the many factors linked to the writings of Indian women writers. These various facets have shown intricate connections between them, which can be comprehended with the aid of ecofeminism, spirituality, tradition, and resistance. Women and the natural world are connected, as embodied by ecofeminism (Kakati, Papari). Numerous Indian women writers are known for their portrayals of women's roles and their special and fundamental relationship to nature. Women and nature share a strong spiritual connection that is connected to nursing along with offering care for all related facets of life. Numerous tales from India's past have been recognised as illustrating the numerous manners in which environmental deterioration and environmental difficulties impact women's chances (Ragab, Mahmoud, and Alshaimaa Mahmoud).

The theory of development and eco-feminism have significantly cooperated in Indian women's fiction in order to establish a linkage between the environment and women. In a particular reference to the aspects of cultural eco-feminism and Vandana Shiva, it has been identified that the environment belongs to the monolithic and simply stick category. All these writings are associated with representing the situation of women and the environment in both positive and negative ways. The questioning acceptance of the women's nature link also represents the context of India as women belonging to this country are severely affected by environmental degradation. It represents the positive attitude of Indian women writers towards representing the environment from different aspects (Foster, Emma). On the other hand from the aspect of the static dualism of nature and culture, it is identified that the disruption and transformation of nature towards globalisation is a more dynamic and directional relationship that represents two sides of the binary that is pivotal to gender-exclusiveness in terms of material position of women as a citizen and providing care. Stories about women binding together to speak out against pollution, deforestation, and climate change are depicted here. These stories highlight the important role that women play in maintaining their

natural surroundings. The majority of Indian fiction authored by female writers is mostly linked to portraying women as leading advocates in historical environmental movements in India. Women actively participated in the Chipko movement's real-life movements, promoting sustainable practices and actively opposing deforestation. Based on these concepts it has been identified that nature and culture have engaged with some stereotypical thoughts that do not recognise the female citizens as an occupant or multiple identities and a pluralistic notion (Ottuh, Peter). Emphasizing the aspects of dualism on the other hand there is an ambivalent relationship identified between nature and women. Much of the economist theory and women-led activism does not allow search and ambivalence to merge. On the other hand from the writings of Indian women writers in fiction writing it has been identified that both women and the environment have shared an ambivalent relationship that represents Indian women's races and interference in dominant models of living experience and discourse (Kumar, Sudhir).

Concerns related to ecofeminism in the modern-day literary anthology of women novelists of India

Pieces of literature are significantly known for imitating the contemporary problems that remain untouched by the concept that is selected to be studied in the paper. In this context, it is seen that with increasing threats to humanity due to misuse of natural resources and ecosystems previously writers have increased their preference to incorporate them in their writing. In this case, it is seen that the textualization of the aforementioned environmental problems in literary work has given rise to a new decision of literal theory which is ecocriticism (NANDA, DR SILIMA). Environmentalism is evaluated from an interdisciplinary point of view. In this particular aspect, all sciences came together in order to successfully analyse the brainstorming strategies to overcome the environment and correct the contemporary challenges that took place in the environment. The role of eco feminists is significant in this process as they are associated with evaluating the affiliation between the interaction of nature and women with the help of targeting the higher keys created by mind and body along with nature and culture, male and female, and human and non-human by format (Choudhury, Barnali). The primary aim behind these is to reconceptualize the aforementioned consociation in nonhierarchical and non-patriarchal ways.

India is recognised as one of the countries that is engaged with a diverse range of ecosystems including the Himalayas in the north and plateaus in the South as well as lively Sundarbans in the east and Thar desert in the West. The presence of such a diverse range of ecosystems is highly capable of affecting people; however, populations are significantly engaged with these ecosystems for the purpose of socio-economic activities (Kamala Das, Toru Dutta And Mamata Kalia). In the context of the male-dominated society in Indian culture nature along with women are marginalised from fulfilling their needs from ancient times. For instance, according to Hindu mythology, it is believed that a woman must follow all of her father's regulations when she is an adolescent. Further, the juvenile has rules that must be followed by the wife and further follows her sons and denies her any autonomy. The correlating functions of women and nature are further associated with ecological context which is identified by contemporary Indian women writers to evaluate code issues and the impact of environment degradation and its connection with women (Bag, Suparna). The women-led environment has, according to Indian women, a singular stitcher in eco-critical writing. One of them is the Chipko movement that took place in the Garhwal region of Uttaranchal in Uttar Pradesh. This movement is recognised as the consequence of severe turmoil emanating from local women who are influenced the most by State-level verdicts that lead to environmental degradation. Women like Medha Patkar, Mahashweta Devi, CK Janu and Arundhati Roy have been engaged in this movement against the increment agreement that took place between the state government and Adivasi to grant 500 acres of land to each Adivasi family. All these movements have been associated with the aspects of eco-feminism and are capable of giving consideration to the literal representation of feminism in mentalism. This particular approach shifts critical focus from social relations towards natural relations and emphasises the view of the operation of the environment and females (Kakati, Papari).

Contribution of Vandana Shiva in the history of eco-feminism literature

Vandana Shiva is significantly known for being an environment activist along with feminists and associated with writing several literatures to shape the aspects of eco feminism and spread awareness related to environment. The contributions made by her through writing have become significantly capable of representing the linkage between women and environmental degradation on the grounds of India. One

of the influencer works that is staying alive is representing the foundation of eco-feminism in India (Kalieva, Kanykei, et al). In this book, she is associated with representing the aspects of exploitation of natural resources along with women from marginalised backgrounds. This book has established an interconnection between the phenomena of the colonial system and aspects of patriarchal society. It also represents traditional practices and knowledge of women who mainly belong to rural communities and play a major role in ecological development and sustainability as well. Emphasising the Navdanya movement Vandana Shiva has associated with lighting several pieces of literature that promote organic farming and biodiversity conservation. Both of these are associated with promoting environment reservation for a better future. This particular movement has acted as one of the major strategies against genetically modified organisms along with severity and industrial agriculture (Jyothi, Usha). It represents the effectiveness and importance of local knowledge and the effectiveness of women in encouraging biodiversity and protecting natural resources. She has also been associated with representing the critical angles of industrial agriculture that are given by multinational corporations and encouraging negative consequences towards the environment. It also represents the way industrial agriculture has displaced women farmers as most of the work has become automatic without any sort of man-made practices. She has mainly been associated with promoting sustainable farming practices in order to ensure the protection of the environment and avoid the chances of biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. Empowering women is another primary aim behind the writers of her. She has also been associated with documenting and supporting several environments that took place in Indian history and performed by women (Maharana, Dipti Ranjan). One of them is the Chipko movement in India. In this movement, it is seen that women belong to diverse communities and engage with hugging trees to prevent them from being cut down. It represents the environmental struggle and the role of women in ecological justice and supporting environmental growth.

OVERVIEW AND METHODS

This paper related to the comprehensive analysis of themes associated with eco-feminism that are reflected in the works of contemporary Indian writers will include 5 chapters an introduction, literature review, methodology, analysis and conclusion.

In the **introduction** chapter analysis of the background and problem statement has been made based on which paper objectives and aims will be created. In addition, this chapter will include the scope and significance of conducting the paper and its impact on literature related to ecofeminism.

Further, the **literature review** has been associated with reviewing existing pieces of literature that are written focusing on eco-feminism themes along with the effectiveness of Indian women's pieces of literature to represent the connection between women and nature. In addition, this chapter will be associated with identifying existing literature gaps to find relevant information to fill these gaps easily.

The third chapter **methodology** engages with identifying effective methodological approaches and methods in order to collect and analyse elephant data and information to meet predetermined paper objectives. This chapter is mainly associated with representing qualitative methods and strategies that can be utilised in this paper to recognise eco-feminist themes that are present in the writings of contemporary Indian women writers.

Methods

This particular paper is engaged with conducting a qualitative study which is associated with collecting and analysing non-numerical data. It is quite helpful to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding related to a particular area of concern. The primary aim associated with conducting a qualitative manner of study is to provide a detailed and comprehensive description of the selected phenomena and identify benefits associated with eco-feminism themes that are represented in the writings of contemporary Indian women writers (Martani, Andrea). One of the major advantages related to conducting qualitative research is to gain flexibility in revealing a large number of writings of contemporary women Indian writers in order to understand their viewpoints and aspects towards eco feminism and its impact on the environment and society.

Materials

For conducting qualitative research consideration of a large range of secondary qualitative data has been considered for conducting analysis. In this case, a large number of publications such as Harvard Business Review, the Journal of International Women Studies the International Journal of Academic Research for Humanities, and disciplinary journals have been recognised to be appropriate for gathering relevant data and information related to the area of concern that is understand the benefits of associated with the society and environment due to representation of eco feminist theme in the works of contemporary Indian women writers. The existing journals that are associated with providing critical and thought-of overviews of the writings of Indian women writers who are engaged with eco-feminist themes have been recognised as most appropriate for this thesis(Cheong, He-in). In addition to this the inclusion criteria include that the papers must written in English and should present the aspects and situation of Indian society to understand the role of contemporary Indian women writers towards environment justice and improved environmental concerns in India.

Data analysis

In order to analyse the collected secondary quality of data application of the thematic analysis approach has been considered in this particular paper. The primary rationale behind this is to identify internal patterns based on the meanings and key findings from different sources. This particular thematic analysis has been recognised as an active process that is capable of reflecting the subjective experience gathered previously and capable of making sense of the collective data. With the help of thematic analysis, it has become easy to represent the finish in a structured manner without any sort of consequences. It further supports finding appropriate knowledge for each study objective that is associated with identifying the way contemporary Indian women writers have depicted the theme of eco-feminism and other associated aspects.

The **analysis** chapter will include collected data in a thematic format to represent the identified themes that represent the connection and interaction between nature and women.

Finally, the next and last chapter of this synthesis will be the **conclusion** associated with summarising findings along with discussing the implications and recommendations and will suggest areas for the future as well.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Environmental degradation due to human activities

Several contemporary women writers are associated with writing literature focusing on the aspects of eco-feminism and interlinking the aspects of ecology, social justice and feminism. One of the most renowned eco-feminist women writers is Arundhati Roy who has made contributions through her fiction and non-fiction novels like “The God of Small Things” and “The Cost of Living” along with “Field Notes on Democracy”. In the fixtures novel The God of Small Things, the writer has associated with representing the themes of environmental degradation along with several political and social issues that took place in 1990 (Parveen et al). This book is associated with representing the effectiveness of human activities, emphasising the landscape of Kerala and the interconnection between nature and human life.

Impact of industrialisation

On the other hand, the other two books are associated with critically examining the impacts of industrialisation that took place on a large scale in India on different ecological issues. These writings of Arundhati Roy have been associated with spreading awareness among people regarding the importance of environmental conservation.

There are writers like Kiran Desai who have written “The Inheritance of Loss”, which is a prize-winning novel that engages with representing political issues and the effectiveness of globalisation that leads to negative consequences towards environmental degradation most specifically in North northeastern Himalayas. In addition to this Githa Hariharan in her writing “The Thousand Faces of Night” is associated with representing the lives and problems faced by contemporary Indian women by establishing their interrelationship with nature. Mode over there is Namita Gokhale in her book “Things to Leave Behind” which is associated with representing the natural aspects of Himalayan foothills to reflect on the cultural and historical context of the Indian colonial Era (Der, Sunil). This book emphasises representing the

interconnection between the natural environment and with local community along with the role of women in maintaining ecological balance as well. There is Anita Nair has represented environmental disasters focusing on the situation of cyclones that took place in Tamil Nadu in her novel "Lessons in Forgetting". This novel is associated with representing the resilience of women in the situation of personal and environmental crises focusing on the interrelation between social justice and ecological challenges (Parameswaran, Gowri).

In addition to this, there are many contemporary Indian women writers present who are associated with representing the effect of urbanization and industrialisation from a critical point of view to identify its negative impact on the environment and women. Arundhati Roy represents the activism that took place as a large-scale project. This project is associated with destroying the natural ecosystem and also this place in the existing community. As a result of the disc construction of the environment, people belonging to the marginalised background more specifically women who are associated with primary activity were significantly affected by this particular work (Rangwala, Shenaz, Chanaka Jayawardhena, and Gunjan Saxena). This particular aspect represents the consequences related to industrialisation and urbanisation that took place due to the exploitation of natural resources which further hamper social equity. In addition to this Kiran Desai has represented in her writings that urbanization is associated with breaking the bond between women and nature. The loss of culture along with ecological heritage is recognised by having as a face of modernisation. From the aspects of eco-feminist, it has been identified that fragmentation of natural resources significantly hampers human-nature relationships (Sharma, Mukul).

From the global perspective, it has been identified in the Indian context that climate change global capitalisation and corporate exploitation are associated with hampering both the global and local environment. One of the major changes that took place is in the form of globalisation for both the environment and people are associated with resonating with global eco-feminist aspect. More engagement is another major aspect related to this particular area of concern. Indian women writers are the youngest to represent literature that also provides knowledge of eco-feminism themes through the angle of Identity crisis along with environmental responsibility and belonging from different cultural backgrounds (Joshi, Prayag Raj, and Ram Krishna Maharjan). These writers are associated with overcoming the gap experienced by people who live abroad and their Indian heritage. Environment and gender issues are both experienced by Indian people who live in their own country or migrate towards another country. In this context, it is evident that writers have been more inclined to include natural resources and ecosystems in their works as the hazards to humanity posed by their misuse have grown (Sikka, Gaurav). In this instance, it is evident that the literary textualization of the previously described environmental issues has given rise to ecocriticism, a new literal theory judgement. Assessment of environmentalism is done from a multidisciplinary perspective. In this specific area, all sciences collaborated to effectively analyse the creative problem-solving techniques used to address the environment and address the current environmental issues. Ecofeminists play a crucial part in this process since they are involved in assessing the relationship between the interplay of nature and women (Malakar, Kousik).

Ecological and socio-cultural aspects featured by contemporary Indian women writers

Indian women writers are mainly associated with representing eco-feminism from the angle of a movement that is associated with linking nature and women with the patriarchal structure of Indian society and associated with representing a significantly powerful framework that supports analysing the themes of environment, gender and socio-cultural dynamics (Bhattacharya, Sourit). One of the major features identified by contemporary Indian women writers is the oppression of women along with natural degradation. From the perspective of eco-feminism, it can be critical that the existing patriarchal system in the colonial era of India is associated with reducing the value of both women and the environment. Men are highly associated with dominating both of these factors as identified by the writings of Arundhati Roy. The author has represented the struggles of female characters that are mainly encouraged by males in the patriarchal society. In addition to this from the angle of women belonging to rural and indigenous backgrounds who are significantly related to land has been represented in the eco-feminist literature written by contemporary Indian women writers (Das, Suraj, and Anindya Jayanta Mishra). It represents a deep connection between women and nature and is associated with representing the custodians of ecological knowledge that is believed traditionally. The diversified society most specifically women faces

discrimination and violence due to industrialisation and environmental degradation. As seen in the writings of Mahashweta Devi tribal women and that time were highly affected by economic and environmental degradation (Sivakumar and Manimekalai).

There are other women Indian writers present who were engaged with representing nature as a metaphor for the feminine. the primary rationale behind these is women are traditionally associated with resilience and nurturing. Mean they are challenges also identified that are faced by nature that hamper its resistance and regeneration. It also reflects the consequences related to women's rules and hamper they are social position at a significant rate. Moreover, the writings of Anita Desai represent different cultural symbols that are associated with considering women as empowered characters and engaged with considering the earth as a goddess and mother nature (Kumar, Rahul, and Purabi Saikia).

Meanwhile, the eco-feminist pieces of literature that are mainly written by Indian women writers are associated with criticizing the aspects of environmental injustice that took place due to globalisation and industrialisation. Continuous exploitation of natural resources has significantly as it women from diverse societies specially those who belong to rural areas. As most of the diversified women are youngest with natural primary activities be construction of environmental resources is associated with hampering their social identity significantly. It increases the need for preserving ecological knowledge that is passed down through different generations of women (Vijayalaxmi and KC Kalam Arathy). This particular knowledge also plays an important role in increasing awareness towards improving the living of the community and sustainable living as well. It can be stated that most contemporary Indian women writers are associated with representing the ecological and social affairs of India and also raising awareness towards the protection of both women and the environment for a better society (Sen, Swatilekha, and Sanat Kumar Guchhait).

CONCLUSION

There are several Indian contemporary women writers present who are associated with highlighting themes related to ecofeminism through their pieces of literature. All these works are significantly focused on establishing an interconnection between social justice, environment and gender and identifying the impact of ecological degradation along with gender operation. By understanding all these associated aspects and perspectives it will become easy to identify effective movements towards ensuring future sustainability. This specific ecofeminism expertise is especially crucial in raising awareness of the need to promote sustainable living and better communal living. It may be said that the majority of modern Indian women writers are known for portraying the country's social and ecological issues and for bringing attention to the need to protect the environment and women in order to create a better society. Crucial to each of these works is the articulation of the relationships among social justice, the environment, and gender; additionally, the identification of the consequences of ecological degradation and gender operation is addressed. All of these thesis investigations centre around demonstrating the links between gender, the environment, and social justice as well as demonstrating the effects of degradation of the environment and social operation.

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