

ECOFEMINISM: AN IMPORTANT THEORY OF LITERARY CRITICISM

*Dr. Govind Digambar Kokane, Assistant Professor; Department of English,
Dr. B. A. M. University Sub-Campus, Osmanabad*

Abstract:

Ecofeminism is a philosophical and political theory. It combines ecological concerns with feminist ones; it criticizes the injustice done to women in patriarchal society. Its theorists say that paternalistic or capitalistic society has led to a harmful division between nature and culture. Ecofeminists propagated that the division can only be healed by women's instinct for nurture and holistic knowledge of nature's processes.

Ecofeminism describes the movements and philosophies that associate feminism with nature. This movement seeks to eradicate all forms of social injustice, not only injustice against women and nature. Francoise d'Eaubonne coined the term, Ecofeminism. The ecofeminist framework establishes the way of viewing and understanding of the present world. It also offers us the ways to improve the ills of injustice in the present world. The four sides of the frame are: 1. the mechanistic and materialistic model of the universe is resulted from the scientific revolution; 2. self and other dualisms and the inherent power and domination ethic, and capitalism and its intrinsic need for exploitation, destruction and instrumentalisation of earth, animals and people for the sole purpose of creating wealth.

KeyWords: *Ecofeminism, capitalism, exploitation, injustice.*

Ecofeminism is a movement or theory that applies feminist principles and ideas to ecological issues. The movement unites environmentalism and feminism. Around the world economies, cultures and natural resources are plundered. Twenty percent population of the world consumes eighty per cent of the natural resources of the world in the name of progress. Mary Mellor, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva are the famous Ecofeminists who have offered a new vision to look at the world and transform the world on the principles of equality. Ecofeminism uses the basic tenets of feminism that is the equality between the genders. It re-values non-patriarchal and non-linear structure of society. It advocates an alternative view of the world: the earth is holy, human life is based on natural world, and embraces all life as valuable. Ynestra King popularized Ecofeminism with the publication of her article "What is Ecofeminism?" in *The Nation*. She pointed out that belief system of the society is responsible for the oppression of women and nature. Ecofeminists advocate the revaluation of science to acknowledge the role of science and intuition. They support the alternative world view which considers all life forms valuable. They insist on the solving of problems of class, race, gender, and inequity in development. They believe through affirmative and non-violent ways problems should be solved.

Ecofeminism is a branch of feminist theory. It is also known as ecological feminism. The feminist theorists argue for the equality between genders. According to them incomplete world view should be replaced with the holistic and organic world perspective. They present the alternative world view. They value the sacredness of the earth. They acknowledge that human life depends on the natural world. They believe that all life forms are valuable. They campaign that the problems of environmental crisis and social injustice should be solved through assenting and non-violent manner. They have offered a new perspective to know the world. Rosemary Ruether wrote in her book, in 1975 in *New Woman / New Earth*: Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and nonsoultion to the ecological crisis within a society whose

fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination. They must unite the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this (Modern Industrial Society) (204).

The Ecofeminists, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva observe that there is the association between global militarism and the destruction of nature. The world has been facing the danger of wars between the states. Ecofeminist perception is rooted in the needs of everyday life. They reject both the militarism and the destruction of nature. They articulate the deepening of the human values among the people. They take a new look at the human beings and the world around them.

Environmentalism and feminism are two of the most important political movements of the late twentieth century. They offer us a philosophically well-versed description of the relation of women and nature. Male domination is closely related with the domination of nature. The relationship between human and nonhuman is material as well as cultural. Their relationship is inherently intertwined with questions of gender equity and social justice. Ecofeminists explore the super strategy for the liberation of human beings and the earth. Patriarchal system is responsible for unjustified domination. Domination of women and other humans is connected with the domination of nature. We need to substitute oppressive theoretical structure and baseless dominance. Ecofeminist perspective explicates the issues of environmental and social justice.

Ecofeminist politics addresses the questions of cultural globalization, environmental crisis and economic exploitation. Ecofeminism explores the relationship between humanity and nature. The spiritual, religious and philosophical beliefs concerning women and ecology should be just. We should protect, preserve and improve ecological systems for the future generations.

In contemporary times we face the social and ecological crisis. These problems threaten the preservation of life on the planet earth. To solve these problems, we should understand the dynamics of patriarchy and expose the answers or false solutions that obscure, perpetuate and even deteriorate the contemporary circumstances. It is the life of the earth herself that must be protected. At present geoengineering is threatening not life on earth and the natural system itself. Technological interventions have made a huge impact on systems like, climate, ocean currents, temperatures, humidity, droughts, and effects of nuclear tests that have occurred in many countries of the world.

According to Jennifer Munroe we find relationship between men, women, animals and plants in the plays and poetry written by the world famous dramatist, William Shakespeare. William Shakespeare is a playwright of all times. He knew the intricate relations between men, women and nature. Nature is the basis of human life.

Heidegger has also provided valuable views on the problems of ecological crisis and social disintegration. He has offered the identification of our world's problems and possible health-giving prescriptions. Heidegger and Nietzsche differ in their perspectives of the world. We do not agree with Heidegger for his views on Nazism. But the productive and healthy thoughts in his philosophy should be accepted. We should rethink the techno-industrial paradigm of the world through the creation of new myths and transform the present human life beyond anthropocentrism and egocentrism.

Contemporary Ecofeminists have explored the effects of race, class, ethnicity and sexuality on women's social positions. They battle against the systems of oppression and domination. They believe in the plurality of the belief systems. The Ecofeminist movement is inclusive. It addresses the inherent problems of patriarchal and hierarchal systems. The role of science in human life should be revalued. Subjectivity and intuition also play an important role in human life practically as well as theoretically.

Vandana Shiva is a physicist, philosopher and feminist activist. She is the world renowned environmental thinker. She is the author of hugely successful book, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*. In this book she describes the link between ecological crisis, colonialism, and the oppression of women.

Ecofeminism offers a deconstruction of the phallogentric dichotomies of nature and culture, self and other, and the concepts of power, action and making. Ecofeminists endeavor to reconceptualise the natural, cultural situation of human beings in a way that is not built on control or essentialist structures. They denounce the suppression of the feminine in western culture. They criticize phallogentric thought and culture. We should create gender balance in the home and in the world. The Ecofeminism theory is based on sociological, psychological corpus. They affirm that the oppression of women, the exploitation of the earth, and the oppression of the people of colour are based upon the domineering thought processes.

Marxist Ecofeminism investigates and explains the ways in which women are oppressed through systems of capitalism and private property. According to the Marxist thinkers, women's liberation can be achieved through a radical reorganization of the current capitalist financial system. They see a parallel between a devaluation of earth and the devaluation of women.

Words exert power in the world. Ecofeminism presents the rhetoric of care. They believe that environmental problems can be solved through cooperation and partnership rather than hierarchical subordination. They encourage forms of communication that value mutual understanding over persuasion and control. They deconstruct domineering practices and expose the domineering practices and expose the underlying ideologies. Language has the transformative capacity to foster emancipation and liberation of human life.

Ecofeminism is entangled with identity politics. The nature is often deformed by the multinationals' corporate practices. The theory strengthens democracy. It is important for sustainable development and climate change politics. It explores the deep interdependence of humanity and the ecosystem.

Moral values are the base of human life. The theorists assume that human behaviour to war the natural world is governed by moral norms. In contemporary society film has provided a powerful instrument for molding of such ethical attitudes. Historical ethical values can be reimagined and reconstituted. There is the saying that 'Without vision, there the people perish.'

The Ecofeminists, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva criticize prevailing economic theories, the myth of catching up development, the philosophical foundations of modern science and technology. They reject any form of exploitation, the endless commoditization of needs, and violence.

Marxist Ecofeminism explores the political and ideological rationalities operating under the constraints of capitalist market. Different forms of social domination are interrelated. The matrix of social domination is dynamic- constantly shifting and changing.

Ecofamilism has become famous in contemporary times. It believes in the conviction that any real and sustainable change must begin with the family. Ecovillage is a movement which promotes the community living. It promotes learning the best elements from traditional and indigenous cultures. The followers of the movement implement low impact living, organic, local food, small scale participatory governance. We should aim to minimize the ecological impact, while maximize human well being and welfare.

Ecofeminism helps in remaking a better, more ecologically sustainable world. The critics envision a world that is more compassionate, more equitable and more loving. They describe the complexity of human life. They advocate equal rights for women in political, economic, social and cultural spheres. They believe that transformation in the world is possible through consciousness raising, healing and communication with nature. Time has come to replace human arrogance with ecological humility and an understanding of ourselves as members of the whole community of life on earth.

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