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**UNDERSTANDING ECOLOGY: PHILOSOPHICAL, RELIGION AND
LITERARY PERSPECTIVES**



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ABSTRACT

The term ecology or *oekologie* was coined by the German biologist Ernst Haeckel in 1860 as the comprehensive science of the relationship of the organism to the environment. The study of ecology increases our understanding of the world and its life. This is important because our survival and well-being depend on ecological relationships throughout the world. Even changes in distant parts of the world and its atmosphere affect us and our environment. Although ecology is considered a branch of biology, it focuses on the higher levels of the organization of life on earth and on the interrelations between organisms and their environment. A central principle of ecology is that each living organism has an ongoing and continual relationship with every other element that makes up its environment.

Today we are facing ecological crisis which has its deep roots in misguided, anthropocentric attitudes about the dominion of humans on Earth. The deep ecology movement thus can be contrasted with the so-called shallow ecology movement. The shallow approach considers it unnecessary and even counterproductive to take up philosophical or religious questions to solve the ecological crisis.

The paper will highlight and explore the Philosophy of Ecology, Deep and Shallow Ecology. Further it will discuss its importance from religious point of view with reference to Holy Quran and Hadith. Finally the issues will be taken into consideration and concern with the help of literary text.

RESEARCH PAPER

The term ecology or *oekologie* was coined by the German biologist Ernst Haeckel in 1860 as the comprehensive science of the relationship of the organism to the environment. The study of ecology increases our understanding of the world and its life as our survival and well-being depend on ecological relationships throughout the world. Even changes in distant parts of the world and its atmosphere affect us and our environment. Although ecology is considered a branch of biology, it focuses on the higher levels of the organization of life on earth and on the interrelations between organisms and their environment. A central principle of ecology is that each living organism has an ongoing and continual relationship with every other element that makes up its environment and the sum total of interacting living organisms (the biocoenosis) and their non-living environment (the biotope) in an area termed an ecosystem. Thus in an ideal condition, we can live together with plants and animals, without disturbing each other which further results in 'ecological' balance.

The ongoing increase in population and the excess utilization of the same piece of land will lead to an ecological imbalance. In the olden days, a large number of people died of diseases caused by germs but today with the advancement of science, diseases like small pox, cholera, diphtheria, typhoid, tuberculosis etc can be easily cured thus most of the people now survive and live longer. This has resulted in overpopulation. So with more people, we need additional houses, more food, fuel and other commodities. However, we cannot create additional land. What the hungry people will do and from where will they get food? To satisfy their needs they may cut jungles, start eating animals and fight among themselves for survival. These are the worst possible effects of an ecological imbalance. Thus, ecological balance is necessary for our survival.

Ecologism provides a radically different vision of nature and the place of human beings within it. The two fundamental questions that environmental ethics must consider are: What duties do humans have with respect to the environment, and why? Different philosophers have given quite different answers to this fundamental question which has led to the emergence of quite different environmental ethics. If the answer to the question as stated above is simply that we, as human beings, will perish if we do not constrain our actions towards nature, then the ethics is considered to be "anthropocentric". Anthropocentrism literally means "human-centeredness". Within environmental ethics, it refers to an ethical framework that grants "moral standing" only to

human beings. Thus, an anthropocentric ethics claims that only human beings are morally considerable in their own right.

The ecological crisis has deep roots in misguided, anthropocentric attitudes about the dominion of humans on Earth. These exploitative, consumptive attitudes, according to deep ecology movement principles cannot be overcome without significant social changes; these include changes in the lifestyles of those who live in the rich countries. Such changes can emerge from a philosophical or religious basis that nurtures a sense of *personal responsibility*, not simply to persons now living, but to future human generations as well as to fauna and flora. The deep ecology movement can be contrasted with the so-called shallow ecology movement. The shallow approach considers it unnecessary and even counterproductive to take up philosophical or religious questions to solve the ecological crisis. Its supporters agree that changes in existing practices are needed, but changes of basic principles are not necessary. Those advocating the shallow approach do not find intrinsic value in nonhuman life forms, nor do they think the consumptive economic system is problematic. Humans ought to exploit nature, but prudently. High standards of living are not objectionable; they can be raised further by more investments in science and technology. Attempts should be made to bring less-developed nations up to our Western standard.

The deep ecology movement's historic forebears include Henry David Thoreau, John Muir and Aldo Leopold. Rachel Carson, and others also in the United States and elsewhere, is more recent pivotal figures. In 1962 Carson's book *Silent Spring* set off an ecological alarm. Starting with practical issues related to pesticides, she probed the philosophical assumptions underlying this attack on pests believed to stand in the way of human well being and progress. The deep ecology movement is for ecological sustainability, and human development that conserves the richness and diversity of life forms on Earth. This approach is said to be *biocentric* (centered on life) rather than anthropocentric (centered on human life only); it includes what Leopold called "*the land*": the whole community of life on the landscape - rivers, mountains, canyons, forests, grasslands, and estuaries. Reforestation, for example, should not be large tree plantations, for only producing timber and fiber for humans. Such plantations lack the biodiversity, complexity, health, and the integrity of spontaneous natural ecosystems. They are not genuine biological communities. The deep ecology movement is more focused than the broader environmental

movement. Empirical studies have helped to state the unifying Deep Ecology Movement platform through 8 points:

- All living beings have intrinsic value.
- The richness and diversity of life has intrinsic value.
- Except to satisfy vital needs, humankind does not have the right to reduce this diversity and this richness.
- It would be better for human beings if there were fewer of them, and much better for other living creatures.
- Today the extent and nature of human interference in the various ecosystems is not sustainable, and the lack of sustainability is rising.
- Decisive improvement requires considerable change: social, economic, technological, and ideological.
- An ideological change would essentially entail seeking a better quality of life rather than a Raised standard of living.
- Those who accept the aforementioned points are responsible for trying to contribute directly Or indirectly to the realization of the necessary changes. (From Arne Naess, 2002, *Life's Philosophy*, pp 107-108.)

Deep Ecology is thus a branch of Eco-philosophy that has been taking a more holistic view towards nature. It recognizes that humans are one among many other species that have developed in this global eco-system. Naess, through the above mentioned eight points emphasizes the intrinsic value of each living being. He explains that all entities have intrinsic value and we have an obligation in respecting the inherent value of beings in pursuing our interest. Though man has exceptional characteristics such as culture, communication skills, art of living, technological equipments and the like, the other entities should also be treated on par with their sentience, the ability to feel pain or even the poetic properties of existence. John O'Neill projects the importance of 'intrinsic value' in understanding our obligations towards other beings when he says that:

Intrinsic goods are goods that other goods are good for the sake of. It is a well rehearsed point that, under pain of an infinite regress, not everything can have only instrumental value (O'Neill, John p. 131)

Here John O'Neill mentions three varieties of intrinsic value with regard to Deep Ecology, which are often glossed over by many thinkers. First, as a synonym for non-instrumental value, secondly as to the value an object has solely in virtue of its intrinsic properties, and finally as a synonym for objective value'. Further O'Neill points out that in order to defend an environmental ethics based on intrinsic values one may have to commit to the other two senses of the notion of intrinsic value. He takes up the notion of intrinsic value as one that depends solely on the non-relational properties of the object of valuation for further scrutiny. Non-relational properties of an object are actually characterized as the intrinsic properties of that object. O'Neill, interprets the term non-relational properties in two senses, a weak and a strong sense. To quote O'Neill:

- (i) The non-relational properties of an object are those that persist regardless of the existence or non-existence of other objects (weak interpretation)
- (ii) The non-relational properties of an object are those that can be characterized without reference to other object (strong interpretation) (O'Neill, John P. 134)

Leopold explains the eco-philosophy that underlies Deep ecology as follows:

Natural environment is a fountain of energy flowing through circuit of soils, plants and animals. Food chains are the living channels which conduct energy upward. Character of the upward flow of energy depends on the complex structure of the plant and animal community-without this complexity normal circulations would presumably not occur. All whole revealed by Ecology and quantum theory are unified and they are one more in the manner in which organisms are one, than one in the manner that indivisible, homogeneous quality less substance is one. We could see world as an organism if internal relation is conscious. This relationship of consciousness is metaphysical. It may be macro/micro, New/old, necessary/immediate. (Bryan G. Norton)

Another implication of Deep Ecology can be seen in the emergence of an 'ecological self. Monika Langer points out that:

Self-realization is a term for widening and deepening our self so that it embraces all life forms. Academically speaking what I suggest is the supremacy of environmental ethics as a means of invigorating the environmental movement in the years to come. (Langer, Monika)

Arne Naess elaborates the notion of 'ecological self' as follows. He says that the ecological self is the terminus of the human self that begins with the ego pole. Naess explains:

The concept of 'ecological self' is not to be interpreted as that of the ego or 'narrow' self. Rather, as Gandhi emphasized, it is a question of reducing "the dominance of the narrow self or the ego" and recognizing that we are 'in' and 'for' Nature from our very beginning. Society and human relations are important but our self is richer in its constitutive relations. Through the wider self every living being is connected intimately and from this follows the capacity of identification and as its natural consequence, the practice of non-violence. No moralizing is needed -- we need to cultivate our insight... We are here to embrace rather than conquer the world...I suspect that our thinking need not proceed from the notion of living being to that of the world, but our will conceive reality or the world we live in as alive in a wide, not easily defined sense (Naess, Arne: Bhagavat Geeta, Ecosophy—T and Deep Ecology')

Naess in his writings aims to confirm the relevance of Deep Ecology movement and shallowness of Anthropocentrism. In order to achieve this Naess has to show how far Deep Ecology is in accordance with our modern notion of evolutionary biology. Thus Golley notes:

Non Anthropocentric value theory must provide for the intrinsic value of both individual organisms and a hierarchy of higher order organismic entities, such as eco-systems and regional biomes and be conceptually concordant with modern evolutionary and ecological biology (Golley, Frank B)

This is a movement of reconciliation towards ecological harmony. That is why Naess illustrates self-realization as a tool, for the protection of man himself. So nature conservation acquires a new, spiritual dimension. 'Deep Ecology' as a branch of Environmental Ethics, acts not only as an ethical principle, but also accumulates spirituality in the social order.

The basic environmental beliefs of planetary management worldview are that the human beings are the planet's most important species, and they are apart from and in charge of the rest of nature. This worldview also believes that the earth has an unlimited supply of resources for use by humans through science and technology. Besides, human's success depends on how well they can understand, control, and manage the earth's life-support systems for their benefit. On the other part, the views of environmental wisdom worldview are sharply contrary to that of planetary management worldview. It believes that human beings are the part of nature, and

nature does not exist just for them. It emphasizes that the earth's resources are limited, should not be wasted, and should be used efficiently and sustainably for them and other species.

Interestingly, however, Islamic worldview of environmentalism takes a place 'in between' the above-mentioned two dominant worldviews. Islam rather combines these two worldviews in a single melting pot though it was developed fourteen hundred years before. Islam is considered to be a comprehensive way of life whose teachings cover, directly or indirectly, every possible human relationship including that with the environment. These teachings are primarily available in the revealed knowledge which comprises the Quran and the Sunnah.

Unfortunately, the message of this perfected religion in the areas of environment is almost in oblivion both by Muslims and non-Muslims. Referring to the behavior of modern man with nature, Fazlun M Khalid, Founder Director of the Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences, Birmingham, UK comments:

“...this Islamic mode of expression is severely attenuated, having been swept aside by the forces of history, like the other older traditions, into a domain which treats the natural world exclusively as an exploitable resource. As what we now understand by modernity advanced, as the secular ethic progressively seeped into the Muslim psyche and as industrial development, economic indicators and consumerism became the governing parameters of society, there has been a corresponding erosion of the Muslim perception of the holistic and a withering of its understanding of the sacred nexus between the human community and the rest of the natural order.”

Quran, in this respect, reminds us that:

“The creation of heavens and the earth is far greater than the creation of mankind. But most of mankind does not know it.” (40:56)

However, environment, in Islamic worldview is a '*gift of God*' to mankind. Islam is a universal religion and its concern for the environment is a universal one, cutting across national, religious and geographical barriers. Its major commandments are directed, not to the Muslims alone, but to the human race. Hence in the question of conserving the natural resources the Almighty Allah's decree is enforced upon 'people' rather than to Arab or Muslims alone. The environmental worldview in Islam is a holistic one: it assumes a fundamental link and interdependency between all natural elements and bases its teachings on the premise that if man abuses or exhausts one element, the natural world as a whole will suffer direct consequences.

This belief is nowhere formulated in one concise phrase; it is rather an underlying principle that forms the foundation of the Quranic teachings.

In the Quranic view, nature is an estate belonging to Allah and it has been given to man merely as a trust. Nature constitutes a testing-ground for man's morality and whatever right man possesses to have dominion over nature is solely due to his make-up and solidly derives from God's trust in His deputy on earth. It recognizes the fact that there is one absolute Creator and that man is responsible to Him for all his actions. It is mentioned in the Quran:

“To God belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth, for God encompasses everything.” (4:126)

Therefore abusing one of his creations, whether it is a living being or a natural resource, is a sin. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him) considered all of God's creations to be equal before God and He believed not only animals, but also land, forests and watercourses should have rights. The Quran explains that mankind holds a privileged position among God's creations on earth: he is chosen as *khalifa*, (vicegerent) and carries the responsibility of caring for God's earthly creations. Each individual is given this task and privilege in the form of God's trust. Environmental crisis is, in effect, a failure of the trusteeship, thus nature becomes an index of how well a particular society has performed its responsibility towards God. However, the human being was the only one in God's Creation (i.e. nature) that was prepared to undertake this task of trusteeship willingly, according to the verse:

“We did indeed offer the Trust (amana) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it, he was indeed unjust and foolish.” (33:72).

The Quran shows that there is a correlation between the behavior of people and the conditions of the environment. The right and moral behavior yield positive results:

“If the people of the towns had but believed and feared God, We should indeed have opened out to them (all kinds of) blessings from heaven and earth...” (7:96)

“And O My People! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him (in repentance): He will send you the skies pouring abundant rain, and add strength to your strength: so turn ye not back in sin!” (11:52)

Nature is indeed a bounty of Allah that makes the humanity and all other living organisms survive in the earth. The Quran gives a clear indication in this respect:

“And He has made subservient to you, (as a gift) from Himself, all that is in the heavens and on earth: in this, behold, there are messages indeed for people who think!” (45:13)

Man, according to Islam, has been given clear guidelines not to destroy the environment because he is not its owner. Islam also forbids cruelty to animals and bird. It holds man responsible for the well-being of other creation. In other words, the attitude of Islam to the environment, the sources of life and the resources of nature is a positive one, in as much as it is based on protection and prohibition of abuse and destruction. This attitude is based on construction and development. This is clear in the idea of revival and restoration or recovery of lands through agriculture, cultivation and construction. It is mentioned in the Quran:

“... O my people! Worship Allah, you have no god but Him. It is He Who created you from the Earth and made it a dwelling place for you.” (11:61)

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him) has therefore instructed:

“Even on the Day of Resurrection, if anyone has a palm-shoot (a plant) in his hand, he should make sure to plant it.”

The idea conveyed in this *Hadith* points at the importance of looking after the environment. The protection of Allah’s creation is therefore the duty of a Muslim and Allah appreciates those with rewards who takes care of environment. It is these values which led the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) to say,

“Whoever plants a tree and diligently looks after it, until it matures and bears fruit, is rewarded.”

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him) also said:

“If a Muslim plants a tree or sows a field and men and beasts and birds eat from it, all of it is charity on his part”.

True environmental consciousness is born when such values are adopted and become an intrinsic part of our mantel and physical make-up. In his letter of recommendation, the First Caliph, Abu Bakr ordered his troops,

“Do not cut down a tree, do not abuse a river, do not harm animals and be always kind and humane to God’s creation, even to your enemies.”

On looking at the Quran, the prominent place given to animals, the key members of the ecosystem, is immediately apparent. A number of its Suras bear animals’ names: al-Baqara (The Cow); al-Nahl (The Bee), al-Anqabut (The Spider), al-Naml (The Ant). One of the striking

expressions the Quran uses about animals is that they are a “community” (*ummah*). It is especially noteworthy that this concept, which is a significant concept in Islamic tradition and literature, should also be used for animals:

“If you really want to see the signs of Allah, just look at any animal that walks upon the earth and any bird that flies in the air; they too are the communities like you. We have not left out anything from the Book in determining the courses of their lives.” (6:38)

When it comes to literary perspective Ecofeminists broke new ground stating that the exploitation of natural resources and the degradation of women are interconnected. They introduced a feminist perspective quite contradictory to the traditional patriarchal ways of relating things to the environment. Janis Birkeland in “Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practise” defines Ecofeminism as “a value system, a social movement and a practice, but it also offers a political analysis that explores the links between androcentricism and the environmental destruction.”. Since its inception Ecofeminism critiques the dualistic concept of the patriarchal system such as self/other, man/woman, human/animal, culture/nature and white/non-white thereby constructing “white male human identity as separate from and superior to the identities of women, people of color, animals and the natural world” (Gaard 1993,p. 9). Ecofeminism contrives to obliterate these detrimental dichotomies which are nurtured by western creeds.

In the chaotic ebb and flow of human affairs, Alice Walker sees writing as a way to correct wrongs that she observes in the immediate world around her. Her recognition of misogyny and exploitation of the environment as parallel forms of male domination, undoubtedly takes an ecofeminist stance. In an interview with John O’Brien Walker admits that she is committed to the cause of black women but equally to the cause of nature. She has openly declared her love of nature, which is one of the reasons why, she did not commit suicide. Walker reproves that the earth has become the nigger of the world and will assuredly undo us if we don't learn to care for it, revere it, and even worship it.

Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* written in an epistolary mode deals with the story of Celie, a black woman in the South. Celie writes letters to God in which she reveals her life - her roles as daughter, wife, sister, and mother. Through writing letters, women not only record their lives but also reflect upon them, a source of personal growth. In *The Color Purple*, as in her other writings, Walker focuses on the theme of double repression of black women in the American experience. The primary theme of the novel, reflects Walker's desire to project a positive

outcome in life, even under the harshest conditions her central character triumphs over adversity and forgives those who oppressed her. This central theme of the triumph of good over evil is no doubt the source of the book's great success and that is achieved by the protagonist by her close association with all beings of nature irrespective of race and gender. The protagonist shifts her attention from an Anthropocentric Male God to an Ecocentric God - A God of Trees, God of Birds, God of Air and all other things. This perspective leads us to view the novel through an ecofeminist lens.

Celie's condition is deplorable. She is abused physically, sexually, emotionally and socially. She becomes pregnant at a young age. The novel begins with the threat "you better not never tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mummy." (Walker 1982, p. 1). The warning implies that God knows and he understands. He compromises with male wickedness and accepts a woman's silence. Throughout her life she has been subjected to a cruel form of male dominance. Metaphorically dumb and left with nobody to share she turns to write letters to God. The female body becomes the target of male aggression and so woman like Celie begins to view their bodies with animosity. Thus, Celie hates her feminine self and her inferior position. The black woman lives in a society where men are aggressive and women remain acquiescent. Walker reminiscences the black mothers and grandmothers as "creatures so abused and mutilated in body, so dimmed and confused by pain that they considered themselves unworthy of hope" (Walker 1983, p. 232). This situation stems from the patriarchal culture that replicates the historic gender-based relationship between men and women. It clearly demonstrates the power over the powerless.

A practical movement ecofeminism not only condemns these patriarchal perceptions but also aims to eradicate it, thereby negating any hierarchical notion of difference. Walker recognizes the interconnectedness of culture and nature in the Olinka tribe. She identifies the relationship between the local cultural preservation and the defense of biological diversity. Thus by projecting the Olinka tribal life Walker shows the most ecologically responsible people. Nettie observes the exploitation of the Olinka's life as a result of the clearing the way for culture. To the Olinka "the roofleaf is not Jesus Christ but in its own humble way, is it not God?" (Walker 1982, p. 160). For these people the roofleaf is not simply a thing but an embodiment of the very essence of life. Nettie, in one of her letters, writes "the Olinka territory has been destroyed and their women folk spend all their time in the fields, tending their crops and praying. They sing to

the earth and to the sky and to their cassava and groundnuts. Songs of love and farewell. We are all sad here, Celie” (Walker 1982,p. 179). The white man explores and exploits the Olinka territory for its rubber plantation. Nettie first perceives Olinka as a natural and self-describing people but astonished to find them vulnerable to invasion of the white emperor. The Olinka though happy to welcome the road but never thought it will be for the worse. The road actually destroys their fields and homes. The church, the school including Nettie’s hut were levelled down. In anger the village chief went to the coast seeking explanation and reparation for laying the road. He returned to the village with the breaking news that the whole village including its territory belongs to the rubber manufacturer in England. Like a cancerous cell that slowly penetrates into the body and destroys it the white man slowly enters to the Olinka village and seize it. The devastation of the Olinka village is a perfect example of modernization or the presumed pursuit of development which leads to the ecological and cultural rupture of the bonds that the tribes have established with nature.

Ecofeminist Vandhana Shiva in “Ecofeminism” discuss a similar situation, but in the Indian context. “The culturally rooted tribal is made physically homeless by being uprooted from the soil of his ancestors” (Shiva 1993, p. 98).The native’s traditional practices have played a key role in conserving the forest and its pristine beauty. Abandonment of these traditional practices by modernism accompanied by colonial characteristics of oppressive tendencies has led to the present ecological crisis.

Kamala Markandaya deals with the imbalance, plight and predicament of women, especially of working class women and another oppressed entity: the environment. She portrays; how a society’s women are totally degraded due to poverty, women’s strong ties with nature and nature’s exploitation by patriarchal zamindari and industrialists. Kamala Markandaya portrays Rukmani, the protagonist, Ira and environment as oppressed beings. Rukmani’s work in the garden and total dependence on this resource through her hard labor depicts her deep rooted link with nature. She gets pleasure when she sees growth of her field. It becomes clear when she says, “our freedom to work in the forest and to farm is very important” (Markandaya, K. 2010, p. 241). It is also important and tragic to note that her reproductive labor and her domestic duties are not given any value in this rural male chauvinistic society. *Nectar in a Sieve* is replete with the dominant issues of urbanization, when these villagers are evicted from rented land, women’s oppression and exploitation in male dominated society, women’s connection with nature and

environment's degradation, class and gender issues. Indira Gansion writes in the introduction to the *Nectar in a Sieve* that [b]y giving voice to the main character Rukmani, Markandaya gives us a woman who has great affect on us through not only the problems of rural life, but also the problem that she is a woman (Gansion, 2002).

Rukmani, a poor rural woman, the central character and narrator of the novel, describes her story of hard life, and shows her bravery in spite of all heavy odds put on her by cruel society as well as by nature. This protagonist develops her bond with nature from the very beginning of the novel. This association with nature seems stronger after her marriage with Nathan, a poor tenant farmer. Her strong ties with nature seem to be superb, brilliant and thought provoking. The text explains Vandana Shiva's perspective that how the development is actually mal (e) development and a cause of environmental demolition and threat of livelihoods for the poor peasants. Shiva's other aspect that peasants, including women and men, are regarded feminine in fact; historically and colonially, is also under consideration in this text. The novel also depicts Rosemary Radford Ruether's argument that human's destruction of nature and women's degradation are perpetuated and legitimized by a social structure based on hierarchy that allows one group to rule another. It seems due to Rukmani's close tie with nature, that her day to day activities and duties are environmentally driven. A normal person cannot even think about these natural objects which this young protagonist mentions, when her husband has gone and she is a widow. "Sometimes at night I think my husband is with me again coming gently through mists, and we tranquil together (Markandaya. 2010, p. 01).

Markandaya depicts these villagers having true blood for their land. Their happiness can be estimated with the fact that they do not want to move towards cities from their rural houses, but they prefer to live in their poor cottages, even made of mud and straws, but they love them. These village people love the animals very much. They love each and every object of nature, and give them value and respect by not considering them inferior beings. They, just like all ecofeminists, give equal and independent value to plants, animals and all human beings. A particular village food fried in "desi ghee" is common to them. We also come to know that their ways of earning their livelihoods are completely embedded in land, nature. It is produced from the land whatever, they sell to earn money, and men and women work equally without any discrimination. As, "Old Granny lived on what she made by selling peanuts and guavas (p.09)". They grow and cultivate both these objects from land and feel relax by selling their own product.

Rukmani, our protagonist, being the daughter of village headman does not know, how to milk the goat and how to plant seeds; which she comes to know at her husband's house, as she learns, "How to churn butter from the milk, and how to mull rice (p.10)". These activities bring her close to nature and we find her irresistible in adopting these habits with love and devotion.

Her connection with nature strengthens and she grows a beautiful garden at her house; this garden becomes very special to her. She compares her life stages with her work in the garden and with the growth of vegetables, and seems to be spiritually connected with nature. Here the development of pumpkins can be compared with her pregnancy when she has Ira in her womb (spiritual ecofeminism), and she grows as the pumpkin has different stages of growth, and we also come to know that her work in the garden is somehow valued while her reproductive labor is not given any significance in that rural family. In this way there exists same dualistic condition as there was before enlightenment, as it is noted that Rukmani's growth of a garden pleased Nathan, especially the growth of pumpkins, which was precious to Nathan because he has never grown them before, in his own garden. It seemed that Rukmani's happiness lied with the happiness of Nathan as Rukmani got happy when Nathan was zealous on her pumpkin's growth. It gave Rukmani vigour to give more time and more worth to land as she tells us that "I planted beans and sweet potatoes, brinjals and chillies and they all grew well under my hands" (p.10).

Her strong connection with nature provided her family more food and more earning. Rukmani's commitment to the nature never comes down, even in the days of her pregnancy. In those days she expects from Nathan that he will do work in the paddy field, but he is a work shirker and not ready to listen even. She recounts that, "Sowing time was at hand and there was plenty to be done in the field; dams of clay to be built to ensure proper irrigation of the paddy terraces (p.12)".

Rukmani in spite of a poor peasants acts as an active agent to take care of nature, as she does work with his husband even more than him. As Shiva also writes that the masculine's paradigm of food production involves the disorder of the vital links between forestry, agriculture and animal husbandry, which have been considered the sustainable model. So, women activist, and ecofeminists reject this masculine model and prefer to have female production model as sustainable resources. In this text Rukmani provides this sustainable resource not only to her family but her left community also. She looks after her own planted garden as well as works in the outside patch of land with her husband. She is a woman who knows about the duty of land

more than her husband. She does care the land not only to earn money from it but also to give value and to pay rights to the earth. She seems to be an ecofeminist, to take care of nature within text. Rather it is also right to say that she depicts all those women who give value to earth and try to eradicate all hurdles in the way of establishing its worth. She tells us, “Sowing time was at hand, and I was out all day with Nathan planting the paddy in the drained fields (p.17)”.

She is well informed about the time periods when and how a particular field has to grow. As she again tells, “Corn had to be sown too, the land was ready (p.17)”. When she takes an advance care of land, she also believes in its fertility. She says, “While I came behind, strewing the seed to either side and sprinkling the earth over, from the basket at my hips (p.18)”.

Thus we can conclude that humans have an exemplary relation with nature. What is important is to look with the lens of humanity, nurturing and catering to its needs. Many philosophers have tried to explain the relation between man and nature and how to go ahead for the betterment of both. All these environmental damages are caused due to careless human works and have to be taken it seriously. To get back the sound environment and un Hazardous nature, Islamic teaching and guidelines have no alternative. Islamic ecoethics needs to be implemented at all levels – local, national, regional, global and most importantly, at individual level. Ecofeminist too has carried on their duty in an exceptional way. Both the novels have clearly specified the role of women and their contribution to the nature. The women characters overcome all the hindrances that have hindered their mental and spiritual evolution earlier. Ecological womanism needs hard-headed persuasion and application and both Walker and Markandaya recommend this through their novels. Through the novel, they drive home the point that the subjugation of women and the conflagration that men have made of mother earth needs immediate amendments. Through their novel they ask women to develop and put forth their ecowomanist awareness in action, through their activism, and by promoting eco-friendly ways of life.

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