



Exploration of Ecofeminsim: Critique



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Abstract : *The present research paper aims at making an in-depth exploration, analysis, interpretation and evaluation of ecofeminism in the English Literature. The paper will explore the pros and cones of ecofeminism with a compare and contrast of male and female writers to point out the specificities of women writers. It would also point out the relevance of Ecofeminism for the emancipation and empowerment of women and the harmonious relation between man and women unto this last. Mostly, the present paper will thoroughly explore the concept of ecofeminism fictionalized in the literary works. There is a great need to work on such a research work that would contribute to the better and comprehensive understanding of gender in equality and environmental sustainability. This work would definitely contribute to the both literary and critical studies of ecofeminism. This is a seminal attempt to explore ecofeminism at least the region is concerned.*

Keywords:

Ecofeminism, Ecocriticism, Ecology, Green Literature, Ecofeminist, Victimology

Research Paper :

The term 'Ecofeminism' was first used by French Feminist FranCoiser d' Eaubonne in 1974. It is considered as the third wave of feminism. Ecofeminism is an umbrella term with wide variety of approaches. Ecofeminist activism grew during the 1980s and 1990s among women from the antinuclear, environmental and lesbian feminist movements. The "Women and Life on Earth: Ecofeminism in the Eighties" conference, held at Amherst 1980, was the first in the series of ecofeminist conference, which inspired the growth of ecofeminist organizations and also conferences. These conferences were organized to explore the possible antidotes on sexism, classism, racism, and environmental destruction.

The Politics of Women's Spirituality: Essays on the Rise of Spiritual Power within the Feminist Movement, *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics* are some of the important texts by women trying to integrate and interconnect their personal, ecological and political concerns. There is a wide range of women/nature interconnections which are being explored within ecofeminist thought and action. However, there are three connections, which seem central to the ecofeminist theory such as the Empirical, the Conceptual, Cultural, Symbolic and Epistemological.

Ecofeminism is an activist and academic movement that see critical connection between the domination of nature and the exploration of women. The ecofeminist epistemological claim follows from the connection between women and nature. The fact that women are most adversely affected by environmental problems makes them better qualified as experts on such condition and therefore places them in a position of epistemological privilege that is women have more knowledge about earth systems than men. This means that these women are in a privileged position to aid in creating new practical and intellectual ecological paradigms. This kind of understanding is advocated by Indian ecofeminist like Vandana Shiva.

There is a great need to work on such a research work that would contribute to the better and comprehensive understanding of gender in equality and environmental sustainability. This work would definitely contribute to the both literary and critical studies of ecofeminism. This is a seminal attempt to explore ecofeminism at least the region is concerned. A range of women and nature interconnection are being explored within ecofeminist thought and action. Ecofeminist theory has three major connections. The

empirical is that in most of the world, women generally affect environmental problems. The increased burdens of women face result not from environmental perspectives. The second claim is that women and nature are connected conceptually, culturally and symbolically. These connections are expressed, revealed in several ways. Many of people and critics agreed with Reuther's theory that researched western culture presents idea about the world in a hierarchical and dualistic manner in which world is organized. The claim is that dualistic conceptual structures identify women with femininity, the body, earth, sexuality and flesh and women with masculinity spirit, mind and power. It results that men have innate power over both women and nature. The third and last, the ecofeminist epistemological claim follows from the connections noted between women and nature. Various links exist to response women and nature. It is both historical and religious connection. Women's relationship to the environment is ambivalent, thus disputing the dualism of nature and culture.

The present paper will discuss ecofeminism, origin and its development with the help of various approaches in detail. The present chapter will also highlight the writers concerned with problems and issues of women and nature discourse in their writings.

Feminist writings on 'environment and development' have often portrayed women as victims of environmental degradation, stressing the negative consequences of degradation on women. The ecofeminist position has been termed the 'post victimology stance' (Shiva 1989) believing that women will mobilize in defense of the environment. Ecofeminists believe that women's affinity with nature leads them to defend and protect such kind of hollow criticism.

The ecofeminist stance has led to the generation of a considerable amount of policy-based international literature stressing the positive relations between women and the environment. It is assumed that what is good for the environment is good for women. For, example ODA (1991) coined the term 'synergistic interventions' and the 1992 World Bank Development Report stressed the need for 'win-win' programmes (Jackson 1994). These have been strongly critiqued by Jackson (1994) who calls for gender analysis of individual situations. Jackson argues that it may be damaging to assume that women always protect nature because it is in their interest to do so, as clearly women can be the agents of degradation – particularly due to the nature of their multiple and competitive roles. She proposes an

alternative 'feminist environmentalism' which analyses how the socially constructed nature of gender relations mediates environmental access, change and experience and understand gender roles as socially and historically constructed.

Some feminist scholars like Carolyn Merchant (1992) have categorized ecofeminist theory into liberal, radical or socialist frameworks. However, leading versions of feminism have not, in fact, articulated their positions on ecology or on the nature of the connections between the twin oppressions of women and nature. In the 1960s, the feminist movement demanded equity for women in the workplace and in education as a method to achieve a fulfilling life. At around the same time, Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring* (1962) focused attention on the effects of pollution on the human and non human world, making the question of life on earth a public issue. Ecofeminist with a radical bent analyzed environmental problems from within their critique of patriarchy and offered alternatives that could liberate both women and nature. (Merchant 1990. P.93).

Since early 1970s many feminist, especially ecological feminist (ecofeminist) have depended Rosemary Ruether's basic points: the environment is a feminist issue. Ruether's view are like, there is correlation between environment and feminist issue, connection between domination of women and domination of nature and how and why these connection is important to feminism, environmentalism and environmental philosophy. Some scholars and critics claim to link the twin domination of women and nature. Thus, discussion of this issue provides an overview in ecofeminism.

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