

**SREE NARAYANA COLLEGE, CHATHANNUR**

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**Final Work Report**

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**DISCOURSE OF THE OPPRESSED: AN  
ECOFEMINISTIC READING OF WOMEN'S  
WRITINGS IN INDIA**

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this project entitled Discourse of The Oppressed: An Ecofeministic Reading of Women's Writings in India is a bonafide record of research work done by me and that no part of this has been presented for any other project work, degree, diploma or similar title of this or any other University.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION - A BRIEF LOOK INTO OPPRESSIVE DISCOURSES

The term oppression is synonymous with destitute, enslaved, exploited, tyrannized, burdened etc. Oppression is the way by which certain groups organize to protect their position as dominant groups thereby making life miserable to the less privileged ones. They exercise their power and authority in an unjust and burdensome manner thereby subjecting the oppressed to harsh and authoritarian treatment. Individuals experience oppression because they are part of a group that is defined on the basis of certain characteristics like gender, race, class, ethnicity, nationality etc. Oppression is the root cause for many of the serious conflicts taking place across the world. The conflicts can be religious racial, between sexes, between governments and citizen etc. Violence need not be visible and subjective, it can be invisible and symbolic operating through languages, discourses and beliefs.

At this point it is sensible to reflect upon Foucault's discourse analysis which is an approach that studies how language is used as a form of resistance by those who are in power. This form of discourse is a source of resistance to those who are in power and they exercise this power upon whom they dominate. This language or discourse plays a significant role in the oppression of 'the other' (Wollstonecraft 80). The plights of the marginalized and destitute are given a voice in the discourses of the oppressed. Oppressive discourses thus illuminate this tragic and pathetic situation of the downtrodden such as the blacks, the dalits, women, nature etc.

It is presumed that the western construct of dualism or binary opposites perpet-

uates oppression. It is a concept which divides the orders of the world into opposite pairs where one is privileged and the other is marginalized. This paper makes a generalized probe into the various discourses of the oppressed and attempts a study on the ecofeministic women's writings in India.

The writings of the African American writers explore various themes relating to their existence like racial discrimination, inequality, slavery, denial of human rights etc. in their society. Alice Walker is a widely acclaimed activist and one of the most influential African American writers of the 20th century. As the first African American female to win the Pulitzer Prize, she portrays in her works the sufferings and tortures of the people of her race and the inhuman atrocities and injustices towards black women. Through her novels, she condemns and criticizes black men who use women as a commodity and use violence and power to control them. In her most famous epistolary novel *Colour Purple*, she narrates the sufferings and oppressions of a black girl Celie. She is a victim of racism, sexism and paternalism.

Toni Morrison, the 1993 Nobel Laureate is a prominent writer among African Diaspora Women writers. In her novels she tries to illuminate the sad and pathetic situations of the Black Americans at a time when racial discrimination and segregation were at its heights. The African American displacement paves a significant theme in Morrison's works. Her most famous novel *The Bluest Eye* is the story of a young African American black girl named Pecola who is under the belief that her life gets betterment only if she possesses blue eyes. She is looked down and ridiculed upon by others due to her dark complexion and coarse features. This fuel her desire to be a white skinned, blonde haired and blue eyed girl. But her life turns upside down when her own father rapes her leading her into a world of insanity.

These women writers portray a true image of the Afro-American women which their own men had overlooked in their writings. These women face double oppression owing to their race and gender.

Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian novelist highlights the African tradition and culture that had suffered seriously during the British colonialism and imperialism. Joseph Conrad in his novel *Heart of Darkness* narrates how the negro slaves receive inhuman treatment at the hands of the whites. Another prominent type of literature that sprang up after the 1960's is the Dalit literature that championed the cause of the outcastes under the Indian caste system. It can be written either by a dalit or by a non dalit. Although it began as a genre discussing the matters of the dalits or outcastes, it now attained a large periphery and it speaks volume about any type of domination faced by any people. This change in attitude of the Dalit literature began after the advent of the post-structuralism which deconstructed the meta-narratives. Thus it voices the plights of several classes who are relegated to the margins by the so called privileged classes. It encompasses racial discrimination of the African Americans, exploitation of women, nature, environment etc.

Mulk Raj Anand is an Indian writer in English well known for his portrayal of the lives of the outcastes and destitutes in his novels. In his novel *Untouchable*, he features a day's struggle in the life of an outcaste boy named Bakha, who is the central protagonist of the novel. Dalit literature portrays a long historic and age old struggle against oppression. Shame, anger, sorrow, frustration are the inevitable features of Dalit literature. Another important voice of the subaltern is Mahaswetha Devi who through her fictional, historic and journalistic writings expose the grim realities of the indigenous people and brought to the fore the exploitation, deprivation and subjugation of the marginalised classes. Her *Breast Stories* are a sheer reminder of the predicament of women in India. The protagonist Jashoda in *The Breast Giver* is unable to fulfill the duties of the sanctified stature, motherhood. Instead her motherhood becomes a symbol of exploitation of women thereby relegating her to the sidelines of the society.

Another great uprising is the feminist movement which advocated granting same

social, political and economic rights as those enjoyed by men. This includes establishing equal opportunities for women in education and employment. Feminist activists campaign for equal pay, reproductive rights, right to own property etc. They try to abolish all sorts of gender inequalities practiced in a patriarchal society. Some English socialist and French radical women of the nineteenth century argue that in order to overcome subjugation, women must demand freedom of opinion, work, income, and respect from men (Geetha 33). Feminist movement is divided into three different waves namely first-wave feminism, second-wave feminism and third-wave feminism. The first-wave feminism is concerned with accessing equal opportunities for women in all fields especially the right to vote. One of the earliest manifestations of liberal first-wave feminism in Europe is Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* which is considered as the seminal text in feminism. The second-wave feminism is linked with radical feminist movement that voiced women's empowerment and differential rights. Virginia Wolf's *A Room of One's Own* and Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* paved the ground work for radical second wave feminism. Another important text of this period is Kate Millet's *The Sexual Politics*. The third-wave feminism aims at establishing a new global perspective which breakdown the master stories of oppression and liberation. It is also concerned with the effects of globalization which challenges the ideals of feminist theory and politics. The feminist writers boldly used their pen to illustrate the 'Angel in the House' (Patmore 743-44) image of womanhood which constrained them to take up their traditional roles under the domain of patriarchal culture. But these writings inspired them to break the glass ceilings and have a look at the world outside.

Indian writing in English emerged as an off shoot of English literature. It is a powerful medium to express Indian sensibility through a foreign language. Indian writing in English now attains a prestigious status among the world literatures.



Inspired by the Western feminist writers, the Indian women writers have developed their own verbal strategies to counter the male patriarchal norms that are considered as standards. Many Indian women writers have attained international acclaim by expressing their creative talents through the medium of colonial legacy. These women writers expose the gender bias and male chauvinism prevalent in the patriarchal Indian society. Many male writers have portrayed women in their writings as embodiment of love, beauty, purity etc. But none have depicted them as symbols of boldness and strength. Therefore it is through the creative outpour of female writers that a realistic picture of women is revealed to the world. For the last three decades Indo-Anglican literature is greatly enriched by contributions of many woman writers like Kamala Das, Arundati Roy, Anita Desai, Sashi Desh Pandey, Jumpa Lahiri, Kamala Markandaya and many more who dealt with the theme of feminine sensibility in their writings.

Kamala Das is known for her most explicit and frank expression on matters of sexuality. She had little inhibition to discuss about body and sex in her writings. She articulates her love longings, unsuccessful sexual relations, frustrations and disillusionments with outspokenness which even shocked her male counterparts. She even braved to write about her unsuccessful sexual relations with her husband. Sashi Deshpande, being a rebel herself transfers this rebellious nature to all the female characters she portrays. A brief examination of her female characters shows how rebellious to traditions and customs they are. They fail to adhere to the feminine roles assigned to them by the society. For instance, her protagonists Saru and Indu in the novels *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *Roots and Shadows* respectively are characters who attacked the traditional roles of women attributed to them by the elders. Saru is often reminded by her mother that she is a woman. Indu recalls how the elderly women in her house used to remind her of her womanliness. "As a child they had told me I must be obedient and unquestioning. As a girl, they told

me I must be meek and submissive. Why? I had asked. Because you are a female. You must accept everything even defeat, with grace because you are a girl, they had said. It is the only way, they said, for a female to live and survive" (158).

A prominent voice of the Indian diasporic literature, Jumphah Lahiri showcases the dilemma of women caught in a diasporic community. It examines the predicament of the immigrants along with cross cultural conflicts and dilemmas of those people who are torn between two cultures. From this brief analysis of oppressive discourses it is apparent that the oppressive masses are always at the receiving ends and are vulnerable to exploitation and marginalization. It is attributed that men are masculine and strong while women are feminine and weak giving them a secondary status in society. Thus women are always equated with the oppressed and marginalized by the patriarchy. Another entity that is equally oppressed and marginalised as the woman is nature. Man exploits nature to gratify his selfish needs and leaves an insensitive attitude towards it. The oppressed and demoralized positions of these two entities develop an association between both women and nature. Both are marginalized and ostracized. A woman's fragile and weak body is often equated with the nature. Many critics attribute this to the reproductive capacity of women. Thus began another distinct movement which links feminism with ecology namely ecofeminism which is dealt with in detail in the following chapters.

## 2. ECOFEMINISM - A THEORETICAL APPROACH

Ecology is the study of environment, its changes and conservation. It is concerned with the relationship between the living organism and its natural environment. Ecocriticism as a separate movement of literary criticism developed during the 1990's. Ecocriticism studies the relationship between environment and literature or how man's relations with his environment are depicted in literature. In an age of environmental destruction ecocriticism can be seen as a response to the need for humanistic understanding of our nature and environment. A major part of environmental destruction is due to man's distancing from his natural environment. Ecocriticism finds its strongest advocates today in feminist and gender studies. Thus evolved ecofeminism or ecological feminism, a term coined by Francoise d' Eaubonne in 1974 which links ecology with women.

The oppression of both women and nature are a social construct born out of the power dynamics of the patriarchal society. Ecofeminists assert that the patriarchy gather power through the creation of dualistic hierarchies or 'binary opposites' (Holyn 406) like male/female, culture/nature, mind/body etc. In the construct of such dualism women occupies the downside position of each pair. Thus women are considered more akin to nature rather than culture, to mind rather than body, illogical rather than logical. This attitude on the part of patriarchy gives them a self proclaimed license to appropriate and exploit nature and women as they like. Men in their hasty life to gain more ignore the valuable contributions made by women and nature. They dismiss or consider irrelevant the help rendered by their wives. Likewise they disregard the fact that nature and natural resources play a crucial

role in their lives. Instead of seeing them as significant aspects of living, they are just seen as mere resources or commodities catering to their needs.

According to the ecofeminist Vandana Shiva the exploitation of nature and the marginalization of women are done by men in the pretext of development without realizing the fact that they are moving towards not development but maldevelopment (5). The privatization of land for the generation of revenue displaces women from possessing land of their own. Also the cultivation of commercial crops for monetary gains reduces the availability of food grains. The vast destruction of forest cover for this purpose also results in ecological imbalances. Women start reacting against such patriarchal practices and also raise their voice for the preservation of nature and its resources. They challenge the western construct of patriarchal dualism by which they dominate both women and nature and see them as objects of exploitation. According to this concept both marginalization of women and degradation of nature go hand in hand. Men displace women from the domain of development branding them as unproductive. Similarly they consider nature as unproductive unless men themselves involve in harnessing its resources.

Women have always been in the forefront in matters regarding ecological conservation. One of the earliest initiatives by women in India to protect environment is led by a woman named Amrita Devi who resisted against king's men when they attempted to cut down trees of her village. This inspired another well known movement namely Chipko movement with Sundarlal Bahuguna as its leader. It practiced Gandhian methods of non violence and satyagraha by hugging trees to stop activities like deforestation, lumbering and mining. Another noteworthy aspect of the movement is the significant role played by women in its activities. This is because women are mostly affected by the degradation and destruction of environmental resources. Vandana Shiva argues that a sustainable approach to farming can be attained by advocating a system of farming that is more centered on engaging women. She says

that it is the feminine principle which is the basis of development and conservation of ecology. The exploitation of nature and subjugation of women arise from the subjugation of this feminine principle which will ultimately lead to a disharmony between both men and women and man and nature leading to total destruction. She explains how women are special to her environment though her relation to it are unacknowledged by the male sector (5-7) . Medha Patkar, another prominent environmental and social activist was on the forefront of the Narmada Bachavo An-tholan movement which protested against the construction of a dam in Narmada that has far reaching ecological consequences.

Men are blind towards the silent and invaluable work done towards sustenance by women and nature as they consider them as passive, marginal and decentred. The only way to attain liberation of this downside pair is by dismantling such binary opposites or else such disparities exist as long as there is this humanity and universe. Ecofeminist writers try to highlight the humiliation and disgrace faced by both women and nature through their writings and attempt to find practical solutions for the emancipation of these two marginalized pairs. As it is unlikely to include almost all the ecofeministic women's writings in this paper, this investigator tries to assimilate a few major Indian ecofeministic women writers and their writings in this oppressive discourse study. This paper sets out to explore how woman and nature are dealt with in the writings of Kamala Markandaya (*Nectar in a Sieve*), Arundati Roy (*The God of Small Things*), Anita Desai (*Cry the Peacock* and *Fire on the Mountain*), Gita Mehta (*The RiverSutra*), Manjula Padmanabhan (*Escape*) and Sara Joseph (*Gift in Green*)

### 3. BONDING OF THE EQUALLY MARGINALISED

Kamala Markandaya is one of the most outstanding figures among the Indo Anglian fiction writers. Markandaya's novels are remarkable for the creative release of feminine sensibility. Through her novels one can read out the experiences, dilemmas and pathos of the common Indian village folks. She illustrates in well phrased, simple and beautiful diction how the industrialization and modernization change the beautiful and tranquil atmosphere of the Indian villages. Kamala Markandaya can be seen as a champion of the poor and downtrodden village women as she seems to give a space to their cause in most of her novels. In all her novels beginning with *Nectar in a Sieve*, she makes strenuous efforts to uplift the status of women in the Indian society. Along with the status of women, Markandaya is also concerned with the protection of ecology. She exploits this theme in most of her novels. In many novels, her voice seems to rise against industrialization which corrodes the smooth and peaceful atmosphere of village life. Thus her novels can be studied with respect to ecocritical perspectives.

Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* depicts a typical rural life with all its happiness, sufferings and poverty. It details in well phrased diction the beauty and tranquility of rural life and how the introduction of modernization corrodes and wilts away the serenity of village life. The chief protagonist Rukmani endures a life sans happiness throughout her life. Rukmani, the daughter of a village-headman married Nathan, a landless tenant and came to his household at the age of 12 years. At first the sight of her husband's mud household was disappointing to her as she belonged to a much wealthier lineage. But very soon she accepted her fate and became accustomed to

her new living conditions. This is remarkable of a woman's stoic acceptance and submissive nature. Rukmani is a victim of a male dominant society. She is unable to articulate her opinion regarding the choice of her bridegroom. She has no other choice but to obey her father and marry the person he selects. It is typical among the patriarchal household for the male members to take decisions and the females to obey them without any protest. Some ecofeminists associate women with nature due to their biological activities. A fertile woman is compared to mother earth which holds the seeds in its womb and nurtures it. Here Rukmani who gives birth to her sons and daughter is compared to the fertile land which gives a plentiful yield in the form of ripe, yellow pumpkins, beans, potatoes, brinjals and chillies that she grows behind her hut.

Men are considered as active and women as docile and inactive, hence the domination of men over women. Rukmani's reaction to her husband's infidelity towards her was as passive as mother earth. She endures the betrayal her husband has shown her like mother earth which endures man's cruel actions towards it. Even after receiving such a terrific blow from the part of her husband she still loved and cared him. Here Kamala Markandaya makes Rukmani an idealized woman of Indian tradition. In this sense she can be compared to nature. Nature loves man and provides him with everything he needs even if he ill-treats it. The violence to women and the violence to nature arise from the subjugation and exploitation of the feminine principle as explained by the environmentalist Vandana Shiva. Arundhati Chatterjee, wrote about the protagonist Rukmani in *Nectar in a Sieve*: "Rukmani, the mother figure who symbolizes the mother earth, is the virgin soil, the source, the origin, the well-spring, the life-giver, the supporter, the sustainer, the nourisher and even more, the last retort, the consoler, the healer" (7).

In the novel both barren woman and barren land are cast aside by the patriarchal society. Rukmani's daughter, Ira is left behind by her husband because she is barren.

In the same way men despises land when it is of no use to them. Here Rukmani's sons left the land and went to work in the tannery when the land did not cater to their needs. The introduction of a tannery in the village adds up new hopes and means to the poor village folks. The agrarian society which had its livelihood on agriculture abandoned it for the sake of more lucrative sum of money from the industry. As the industry works on machine and requires only masculine service, most of the women were rendered jobless. Industrialization is in one way for the betterment of the rural people but it has its own defects. The tannery slowly corrodes the calm and serene atmosphere of the village life with its dirty stink and noise pollution. Right from the beginning Rukmani echoes her distress at the establishment of the tannery. She longed to live in the quiet and serene atmosphere of her village which has now become impossible. The tannery occupies large areas of land and space preventing even the children to play in the open space. It started emitting dirty stink and produced heavy noises destroying the serene and quiet ambience of the village. Everywhere there is noise and hustle and bustle of crowd and it is even hard to listen to the sweet song of a bird. Kamala Markandaya gives vent to her ecofeministic views through her protagonist Rukmani. She wants to live in the "sweet quiet of the village life" (46). But being a subaltern in gender she can do nothing to preserve and protect her land as the tannery is lead by a male domineering sector. The tannery spreads like "weeds in an untended garden, strangling whatever grows in its way" (59).

The novel also tries to analyse both male and female attitude towards nature. It tries to bring in the concept of women as supporters of nature and men as exploiters of nature. Drought and famine became a common phenomena in the village soon after the coming of tannery in which show that nature dislikes to its coming. There was heavy rainfall and the remaining paddy fields were sank under water and lost. The cutting down of large masses of trees cause ecological imbalance resulting in the scarcity of rainfall. The excessive use of ground water by the industry also caused



the depletion of water level. The men folks of the village show scant regard towards the depleting environmental condition of their land and nature. But it is the women who are aware of the changes in nature as she nurtures an eternal bond with her land and nature. Here Rukmani's concern towards the destruction of environment is echoed in her words: "Already my children hold their noses when they go by, and all is shouting and disturbances and crowds wherever you go. Even the birds have forgotten to sing, or else their calls are lost to us" (29). Being a subordinate in gender, Rukmani is helpless to do anything in this male dominating world. She is the one left behind to see the wilting away of her serene, clam and beautiful village. But the industrialization of the village compels Rukmani to sever her bond with the land temporarily. Amidst the crowd of the city Rukmani's mind urges to reach back to her village. She feels suffocated amidst the crowd of the city life. Rukmani becomes fully at ease only when she finally reunites with her land. Rukmani's final reunion with her land symbolizes a woman's innate attachment with nature. Seeing her land again she says: "So good to be home at last. The cart jolted to a standstill. I looked about at the land and it was life to my starving spirit. I felt the earth beneath my feet and wept for happiness" (189).

Thus in her novel *Nectar in a Sieve*, Kamala Markandaya portrays her chief woman character as a protector of nature and men as both exploiters of women and nature. She is so keen and observant of the pathetic status of these marginalized and oppressed sections and expresses her chief concern towards them through her novels. Her novels can therefore be seen as a mouthpiece for the downtrodden and oppressed. Her chief concern towards women and nature makes her a protector of both women and nature and her writings can be viewed in terms of ecofeminism.

Another prominent writer whose novels can be studied with respect to ecofeminism is Anita Desai. She is a well known novelist, short story writer and children's author. In her novels, she explored themes such as women's oppression, quest for

self identity, estranged marital relationship, family relationships etc. Her chief concern has always been the inner struggles, frustrations and anxieties of the female world who are fettered to the customary roles by the conservative male dominated society. Unlike her contemporaries Desai's novels are rich in visual imagery and details which support the psychological travails of her chief women characters. The novels *Cry, the Peacock* and *Fire on the Mountain* are analyzed here for ecofeministic elements. The nature and environmental factors seem to identify itself with the characters in the novel. Anita Desai uses her exquisite narrative techniques to reveal how there is a close link between women and environment. Unlike her contemporaries, she fills her pages of these novels with wonderful visual imagery and details of hills, mountains, landscapes, birds, animals etc. Therefore it is evident from this that her women characters are psychologically more associated with nature. Desai draws equilibrium between the conditions of both women and nature. The very titles of Desai's novels *Cry, the Peacock* and *Fire on the Mountain* imply psychological travails of the chief protagonists. The nature and environmental factors seem to identify themselves with the female protagonists of her novels. She uses her exquisite narrative style to reveal how there is a close link between women and environment.

Ecofeministic elements are central in *Cry, the Peacock* and *Fire on the Mountain*. In *Cry, the Peacock*, the animal and nature imagery featured in the novel help to unravel the distorted psychic world of the protagonist Maya. Maya's father marries her off to Gautama who is much advanced in age, thinking that he would take care of Maya like him. But Gautama fails to satisfy the feelings and desires of young Maya. She becomes quite obsessed with the thought that her husband is numb towards her presence at home. She believes that he is cold to her desires. Maya's thoughts and dreams stand quite apart from Gautama's who considers it as the wailings of a silly child. He keeps her at a distance or avoids her from many discussions he engages

with his family and friends which shows the typical patriarchal mindset that ignores women from being a part of important decision making situations. Her neurosis or psychic disorder is the result of her alienation and solitary existence.

Deprived of her husband's love and affection, Toto, her pet dog was the sole being in the house whom she loved the most. When the novel opens Maya is seen as shedding tears over the death of her pet dog Toto. She justifies her attachment to Toto to her childless condition. She says "childless women do develop fanatic attachment to their pets..." (15). But Gautama responded calmly by just saying that it was all over. The western construct of dualism sees men as a rational being and women as an irrational being. Thus Maya who shed tears over the death of her pet is seen as a silly irrational female and Gautama who responds calmly to this incident becomes a rational, logical man. For Maya, death of her pet is not an ordinary incident. She nurtures a caring attitude towards nature and natural beings unlike Gautama who is always busy with his work and has little time to enjoy and acknowledge the nature and surroundings around him. With the tenderness and caring attitude of a mother, she observes the pigeon and the nest filled with its babies in her veranda . In her state of loneliness she observes the barrenness of nature."Leafless, the fine tracery on the naked neem trees revealed unsuspected so carefully concealed nests, deserted by the birds" (34). This identification with nature gives her a sense of temporary relief from a state of depression and loneliness. Occasionally when she slips into a mood of frenzy her thoughts become preoccupied with images of snakes, rats, lizards and inguinias which is an outcome of her repressed desires and feelings. Throughout the novel Maya exhibits her liking towards every sight and smell of blossoms, trees etc. which make her a lover of nature. For instance, she exhibits her concern towards the untended garden in her compound and finds fault with the gardener for his irresponsibility. Another instance of her love towards animals is evident from her action of giving a bunch of bananas to the

dancing bear and echoes her concern over its pathetic plight at the hands of the rough master. Unlike the master she has a loving and caring attitude towards the animal and its wellbeing.

The title of the novel is quite significant. The peacocks fight and tear themselves before engaging in the act of mating. Similarly Maya killed her husband out of her love towards life and finally kills herself.

*In Fire on the Mountain*, through the protagonist Nanda Kaul, Desai draws the picture of a great grandmother who leads a secluded and lonely life in Kasauli hills. After the death of her husband, she detached all bonds with her relations and friends and decides to spend the rest of her life in Carignano. Except for the pine trees Carignano is remarkable for its stark barrenness. Desai draws similarity between the barren Carignano and Nanda's detached and aloof life. At times Nanda herself fancies herself to be a pine tree which is tall and grey like her. "She was grey, tall and thin and her silk saree made a sweeping shivering sound and she fancied she could merge with the pine trees and be mistaken for one" (1).

Desai gives a panoramic sketch of dry Carignano. It is the stillness and barrenness of the land that attracts Nanda. It reflects Nanda's own barren life. The land is remarkable for its rocks, pines, light and air. This peculiar depiction of the landscape helps the reader to understand the inner mindscape of the protagonist. Through her act of self declared exile she tries to sever her connections with the past.

Nanda has received deep rooted wounds from within her family which prompted her to take this decision of self withdrawal. As a wife of vice chancellor, she beautifully essayed the role of a busy hostess at her home. The house was always filled with guests and friends and her husband always wanted her to be at their service. That was the only job her husband expected her to do and she obeyed him until his death. Neither the children nor the husband cared about her well being. She

was also aware of her husband's secret affair with an English lady. She ignored and only remained silent to this infidelity from his part. Through this narration Anita Desai expounds the pathetic situation of a typical Indian housewife in a patriarchal society.

At Carignano, she is so pleased at the bareness of her garden. She never tries to fill her garden with trees and plants. It reminds her of the garden filled with trees and plants in her husband's house. But it never gave her any solace and peace of mind as the house was always crowded with guests. Nanda never enjoyed a space of her own in her husband's house. Mere thought about the house makes her feel humiliated and frustrated. She ignores the hoopoe which had its nest outside her bedroom window. She never looks at the bird feeding its nestlings. Its shrill and cry makes her mad. Perhaps the sight of the bird and its nestlings kindles in her many emotional memories of the past. She discards anything which reminds her of the past. In this solitary life she never allows anyone to trespass into her space. That's the reason why she fears the impending arrival of her great granddaughter. She considers Raka as an intruder into the empty space of her own and moreover Raka's arrival involves taking up responsibilities which she has relinquished years ago.

Nanda Kaul cannot be labeled as someone who is numb and thoughtless about her surroundings. Her mind has grown hardened out of her tedious life journey with her loveless and adulterous husband. At various instances Nanda is portrayed as scrutinizing the minute details of her surroundings. On one evening, she goes out with Raka for a stroll in the hills which she rarely does. After the rain that lashes the hills, Nanda goes out again with Raka to enjoy the pink blossoms all over the hills.

Desai portrays Raka as a replica of Nanda Kaul. Raka is an isolated lonely child who always enjoyed solitude. She dislikes being in the company of her great

grandmother. Instead she enjoys roaming all over the Kasauli hills and inventing new adventures. She wanders and makes an exploration of the flora and fauna of the place. She is also seen as enjoying the sudden onset of pink blossoms all over the hills soon after the rain. But the sight of the forest fire in Kasauli keeps her awake all through the night. It makes a greater impact upon the little child's mind. The forest fire kindles a destructive and evil mindset on Raka which makes her set the forest on fire. Here there is ample scope to make a study on the psychological working of a child's mind. Out of negligence from the part of loveless parents, Raka becomes an introvert. Perhaps it is the psychologically distorted and repressed mind that sets everything to destruction. The fire can be either natural or created. If it is natural the forest has its own regenerating power to renew to its original form. But if it is man made it never regains its original form owing to man's dominating power upon it.

Illa Das is another marginalized female character portrayed by Desai in this novel. She is the only other person from outside with whom Nanda keeps a contact and used to make occasional visits to Carignano. Illa Das is a victim of patriarchal dominant society. Unlike Nanda who is economically sound, Illa lives in utter penury. Her father spends all his income for the studies of his sons and left Illa and her sister penniless. Here Desai attempts to strike hard at the patriarchal tradition which ignores the dreams and aspirations of a female child for the sake of a male child. She lives out of the meager income she earns as a social worker. Though a physically handicapped woman, Illa Das is strong enough to fight against certain patriarchal practices she came across as a social worker. She fights against child marriages which was prevalent in her society and prevents the occurrence of many such marriages. Thereby she earns the wrath of many dominant men of the society which ultimately led to her rape and murder. Rape is the horrifying and cruel physical violence men inflict upon women to silence them. The life and death of Illa

Das show the tragedy stricken life of a woman who is doubly marginalized by virtue of her poor economic status and gender subordination. Desai's novels are filled with such exquisite narrations of landscape and nature that give it enough room to make a study on ecocriticism.

Gita Mehta's *The River Sutra* is a group of six interlocking stories woven by the thread of river Narmada. Narmada is revered as a holy river since time immemorial. It has been the holy sight of salvation for pilgrims, monks and ascetics. In this story, it is the river which stands for the whole nature. The river is an embodiment of nature and all its activities. The female characters in the story reach out to the river for their final refuge supports the ecofeministic view that women always depend upon nature for help. It also supports the ecofeministic view that sees resemblance between women and nature. The patriarchal society always exploits and abuse nature to gratify their selfish needs as it exploits women. The nameless narrator who narrates the story describes the river as the daughter of Lord Shiva and hence its holiness. There are many instances where he equates the river to a young and beautiful maiden. The stream took on the form of a woman-the most dangerous of her kind: "a beautiful virgin innocently tempting even ascetics to pursue her inflaming their lust by appearing at one moment as a lightly dancing girl, at another as a romantic dreamer, at yet another as a seductress loose-limbed with the lassitude of desire" (8). In another instance he says "I can see the river flowing to meet the bridegroom....." (9) In these stories Mehta tries to underline the in depth relationship between women and nature.

Women and nature are dealt with significant importance in 'The Minstrel's Story' and 'The Courtesan's Story'. In 'The Courtesan's Story', the courtesan narrates the pathetic story of her abused and exploited life. Added to her grief is her inability to protect her only daughter from the malicious hands of the society. She condemns the society which treats her as a mere commodity for pleasure. Later

the girl is abducted by a bandit named Rahul Singh and there develops a romance between them. When Rahul gets killed, the girl seeks her last refuge in Narmada by ending her life in the holy river. She finds it as a means of renouncing and cleansing of her sins rather than leading a life of humiliation and disgrace before a society which sees women as a material for pleasure. Thus she reaches out to nature (here river Narmada) as the last means of escape. The courtesan too felt happy for her daughter as river Narmada will purify her by absolving her of her sins.

Another story which gives enough room for a study on women and nature is ‘The Minstrel’s Story’ which tells the story of a Naga monk and a girl whom he rescues from a brothel. As a little girl rescued from brothel, she was so feeble, exploited and abused. The customers who visited the brothel did not even spare the little girl. She did not even own a name of her own. It throws light on the patriarchal culture of a society which fails to see a woman as an individual but as a commodity. She is a true victim of a typical Indian patriarchal society. Her father did not even bother to give a name to his daughter. He simply calls her a misfortunate as her mother died soon after her birth. The father loves the sons as they are earning members of the family. She is allowed to eat only after everyone else in the family had eaten. Later under the pretext of sending her to a new mother her father sells her to a brothel for monetary gains. A monk named Naga Babu rescues her from the brothel and encourages her to start a new life. He makes her take a holy dip in the cold waters of Narmada which purifies all her dirt and sins of the past life. He named her Uma and advises her to accept the holy river, Narmada as her mother

Inspired and encouraged by the monk’s words, she renounces her old life and begins a new life in the repose of nature. Uma feels quite protected and safe in the lap of nature. Having a past as an abused, neglected and exploited child, Uma grows as a minstrel accepted and respected by everyone on the banks of river Narmada. As a mother the river teaches her all the good aspects of life and Uma imbibes



all its attributes including its agelessness. Later in the second phase Naga Babu enters into mainstream life as Professor Shankar accepting Uma's hands into his life. Thus the river plays a significant role in nurturing and moulding the nameless, misfortunate little girl from a brothel into a well mannered and disciplined minstrel named Uma. It reinforces the ecofeministic view that women can never sever their bonds with nature. Nature never betrays her and becomes her sole protector when there is none to lend a hand of comfort.

Arundati Roy is a writer, essayist, political activist and environmentalist. She is the winner of the Man Booker Prize award for her semi autobiographical novel *The God of Small Things*. The book chronicles some of her childhood experiences and events in her maternal grandparents' village in Ayemenem. She worked alongside activist Medha Padkar against the Narmada Dam Project for which she received widespread criticism. She also raised her voice against many industrial and developmental projects that posed as a threat to our environment. The environmentalist bent of mind of the writer is revealed to the readers right from the opening page of the novel. She makes a detailed and minute observation of nature and surroundings in and around Ayemenem.

The country side turns an immodest green. Boundaries blur as tapioca fences take root and bloom. Brick walls turn moss green. Pepper vines snake up electric poles. Wild creepers burst through laterite banks and spill across the flooded roads. Boats ply in bazaars. And small fish appear in the puddles that fill the PWD potholes on the highways. (1)

In the novel, Roy also concentrates on subaltern issues concerning women and dalits. Being a subaltern in gender, Ammu, the daughter of Reverend John Ipe has to face marginalization not only from her drunkard husband but also from her own family. Roy portrays Ammu not as an ordinary woman but as a woman capable of breaking the orders of patriarchy. She marries a Bengali Hindu contrary to the

wishes of the family. But her marital life becomes a failure when her husband turns a drunkard. She could not withstand him any longer when he asks her to have a sexual relation with his white boss in order to get a promotion in his job. Ammu returns to Ayemenem house as a divorcee and mother of twins, Estha and Rahel. She leads a life of an outcaste in her own house. Also the Syrian Christian inheritance law prohibits her from inheriting any family property. The children are also despised by others in the family owing to their hybrid roots. But Ammu breaks all social and caste norms by being sexually involved with an untouchable named Velutha. Velutha being an untouchable is discarded by all the other upper classes. They even detest him being employed in Ammu's brother, Chacko's pickle factory. Later he is doomed to a tragic death due to no fault of his and simply because of him being an outcaste. Ammu goes to the police station to defend his innocence. It was a bold action quite uncommon from the part of an upper class woman.

Though a third person narrative, it is through the eyes of Ammu's daughter Rahel, Roy expounds her environmental concerns. After 23 years, Rahel returns to her ancestral home in Ayemenem to meet her twin brother Estha, who has grown silent over the years. Roy's pen makes Rahel a keen observer of nature and natural phenomena. In Ayemenem, she is welcomed by the June rain. She observes the rain that lashes Ayemenem house and its surroundings.

Heaven opened and the water hammered down, reviving the reluctant old well, greenmossing the pigless pigsty, carpet bombing still, tea-coloured puddles the way memory bombs still tea-coloured minds. The grass looked wetgreen and pleased. Happy earthworms frolicked purple in the slush. Green nettles noded. Trees bent. (10)

Another significant aspect which Roy points out is the pollution of the Meenachal river. The river bed is contaminated with dirt and filth. Children defecates directly into the river bed and the smell of shit wafted all over Ayemenem on warm days.

The growing hotels and resorts nearby try to screen off the dirt from entering their premises by building tall walls but are helpless with the smell. It shows the act of irresponsibility on the part of men towards nature. Whatever happens to his environment he is thoughtless and is only concerned with expanding his business sector. Through these narrations Roy points her finger at the pathetic state of God's own country and echoes her concerns with regard to environmental degradation. It also shows man's insensitivity towards nature and his inherent greed to amass wealth thereby polluting and exploiting nature.

Estha and Rahel used to swim, play and ride boats across the river. Years later the river has a devastated appearance. Rahel remembers the fearful nature of the river during her childhood. Despite the June rain, it is "no more than a swollen drain now" (124). Now it has lost its power to evoke fear. It is now covered with garbage and plastic wastes which the river ferried to the sea.

Another character whom Roy portrays as a lover of green is Baby Kochamma, Rahel's grand aunt. Holding a diploma in ornamental gardening, she nurtures a beautiful garden in front of Ayemenem house and spends her afternoons in the garden. Perhaps she finds repose in nature after a tedious life journey of a Roman Catholic nun from which she derived no satisfaction. She renounced the garb of a nun and returned to Ayemenem and began her passion for ornamental gardening. Arundati Roy also strikes at the growing influence of technology upon mankind which makes people insensitive towards their surroundings and nature. When Rahel returns to Ayemenem after 23 years, she could only see the dead remains of Baby Kochamma's ornamental gardening and Baby Kochamma is now fully engrossed in the television set installed in her dining hall.

Roy focuses on the issues of both women and nature along with the trauma of dalits in her novel and the writer's ecofeministic bent of mind is revealed in each and every reading of the text.

Sarah Joseph is a well known feminist writer, social activist and environmentalist. Almost all her works including her prestigious novel *Alahayude Penmakkal* abounds in addressing the issues of the marginalized people and the ill effects of ecological destruction in the name of development. The work under study here is her novel *Gift in Green*. Here the elements of ecofeminism are so strong and profound and emanates from each and every pages of the novel. *Gift in Green* revolves around Aathi- a serene island of water bodies and mangrove trees where the people live blissfully under the grace of the holy shrine of Thampuran. The native people of Aathi make their livelihood by engaging in alternate farming (pokkali farming) and fishing. The water bodies are so pristine and crystal clean which provide the people with abundant fish and mussels. People live in close touch with the nature and in return nature provide them in plenty. Aathi has a strong tradition of storytelling which the people host it with awe and respect. In one of the story telling episodes, the story teller narrates the story of a young woman and her child who are abandoned in a lonely desert by her husband for no fault of hers. Here the man becomes a stereotypical representative of a patriarchal male character who has every right to pronounce his authority upon his wife. Though helpless in an unknown desert with meager food and water, Hagar tries every step to safeguard the life of her child which is remarkable of a mother's selfless love and affection for her child. Hagar and her child's protection lie on the shoulders of her husband who has now abandoned her. At this critical juncture, it is nature in the guise of a bird who leads her to a spring when both the child and herself were on the verge of death. Nature knows that women are their eternal protectors and thus Hagar becomes the protector of the water body and she is so adamant that not a single drop of water in it be wasted.

There are many strong women characters in the novel who nurtures a deep affinity with the nature and surroundings around them. Prominent among them is Kunjimathu who is 52 years old. Her life is surrounded by the water bodies. She

is devoid a life sans Aati and its clear water bodies. While Kunjimathu stands as a strong ecofeministic character in the novel, Kumaran, her ex-lover is a representative of the male dominant society who despises his roots (including land and family) for his money minded selfish pursuits. With false promise of a better life with him in future, he robs Kunjimathu of her virginity before leaving Aati. Thus Kunjimathu becomes one among the many victims who are lured into a physical relation in the pretext of true love. Men see women as a commodity for just sensual pleasure thereby undermining the value of true love that women cherishes in her heart. But Kunjimathu was sincere to Kumaran which is evident from her being a spinster all through her life. Also with the money secured by her father for her marriage, she bought the land that Kumaran sold before leaving Aati. She works hard on the land earning a livelihood not only for herself but also for the old and dilapidated parents of Kumaran. This is a good instance of a woman's eternal bond with the land which she never despises.

On the contrary, Kumaran's mind grows narrow with the accumulation of money. He marries a woman of his choice and lives a blissful and joyous life unmindful of his past relations and roots. Kumaran lures the young men of Aati with promises of a better life and money in the the town and the poor men easily fall a prey to his vicious deeds. Almost all the women characters portrayed in the novel along with a few men exhibit a strong connection with their land and nature. They are always ready to forsake their lives to safeguard and protect Aati from being a land of sewages. They are adamant that they never leave Aati and resort to protect their homeland from being converted into a commercial township. Formation of township necessitates destruction of vast areas of forest belt which is sure to cause adverse effects upon the ecosystem. Also it pollutes the clear water bodies with garbages and wastes affecting the people who depend upon them for their livelihood.

Sara Joseph represents Shailaja as a strong minded woman who is stern in her

action against the evil minded forces represented by Kumaran and his team. She braves to leave her husband's household on the very day of her marriage when she learns that the water bodies and surroundings of her new home is contaminated with shit and filth. She works headstrong with others who wish to protect the natural beauty and serenity of Aati. The pale young girl whom the story teller Noor Muhammed meets occasionally in the water and sometimes in the midst of the forest is yet another women character who exhibits a deep concern towards the pollution of water bodies and depletion of forest cover. Noor Muhammed once spots her crying, for the clear water she sees everyday has turned filthy and muddy. She earnestly cleans the water bodies which are polluted with plastics and other waste materials. She feels sick at the sight of her environment turning polluted. The woman story teller who reaches Aati along with her daughter Kayal strongly believes in the healing power of nature. Kayal, who is sexually abused at a tender age of five, loses her liveliness and chirpiness and is always a moody and wailing child. The pristine clear water bodies and the beautiful and serene nature of Aati revive Kayal into an active, enthusiastic and charming young child. By portraying Kayal in all her liveliness in the latter part of the novel, Sara Joseph draws before us how nature cures human illness when we fully devote ourselves in the healing power of nature.

The method of narration implied in the novel is so realistic and natural that quite often we can visualize the waterlogged island Aati and the filth and dirt afloat the water right before our eyes. Through these observations, it is apparent that in addition to the treatment of feminine sensibility in her novels, Sara Joseph makes her novels a platform to point at the readers the far- reaching effects of ecological destruction that is so impending in the very nearby future.

Manjula Padmanabhan is an author, artist and children's story writer who belongs to that generation of women writers who are not fettered by the chains of

traditions and conventions. Her novel *Escape* though appears to be taking place in a fantasy world, points a sharp finger at the social issue of female infanticide that was much prevalent in our country. The focus of the novel is the tension and trauma faced by Meiji as a single female left behind in a land ruled by males. Also it gives us a picture on how the excessive use of nuclear power and technology contaminates the land, water and natural resources. The military Generals (who are clones to each other) rule the world and exterminate every single female from their world except Meiji who lives unnoticed in the company of her uncles. The generations are created by cloning ignoring the reproductive power of women. They denounce womanhood and view them as "Vermin Tribe"(237). They never attribute any role to be played by women in their lives thereby wiping them completely out from their world. According to the General, "Females are driven by biological imperatives that lead them to compete for breeding rights. Whereas collectives breed cooperatively. In order to control breeding technology and to establish the collective ethic we had to eliminate them" ( 271).

Meiji is a prisoner since birth and is forced to live in disguise as a boy. Her growth is retarded by administrating hormone suppressant. Meiji lives unaware of her gender. She is inaccessible to any knowledge about woman for she has seen only her three uncles since her birth. The novel exposes the pathetic situation of a female in a male dominated world who is denied the freedom of self awareness. They see both woman and nature as unwanted elements and take every step to suppress and dominate them. The fertile land has been converted into a barren land owing to excessive radioactivity. In one instance, when Meiji and her uncle Youngest decide to run away from this country, they wear radioactive pressure suits in order to escape from the harmful radiations. By portraying Meiji as the last woman and the future world engrossed in harmful radioactivity, Manjula Padmanabhan mocks at the modern man's pursuit behind technology and development without keeping a

watchful eye on these shortsighted changes. Radioactive materials are very useful source of powerful energy if we harness it properly. But in the long run, it may prove fatal both for the human beings and animals. Nuclear radiations are strong enough to wipe out every single living being from this universe. Looking at these perspectives Manjula Padmanbhan's novel *Escape* can be viewed as an ecofeministic text.



## 4. CONCLUSION

Ecofeminism has its distinct and significant position in the oppressive discourse study. Power and dominance are innate and emanates from every social and political structure. It is the power dynamics which played a significant role in the oppression of the less privileged. The notion of less privileged or marginalized is actually a social construct by which they are decentered and marginalized as 'the other'. The oppressive discourses in general tried to analyse the humiliating and disgraceful position of the oppressed and also probed how these oppressive masses reacted to such embarrassing conditions. By making a generalized probe into various oppressive discourses in literature this investigator tried to give a general outlook on various such oppressive discourses in fiction writings like the dalit writings, diasporic literature, literature of the black, feminist writing, ecofeminist writings etc. with an emphasis on ecofeminist fiction writings. All these writings encompassed the trauma of the oppressed.

Ecofeminism linked ecology with women on the basis of a relationship that is highly interconnected. This paper has made a probe into a few ecofeminist fiction writings and came to a conclusion that there exists a strong bond between woman and nature and different women interact and respond differently with her environment. But the act of the female characters in these novels seeking refuge in nature as the last resort of hope reinforced the fact that the relationship between women and nature are bonded firmly and are never estranged. It also reiterated the notion that both women and nature are equally marginalized and demoralized by the patriarchal dominant society.

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In the novels analyzed in this paper Rukamani in Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* is a woman who nurtured a strong and eternal bond with nature. As a peasant woman she has direct connections with land. She cultivated vegetables in the little piece of land available in front of her hut and enjoyed watching it grow. She shunned the coming of tannery in her village which corroded the calm and peaceful atmosphere of the village. Though the male members of her family shifted to the town for work, Rukmani was the sole being who stood back. Eventhough circumstances pushed her out of her land and made her seek temporary shelter in the town she never hated and despised her land. Instead, she returned to her land seeking her last place of repose in her native land. She knew that her land will never betray her unlike her husband who was disloyal in his relationship with her.

Unlike Rukmani who fostered a direct relationship with her nature, Maya and Nanda Kaul, the chief protagonists in Anita Desai's *Cry the Peacock* and *Fire on the Mountain* respectively unfolds a different relation with nature. They tried to empathize their situation with the natural surroundings around them and sought happiness out of it. Maya, a victim of unhappy married life developed neurosis out of her husband's negligence towards her. Added to her grief is her state of infertility which was too much for her to tolerate. In her state of loneliness, she tried to identify her barren status with the barren and dry nature around her. She found solace in watching trees with dry branches and leaves which gave a sort of temporary relief to her state of loneliness.

If Maya's loneliness is circumstantial, Nanda's is self imposed. Nanda severed all her connections with the past and led a life of recluse in Carignano. It was the dryness and bareness of Carignano that attracted Nanda to this place. She never employed a gardener to fill her garden with trees and plants unlike other owners of the house. She found happiness in seeing the dry garden and identified her own solitary life with the bareness around her. She fancied herself to be one

among the pine trees which is tall and grey like her and became invisible from the rest of the human world. Thus taking into account the situations of both Maya and Nanda, they do not develop a direct relationship with nature but both turn to nature at crucial junctures of their life for solace and relief which was bereft in this male domineering world. Desai tried to give vent to the inner consciousness of her characters through various natural images of plants and animals she portrayed throughout the novel

Arundathi Roy, the environmentalist and social activist made her novel *The God of Small Things* as a vehicle to expound her views on ecofeminism. Reflecting through past and present, she gave vent to her concerns regarding environmental degradation especially the pollution of the river Meenachal and the sad and pathetic state of God's own country. Also she portrayed Ammu, the central character as a bold and defiant woman who broke the rigid patriarchal and caste norms of the society by marrying against her families wish and later associating herself with an untouchable named Velutha. Her sexual communion with Velutha that took place at night in the open nature also illustrated the fact that Ammu was quite unprotected and insecure within her family, but found secure in the embrace of Velutha out in the lap of nature. As a woman who was neglected and marginalized in her own family, she made this association as a strong weapon of defiance against the established social orders of a society that turned a blind eye towards the rights and sensibilities of a divorced woman.

In Gita Mehta's *The River Sutra*, as the name suggests, it is the river which played a significant role throughout the interconnected stories. In the six stories incorporated in this book, the river Narmada is an important character which flowed through the lives of the human characters portrayed in the stories. 'The Minstrel's Story' and 'The Courtesan's Story' has been analysed here for ecofeministic perspectives. The female characters in both of these stories reached out to the river for

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shelter and refuge when all other alternatives failed. The holy dip in the river has made them absolved of their sins and purified their mind and soul.

In Manjula Padmanabhan's *Escape*, both women and nature received the same kind of treatment at the hands of the males (Generals) who ruled the world. Nature has turned barren owing to excessive use of radioactive elements and women had been totally exterminated as reproduction is done by cloning. In both these cases, the reproductive capacity of women and nature are not given their due importance and are cast aside as unwanted elements. As a result the land which was once the centre of fertility has turned barren and women had become totally extinct.

Sara Joseph's *Gift in Green* paints a realistic picture of how man's greed elevates the gap between him and nature and at the same time women kept a deep and everlasting bond with her nature. The women of Aati are true lovers of nature and are ready to forsake their lives for their land and water. While at the same time, men like Kumaran are blindfolded with greed and overlooked their roots and turned their traditional homeland into a commercial city.

In view of analyzing these texts, it became apparent that in all these novels considered the women are victimized and traumatized to the margin by the patriarchy who is solely responsible for their inferior status in the society. Irrespective of whether they were rich or poor, belonged to high class or low, the status of women were always inferior to that of their men folk. The only way out for them to escape from this humiliation was to seek refuge in nature, an entity which received similar blow and mistreatment as them. All the women characters portrayed in these novels like Rukmani, Maya, Nanda Kaul, Ammu, Uma etc. after having experienced a tragic life journey of exploitation and dishonour sought refuge in the lap of nature for ultimate solace and happiness. This strengthens the ecofeminist view that women established a strong and eternal bond with their nature unlike men who exploited nature for their own selfish needs.

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Women's activism and measures taken by the government had resulted in providing equal opportunities to women in the fields of education, politics, equal pay etc. leading to a change in the outlook of the society which has reduced exploitation and harassment of women and also oriented them to make organizations for their empowerment. Also the clarion call of the environmentalists and the alarming state of the environment like the global warming, depletion of ozone layer, earth quakes, tsunami and other natural hazards had awoken the awareness of people towards the protection and care of their environment. Women environmental activists like Vandana Shiva, Medha Patkar, Arundhati Roy had played significant roles in initiating many environmental drives and were also successful in motivating and mobilising women towards these moves.

The ecofeminist women writers by portraying the issues of both women and nature in their fictions foreground their pathetic state so as to make an awareness of their situation along with a steady revolution in their state. These narratives not only entwined a theory on feminism and ecology but also tried to problematise their situation seeking possible solutions for the uplift of both women and environment. They threw light on the irretrievable damages that man has inflicted upon this environment which will unquestionably lead to a situation when the technology and development that man has created till date will prove futile. Distancing of women and nature from the mainstream development will prove fatal in the nearby future. What these ecofeminist fictional writers by positing women and environment in their novels laid bare before us is to create a well balanced, just and substantial social order by developing a harmonious relationship between man and woman and man and nature. This would definitely necessitate a deconstruction of the western construct of patriarchal dualism and hierarchical structures that is the basis of all power structures dominant in the society.

These texts are therefore a sight for the plurality of the discourses of ecofeminism.

These discourses by highlighting a constant struggle for justice and honour are promising enough to make their stance felt in the society aiming at the betterment and growth of the nation. They are of course a beacon of light and hope to those sections who are marginalized and silenced for years. The upcoming generations should be inspired by these writings and should abstain from practicing any sort of oppression for themselves.

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