

**ECOFEMINISM: AN AMBIVALENT
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN AND
NATURE IN SELECTED NOVELS OF
ARUNDHATI ROY, ANITA DESAI
AND SARAH JOSEPH**

A Thesis submitted to Gujarat Technological University

for the Award of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Humanity – English Discipline

By

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Under Supervision of

PROF. AMI UPADHYAY



GUJARAT TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

AHMEDABAD

FEBRUARY – 2019

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ABSTRACT

Civilization and culture involves all round development of society from material as well as intellectual point of view which is based on beliefs and patterns practiced in the society. Women and Environment are indivisible and inseparable part of every culture and civilization because both women and Environment have contributed in the progress of mankind; their relationship is defined, classified and determined by many ecologists and writers. Today ecological concerns have become very important issues in the field of human/gender relations aspects, especially in women's' lives and the interaction between nature/women and colonial patriarchal domination which begs for ecofeminism analysis. The researcher argues that women's relationship to the environment is ambivalent. Ecofeminists look for nonviolent solutions to world problems.

Attention of this work will be focused on the qualitative, analytical and critical interpretation of the ecofeminism and will discuss the feminism and ecology, spirituality, loss of identity, exploitation and accommodation that the native people are confronted with the familiar world in the novels *The God of Small Things*, *Fire On the Mountain*, *The Scent of the Other side*, respectively. The research has tried to examine the significance of woman and nature connectedness and tried to prove their vital role in this whole ecosystem and in the society who accepts the challenge of sustaining in this society as an ecofeminist which is portrayed in the novels very amply.

This Ph.D thesis would be helpful to the students of literature for the further research in this field and also looking forward to a new dawn where there is no exploitation prevails against women and nature.

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The journey is easier, when we travel together and this thesis is the result of patience and work where in I have been supported by many people. So I take this opportunity to acknowledge the help, guidance and support given by different persons.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction to the Study

1.1 Introduction

The human civilization and cultures around the world carry a long history of mankind which involves numerous forces and principles that have been remembered for their contribution and involvement for the betterment of mankind. Man and woman have contributed equally in every sphere of life. However the fact which cannot be denied or ignored that the biological differences have affected a lot on the status and the identity of women in the present time too. The quotation given below is from the Malayalam story “*The Inheritors of The Earth*” by Vaikom Muhammed Basheer clearly gives an ideal lesson that the animals can understand the global ideology but Human being can’t. And earth belongs to all living things on this planet so man has to share equally with other creatures on earth.

“The dog has barked and the birds have let out frantic chirps. Was there any snake? Yeah, Comrade Cobra! Beaten it to death? Nothing doing” It is one of God’s creations. Let it live. It is also an heir to this globe”

(Baseer)

Earth belongs to all creatures on this planet so human has to share equally with them. All living things on earth have equal share on each of them, but for the game called survival, human is destroying other things for their own benefits. Since humanity is inseparable from nature, it is necessary to live in harmony to save the human race as well as the world from the damage and destructions that demand the need of co-existence.

The work emphasizes on the interconnectedness between women and nature that defines the relationship between ecology and feminism and also what women can contribute for the betterment of it. There are only few studies on the new term ecofeminism that demand for such comprehensive study in the current scenario. Therefore, the researcher thought to undertake this concept and examine the importance of it and in that context has tried to analyze the select novels of Indian authors; Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai and Sarah Joseph that explore the essence of ecofeminism.

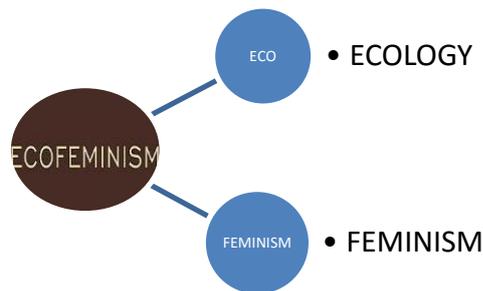


FIG. 1.1 ECOFEMINISM

The term Ecology by German biologist Ernst Haeckel refers to the whole ecosystem, its distribution, development, interconnectedness and all the ideas, efforts and process including protests for the sustainability of life on earth by preserving and maintaining the natural resources. In short it is a scientific study of interactions of living organisms with one another and with their surrounding environment or biotic (flaura and fauna) and non-biotic (non-living) factors as a whole ecosystem.

It discusses the relation between human and nature, in the same way feminism describes the relation between man and woman. As human have dominated earth and other living and nonliving things for the sake of satisfying their needs and desires, men have also exploited women for showing their dominance and priorities by using them as tools of pleasure, restricting their social involvement and depriving them from their basic rights.

Interestingly enough, the arguments related to feminism are not new, even Mary Wollstonecraft, in her book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* discussed the psychic life of women as a crucial element in their subordination and liberation. Feminism refers to the works and protests of women to create equality between men

and women in context of their rights, independence and self-identity for the betterment and universal growth of society.

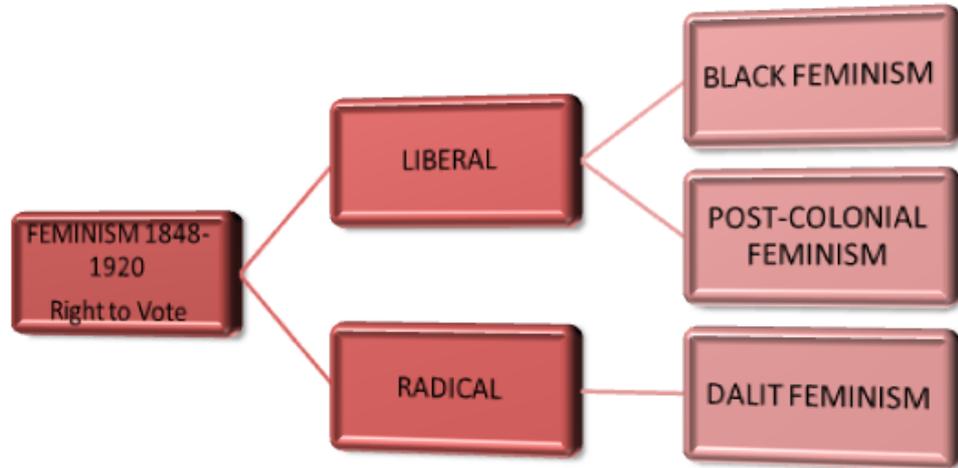


FIG. 1.2 FEMINISM

The first wave of feminist movement (1848 to 1920) spreaded the liberal ideas of legal and political equality, liberty and dignity. The freedom from discrimination or political equality was achieved during this wave through the Right to Vote. But that equality failed to bring economic, social and educational equality. As a result the second wave of feminism was started with two approaches: liberal approach and radical approach.

This movement focused not only on discrimination but also on oppression of women which was related to the attitude and mindset of people and the feminists of second wave feminism tried to remove this oppression through liberation movement as women all over the world shared the experiences of male dominance and in this movement women were projected as sisterhood or presented as a unified group.

Due to diversification or marginalization of women within the social class or sisterhood, the third wave feminism known as post-modern feminism emerged such as Black feminism, Post-colonial feminism, and Dalit feminism. Ynestra King the famous theorist considers Ecofeminism as a third wave of feminism. There are many feminist views and sometimes somewhere they disagree with one another. But one thing is common in them is the feminism, as a voice against the sexism,

discrimination, the oppression and marginalization that has shaped our history, many social institutions, our nation and it continues even today. This raised voice is not opposition of male but more of concern for the women.

Nowadays all are facing the problem of pollution and environmental degradation due to increasing industrialization, growth of population, urbanization and the modern materialistic philosophy of life. Ecofeminism is a kind of feminist view which claims capitalism and patriarchy as common causes for environmental exploitation, ecological destruction and women oppression and social injustice. It explores the existence of understanding between nature and women. “To live in the harmony with Nature” had been the main motto for billions of creatures and human being since the centuries. But for the past few decades, the environmental conflicts were muted. However there has been the environmental crisis or conflicts.

Human race lost connection with nature and as it is a part of nature, it is inseparable. This in turn indicates that the human race cannot survive in the long term by destroying the environment. The **GAIA (Global Astrometric Interferometer For Astrophysics)** theory also proposes that earth is a living organism and human beings are part of this ecosystem and the interaction between organic and the inorganic together form and maintain the balance on planet. This theory was proposed by a renowned chemist, James Lovelock during 1960s and defines Gaia as,

“a complex entity involving the Earth's biosphere, atmosphere, oceans, and soil; the totality constituting a feedback or cybernetic system which seeks an optimal physical and chemical environment for life on this planet.”

(<http://environment-ecology.com/gaia/70-gaia-hypothesis.html>)

There is a strong connection between Biosphere and the Physical components of earth which is essential to maintain the interacting system on earth

1.2 Emergence of Ecofeminism:

During the early 1970s, alongside the radicalization of feminism, Ecofeminism emerged. So In order to explore the theory of Ecofeminism, Firstly one needs to look

at the word feminism which follows the discussion of the concept of Ecofeminism. Further, one needs to identify the alleged correlation between the subordination and operation of women and nature. Here, word feminism refers to the access of same rights, enjoyed by men. Feminism does not only talk about equality and rights of women but it also emphasizes upon compassion, respect and understanding from the male counterparts. Throughout the world women have been kept away from their social and economic rights for quite a long time. But in Twentieth century, women have become more aware regarding their desires, sexuality, self-definition, existence and destiny.

Revolutionary efforts by women to seek their independence and self-identity all over the world are termed as 'Feminism' by analysts and critics. Orthodox society has constructed the conventional image of women and it is necessary to change it by discouraging the habit of defining woman by their biological nature and labeling their sole identity as to produce human species. Attitude of men to showcase their superiority above women is the prime cause for the dissatisfaction of the women in today's society. Women have suffered through this for years in silence and feminism presents concern for the same. Indian English novelists have frankly highlighted this concept in their works like;

"She trudges along day, silently going her way; she rises despite the strong patriarchal trends, which permeate attitudes and behaviour in a society, entrenched in culture. She breaks the barriers of linguistic, ethnic and cultural complexities and emerges strong willed and more determined than ever."

(Aneel Salman)

Ecofeminism strengthens deep ecological movement through the values, experiences, thoughts and perspectives of women. It holds the key for cultural transformation and provides balanced attitude for humankind which is essential if the life of Gaia has to reconcile the human life. Google defines, "Gaia is the personification of the Earth and one of the Greek primordial deities. Gaia is the ancestral **mother** of all life: the primal **Mother** Earth goddess. She was the mate of Uranus and the mother of the Titans and the Cyclopes."

Today the beautiful system of our planet is being violated, polluted, degraded and resulting in damaged, yet very less people showing their concerns towards the GAIA-Mother Earth. In India, farms are suffering loss of four billion tons of topsoil every year, pesticide run-off and toxic dumping accumulated over thousands of years are poisoning the soil and the groundwater table, the nuclear power industry by generating plutonium, poisons enough every living thing and flora and fauna of Earth without any plan to secure them. Even we are facing the deprivation of 200.000-300.000 acres of wet land habitation each year. All these are happening to gain profit for agribusiness and developers.

Gradually Development has separated man from nature and still has continued to broaden the gap day by day. That resulted into devaluation of nature, natural resources and women in the form of gender division of labor, dominance and control over women and through culturally-sanctioned crimes (rape and abuse of women, honor killings, female genital mutilation, an anxiety disorder, forced marriages, and so on). Women are systematically marginalized or discriminated against, institutionally and directly, in every part of the society such as in politics, in employment, in the arts, in media and in culture. And hence patriarchal society started to take hold by exploiting and devaluing earth and women.

In patriarchal society Women are the most vulnerable and hence they are affecting most due to the operation of the earth, for the reason that women and nature be not separated. Human being has subordinated the entire living and nonliving entities on earth. And this divorce between men and nature led to the lack of disparity between men and women. Moreover within the less developed countries, especially poor, rural women's lives and status are associated to existing environmental problem. Undoubtedly due to climate change and environmental problems such as deforestation, water pollution, and environmental toxins, women suffer from poverty, food and water crisis, health issues, sexual violence and many more. People are dependent on the earth for their lives wholly and thus they must value it. And as all the creatures are interlinked, exploitation of one affects others. Due to double oppression of women (classism, racism, and sexism) through poverty, race, education or nation ecofeminists focus mainly on women.

Across every spectrum of society women are primary victims of violence, exploitation, and discrimination. Therefore today's women should come out and fight for their rights. Mary Wollstonecraft opines that women are particularly vulnerable to inequality and exploitation because they are too timid and submissive, laid greater emphasis on compromise rather than confrontation, adept themselves according to men and follow men. She further says, feminity is something that imposed on us by men; and the very concept is full of contradictory as woman is at once protected and deprived, idolized and despised, she is a goddess and queen, but treated like a domestic servant or if she is unlucky, a slave. (RICHA)

Here I would like to quote Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishna, "*Civilization is what we have, culture is what we are*". (Bindra) All agree with the fact that none of the culture is good or bad, it's all about our vision and mindset upon it. The modern, trendy, fashionable and stylish western culture has deeply influenced the developing countries, like the youth and women become independent, employment opportunities for women; get pleasure from learning new constructive things, and new languages. However as every coin have two parts, so the harmful side of westernization has ruined the life of youth and women in the name of drugs and consumption of unwanted chemicals, Old age homes, pre-marital sex or one night stand etc. More over in gender employment distribution, women consider to second-rate employment arrangement than those seized by men. As it is rightly quoted, "nearly two-thirds of women in manufacturing are categorized as laborers, operators and production workers while only a few can be found in the administrative and managerial positions predominantly held by men". (Tzannatos)

In Western development, women are being victimized more and more as they are seen as the most helpless and vulnerable. In developing countries, the quality of life actually decreases for women due to Westernization. Traditional agricultural methods are abandoned, and natural resources are damaged. Men moved to the towns to find jobs and that left women alone with all the hardships for them and their children. Even gender based violence on women is widespread that consider women as mediocre to men, which take place in various types like beating, rape, acid-throwing, Eve –teasing, forced prostitution, bride-burning, honor killing, dowry death, trafficking, forced pregnancy and abortion, sexual coercion and harassment, as well as

verbal and psychological abuse as our society is shaped by different languages, symbols, rituals, myths and behavioral patterns of our cultural tradition. (Wikimedia Foundation)

Hence, in developing countries, westernization has degraded women's abilities. Culture is a problem as well as the solution which in turn acts as curse and hope for all. So implementing western traditions is not immoral at all but as a topic of truth, one must keep in mind and respect one's society and traditions. One should not completely surrender to Western civilization. In patriarchal society, there is normative definition of reality for men in which terror of women and unawareness of nature has set the position for killing living organism. Deep composition and inspiration encouraging and stimulating all forms of dominance are uncovered by radical/cultural movement. Then Ecofeminism becomes of enormous value as it is not only about protecting trees, animals or soil only because it is sacred, but rather for the survival of people it is necessary. As Y. King writes:

“Yet this is not a sentimental movement--lives depend upon the survival of the forest. For most of the women of the world, interest in preservation of the land, water, air, and energy is no abstraction but a clear part of the effort to simply survive.”

(King p.118)

The huntsman may be pleased about the beauty of nature, but only in the disguise of being built for his utilization. All human beings commit a wrongful act but men are the primary accountable as they have continued to drive upon this belief in industry, science and technology. Even the governing patriarchal vision states that women too are produced for the expenditure of men. As woman and man similarly divide the responsibility for the misuse of the earth, men are responsible for the violence towards women.

Women living in developed society hold the responsibility for the wound they impose upon the globe Radical or cultural feminism became the source of Ecofeminism, recognizing the dynamics comprising fright and bitterness behind the supremacy of male over female.

However, Liberal, social and cultural feminism have contributed to ecofeminism but in different ways with the concern to improve the relationship of human and nature. Ecofeminism explores the connection between operation of woman and operation of nature by the masculine centered practices and attitude. The research explores the textual and conceptual essence of Ecofeminism with detailed study of the select work of fictions of Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai and Sarah Joseph, with the essence of ecofeminism. To achieve this goal it is necessary or essential to analyze and interpret the relevant eco feminist theories, its origin and different perspectives of it.

To begin with, the researcher focuses on the concept of Ecofeminism and its literature by and about women. The work also talks about the function of women and their interrelationship with the environment and the conflicts faced by them to conserve their habitats. Though the feminist literary criticism often explored the issues of gender, race and class and our hypothesis is that the culture in which writers live and write, formed the sex and gender role behavior, as well as race, socio-economic status and the impact of colonization can be found on an author's inhabitants of source. Ecofeminism contains the biotic spaces in which the female resides and how the presence of nature and non-human objects correlatives illuminate the situation of patriarchal/ colonization female dominance. Literature has also played an effective role in helping women to present their thoughts and opinions to reach out to the world.

The wonderful contribution in Ecofeminism is Rachel Carson's famous book titled- "*Silent Spring*" which ignited the ecological movement which was published 50 years ago. More than two million copies of it were sold and made an influential impact by questioning about the toxic nature progress-the effects of synthetic pesticides like DDT.

She opines that if human being poisoned nature, nature would in turn poison human kind, "our heedless destructive acts enter into the vast cycles of the earth and in time return to bring hazard to ourselves." One would find her ideas and concerns serious and sensible in present time too as the increasing amount of chemicals being introduced into the environment are dangerous. (Rachel)

By picking up this point, her writing opens everyone's eyes and makes one aware about what mankind is doing against nature and that all should be grateful for it. It also leads one's attention towards environmental issues. Mckibben rightly says about Carson that "She was the first to tap into the idea that other people were starting to feel."

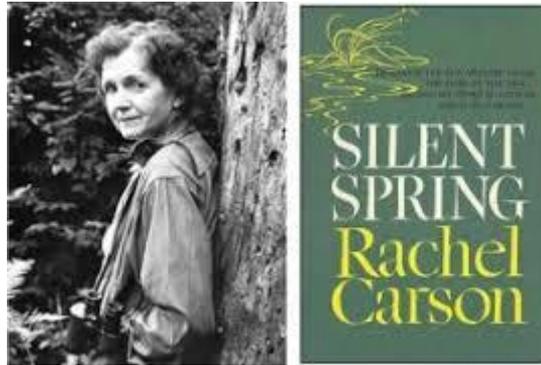


FIG.1.3 RACHEL CARSON

On the contrary, Michael Crichton disputed Carson's view on DDT and says in his work of fiction, 'State of Fear' that banning DDT eradicated more people than Hitler. But one may agree that banning DDT resulted into death is simply wrong, as all would agree that the environment was much healthier before past 50 years, It was beautiful, healthy and full of life. (Griswold)

Various scholars and ecofeminists also came out during the cold war to bring attention of the world to the interconnectedness of women and nature for the survival through anti-nuclear and anti-militarist protest and through their contributions. In 1980, Susan Koen and Nina Swaim mentioned about ecofeminism in their book titled, "*A Handbook for Women on the Nuclear Mentality*".

Moreover the relationship between the subjugation of women by patriarchal society or system and environmental degradation is rightly stated in Ruether's ecofeminist book titled, 'New Woman/New Earth':

"Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within society whose fundamental model relationships continues to be one of domination. They must unite the demands of movement of the women's with those of the

ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this society.”

(Ruether p.204)

Ecofeminism believes that woman's ethics are nearer to environment than that of a man and devalue the female individuality. Women are an affectionate part of natural world, both in fancy and in practice. Women are also functioning in sync with nature, while men hold a hierarchical connection with nature. Ecology gives equivalent significance to all living and non-living components in the formation of an ecosystem. Similarly, Feminism emphasizes the equality of male and female in the structure of social system. Today Ecological and Environmental concerns become very important issues in the field of human/gender relations aspects, especially in women's lives and the interaction between nature/women and colonial patriarchal domination which begs for a feminist analysis. Eco feminists look for nonviolent solutions to the world problems.

After reading various books on ecofeminism, it would make believe that the relationship of women to the nature is ambivalent. One may argue that Ecofeminism is a movement at one level but it has not developed into a full-fledged social movement. As we know this movement is not yet that much powerful and global, the term still needs strong support and recognition in all over the world.

In this research, the primary section deals with the notion and the origin of the term 'Ecofeminism' and it consists of the various movements. It also discusses about the review of literature and also explores the interconnectedness of women and nature. It further investigates the struggle of women to conserve their rights and habitats provided by eco feminist approaches.

The last chapter draws forth the conclusion of above chapters. Finally the work includes the reading of secondary sources include book reviews, newspapers, journals, research reports, interviews of eco feminist writers and other secondary materials.

1.3 Defining Ecofeminism

Bell said that, *“When we start messing around with Mother Nature, Bad things happen.”* The new term ‘Ecofeminism’ is become fully grown out of different social movements - the feminist, peace and ecology movements, radical, or cultural, feminism rather than from liberal feminism or socialist feminism. Radical, Cultural and Spiritual feminists who stressed the resemblance of women to the earth governed Ecofemiism. The other socialist feminist saw the operation and exploitation of women in the structure of society.

There is not specific definition of ecofeminism. It is not only a movement but philosophies. Google identifies ecofeminism as *“a philosophical and political theory and movement which combines ecological concerns with feminist ones, regarding both as resulting from male domination of society.”* (Wikimedia Foundation)

The United Nation Nature program has depicted ecofeminism as *“Around the world, environmental conditions impact the lives of women and men in different ways as a result of existing inequalities. Gender roles often create differences in the ways men and women are enabled or prevented from acting as agents of environmental change.”*

Elizabeth Gould Davis writes about the affinity between the women and nature in her book, *“The First Sex”* (1971):

“Man is the enemy of nature: to kill, to root up to level off, to pollute, to destroy are his instinctive reactions.....Woman ... is the ally of nature, and her instinct is to tend, to nurture, to encourage healthy growth, and to preserve ecological balance. She is the natural leader of society and of civilization, and the usurpation of her primeval authority by man has resulted in uncoordinated chaos.”

(Elizabeth p.335)

Andree Collard also agrees that the individuality and destiny of woman and nature are combined. Even the Patriarchy is the rival of nature at the same time as women having the biological connection are the rescuer to nature. He also recognizes that

woman is the most truthfully child of Mother Nature. Even women have the mothering identity though she experiences the biological motherhood or not she is full of integrity in caring for others like nature.

According to Besthorn and MacMillen (2002) the term Ecofeminism was first conceived by French feminist Francoise d'Eaubonne in 1974 in the book *Le Feminisme ou la Mort* (Feminism or Death) which is disputed by Janet Biehl, of the Institute for Social Ecology in Vermont, in the US. She argues that in the same year, 1974 Ecofeminism was first elaborated in detail in the context of the eco-anarchist Murray Bookchin's social ecology as 'social ecofeminism' by Chiah Heller. Ecofeminists dispute that there are vital associations between the domination and subjugation of women and deprivation of nature by masculinise system and attitudes. Eco feminists focus on these connections.

In his book, d'Eaubonne proposes that

“Women...have been reduced to the status of a minority by a male-dominated society, although their importance in terms of numbers, and even more significantly in terms of reproduction, should have permitted them a dominant role... [And] women must act to save themselves and the earth simultaneously. The two needs are intimately linked.” (Gates p.15-22)

Her book, *Feminism or Death* which is controversial book in 1974 due to the first chapter of the book entitled, “ The Time for Ecofeminism”, in which she explored ecofeminist issues. Francoise d'Eaubonne discussed on many issues in her work i.g. gender issue, patriarchy, women or feminism have to take the initiative and can be the bridge in social crisis and resolve this social problem. In 1972, she has established the Ecology Feminism Centre in Paris. And the slogan of it was;

“to tear the planet away from the male today in order to restore it for humanity for tomorrow...if the male society persists there will be no tomorrow for humanity.” (d' Eaubonne. 175)

At the beginning, environmentalism was not on our minds; since moving out of that into activism, ecosystem has never left our minds. In mid-seventies numerous radical/cultural feminists practised the thrilling discovery, through historic and

archaeological sources, of a religion that privileged the woman and appeared to have as its "Good Book" nature itself. Cosmologically nourishing and healing were the innovation of the Divine as immanent in and around us. The sacred linkage of the Goddess in Her many disguises with totemic animals and plants, sacred groves, womb like caves, the moon-rhythm blood of menses, the ecstatic dance -- the experience of knowing Gaia, Her voluptuous contours and fertile plains, Her flowing waters that give life, Her animals as teachers; for who of us who would ever again see a snake, coiled around the arms of an ancient Goddess statue, teaching lessons of cyclic renewal and regeneration with its shedding of skins, as merely a member of the ophidian order in the reptilian class of the vertebrate phylum? That period of discovery -- this would certainly not have been news to primal people, but was utterly earth-shaking for us. (Larson and John)

1.4 Relationship between Feminism and Ecology

The Eco feminists claim that the woman has additional intimate affiliation with nature than Men. Generally Woman has been passive so has been nature. On the contrary, Katherine Davis and some other Eco feminists argue that this connection between women and nature is socially formed. Ecofeminism gives women and men common ground which enable us to recognize the relationship with nature as well as women.

- Environmentalism distributes equivalent significance to all organic and inorganic mechanism in the structure of an ecosystem. Correspondingly, Feminism emphasizes on the impartiality of men and women. They observe intellectual differentiation as human distinction, rather than gender or race specific. So it can be pointed out that the subordinate position of women stems from society, rather than nature. (Bill)
- Secondly, the Earth is a region for all living organisms, while houses are habitats for groups of humans. For ecologists and feminists the Earth's house and the human house are habitats to be cherished. On the contrary, Chemicals and all forms of energy lead to illness on the planet or else in the home that is unbearable. All must try to repair the health of indoor and outdoor environments.

- Feminist vision repeatedly illustrates the contrasts obviously; it is life versus death, Gaia versus Mars, mysterious forest versus technological desert, women versus men. (Plumwood)
- In the direction of depiction in detail, here the researcher would like to give the example of our first woman Prime Minister of India. In 1980, When Prime minister of India – Indira Gandhi, addressing the All India Women’s conference said,

“...I have often said that, I am not feminist, yet in my concern for the privileged, how can I ignore women who since the beginning of the history, have been dominated over and discriminated against in social custom and in laws...? Even in the west, so called freedom of women is often equated with imitation of man. Frankly, it seems to be a kind of bondage for another. To be liberated, a woman must feel free to be herself, not in rivalry to man, but in the context of her own capacity and her personality. We need women to be more interested, more alive and more active...?” (Gandhi)
- Ecofeminism enlightens us by pointing out that this world is under enemy control by Male society, is not just mere mishap or accident. So woman as a common group must take interest to flee from this ancient domination and violation.
- Women and nature is also observed through the romantic conception. As Plumwood describes, Women have special powers and the capacities of nurturance, empathy and closeness to nature which are un-sharable by men and which justifies their special treatment, which of course nearly always turns to be an inferior treatment in male dominance society. (Plumwood p.8)
- It gives an optimistic assessment to a relation of women with nature. Like nature, women are the source of life. They are nearer to natural world than men.
- After a close reading of ecofeminism concept, we agree with the statement that within the ecofeminism, we find the two concepts related to the connection of women and nature. The foremost one is direct connection that is a physiological or psychological correlation I.g. birthing, menstrual cycle,

caring, nurturing etc. Throughout the history woman and nature is also psychologically connected e.g. the menstrual cycle which is linked with the lunar cycles is the evidence of the closeness of women to nature. And on the other hand, Men became the enemy of both women and nature. The second connection is the connection between the operation of women and exploitation of nature which is occurred due to capitalization and industrialization respectively.

1.5 Ecofeminism and Movements

Let us now have a glance at some of these movements, their beginning and development. Ecofeminism is a movement that notices the correlation of oppression and deprivation of the natural world with the subordination and oppression of women. The ecofeminists, feminists, and women's spirituality movements move together out of a common concern for the security of the Earth and all forms of life which depend on it. They promote to restore synchronization in a global environmental, damaged occurred due to a devaluation of nature and women; and support the earth. Ecofeminism- a social movement why it is a social movement, as it studies or tries to understand the present scenario. The word social movement gained its popularity in European languages in early nineteenth century, this term was concerned with creation of new society. Specifically, it seeks to critique the consistent domination that is occurred through globalization, industrialization, modern trade and industry theory and practices. In this context societal human resources may act as a team with communities and individuals to renovate to save our planet.

According to Mary Mellor, *“Ecofeminism is an activist and academic movement that see the critical connections between the domination of nature and the exploitation of women. It also sees a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and operation of women. It emerged in the mid-1970s alongside second wave feminism and the green movement. Ecofeminism brings together elements of the feminist and green movements, while at the same time offering a challenge to both. It takes from the green movement a concern about the impact of human activities on the non-human world and from feminism the view of humanity as gendered in ways that subordinate, exploit and oppress women.”* (M. Mellor p.1)

Ecofeminism is an ideology of integration, preservation, protection and sustainability and the famous ecofeminist, Judith Plant writes about it in her book, *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism*,

“Our aim is a non-violent and ecological feminist transformation of societal structures. Our aim is radical, non-violent change outside and inside of us. The macrocosm and microcosm! This has to do with transforming power! Not power over power to dominate or power to terrorize – but shared power, abolishing power as we know it, replacing it with the power of non-violence or something common to all, to be used by all and for all! Power as the discovery of our own strength –as opposed to a passive receiving of power exercised by others, often in our name. Creating a truly free society- based on ecological and feminist principles that can mediate humanity’s relationship with nature- is our common aim...living, producing, working and living in comprehensible human dimensions is another common goal for us all... ecofeminism draws on the principles of unity in diversity, a most important aspect in times of social simplification.”

(Plant p.10-11)

Several other contributors declare that ecofeminism is a social movement too. Diamond and Orenstein assert in their book, *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism* (1990), that ecofeminism is a social movement. Ecofeminism has provided the voice to the women and connect them with the whole world i.e. the decade from the 1975 to 1980, the U N and international NGOs supported international conventions centring on ecofeminism. ‘The U N Environmental programme’s Global Assembly on Women and the Environment’ and ‘World Women’s Congress for Healthy Planet’ was held in Miami in 1991 that had a huge impact on ecofeminist movement. And *Wangari Maathai* was the participant of these conferences. (WEDO)

However some argue that ecofeminism has not yet developed into a social movement. Sale disputes that it is "too early to speak of ecofeminism as a 'movement'" (p. 302) and that it is best thought of less as a movement than a philosophy or perhaps not

movement at all, in the traditional sense, nor even some kind of "tendency" within a movement. Eco feminists may subscribe to liberal, radical, or Marxist/socialist thought, their main focus is on ecology - both of nature and human systems but rather a way of re-regarding the world that can be brought to bear on a whole variety of movements and tendencies. (Sale)

The postcolonial countries like Africa, South Asia, Particularly India, have the history of environmental activities even before the ecofeminism appeared as a phrase. In India, woman is an inmost element of nature. The inspiring movements such as the Chipko movement in India, Anti-Militarist Movement in Europe and US, Movement against dumping of hazardous waste in US, and Green Belt movement in Kenya are dedicated to the survival of human race on earth.

Wangari Maathai the scholar, human rights activist and an environmentalist, initiated the Green Belt Movement in Kenya under that pastoral women planted trees as part of a soil conservation attempt to prevent desertification of their land. In 1985, **Sherrill Elizabeth Tekatsitsiakawa**, Katsi,(woman activist), with the support of other native women, started the Akwesasne Mother's Milk Project Mohawk), along the St. Lawrence River to monitor PCB(polychlorinated biphenyls) toxicity, while continuing to promote breastfeeding as a primary option for women and their babies. Moreover Bernadette Cozart, a gardener as well as founder, started the Greening of Harlem. He organizes different community groups to transform vacant garbage-strewn lots into food and flower gardens in Harlem. Sister Rivers' performance ritual was begun where Japanese women placed rice, seeds, and soil from Hiroshima and Nagasaki in pillowcases and then floated the artwork down the Kama River. Lois Gibb also contributed through developing the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste to share tactical skills with local environmental groups to set off the exposure of the Love Canal as a toxic waste site her founding of. (Wikivivdly) Chipko movement and Green belt movement took place which the researcher has examined below.

If we look at the post-colonial countries, we realize that those countries have the history of environment movements. So Here, I focus on the movements occurred in USA, Kenya, India, Bengal and Pakistan.

1.6 Chipko Movement in India

Ecofeminism was started in India in early seventies with the very inspiring movement called Chipko movement. Here Chipko means Hug. The women of that region spontaneously came out with a protest, out of the love and connectedness with nature to sacrifice their lives for nature and as result this movement gained iconic status in all over the world. (Shangpliang)



FIG. 1.4 CHIPKO MOVEMENT

Chipko movement is involved with the conservation of forests and safeguarding the environmental balance in the sub-Himalayan region, started in 1970 which was non-violent movement. The Chipko Movement was initiated in the Garhwal hills of northwest India. Women of Garhwal region played noteworthy role in it. The forename of the Chipko movement derived from the word 'embrace'. The villagers used to embrace the trees to guard them from wood cutters. It was based on the Gandhian method of satyagrah /philosophy of achieving the goals through peaceful resistance. It was first taking place in 1973, in the Chamoli district. The environmentalist Sundar lal Bahuguna spread out the movement and enlightened the whole country by stopping the construction of the Tehri Dam and made people aware about deforestation and from there it has got widen to the other parts of the country. And he was also awarded Padmabhushan for his contribution in the movement.

Amrita Devi, the girl initiated the movement primarily while protecting the trees from cutting by a King's men in Khejarli or Khejadli (village in Rajsthan). She sacrificed her life along with her three children while trying to save the sacred green Khejri trees. A local Maharaja, the ruler of the village, required to build a palace for his family. And for that he commanded his servants to gather wood from the nearby

village. For this purpose, wood cutters came to cut the trees, but Amrita with other women of the village rose in front of the trees and embraced them and said that they have to cut them first before cutting the trees.

“Jagigyan hum beejigyan hum;

Ab ni chalali choron ki Ghor apuna, baun apuna;

ab ni chalali auron ki”

(We have risen, we are awake;

No longer will thief rule our destiny It is our home, our forests;

no longer will the others decide for us.)

(Negi)

The famous Garhwali folk songs’ writer and singer Mr. Narender Singh Negi tried to aware the people about the deteriorating trees and the environment with the help of his beautiful folk songs

Na kata tyoun dalyoun

Daala na kata chucho daala na kata

Daali katali ta mati bagali

Mati bagali ta koodi na pungadi bachali

ghas – lakhara na kheti roli, bhoul ta aas aulad kya kholi

dhar mangara pandera sukhala ...

sainta taun dalyoun tain nouna jani ,

palyaa taun dalaun tain aulad jaani

(Do not cut the trees , don’t cut the beautiful trees. If you will cut the trees the soil will flow and then neither the houses nor the fields will remain. There will be no grass, woods and fields and so the coming generation will be in hunger. So love the

trees. Give birth more trees and save them with tender hands like own children.)

*Maatu bikigi, paani bikigi,
bikigya hamara baun bhi Haath khaali ,
pet khaali, thikanu ni kakhi raun ki
(soil has been sold, water sold,
our forests too have been sold off ,
Hands bare, stomachs empty,
we have no shelter to stay)*

(Negi)



FIG. 1.5 SINGING CHIPKO FOLK SONGS

*"Maatuhamru, paanihamru,
hamra hi chhanyibaunbhi... Pitronnalagaibaun,
hamunahitabachonbhi"*

(Soil ours, water ours, ours are these forests.

Our forefathers raised them; it's we who must protect them.)
-- *Old Chipko Song* (Garhwali language)

It means the forest is our mother's home; we will defend it and protect it.

The servants were left with no choice other than to pursue the instructions and go ahead. Amrita Devi passed away on the spot. Amrita enchanted: - "*seirsantherunkhraheb, to bheesastojan*" It is still a small price to pay if at the cost of my head the tree is saved. (Eco India)

The act of non-violence movement was also started in Rajasthan in 18th century by Bishnoi community protested against the king to save their living forest.

The incident encouraged several other rural women, which in turn transformed into such similar movements in 1970's in different parts of India or in the tribal areas of Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Aandhra Pradesh e.g. local level struggles by villagers.

Then after, it led into the Chipko camp protesting to stop the mining operations in Nahi- Kal village in Doon valley. Women protestors like, Chamundeyi, Ishwari Devi started non-violent struggles inspired by the Chipko Movement- embracing trees and living mountain and living waters. Women also started to show their environmental concerns by cultural expression as they create songs and poems which help them to spread the movement all over the places, e.g.

“खडु होयुं छौ जुग बिटीन,

तुम्हारा खातिर मै ज्यून चांदौं.

मै तैं न काटा मै छौं तुम्हारो

तुम तैं अगवाड़ी कुछ देण चांदौं।”

“Embrace our trees,

Save them from being felled,

The property of our hills

Save it from being looted.” (Chipko song)

(Chipko movement founder Sunderlal Bahuguna: The defender of Himalayas turns 90)

Even in 1997, Dhoom Singh Negi, Bachani Devi and many other women invented Chipko ecological Slogan: *“What do the forests bears? Soil, water and pure air.”*

Consequently, the famous Chipko poet named Ghanshyam Raturi inspired by the hidden strength of Chamundeyi and Ishwari Devi, and hidden strengths of nature to note down a new poem entitled ‘Shailani’:

“A fight for the truth has began

At sinsyaru Khala

A fight for rights has began

In Malkot Thano

Sister, it is a fight to protect

Our mountains and forests

They give us life

Embrace the life of the living trees

And streams to your hearts

Resist the digging of mountains

Which kills our forests and streams?

A fight for life has begun at

Sinsyaru Khala.”

(Gottlieb p.466)

His songs echoed all over during the movement and inspired others too. The song conveys the importance of sisterhood and non-violent movement like Satyagraha against the environmental exploitation to save future generation.

The rural women of India actively participated and fought for the nature in that particular phase and made others aware of the deforestation and its consequences in the future; a few of the women leaders, Gaura Devi, Sudesha Devi, Bachni Devi, Dev Suman, Mira Behn, Sarala Behn and Amrita Devi who battled against it, were called maternal mothers by the native people of the region.

Sunderlal Bahuguna, an eco-activist, sacrificed his whole life influencing and educating the village people to raise their voice against the demolition of the forests and the Himalayan Mountains by the government through a slogan '*Ecology is the permanent Economy*'.

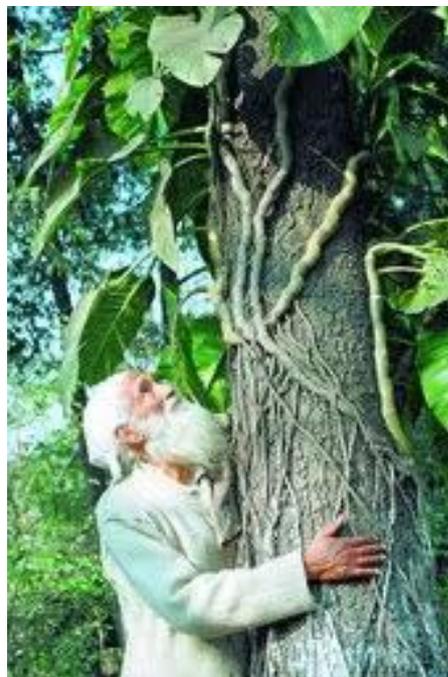


FIG. 1.6 SUNDERLAL BAHUGUNA

One more main leader of the movement was Mr. Chandi Prasad Bhatt. He promoted the expansion of local industries that focused on the sustainable utilization of the forests' resources for the local profits.

One of the foremost accomplishments of the Chipko movement was the prohibition on cutting the trees in the forests of Uttar Pradesh, for 15 years in 1980. Afterwards, due to the strong protests by the activists throughout the country, the Indian Prime Minister ordered for the prohibition or ban, which was enforced in Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Bihar, Western Ghats and Vindhya. Further, 90 percent of

population of India is dependent on land. Besides land, the conflicts over water have been very serious issue in India. In current years, this movement stimulated several people to make an effort on practical programmes of water management, energy preservation, forestation and recycling as well as motivated scholars to study the methods of conservation and issues of environmental degradation in the Himalayas and throughout India.

1.7 Love Canal-United States

The movement which occurred in US is Love Canal movement. The love canal disaster was the example of ground water pollution near Niagara Fall, New York. In 1942, The Hooker chemical Company began a canal project to dug canal for a chemical waste dump. Later on the health survey reveals the inexplicable illnesses—epilepsy, asthma, migraines, birth defects and miscarriages in the Love Canal neighborhood. (Kleiman)

To make it more exploring, here the researcher would like to discuss some case studies:

“The majority of activists in the grassroots movement against toxics are women. Many more got involved when they experienced miscarriages or their children suffered birth defects or contracted leukaemia and other forms of cancer. Through networking with neighbourhood women, they began to link their problems to nearby hazardous waste sites. (Merchant, 1980) After her son experienced health problems in 1978, homemaker-turned-environmental crusader Lois Gibbs began to lead her Love Canal community of mainly ‘lower-middle-class women who had never been environmental activists’ but ‘became politicized by the life-and-death issues directly affecting their children and homes and succeeded in obtaining redress from the State of New York.’”(Merchant 1980)



FIG. 1.7 PROTESTS AGAINST TOXIC DANGERS

The experiences of the inhabitants of Love Canal have come to represent the worries of people in industrialized societies about the unidentified dangers that bound them. However, it was not until women had vandalized a construction site, burned an effigy of the mayor and been arrested in a blockade that government officials began to take notice. (Joni)

In other local campaigns, women were accused of being ‘hysterical wives’ when they attempted to raise voice against the dumping of waste. As one Black woman from Southern United States put it: *“You are exactly right, I am hysterical. When it comes to matters of life and death, especially my family’s and mine, I get hysterical.”* (Newman)

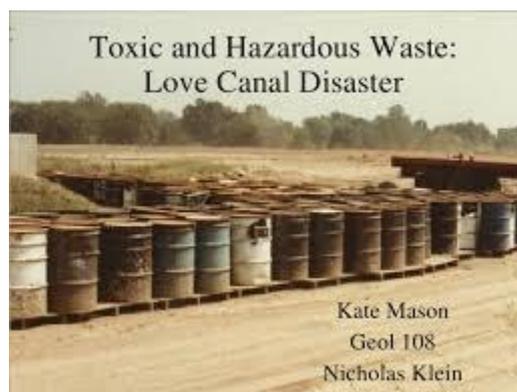


FIG. 1.8 LOVE CANAL RESIDENT PROTESTS TOXIC DANGERS

According to Seager women who become involved in grass root movements have not been active before and have often faced accusations of ignorance and hysteria, not only from experts and officials, but also from their own male relatives. (Joni)

1.8 Green Belt Movement in Kenya

The Green Belt movement was started in Kenya. Wangari Maathai invented this movement, believed that “*When we plant trees, we plant the seeds of peace and hope*” with this spirit he initiated the Green Belt Movement (GBM) in Kenya. In 1977, Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan environmentalist and activist and the National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK) organized the planting of trees as well as started to respond to the needs of rural Kenyan women who reported about their drying streams, less secure food supply and how they had to walk more and more for firewood, fuel and fencing. (The Green Belt Movement organization) This movement has assembled more than 80,000 women to approach for their human rights. She encouraged them to take responsibilities of their children and their lives all the way through sow trees.



FIG. 1.9 WANGARI MAATHAI

The Green Belt Movement (GBM) is an environmental institute that empowers women, to preserve the environment and improve livelihoods. It promotes women to work together to bind the soil through tree planting and educates them to store rainwater and to provide food and firewood by offering a small monetary token for their work. It enables them to modify their surroundings and take their selections. The movement also turned small scale farmers into agro-foresters by transfer of machinery from experts to the people.



FIG. 1.10 THE GREEN BELT MOVEMENT

The Green Belt Movement in Kenya offers many ways to reforest the land. It ensures that there are vital linking of the enhancement of women's state and the requirements of society as a whole. It also reflects the moral principles of caring, nurturing for other human-being and non-human and for future generation and their natural interconnectedness.

In 2004, Maathai won the Nobel Peace Prize Award for her environmentalist peace activism.

1.9 Women and Trees- Bangladesh

After the analysis of the historical development of forest policies in India, it prevents the people to access the forest and its resources. In short they have excluded the forest people from forest. Dankelman and Davidson (1988) describe “My environment is the basis of my economy and my total survival. It is from the land that I get my food.” (Irene Dankelman)

Out of the total population of Bangladesh, 60.4 million are women. In Bangladesh very few women activists came out to work for women and nature. Among them, Syeda Rizwana Hasan and Farida Akhtar are well-known for such actions.

UBINIG is the abbreviation of its Bengali name *Unnayan Bikalper NitiNirdharoni Gobeshana*- a policy research non government organisation working on women's issues. This organization generally is investigating the role of women in the tree planting and their relation and connection to trees in Bangladesh.

An old woman activist once said to the researchers of **UBINIG** that, “Do sons look after their mothers? The answer is No. It is the trees which are more reliable than the sons. If you have a tree you can be sure that at the time of *nikandal* (the time of death), the funeral cost will be met by the tree”.

The role of women in preservation of forest is essential as well as their relationship with environment as they are linked with nature is very important. Despite the fact that Earlier, these issues and concerns were almost missing in the majority of studies on forestry and trees. however now this has changed with the publishing houses like Narigrantha Prabartana the only feminist publishing House in Bangladesh, and organizations like UBINIG and activists like Farida Akhter who is the executive director of UBINIG.

Moreover Julekha Begum, A peasant woman from Gaibandha, Bangladesh, says that

“Our land is a land of rivers... Our strength is in our being together. We are no longer alone and no longer in the background. We are no longer invisible. We decided not to keep anyone in our village illiterate and we succeeded. Now we have also decided to take part in elections to get power and decision making into our hands.”

(Mazumdar, Vina. Embracing Earth; an agenda for partnership with peasant women. FAO, New Delhi, 1992.)

1.10 Ecofeminism in Pakistan

Every woman contributes equally to protect the planet so as women from Pakistan too occupy their significant role in ecological preservation. We know that women own the information of herbs for medicines and reproductive health, food. In the rural area of Pakistan, Men have the possession of the agricultural land and they utilize the women and children for labour and farm work for producing crops by paying less.



FIG.1.11 WOMEN IN PAKISTAN

Sindh Woman's Group tries to uplift the women as well as tries to improve the working condition in Pakistan to facilitate women with employing them in organic farming. They also pay them the same salary as pay to men. Pakistan's textile and clothing (T&C) industry gets up on women's shoulders. Thousands of female cotton pickers work in the cotton fields of Southern Punjab. Sindh woman's Group is cropping the raw material for the production of yarn, cloth, trousers. In September and December, the pick season of it, most of the women and girls are employed. But as the working environment is poisonous, they are exposed for the 8-9 hours of daily picking during pesticide spraying. Now, the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) is carrying out awareness about this issue through working with landowners, pesticide producers and retailers. Their main objective is to organize vulnerable female agricultural workers. Not only that but they work to empower them. So that jointly, they are able to raise their voice for their concerns and for the improvement of working conditions. (Mathrani)

It has been apparent that the movements in Bangladesh and Pakistan continue to inspire others while the Chipko movement at that time acquired attention from all over the world but sadly and slowly it died away.

1.11 Review of Related Literature with Special Focus on Ecofeminism

The present chapter the research work reviews the existing literature in the selected research area of Ecofeminism. It critically looks into the research works already carried out into the selected field. The primary purpose is to review the already existing literature for strengthening the theoretical and structural formation of the study as an original contribution which may be useful to scholars in investigating into new vistas.

The philosophy of ecofeminism conceptualizes the connection between gender and the nature in literature. We all are aware about the fact, that in near future, the human race is going to face the environmental crisis. And Man, as a part of it as well as dependent on it, for his survival needs to improve his environmental behavior. As the environmental system is damaged all over the globe, almost all the disciplines of study have concern about this environmental degradation and crisis. They are in search of the answer, if the environmental degradation be resolved. And if yes, then how? The degradation of environment will lead to the destruction of human life or race on this Planet-Earth-Gaia and Literature may help to overcome this issue. Even Literature too is affected by this global environmental crisis. Earth and all life forms are sacred and must be preserved. So eco feminist says Humans must commune with mother earth.

“As humans, we find ourselves in a specific and unique ecological predicament. A predicament cited as being largely due to our own actions, excessively consumptive behaviors, and loss of connection with nature or an acknowledgement of dependencies on nature.”

(Fileczki)

The ecofeminist theory emphasizes on the connection of women and nature such as the manner in which we treat women and the manner in which we treat nature which further lead to the suppression of woman and devastation of natural world in whole. Buckingham opines that women share the same experience produced on the wide scale environment. Women have a particular relationship with nature because of virtue of biology. (Tobo)

It has been indicated by the Living Planet Report from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF 2016) that due to globalization and industrialization, human is facing the loss of biodiversity and animals, productive land, in short destruction of the whole planet earth. women are mainly disturbed in all over the world, mostly at the time of pregnancy, their health is at risk due to climate change. According to Robert Costanza,

“The most critical task facing humanity today is the creation of a shared vision of a sustainable and desirable society, one that can provide permanent prosperity within the biophysical constraints of the real world in a way that is fair and equitable to all of humanity, to other species, and to future generations.” (Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability: Background: Environment)

In this study, the researcher argues that the women in gender and especially those poor women in India become the victims of this degradation. And as a result they have been the active representatives in movements for the protection of environment. The Ecofeminists also bring new idea to secure health, dignity and the security of all human beings in the ongoing traditional feminist struggles against poverty, population and sexual and racial violence. Ecofeminism is becoming more and more significant in establishing their point of views on women and nature connection in worldwide forums. (B. Agarwal, Environmental management, equity and ecofeminism: Debating India's experience)

Warren opines (1990) that , if women are to rekindle the connection with nature and use their intuitive power and ‘unite in sameness’, there might be a chance of influencing a meaningful change in the current modern system to one that is appreciative of nature as an equal and divine authority. (shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in)

Mother Nature is also associated with cultural gender as Carolyn merchant rightly explains,

“There is no simple relationship between the ways in which nature has been gendered both positively and negatively as female over past two and half millennia, and the roles of women in society. Nature has been revered as animate mother, feared and degraded as unpredictable witch, and plowed as virgin land. Yet forces such as the socialization

of women as caretakers and nurturers, the degradation of women's livelihoods and bodies, and the double burden borne by women as workers and homemakers in capitalist, socialist and colonized countries have often propelled them to act to preserve both non-human nature and themselves."

(Merchant, *Earthcare: Women and the Environment* p.1)

The word first was originated by the French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974. It has become a philosophical trend and a military movement in the English speaking world. Today we work for Eco peace, Eco justice, Eco economics, Eco politics, Eco education, Eco philosophy, and for the evolution of ecofeminism. The work of ecofeminism takes more than dozen years as composing good quality of soil takes time. The concept of ecofeminism was first mentioned in 1974, in the conference "*Women and the Environment*," that was planned by Sandra Marburg and Lisa Watson at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1974. Then after, Ynestra King and other women in New England arranged a conference in Amherst on "*Women and Life on Earth: Ecofeminism in the 1980s*." This conference investigated the association of feminism, ecology, militarism and health. A feminist, anti-militarist, anti-nuclear war weapons' group also were fascinated by this conference. Later on that meeting also stimulated two others as Susan Adler had planned the conference on "*Women and the Environment*," at Sonoma State University in California, and "*Women and Life on Earth*" at London. There are so many eco feminists' books and articles as well as debates are avail but it is difficult to cite here all, however undoubtedly, *Woman and Nature, the Roaring Inside Her* by Susan Griffin and *The Death of Nature* by Carolyn Merchant, *Ecofeminism* by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* by Karen Warren, *Ecofeminism as Politics: nature, Marx, and the postmodern*, by Ariel Salleh, *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, edited by Greta Gaard, *Environmental Culture*, and *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, by Val Plumwood, *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization, and World Religions*, by Rosemary Ruether, were particularly important contributions to this concept. Griffin in the prologue of the book truly admits that women are closer to the natural world,

“Woman Speaks with Nature. That she hears voices from under the earth. That wind blows in her ears and trees whisper to her. That dead singing through her mouth and the cries of infants are dear to her. But for him this dialogue is over. He says he is not part of the word that he was set on this world as a stranger. He sets himself apart from woman and nature.”

(Griffin. P.1)

We notice, during early seventies, in Norway the phenomenon ecofeminism was appeared in Francoise D' Eaubonne's book *Feminism or Death* (1974), in English. In 1976, Ynestra King manifested the most primitive term during her coaching courses on 'radical/cultural feminism and ecology' in England that derived this idea from the Frankfurt school (the institute for social research). The Frankfurt philosophers and the followers: Herbert Marcuse, Leo Lowenthal, Karl Wilogel, and Erich Fromm argued that the dehumanizing tendencies of contemporary technological development and progress create suffering in an in egalitarian class of the society and demolition of the environment. In 1972, William Leiss, a theorist published book entitled, '*The domination of Nature*', he argued that " it was Francis Bacon who formulated the modern agenda of power over nature through science and technology he also highlighted the role of technology in mastering both the external world of nature and the human being." (Leiss, 1972, pp.158-159)

Shepherd stated there are three different strands to look at ecofeminism namely liberal, radical and socialist ecofeminists. Moreover, she interprets that liberal ecofeminists challenge the laws and regulations which are related to women and the environment concern. Radical ecofeminists's focal point is more on the patriarchal foundations for current environment degradation. Lastly, social ecofeminists assert that they also distinguish the patriarchal foundations bringing illness to the environment and also concentrate on economic inequalities created by the patriarchal system and the operation of both the environment and women. (Tobo)

Anne Wilson Schef (1981) truly writes on Patriarchal System that

“I like to think the White Male System As analogous to pollution. When you are in the middle of pollution, you are usually unaware of it (especially it is bad.) you eat in it, sleep in it, work in it, and sooner or

later start believing that that is just the way the air is. You are unaware of the fact that pollution is not natural until you remove yourself from it and experience non- pollution... you can get away from pollution by leaving New York City and going to Mountains, but you cannot get away from the White Male System as easily as that. It is culture we all live in it. We have been educationally, politically, economically, philosophically, physically, and theologically trained in it, and our emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual survivals have been depended on our knowing and supporting system.”

(pp.10-11)

Through the numerous activities, movements and protests against environmental disasters and destruction, the movement got recognitions all over the world. Susan Griffin's work, *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* had awaked many people with the thought of ecofeminism. Through the accident of the meltdown at Three Mile Island, it became apparent for the diffusion of the idea. It also prompted large numbers of women for the earliest ecofeminist conference on - '*Women and Life on Earth: A Conference on Eco-Feminism in the Eighties*' - in March 1980, in USA at Amherst which explored the association of feminism and militarization, healing and ecology. (Women and Life on Earth - women in international cooperation for peace, ecology and social justice.)

Ynestra King, organizer of the conference points out ,

“Ecofeminism is about connectedness and wholeness of theory and practice. It asserts the special strength and integrity of every living thing. For us the snail darter is to be considered side by side with a community's need for water, the porpoise side by side with appetite for tuna, and the creatures it may fall on with Skylab. We are a woman-identified movement and we believe we have a special work to do in these imperil times. We see the devastation of the earth and her beings by the corporate warriors, and the threat of nuclear annihilation by the military warriors, as feminist concerns. It is the masculinist mentality which would deny us our right to our own bodies and our own sexuality, and which depends on multiple systems of dominance and state power to have its way.” (Gates)

Her major contribution is her landmark article on ecofeminism “Feminism and the Revolt of Nature.” Ynestra King figures it out that women are the 'bridge' between `Man'/culture and nature within western patriarchy. Plumwood disputed, women are not `one' with nature but they have been `thrown into an alliance. (M. Mellor, The politics of women and nature: Affinity, contingency or material relation?)

1.12 Historical Background

Discovering the history and its understanding and explanation is also noteworthy for determining the ecological feminism. For the duration of Victorian times, some intellectuals believed that women with the moral goodness, purity, patience, self-sacrifice, spirituality, and maternal instinct would redeem fallen political life (if given the vote), or, alternating that they were too good for fallen political life and so should not have the right to vote. numerous environmental critiques have depicted the exploitation and operation of nature is linked with control over and exploitation of human beings.

Water and air being free supplies for the ordinary people become unfit to sustain life as privatized. They become a privilege for those who can have enough money to pay for them. There are of course apparent segregation in the environmental issues faced by people, particularly the third world and the North women. The issues of accessing clean water and other resources immersed in non-industrial societies, moreover it created the problems of poverty and health related issues. Due to the problems of human injustice, degradation of environment and without market power, poor, women and children become the victims of it. On this point, Battersby, Swilling and Annecke and others too rightly describe that though women produce half of the food required across the globe, women and children suffer the majority in terms of food insecurity and poverty.

As far as the North is related, Northern ecological issues are not visible, is more unknown. In South, feminist critics of the ‘steam roller’ represented the impact of industrial modernization and global capitalism and the threat to both women and environment from so-called ‘development’. Women were facing problems and hardships, such as commercial farming, logging and mining attacked on their traditional way of life. They were forced into extremely exploitative and health threatening forms of production. The aftermath of the destructive social, economic

and environmental consumption centric development occurred together in Hurricane Katrina. That hit the poor African American communities the terribly in North. Women's campaigns in North and South works for their environmental issues and male- female equality in each sphere of government, military, industrial and commercial decisions.

Even Ecofeminism clearly talks on the association between women, society and nature. Some socialist Eco feminists opine that inequality in society escorts to the supremacy of women and operation of natural world. In short if there is equality in society there will be no issues of exploitation and domination occurred.

Pepper has divided the three phases of ecological behaviour in 1996 such as,

- (1) The phase of traditional environmental protection at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.
- (2) The phase of ecological movements in the 1970s and 1980s.
- (3) The phase of the global ecological crises at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of 1990s. (Littig, Feminist Perspectives on Environment and Society p.123)

The roots of the development of human beings' oppression and exploitation and domination of woman and nature and non-human world are defined into three points;

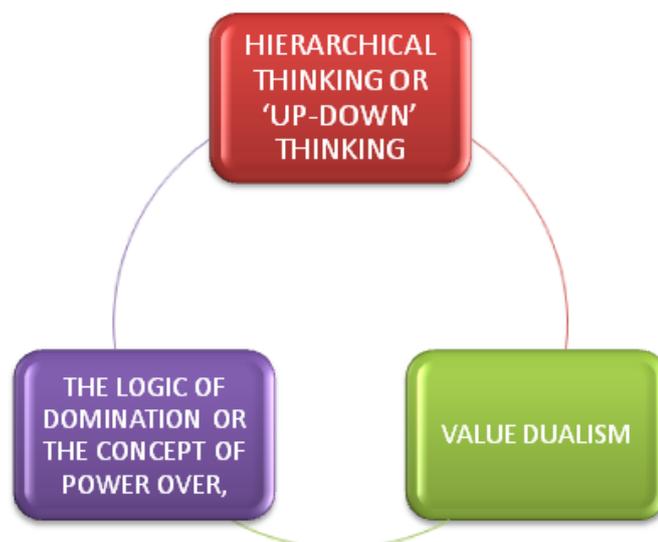


FIG. 1.12 ROOTS OF OPPRESSION OF WOMAN AND NATURE

- 1) Patriarchal hierarchical thinking or 'up-down' thinking that values more that is up than that is down. In short certain things are considered greater or higher than others. The other key feature of the domination of women and nature is value Dualism means contrasting pairs that give higher value to one over the other which is identified and seen as two oppositional realities as higher and lower (e.g. Male –Female, Light – Darkness, Reason- Emotion).
- 2) Further the logic of domination or the concept of power over, means structuring the point of view in a way that defends the domination and subordination of one group over other. It has absolute power over other group. Women and nature both have been thoroughly undervalued and oppressed to serve the men and society. Hence, the power imbalance and hierarchy through the logic of dominance in our society between women and men is the main reason of the occurrence of historical ecofeminism. Before and during the Enlightenment period, it was begun with the increase of science.
- 3) Third depiction of the associations of women and natural world is in individual psychology which resulted into differentiated personality development. E.g. In both creating and maintaining/nurturing life, Woman develops "softer" ego restrictions in compare to man. Therefore woman usually maintains their interconnectedness to other human beings non-human and to environment; Man, on the contrary, psychologically and physically disconnects both from his human mothers and from Mother Earth.

Ecofeminism has been depicted as a third wave of feminism, a branch of deep ecology. Deep ecology is an environmental movement and philosophy. During the early 1970's, the Norwegian activist and philosopher Arne Ness launched it. It believes that humankind, the existing surroundings or the entire ecosystem has right to live, breath and blossom. Deep ecology describes as the word says deeper questions on environmental degradation and exploitation concerning 'how' and 'why'. So human has no right to reduce the diversity of environment for their personal pleasure and need. It says that we should think and believe that all are part of this living earth and one should feel for it just as to put our leg in another's shoes, it alerts us to the injuries of the world. Seeing that women too became aware of the violent behaviour against them by patriarchal system, many people started to act against environmental

demolition and the threat of atomic eradication on the whole planet. As Mies and Shiva pointed out:

“In defying this patriarchy we are loyal to future generations and to life and this planet itself. We have a deep and particular understanding of this both through our natures and our experience as women.”

The first eco feminist writers, Maria, a German social scientist and Vandana, an Indian physicist from the ecology movement, emphasize on how our contemporary world has been relating to nature since the time of enlightenment right up to the biotechnology of today and how supremacy and dominance over Nature and women has ensured the violence inseparable from our civilisation.

Vandana Shiva is India’s voice of future: the environment, poverty, women’s rights, globalization, energy, and agriculture, nutrition-Vandana Shiva has been at the forefront of all the key struggles of our time...for placing women and ecology at the heart of modern development discourse. (Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India* p.1)

Further Mies states that in 19th and 20th century, women’s movements came out only because of their history in which women has been suppressed by governing institutions and the academia. Several cases of the murdering and burning of women took place due to assumption such as women being witches. Hence these movements were occurred to battle against patriarchy, the exploitation and subjugation of women. (Tobo)

According to Vandana Shiva and Mile Maria, Ecofeminism is concerning the resemblance of society’s connection with natural world and woman. Ecological demolition and manufacturing ruin a direct menace to everyday existence. And it is woman’s particular responsibility to preserve it. They talked about the rising of women everywhere and protect life from the industrialist patriarchal world System. However some scholars would agree with the both masculine and feminine qualities of women, but patriarchy categorizes them within the classification of society. Similarly, the natural world is neither masculine nor feminine *in itself*, but both.

Some theorists link ecofeminism with linguistic by identifying the correlation

between sexist and naturist language which used to describe both women and nature. For example, Woman is regularly illustrated in animal terms like cows, bitches, foxes, pussycats, cats, serpents. And nature is described like: Nature is raped, conquered, controlled, and mined. 'Fertile soil' is tilled, her 'secrets' are 'Penetrated' etc. which shows the humiliation and oppressions of women and nature through language.

Spiritualist eco feminist Charlene Spretnak, points out that spirituality is a source of inspiration and encouragement for woman in her efforts to transform the societal realities. So Spiritual Eco feminists put emphasis on the natural connection between nature and women, as spirituality is to do with the inner sense of connection or relationship which is sacred. They also believe that with the help of spirituality, women can fight against patriarchal society. In short spirituality is a source of inspiration for them to change the society or its realities.

Vandana Shiva also explains this,

“Forests have always been central to Indian civilization. They have been worshipped as Aranyani, the Goddess of the forest. The primary source of life and fertility, and the forest as a community has been viewed as a model for societal and civilizational evolution. The diversity, harmony and self-sustaining nature of the forest formed the organizational principles guiding civilization; the Aranyasanskriti (roughly translated as ‘the culture of the forest’ or ‘forest culture’) was not a condition of primitiveness, but one of conscious choice.”

(Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India* p.55)

Whereas Simon D Beauvoir and Sherry O Ornates reject the connection between nature and women stating that this connection is not natural, its mere social creation. However as a spiritual person, the researcher believes that through spirituality we look at life more deeply, and respond in ways that strengthen our God –given humanity. With spiritual way of life, human being begins to look at colleagues as fellow travelers on universe and whoever watches a tree grow from one stage to another can see that what began as a seed one day attains the stature of a fully grown tree.

Ultimately, the aim of the spiritual ecofeminists is to promote male headed spirituality to empower patriarchal society. As they assumed that

“Spirit, Sacred, Goddess, God--whatever you want to call it--is not found outside the world somewhere--it's in the world: it is the world, and it is us. Our goal is neither to get off the wheel of birth nor to be saved from something. Our deepest experiences are experiences of connection with the Earth and with the world.”

(Starhawk. p.73)

Socialist Ecofeminists considers ecofeminism as philosophy and movement came out from the combination of feminist and ecological judgments. They are of opinion that the social mindsets that express the supremacy and subjugation of women are openly related to the abuse of the natural world. It unites eco-anarchism and bioregional democracy under the feminism.

Hence, the masculine possession of land led to the dominating civilization that is also known as patriarchal society which also led to exploitation and oppression of individuals. And under the abusive land ethic, animals and land are also devalued or considered only as economic possessions. Stephanie Lahar further opines that Ecofeminism is both a social theory and a political movement. Hence, ecofeminism has significant potential for both.

With reference to Indian context, and other developing countries, development became a tool of wealth creation in the eyes of modern western patriarchy, based on the operation of women and nature. As an effect of it, the third world women, tribal and peasants are fighting for liberty and freedom. Maria Mies marks, “This concept of surplus has patriarchal bias, because from the point of view of nature and women, it is not based on material surplus produced over and above the requirements of the community: it is stolen and appropriated through violent modes of nature (who needs a share of her produce to reproduce herself) and from women (who need a share of nature’s produce to produce substance and ensure the survival). (Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India* p.4)

And as a result of it, Maldevelopment emerges as a new cause of man- woman inequality in society. This maldevelopment abuses the harmony and integrity of male with nature as well as the synchronization of male and female. This maldevelopment is not only in action but in thought also. And ecofeminism is necessary to unveil this operation of women and nature occurred through development, modernization, globalization and industrialization. After the world war, for the survival of all life on earth, women, as special victims of environmental degradation are establishing the campaigns and organizations to recover and protect the mother earth and their fundamental women principles. On the other hand, ecofeminism has been also developed in the north and one of its most influential voices worldwide is the Indian ecofeminist, Vandana Shiva who is a southern star in eco feminist activists.

Vandana Shiva, a renowned environmentalist contributed in this movement by writing books, condemns this dogma of development and calls this western concept as Maldevelopment. She also throws light on the negative impact of this western ideology on women and nature. Vandana Shiva and Maria Miles also criticize as well propose new ideological ecofeminist perspectives in the book, '*Ecofeminism*'. According to these ecofeminist writers, ecofeminism is a new and somewhat controversial philosophy.

Together Merchant and Shiva uncover the dominance of women and of nature primarily in a shift in ideas and representations of women and nature, at a particular period in history. Merchant describes the link between the subordination of women and of nature in the 16th and 17th century which is associated with the beginning of the scientific revolution. (B. Agarwal, Environmental management, equity and ecofeminism: Debating India's experience)

On the other hand, Shiva sketches the subordination of women and of nature to the modern science and British Colonialism in the mid eighteenth century in India. There is a close linkage between the humiliation of women and deprivation of nature in contemporary society. Merchant also argues that between the sixteenth and seventeenth century in Europe both the Mechanism and domination over nature resulted into the exploitation of nature and male dominance over women. Like Merchant, Shiva also sees women's position in society is also equal like men. This mal development is resulted into brutality, a destruction of nature and women in every

area. It also depreciates women and nature. According to Shiva, there is only one path to survival and liberation of nature, woman and man, and that path is the ecological one, of harmony. (Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India*)

Even Francis Bacon writes in his essay *Masculine birth of time*, written in 1603-3 but unpublished, to subdue a female nature through which male can participate in the process of life. He demands split with nature and science and wants to unite himself with nature. His philosophy came out due to the operation of women and depredation of environment. We are the feminine in fact Gandhiji also cultivate this desire in his daily prayer to make me more womanly' through which he can save the life on earth.

The saga of female meekness and masculine originality has been analysing by many scholars. Like Simon D Beauvoir describes women as passive, weak and unproductive which is accepted by patriarchal society. And it proves that the continued existence of mankind on earth has been possible only because of woman, the saver than man- the seeker. Even Maria Mies also agreed with this and she points out that, the relationship of man the hunter with nature was violent and destructive in contrast to the relationship the woman –gatherers had. (Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India* p.50)

In mid-sixties and early seventies, all over India, students and some activists protested and started *morchas* and tribal movements. And women participated in large number in these movements against the women's operation and violence and gender discrimination. The women who came out with movements in recent time are Medha Patkar, Mahasweta Devi, Arundhati Roy and C.K. Janu and many more. In India, it is surprising that male writers as Amitav Gosh (*The Hungry Tide*), Indrasinha (*Animal's people*) and the only woman writer Arundhati Roy are also incorporated in the field of postcolonial Indian ecofeminism.

It was romanticism which grew out in literature in 18th and 19th century writers such as Words Worth, William Blake, P. B. Shelly, John Keats, S.T. Coleridge, G.M. Hopkins and many others sought refuge in the lap of nature and that is pastoral land. But there is difference between romanticism and ecofeminism. The social frame work of Romanticism does not exist today.

As the globe faces serious threats like depletion of ozone layer and forests, the impact of biotechnology, modernization and many other which were not faced by romantics. Like romanticism Ecofeminism has its root in literature also. The contribution of women authors; Vandana Shiva, Sarah Joseph, Anita Desai, Anita Nair, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, make us aware about the involvement of women in the preservation of nature and feminine values.

MedhaPatkar is a social activist in India known for her active role in Narmada Bachao Andolan related to Sardar Sarovar dam. As a follower of Mahatma Gandhi, She believes in Non-Violence.



FIG. 1.13 NARMADA BACHAV ANDOLAN

The primary aim of this Andolan was the native people, who are living in that area. She is also working as an activist against Lavasa project in Maharashtra, as she could not resist the environmental damage because of this project. She used to fight for the tribal, downtrodden and underprivileged people. She has dedicated her life as a social worker as well as a writer. Her first book entitled “Jhansi Rani”, based on the life of the Queen Laxmibai, the woman ruler who died fighting against the Britishers. She has also written novels, short stories and articles with reference to the struggle for existence by Tribals.

Through her novels; *Sal Girar Dake(In the Name of Birthday)*, *Aranyar Adhikar (Rights over the Forests)*, and *Chotti Mundaebang Tar Tir (ChottMunda and His*

arrow), Medha Patkar brings forth the history of the tribal life from the colonial period to contemporary time.

Arundhati Roy was also arrested for her protest of Narmada Bachao Andolan. She narrates the story in one of her interviews:

“It was absolutely fantastic. I was in a village, Sulgaon. All night, all over the valley, people started arriving, by tractor, by motorcars, by foot. By three in the morning there were about 5,000 of us. We started walking in the dark to the dam site. The people already knew that the dam site would be captured, but they didn’t know from where the people would come. There’s a huge area of devastation there. So we walked in the dark. It was amazing. Five thousand people, mostly villagers, and also people from the cities- lawyers, architects, journalists- walking through these by ways and crossing the streams in absolute silence. There was not a person that a bid or coughed or cleared their throats. Occasionally, a whole group of women would sit down and pee and then keep walking. Finally at dawn, we arrived and took over the dam site. For hours the police surrender us. Then there was a baton charge. They arrested thousands of people, including me. The jails were full.” (Barsamian, Interview with Arundhati Roy)

As an ecofeminist, her only desire is to end the patriarchal domination on earth and women.

Another Indian communal protester, C.K. Janu is the leader of Adivasi Gothra Maha Sabha, a movement. Though she is an illiterate woman, she is working as a leader of tribal in Kerala. Traditionally, Adivasis have a symbolic and harmonious relationship with the land and it is an integral part of their lives. As they are uneducated people, they earn their livelihood by using the natural assets which are accessible to them. They haven’t turned away from their eco-centric culture. They believe that they have blood relationship with their land and cannot survive without their land. C. K Janu came out without any political background and started raising her voice and fights for the tribal people for their land rights. She also wrote her autobiography, *“Mother Forest: The Unfinished Story of C. K. Janu”* which is translated into Malayalam also, which explores her life as an Adivasi woman in the society and significance of the forest in life. Being an Adivasi woman, she has identified multiple problems of tribal

people over generations and learns from their problems. She says: "I have no Leader or philosophy, Experience is my guide." (NCHRO)

To comprehend and understand the responsiveness of eco feminism, one must observe the Indian ecofeminist writers who presented altogether different pictures in sequence such as we are facing natural calamity in agriculture, in national security, in education as well as in international dept situation and most important in the global environment. In this modern era we all agree that something is going wrong. Thus the modern environmentalists come out with the environmental issues such as deforestation, excess energy use, nature's personhood, climate change, and animal sentience in many early modern texts.

We describe Literature as a reflection of our life and literature is also a mirror of life and society, and to narrate the human life which is connected with nature, literary writers describe the nature as an omnipotent and man as a dependent on it. The ecofeminist writers reflect the man and his life in the context of nature, and the characters attitudes and their behaviour towards nature. Such writing of novelists has helped to locate the status of women as well as contemporary Indian civilization and culture.

A work of fiction is determined to be the most important form of literature suited to Indian sensibility. Ecofeminism concept in Indian English novels brings revolution against the patriarchal society. Female writing in India immersed in the late 19th century. Before that the life of woman was prescribed from the male point of view. Hence in search of identity, women authors appeared during the half way of the twentieth century. Indeed Indian woman in that phase was dominated, marginalized and suppressed by the men as well as the colonizers. In this regard, Boehmer rightly writes that,

"Colonized women were as it is called, doubly or triply marginalized. That is to say, they were disadvantaged on the grounds not only of gender but also of race, social class and in some cases, religion and caste."

(Boehmer. P.224)

The novels written by Indian women mostly highlight the ambiguous relationship that women have with the environment. They also represent themes related to gender, class, caste, race and communal practices and nature issues and problems that are manipulated by patriarchal dominant society etc. they raised their voice against any kind of injustice towards women and nature. And their works provide healthy insight of understanding, reservoirs of meanings and bliss of discussion to the Indian writing. However for the sake of convenience of the study, the scholar has selected three novels from three different women authors for the purpose of research. The remarkable figures of Indian women writers from twentieth century literature are Arundhati Roy, Kamala Markandya, Anita Desai, Sashi Deshpande, Usha K.R., Kiran Desai, Sohaali Abdulali, Gita Mehta, Sarah Joseph, Anita Nair, Manjula Padmanabhan who have worked on the concept of ecology and its relations with woman and ecofeminism is very vivid in their novels. This awakening brings fruitful results in the realm of literature by affecting the Indian culture, religion and traditions.

The eminent novelist in Indian writing is Arundhati Roy. The operation of women and nature is represented in Arundhati Roy's work *The God of Small Things* in which she portrays scenery of fictional village Ayemenem. She portrays the glory of landscape and its degradation by human intervention. Being both male and capitalist Chacko the character of this novel has both the cultural power and the economic power to gaze at the image of Ammu. Moreover The love between Ammu and Velutha (the untouchable) transgresses established social codes –gender and caste discrimination and is parallel to nature which too needs to be contained. Women in Roy's text are "sleeping partners" both economically and sexually. Roy makes the contrasting images of nature in the text move from progress to denigration in a linear way to show how nature and the lives of the oppressed human are interlinked. She has explored the authentic picture of patriarchal culture and male dominated society. The barriers before the growth of women have been pinpointed in this novel. She does not accept women and nature as a weaker or inferior section. Even the influential writers and another major voice of Indian writing in English are Anita Desai and Kamla Markandya who have also explored the women and environment connection through their protagonists' struggles. Kamala Markandaya constitutes remarkable place in Indian writing in English by initiating the transformation of women from possession to person in her novels. Her novels reflect the picture of the condition of women, their

emotions, moral and spiritual problems. Ecofeminism concern is also found in her novels. Her masterpiece novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*, describes the explosion of industrialization that manifested the policies of development. Even A harmoniousness and fullness of life reflects in her unfolding story, especially in the comparison between the attractiveness of the fields with the loveliness her husband which can be described in her dialogue, “*While the sun shines on you and the fields are green and beautiful to the eye, and your husband sees beauty in you which no one has seen before, and you have a good store of grain laid away for hard times, a roof over you and a sweet stirring in your body, what more can a woman ask for?*”

Kamla Marakandya portrays the Rukmani, 12 year old girl and a married woman and then a mother with different relationships and her total dependence on environment. She gets pleasure in working in garden and sees the development of her field. But it is tragic that her domestic duties as a woman and reproductive labour are not given any importance and value in this rural patriarchal society. Through the character Rukmani, Kamla Markandya depicts the problems of rural life as well as the problems and struggles of a woman. Kamala Markandya’s another novel *The Coffee Dams* also centres on a dam which is going to be established over turbulent hilly river in India. In this novel, Helen the protagonist is the nature lover and working for tribal.

One of the most celebrated writers is Anita Desai. Through her works *Cry the Peacock* and *Fire on the Mountain*, Desai brings out the connection between men and women and their connection and interaction with environment. The readings of the books show that how the protagonists, Maya and Nanda Kaul, Raka and Ila Das are close to nature, even they are also psychologically associated with nature. Through her writing, she has given a new dimension to the success of Indian Women novelists in English writings. The researcher explores more about Anita Desai’s novel *Fire on the Mountain* in next chapter as; it is one of the select novels for the research.

The contemporary novels of Geeta Mehta’s *A River sutra*”, Soha Abdul Ali’s *The Madwoman of Jagore*, Arundhati Roy’s *An atlas of Impossible Longing* and Usha K.R.’s *Monkey Man* have been also written on the theme of relationship of women with development, and urbanization and the city life.

Furthermore, there is an intrinsic relationship between women and nature and the way human being treat woman as well as nature. In this context Gita Mehta in her book, *A River Sutra* uses river Narmada to hold together the main story and sub stories. “*The Courtesan’s Story*” explores the story of courtesan and his daughter, how he failed to protect her daughter from the heartless society ruled by patriarchal power around her. Finally Courtesan daughter is abducted to Rahul Singh who is also the victim of the same society. Later on, the girl ends up her life in the River Narmada. Even her mother is not disturbed by her escape thinking that all the women find the freedom or shelter in nature (Narmada).

Usha K. R, another writer has also emerged as one of the famous Indian women novelists in English literature. Her novel *Monkey Man* integrates Indian urban obsessions in last few decades. The novel also shows the changes through the country- affecting parts and different cities to a lesser and greater level.

Kiran Desai, the prominent voice of younger group of Indian English writing, was awarded with the Prestigious Booker Prize for her book, *Inheritance of Loss*. Desai discussed the issues of globalization, terrorist violence, and economic inequality. It also shows that both, women and nature are equally condemned to inherent losses only. Her famous novel *Hullabaloo in Guava Orchard* presents the protagonist Sampath, who is dreamer and insincere, fed up with the hectic town life and his job as a clerk and gets freedom from the city life and feels oneness with nature. So Through her characters Kiran Desai voices out the environmental issues, and irresponsibly of man towards nature.

Most of the ecofeminists and activists- Gail Omvedt, Ilina Sen and Gabriele Deitrich support the women’s perspectives on issues of ecological struggles and try to focus on *Stree Shakti* (women power) than operation in their works.

Thus women writing in Indian Fiction highlight the ambivalent relationship between woman and nature in their works and also interweaving various eco feminist theories and seeking solutions or possibilities for the empowerment and development of women and nature in their novels and have made significant contribution in Indian English literature.

Pastly Hallen explains that

“... Everything is connected to everything else and each aspect is defined by and dependent upon the whole, the total context. Life is interconnected and interdependent: we are not above nature, we are an intimate part of it.”

(Hallen.1998,pp.100)

In short, we cannot exist without nature; we are inseparable from our mother earth. Perhaps it would be wise to concentrate on some points related to scenario one witnesses today in the context of ecofeminism. Most importantly, Ronal Engel informs about “sustainable –development, that can be definite as the kind of human activity that nourishes and perpetuates the historical fulfilment of the whole community of life on Earth”. (Rolston).

Kopnina and Shoreman-Ouimet advice to carrying acknowledgement to the Mother earth as a being, nature as an equal into our consciousness. Women are seen as the homemakers, with significant decisions being made on consumption patterns on a very local scale which brings awareness of nature and shift in behaviour could have significant effects on the attitudes of our children and future society. (Helen Kopnina)

Women’s correlation with the natural world and their knowledge from all walks of life can generate opportunities for other’s to give importance to it. The connection between woman and nature is undeniable. However, the most important part is to find the solution of this mess that can be beneficial to nature and woman and role of women can be seen as a solving the ecological problem.

On the other hand, we should try to change the system in which environment is conserve. It should not be oppressed but should be taken proper care to maintain a healthier and secure future for women, children and for each and every one on residing on this planet. The United Nation Women organization had initiated a platform to examine and discuss the issues of woman and nature that help women for establishing some environmental policies for women.

Barbara Bergmann opines,

“Anyone who knows anything of history knows that great social changes are impossible without feminine upheaval. Social progress can be measured exactly by the social position of fair sex.”

(Dr.Richa)

However, we are all silent on action one and other hand. Ecofeminism should be taken seriously as a simple call for action and awareness on the connectedness of all things in relevance and reality. Here The researcher like to discuss the one of the most recent evolution in ecofeminism that is transformative ecofeminism which emphasis that women need to value their self and their special relationship with nature and women should raise their voice against the oppression or should take political actions. Thus many women have played a crucial role in rising, molding, and sustaining Ecofeminism. And due to their consistent efforts, women and Nature have been placed as an important part contributing for the development of family, society and the entire universe. In short, this chapter serves the purpose of providing a kind of theoretical background of the present study.

In next chapter, the research work seeks to bring out and analyse the selected novels by famous eco feminist authors in the light of this and also looking forward to a new dawn where there is no exploitations prevail against women and nature. The research scholar has selected the same thread in the following novels for the sake of the study:

Arundhati Roy: *The God of Small Things*

Anita Desai : *Fire on the Mountain*

Sarah Joseph : *Othappu- The Scent of the Otherside.*

These three novels also covers the themes of man-woman relationship, human yearning, desires, sex, love, emotions, feelings, hatred, self-consciousness, gender inequality, discrimination, awareness, domination, marginalization, protest, myth, irony, passion, marriage system, loneliness, self-identity, social, political, cultural system etc.

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CHAPTER -2

An Exploration of Ecofeminism in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

The present chapter makes an ardent attempt to examine and evaluate the elements of ecofeminism in *The God of Small Things* by introducing the author of this remarkable novel namely Arundhati Roy. Arundhati Roy has occupied an eminent position among the Indian English writers. The close reading of the novel presents her profound insight into the dilemma of the dominance of woman and nature within the male dominated society as well as their interconnection.

Roy was the first Indian lady who became an international literary sensation by winning the prestigious Booker Prize Award in London on October 1997 for her novel, *The God of Small Things*. Due to this recognition, she and her novel has been very popular in native India and worldwide.

On 24th November, 1964, Suzanna Arundhati Roy was born in Shillong in India. Her Mother Mary is a Malayali Syrian Christian and Her Father Rajib is a Bengali Hindu Tea Planter just as parents of Estha and Rahel. Arundhati Roy started her schooling when she was ten. Mary Roy (mother) opened her own educational institute. The first student of that school is Arunshati Roy. Her mother divorced her father and returned to native village with her two children Suzanna A Roy and Lalith, her brother in Ayemenem. She was sent to Boarding school for few years, and then she went to Delhi at the Delhi School of Planning and Architecture, for further study in Architecture field.

In her interviews, she confessed that it is extremely tough for her to rise up without father and how much she admires her mother to raise two children named Suzanna

Arundhati Roy and her brother Lalith, on her own in such a country. Her mother was a social activist. In an interview on October 27, 1997 with India Today, Mary Roy explained that,

“Arundhati Roy is a born talker and a born writer. While she was studying in our school it was a problem to find a teacher who could cope with her voracious appetite for reading and writing.”

(Prasad Murari- Arundhati Roy: Critical Perspective, p.12)

Moreover she admits that her architecture background has influenced her writing. She received her degree at the Delhi School of Planning and Architecture and meanwhile she came into the company of Gerard de Cunha, her first husband there. They went to the seaside together and started to live a normal life by doing business of cakes for tourists. In the meantime, she wrapped up her ‘unofficial’ wedding with Gerard de Cunha.

After four years from coming back from New Delhi, In 1984 Arundhati Roy came into connection of a movie director named Pradip Krishan. She portrayed a small role of a ‘Tribal Bimbo’ in Pradip Krishan’s movie, ‘Massey Saab’ in 1985 and later on both got married and started to write screenplays at the same time as also carried out a bit of film journalism together. The first series of six series of ‘Bargad-The Banyan Tree’, Television Serial was terminated due to the economy issues.

Nevertheless, the tale and script of ‘*In Which Annie Gives It Those Once*’ brought success to the couple. However her screenplay for the film ‘*The Electric Moon*’ (1992) was not a success.

In 1994, her controversial review on Shekhar Kapoor’s movie ‘*Bandit Queen*’, that is derived from ‘*India’s Bandit Queen - The factual tale of Phoolan Devi (1991)*’ written by Mala Sen fetched a good amount of media coverage and she was also messed up in nasty court cases. She got back to work on ‘*The God of Small Things*’ after her trial which got an overwhelming response. The book emerged as her remarkable masterpiece and Roy gets renowned overnight.

Pankaj Mishra said

“This is the biggest book since ‘Midnight Children’. Within the first three months more than 350,000 copies were sold. It has been translated into twenty four languages and also distributed in thirty countries and became the biggest selling book. Nevertheless, in India, it received mixed response.”

Roy is an influential political figure and speaker of the anti globalization campaign. She can be considered an activist as much as an author because her writings and actions speak out on social issues and her interest for both humans and the environment.

She has protested against India's nuclear weapon program and against 'The Narmada Project' along with Megha Patkar. She wrote 'The End of Imagination' which was available in her collected work 'The cost of living (1999). Even she has contributed her booker prize cash and royalty, she received, on the mission of Narmada Bachao Andolan. As an ecofeminist, she desires to work for women and environment, which proves through her interview with David Barsamian on her efforts of Narmada Bachao Movement and recount her story:

“It was absolutely fantastic. I was in a village Sulgoan. All night, all over the valley, people started arriving, by tractor, by motorcar, by foot. By three in the morning there were about 5,000 of us. We started walking in the dark to the dam site. The people already knew that the dam site would be captured but they didn't know from where the people would come. There's huge area of devastation there. So we walked in the dark. It was amazing. Five thousand people., mostly villagers, but also people from cities - lawyers, architects, journalists - walking through these byways and crossing streams in absolute silence. There was not a person that lit a bidi or coughed or cleared their throats. Occasionally, a whole group of women would sit down and pee and then keep walking. Finally, at dawn we arrived and took over the dam site. For hours, the police surrounded us. Then there was a baton charge. They arrested thousands of people, including me. The jails were full.”

(Barsamian, Interview with Arundhati Roy p.1-8)

Her opposition to this project was even criticized by Congress and BJP leaders in Gujarat and accused of 'malingering Gujarat and preventing its March towards progress and peace'. As a result, in 2002, she was imprisoned for one day and fined of Rs. 2500. She has also campaigned against United State military invasion of Afghanistan and the Muthanga Wildlife Reserve incident in 2003, which was social movement for Adivasi land rights in Kerala. The leaders of the movement arrested and she personally visited the area. She wrote a note to A.K. Antony, the Chief Minister of Kerala. Roy's outspokenness on social causes can be seen through her actions as she criticized violent conflicts such as Indian Parliament Attack in 2001, the Mumbai Attack on November 2008, Lebanon War in 2006 and in 2009 she has criticized actions by the government against Naxalite-Maoist rebellious in India, by condemning it 'war on the poorest people in the country'.

Arundhati Roy also criticized Anna Hazare's anti-corruption campaign through her article which was published in 'The Hindu'. Roy has also stated,

"an anti corruption campaign is a catch – all campaign. It included everybody from the extreme left to the extreme right and also the extremely corrupt. No one's going to say they are for corruption after all I am not against a strong anti-corruption bill but corruption is just a manifestation of problem, not the problem itself."

(en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arundhati -Roy)

Arundhati Roy expressed in one of her interviews with The Times of India, in 2008 that she was in favor of Kashmiri separatism and supported them by her anti-India dialogues at a conference on Kashmir, 'Aazadi: the only way'. Indian National Congress criticized her support to Kashmiri separatism and was also charged with sedition by the Delhi Police along with Geelani.

The God of Small Things is the only work of fiction she has written which acknowledged with mixed reactions after being published and after that she has concentrated on political issues. She is the supporter of anti-nuclear, anti-American Movements, anti-globalization. She has also written her non-fiction book in *The Cost of Living* in 1999 and in 2001 *Power Politics*, followed *The Algebra Infinite Justice* in 2002, in 2003 *War Talks*, and *The Check book and Cruise missile* in 2004. She was

also honored with the Sydney Peace Prize in May 2004 for her influential work in societal campaigns and promoting non-violence. For her collection of essays '*The Algebra of Infinite Justice*', she was honored with the Sahitya Academy Award, but she declined to accept it.

After twenty years, the fiction revisited Arundhati Roy and she has published her novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* in 2017 set in old Delhi and Kashmir. According to her, the novel is about the air we breathe in India and that is Hinduism, nature of Indian state, nationalism, caste, politics, Godhra train burning, and Kashmir separation. And for this novel she was awarded Man Booker Prize in 2017.

Apart from her political controversy, Roy turns out to be one of the most controversial figures in her time, when a lawyer Sabu Thomas from Kerala filed a public suit against the novel's *The God of Small Things* last chapter-The Cost of living for depicting the sex scene between Ammu and Velutha which corrupts the mind of the readers.

However the main objective of this study is to focus on the connection of women and nature in the novel through themes, style and topics which cannot be avoided while describing it. By the close reading of the novel one can find that it is semi autobiographical novel and Rahel may be the representative of Arundhati Roy.

The God of Small Things was published in 1997. The prestigious annual award "The best Novel of the year written by a citizen of the United Kingdom, the commonwealth or the Republic of Ireland" was given to this novel. That makes us to think that *The God of Small Things* is on one occasion an Indian novel and an English novel. it is inscribed by an Indian author from Delhi and describes – Kathakali, a classical dance drama form which retells the story of Karn from 'Mahabharata' in her novel means Indian culture. Secondly it is written in English Language of British Colonist to India. Thus I agree that it is both Indian and English novel. Furthermore it is also considered as the World novel in historical, geographical and linguistic context because normally people do not talk about the topics such as politics, religion and caste, whereas this novel talks about it. The success of the novel made her financially secure.

Roy sets the design of her novel in precisely described Indian location and lush country - in Ayemenem, the green town located on the banks of Meenachal River in Kerela - in which she grew up.

The formation of the novel is one of the very difficult tasks or we can say a jigsaw puzzle for a reader as it unfolds the story of three generations. Rather than following a conventional route or time from starting to middle to conclusion, Roy employs backward and forward movements to tell her story where the past is constantly in the present and the present is always determining the future. This novel is divided into 21 different chapters of varying lengths that are as below;

1. Paradise Pickles & Preserves
2. Papachi's Moth
3. Big man the Laltain, Small Man the Mombatti
4. Abhilash Talkies
5. God's own country
6. Cochin Kangaroos
7. Wisdom Exercise Notebooks
8. Welcome Home, Our Shophie Mol
9. Mrs. Pillai, Mrs Eapen, Mrs Rajagopalan
10. The River in the Boat
11. The God of Small Things
12. Kochu Thomban
13. The Pessimist and the Optimist
14. Work is Struggle
15. The crossing

16. A few Hours Later
17. Cochin Harbour Terminus
18. The history House
19. Saving Ammu
20. The Madras Mail
21. The Cost of Living.

Roy chooses 'metatemporal narrative mode', Madhu Benoit used this term to signify Roy's shattering of terrestrial boundaries for her novel which can be cleared from the very first chapter as the first chapter end with the famous lines:

"In a purely practical sense I would probably be correct to say that it all began when Shopie Mol came to Ayemenem."

(Arundhati p.32)

"Equally, it could be argued that it actually began thousands of years ago.

Long before the Marxists came...

before Christianity arrived into Kerala like tea from a teabag...

the Laws that lay down who should be loved and how and how much."

(Arundhati p.32)

Roy's non linear plot and her interesting story telling techniques allow us to compare her to Salman Rushdie. Ramlal Agrawal compared Roy to Salman Rusdhie, the father of modern Indian writing in English, in his work titled '*World Literature Today*', "*the narrative is splashed with humor and irony and is reminiscent of Rushdie's felicity and freedom in using English*"

(p.208)

Arundhati Roy states her rules in *Power Politics*:

“Rule one is fire a writer, as far as I am concerned, there are No Rules. And Rule Two is there are No Excuses for Bad Art.”

(p.5)

As Fredreick Luis Aldama describes *The God of Small Things* like “generously roomy and capable of fitting in everything and everything from the external world and from the subjective world of feeling and thoughts”

Her language experimentation within the novel by breaking the standard norms of grammar, spelling, syntax and forming new words, inserting lists and numeration and scattering the novel with puns, anagrams and palindromes represents Roy as an Anglophone author. Roy has followed the third person story telling structure in the novel yet its narration adopts the children’s thoughts and images. Supriya opines that,

“Roy handles the shifting surfaces of past and present with extraordinary fineness and delicacy, producing a controlled, intricate narrative structure through which the theme of love, spite, betrayal, hatred and guilt run like a spider’s web - A remarkable achievement.”

(Arundhati)

The God of Small Things is the narrative of a Syrian Christian ancestor in Kerala. Like Raja Rao’s work *Kanthapura* (1938) and Mulk Raj Anand’s novel *Coolie* (1936), Roy opens her novel by mentioning a fictional place and landscape at the beginning,

“May in Ayemenem is a hot, brooding month. The days are long and humid. The shrinks and black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still dust green trees. Red bananas ripen. Jackfruits burst. Dissolute bluebottles hum vacuously in the fruity air. Then they stun themselves against clear windowpanes and die, fatly baffled in the sun.”

(Arundhati p.1)

The opening page of novel flourishes with richness of nature along with a description of the summer in Ayemenem. *The God of Small Things* starts in Ayemenem which is a real life rural community in South Central Kerala, set near a river 'Meenachal - resemble in the river Minachil', near the town Kottayum.

Here the researcher likes to quote Simone de Beauvoir, remarked in 'The Second Sex', "*Women have been always man's dependent, if not his slave; the two sexes have never shared the world of equality.*" So with the women characters of the novel are subjected to the dominance of Patriarchal system. As the novel's opening chapter 'Paradise Pickles and Preservers' is the name of the factory started by Mammachi - the protagonists of the novel, Esthappen and Rahel's grandmother. From the very first chapter, the reader can find a patriarchal model and exploitation of marginalized bourgeois women in a private sector and laborers of low caste:

"Up to the time Chako arrived the factory had been a small but profitable enterprise. Mammachi just ran it like a large kitchen. Chako had it registered as a partnership and informed Mammachi that she was the sleeping partner. He invested in equipment and expanded labor force."

(Arundhati p.57)

The foremost event of the novel moves between December 1969 and 1993. The story unwraps with a reunion of the twin Estha and Rahel at the family house which has fallen into ruin. Rahel returns to Ayemenem in her thirties to meet up her brother Estha. They have not been in contact with each other although as twins they are incredibly linked, connected and attached with each other. The meeting of Estha and Rahel after several years is not joyful as they do not know each other from last twenty three years.

Once upon a time Ayemenem was known for its unpolluted river, freshness and greenery but now it is totally changed, instead of greenery and freshness one can find the latest freshly baked, glaring Gulf money residences built by masons, nurses, wire benders and bank clerks. It is gradually urbanized.

"Some days he walked along the banks of the river that smelled of shit and pesticides bought with World Bank loans. Most of the fish had died."

(Arundhati p.13)

"Other days he walked down the road. Past the new, freshly baked, iced, Gulf- money houses built by nurses, masons, wire-benders and bank clerks who worked hard and unhappily in faraway places. Past the resentful older houses tinged green with envy, cowering in their private driveways among their private rubber trees. Each a tottering fiefdom with an epic of its own."

(Arundhati p.13)

The descriptions of the adult Estha's walk around Ayemenem and her later stand on Sardar Sarovar Dam in the Narmada Valley are the evident of Roy's stance on globalization. In short there was exploitation everywhere. The village Ayemenem has changed unbelievably, not only the village but the people in general also changed and lost their innocence. Ayemenem has lost their glory. It is not Ayemenem which is changed but the Ayemenem house is also changed. When Rahel and Estha meet in their Ayemenem house they found the house aloof and gone to the dogs.

"It had little to do with people that lived in it. Like an old man with the people that lived in it. Like an old man with rheumy eyes watching children play, seeing only transience in their shrill elation and their whole- hearted commitment to life."

(Arundhati p.165)

Once that village was full of vegetation of which Estha and Rahel dreamt about it in their childhood:

"It was warm, the water, Grey green, liked ripped silk with fish in it, with the sky and trees in it and at night, the broken yellow moon in it."

(Arundhati p.8)

But after twenty three years, they found that the river was nothing but,

“A slow, slugging green ribbon lawn that ferried fetid garbage to the sea... the banks of the river that smelled of shit and pesticides bought with World Bank loans. Most of the fish had died. The ones that survived suffered from fin rot and had broken but in boils.”

(Arundhati p.13)

Thus Ayemenem house with a legend of five generations - means past which was once a dreamy house, has not meaningful present to tell.

“...the old car settled more firmly into the ground. Like an angular, arthritic hen settling stiffly on her clutch of eggs. With no intention of ever getting up grass grew around its flat tyres. The Paradise Pickle and Preserves signboard rotted and fell inward like a collapsed crown.”

(Arundhati p.295)

The above lines described that how Ayemenem is changed from a beautiful village with all the glory and freshness of nature to a polluted and materialistic town through all these years.

Thus like Faulkner's (1966) 'The Sound and the Fury', Roy's *The God of Small Things* narrates the tale of the family living into the past. In short through her presentation she gives the clear picture of how natural harmony has gone in search of material comforts and pleasures.

Kerala has the utmost literacy rate of 97% among Indian States. In *The God of Small Things*, Rahel, Estha, Ammu, Baby Kochamma, Chacko, Inspector Thomas, Methew are educated 'upper' and middle class characters. In contrast Velutha, Vellya Paapen and Kochu Maria are the Lower class Characters. We agree with the fact that the education ratio is higher in Kerala than any other states in India, so women are also more empowered and educated.

The title *The God of Small Things* itself proposed that small people or things deserve more attention than 'big things'. After the overall analysis of the novel, the researcher found that *The God of Small Things* is a story of a family as well as a story of the characters that have unsatisfied needs and they are penalized by the society or system in many ways. Women characters are confronted with broken marriages, family problems, sexuality, revenge and violence.

The oldest member of the Ayemenem family is Rev. E. John Ipe's father whose description is not given in the novel. His son Ipe known as 'Punnyan Kunju'- means little blessed one. He was the priest of the Mar Thoma Church, and Aleyooty Ammachi, his wife and mother of Baby Kochamma.

Baby Kochamma is the first member of the family of third generation. She is portrayed as a villain in the life of Ammu and twins and the untouchable Velutha. At the age of eighteen, she loved father Mulligam, a young Irish Monk. She has been influenced by 'the Love Laws' as Roy Writes:

"At the first Baby Kochamma tried to seduce Father Mulligan with weekly exhibitions of staged charity. Every Thursday morning, just when father Mulligan was due to arrive, Baby Kochamma force-bathed a poor village child at the well with hard red soap that hurt its protruding ribs."

(Arundhati p.23)

"And she entered a convent with only hope to be with father Mulligan. Somehow to be near him, close enough to smell his beard and to see the coarse weave of his cassock. To love him just looking at him," (Arundhati p.24)

She lives in her dream world.

"She turned to 19 in June and made a fresh entry. Her manner was routine. She wrote: I love you I love you. Every page in the dairy had an identical entry."

(Arundhati p.297)

The above statements are the testimony of Baby Kochamma's feeling for Father Mulligan. In her whole life, she attempts to obey love laws but ends up by contributing to disaster. Soon her dreams fall into pieces when she faces the reality. Out of tortured and deserted she turns into tormented woman in the house and try to poison the minds of Mammachi and Chacko against Ammu, Estha and Rahel and ruins their life. Even her attitudes towards the nature are also distorted.

Here we also find the environmental colonization in the approach of Pappachi and Baby Kochamma towards the farming of the Indian landscape, as in Kerala the British colonial started coffee, rubber and then tea plantation and being close to the British Planters, Christians releases new areas for plantation. As an imperial Entomologist, Pappachi estranged Indian culture and its environment. On the other hand Baby Kochamma's ornamental garden demonstrates an exploitative and abuse attitude towards the non human world and attempts to have power over the Indian environment.

Another interesting character is Mammachi- Soshamma Ipe, the grandmother of Estha & Rahel, the wife of Pappachi and his full name is Benaan John Ipe, brother of baby Kochamma. Mammachi is seventeen years younger than him and Pappachi could never reconcile to the fact that,

"He was an old man when his wife was still in her prime."

(Arundhati p.47)

As women and nature are both considered mediocre to men, such a patriarchal thought can be seen in the characters of Pappachi and Chacko. Chacko is hypocrite with tyrannical attitude like his father. The domination of men in women's life is an obvious element in patriarchal society. Gender discrimination is shown by parents in the family even Ammu's mother turns eyes from her by not giving equal status and found more cruel and hostile towards her own daughter. On the contrary she considered Chacko as an asset or a gift of God who would take care of her. Once, out of invidious and jealousy, when Pappachi, his father is beating Mammachi with a brass-vase and living scars in her skull. She has one daughter, Ammu and the only son, Chacko who came from London a Rhodes-scholar from oxford, puts an end to Pappachi's practice towards her mother-Mammachi. After Chacko's unexpected

action he turned into a hero and her only love. He becomes the repository of all her womanly feeling. Both Ammu and Chacko have no good opinion for their father, who has double face as he likes to be a sophisticated and generous man to public by donating money to leprosy clinics and orphanages whereas for his wife and children he is a shit-water, even Chacko refers him as Anglophile. Mammachi, mother of Chacko and Ammu is an unfortunate wife. Like so many other women in different societies, Mammachi also suffers and she is tortured and abused physically and psychologically by the patriarchal authority, though Mammachi and Baby Kochamma give more importance to patriarchal society and their norms.

Unfortunately she establishes a small business of making pickles and jams and his son Chacko develops it into a factory by taking charge of it. Chacko replaces her and seizes away the factory from her and there we find the domination of a son over mother. She is the victim of class and gender and marginalized by her husband when she is young and her son in her old age. For Mammachi, Chacko is one of the cleverest men in India and he falls in love with Margaret Kochamma and has a daughter, Sophie Mol. Mammachi does not like Margaret but she never shows it out wordily. But soon he was divorced by his wife.

Within a year of marriage, Margaret decides to separate from him. She realizes that Chacko is not the right person and she finds Joe, an old school friend of Margaret's brother. On the other hand, Chacko returns to his native place and continues to love Margaret. Though it is very odd to accept the invitation of her ex husband, soon after her husband Joe's death, she makes a bold decision for the sake of her daughter as well as for her own sake and takes a flight to Cochin to join him. With her daughter Sophie Mol, Margaret comes to Ayemenem to heal her wounded world after the death of Joe but instead she lost everything, her daughter Sophie Mol dies in the boat tragedy and she shatters like glass.

“When Margaret Kochamma saw her little daughter's body, shock swelled in her lie phantom applause in an empty auditorium. It overflowed in a wave of vomit and left her mute and empty eyed.”

(Arundhati p.263)

Even Shophie Mol is also experienced and misfortune and isolated in her life. Roy remarks that,

“But around her, the air was sad, somehow. And behind the smile in her eyes, the Grief was a fresh, shining blue because of calamitous car crash. Because of Joe shaped whole universe.”

(Arundhati p.143)

The loss of her daughter struck her so badly that she slaps Estha, whenever she gets up from the drug induced sleep. But later on, she becomes conscious of her mistake and expresses her regrets for being cruel to the boy. She is also tortured by time and fate. She believes that it is she who is responsible for the death of her own daughter and there is no way to escape from this tragic incident.

“Where do old birds go to die? Why don't dead ones fall like stones from the sky?”

(Arundhati p.16)

The loss of Sophie Mol is like a seasonal fruit and like a government permanent occupation, it is always there and Margaret Kochamma never forgives herself for this loss. Ammu, Mammachi's daughter is the boisterous and unruly daughter of the house and the most important character of this fiction.

Chacko does not want to share the family property thinking that he is the only successor to it. Here Roy rightly put the point of sharing family property in which the daughter doesn't have her claim. He is full of selfish ego.

“Though Ammu did as much work in the factory as Chacko, whenever he was dealing with food inspectors or sanitary engineers, he always referred to it as my factory, my pineapples, and my pickles, legally this were the case because Ammu, as a daughter, had no claim to the property.”

(Arundhati p.57)

Her tragedy begins even when she is very young and continues to the last moment of her life. To escape from her abusive father, suppressed mother, and in search of sympathy, she accepts the marriage proposal from a Bengali Hindu man, who belongs to a once wealthy Zamindar family.

"She thought that anything, anyone at all, would be better than returning to Ayemenem."

(Arundhati p.39)

And in a hurry she decides to marry Babu who works as a tea estate assistant manager in Assam where the workers are exploited by low paid to plant and harvest the crops. Unfortunately, she realizes that he is unfit to her as a husband due to severe alcoholic issues. The worst condition of Ammu was that when her husband to save his job pushes her to satisfy his boss's sexual thirst. She finds herself in this extreme humiliation. By hitting her husband with a book out of wrath, she makes a decision to separate from him and leaves the house with two kids Estha and Rahel. She returns to her father's house in Ayemenem. Her dilemma is described by the Roy:

"Like a pair of small bewildered frogs engrossed in each other's company, lolloping arm in arm down a highway full of hurtling traffic."

(Arundhati p.43)

Even She does not get any consolation instead her brother treats her as sinner which makes her lonelier. Her husband was a heavy alcoholic with an alcoholic's cunning and dreadful charm.

"He lunged at her, grabbed her hair, unshed her and then passed out from the effort..."

(Arundhati p.42)

Life becomes unbearable to her after the birth of twins. Her husband's drunkenness' makes her more desperate and she decides to leave him.

“Ammu left her husband and returned, unwelcomed, to her parents in Ayemenem.

To everything that she had fled from only few years ago.

Except that now she had two young children. And no more dreams”

(Arundhati p.42)

When she returns to the house in Ayemenem, her father Pappachi is not ready to believe her story. Even Mammachi and Baby Kochamma are also discontent with her. Baby Kochamma is such a hypocrite women that she strongly believes,

“A married daughter had no position in her parent’s home. As for a divorced daughter – according to Baby Kochamma, she had no position anywhere at all.”

(Arundhati p.45)

She hates Ammu and also dislikes the twins – Estha and Rahel. She enjoys the way Ammu is punished. Without her knowledge, gradually Ammu is becoming restless.

“On days like this there was something restless and untamed about her. She had temporarily set aside the morality of motherhood and divorce hood. Even her walk changed from a safe mother walk to another wilder sort of walk...she spoke to no one. She spent hours on the river bank with her little plastic transistor shaped like a tangerine. She smoked cigarettes and had midnight swims”

(Arundhati p.44)

It is clearly seen that right from the beginning of creation, women have been subjective just as Ammu becomes the victim in her own family and is tortured and tormented in her parental home.

The family structure and her brother too marginalize Ammu as she is not welcomed by her family members on her return and treated as an outcaste in her own house for the bloody sake of the family honor. The researcher says like ‘untouchable’ Velutha,

Ammu too being 'touchable' becomes 'untouchable' within her own father's house. On the contrary Aijaz Ahmad says "Ammu had been all through her adult life a woman of great grit..." (Murari p.39) as she challenges marriage and also rebels against the patriarchal structure or system of the society by her erotic encounter with 'untouchable' Velutha. Amitabh Roy rightly quotes on this, "Ammu on the other hand is rebel who represents the defiance of the present state of society from educated, passionate and thinking women. She stands for those women who are aspiring for freedom and equality..." (A. Roy)

During these circumstances, Ammu is fascinated by Velutha and loves him. Velutha works as a carpenter in pickle factory and the man her children loved by day. But here her tragic stage of life starts. Velutha, the Paravan means the lowest kind of untouchable outcasts. Velutha means white in Malayam, opposing it, he is also with black skin. Through the character of Velutha, who is the representative of the group of people who perform the unclean tasks of tanning, the disposal night soil and cremation of dead bodies, called Untouchable, Roy describes the humiliation of the untouchables due to the orthodox caste hierarchy in Hindu society. He stays with Vellya Paapen, his father and his brother in a small hut situated close by the Ayemenem house. He is an expert in carpentry and used to make little gifts for her Ammukutty-(little Ammu) like boats, boxes, small windmills etc. Mammachi persuades Vellena Paapen for sending Velutha to the school of untouchable which was established by her father in-law, Punnyan Kunju, to learn. Apart from carpentry Velutha is also good at machines. So after completing his schooling at the age of sixteen and he is also trained in carpentry through a workshop by Johann Klein, a German carpenter, held at Christian mission society. So Velutha is working as a carpenter and mechanic in the pickle factory and also looks after all the gadgets of the Ayemenem house,

"Mammachi often said that if only he hadn't been a Paravan, he might have become an engineer. He mended radios, clocks, water pumps. He looked after the plumbing and all the electrical gadgets in the house."

(Arundhati p.75)

Velutha is acquainted with the equipments and technology in the Pickle factory than anybody else. Once Chacko said,

“He is a good worker, highly intelligent. He is an excellent carpenter with engineer’s mind. Velutha practically runs the factory”

(Arundhati p.277)

From the above description of Velutha, It proves that Velutha is an extraordinary and astonished person despite being a Paravan. Being a Paravan, Velutha is marginalized even in dreams too, he comes in Ammu’s dream as an untouchable, unclean,

“He left no footprints in sand, no ripples in water, no image in mirror.”

(Arundhati p.216)

Paravan in Mammachi’s time regards as inferior. She used to tell Estha and Rahel about untouchables. They were anticipated to move slowly backwards with a broom. So they must sweep away their footprints. As Brahmin or Syrian Christians could not pollute or despoil themselves accidentally by stepping into a Paravan’s footsteps. Being a Paravan, Velutha is the most downtrodden and oppressed characters despite being a man. On the other hand, Ammu with the feeling of Christian and detachment at the Ayemenem house is fascinated towards Velutha.

“In the dappled sunlight filtering through the dark green trees, Ammu watched Velutha lift her daughter effortlessly as though she was an inflatable child, made of air... she saw ridges of muscles on Velutha’s stomach grow taught and rise under his skin like the division on a slab of chocolate. She wondered how his body had changed – so quietly, from a flat muscled boy’s body into man’s body. Contoured and hard. A swimmer’s body”

(Arundhati p.175)

Physically and mentally unsatisfied Ammu is attracted towards Velutha and her attraction very soon is developed into physical relationship which is irresistible:

“Ammu, naked now, crouched over Vvelutha, her mouth on his. He drew her hair around them like a tent. Like her children did when they wanted to exclude the outside world. She did further down, introducing herself to the rest of him. His neck, His nipples, His chocolate stomach. She sipped the last of the river from the hollow of his navel...she felt the sweetness slipping on his skin. He took her nipple in his mouth and cradles her other breast in his calloused palm. Velvet gloved in sandpaper.”

(Arundhati p.336)

Her affair or that happy moment is reported to Ayemenem house and Mammachi condemns her harshly and as punishment, Estha returns to his father and she is separated from her daughter. Here, we also notice Mammachi's double standard face, as she entertains Chacko for his female visitors. The affair with Ammu also brings more disaster in Velutha's life and Mammachi, Vellya Paapen, Baby Kochamma decide that Velutha should leave the Ayemenem house before Chacko returns, because Chacko may not be ready to send Velutha away, since he in fact 'practically runs the factory.' It is very tricky and difficult to argue with Chacko. Velutha lives a rebel's life and also a life of a lover and the love making scene with Ammu takes him to heroic heights. The untouchable are not allowed or permitted to touch the things which are belonged to upper class society but Velutha does something unique by falling in love with Ammu. Moreover being a son of nature, he identifies his body with nature as nature becomes metaphor in the text,

“On his back, his lucky leaf from the birthmark tree that made the monsoons comes on time, his autumn leaf at night.”

(Arundhati p.175)

“A log, a serene crocodile”

(Arundhati p.333)

Ammu feels guilty about Velutha's death. Because of the social difference in class and caste, they have to pay for their relationship at the end. Though Velutha is innocent, Estha disposes before police that Velutha is involved in kidnapping Shopie Mol which leads to the death of Shopie Mol. All the upper class people finally condemn Velutha and decide to finish off 'Velutha' – the untouchable. The innocent Velutha is tortured to death in most inhuman way, as he is charged with kidnapping and murder.

“His skull was fractured in three places. His nose and both his cheekbones were smashed, leaving his face pulpy, undefined. The blow to his mouth had split open his upper lip and broken six teeth, three of which embedded in his lower lip... which was made him bleed from mouth.”

(Arundhati p.310)

On the whole, Velutha is a literal tragic hero, a man of higher spirit and ambition. He is never a coward, but is daring Velutha. In his vocation he is unique and extraordinary craftsman even he is a good friend of Estha and Rahel. His affair with Ammu is also true love and unique in his own way. It is a society which makes Velutha dies a miserable death. He is a silent sufferer as an untouchable. Despite of his art and technical expertise, man of sober nature and his good behavior, becomes the victim of classism, casticism and social discrimination which make him powerless.

Here we are able to recognize that this act of violence and oppression on Velutha in the history house is generated by the patriarchal domination and the system of exploitation and not only the caste prejudices as being the Untouchable. Through the violent brutality and viciousness committed to Velutha in the History House by police, Roy describes the reaction of terror,

“Feeling of contempt born of inchoate, civilization's fear of nature, men's fear of women, power's fear of powerless. Men's subliminal urge to destroy what he could neither subdue nor defy.”

(Arundhati p.308)

Moreover Roy also uses an allegory in Kathakali-episode of Karan's tale for the injustice experienced by Velutha (any untouchable in this modern world). In short Roy gives the hint that if the discourse of patriarchy is a civilized intellect then nature and women become the objects of male gaze who constructs women and nature alike and exploit and oppress them. Thus the lives of Ammu and Velutha are destroyed in this novel. Ammu, a vibrant lady love, turns to a woman with unseeing eyes.

"Once it had the power to evoke fear. To change lives. But now its teeth were drawn, its spirit spent..."

(Arundhati p.118)

On the other hand, being marginalized Rahel, the barren one is awake from her battle with real life. She is deprived and destitute child and craving for love when she was child as well as later on too. She is badly treated or tortured inside and outside too. She has been neglected and mistreated by her mother and everyone else in the house not only at home but also at school and college e.g. Ammu scared her with frightened eyes,

"Do you know what happens when you hurt people? When you hurt people, they begin to love you less. That's what careless words do. They make people love you a little less."

(Arundhati p.)

Like her mother she has also courage to challenge the society's conservative norms. Due to troubled childhood, sometimes she loses her temper and as a result everyone at college fears her. She is so hopeless and helpless child.

"She occasionally wrote to Chacko and Mammachi, but never returned to Ayemenem. Not when Mammachi died. Not when Chacko immigrated to Canada."

(Arundhati p.18)

After her divorce when she returns to her village on learning about Estha has returned, she has developed carefree attitudes towards life, she becomes rebellious

against the conservative society which can be seen in her reply to Comrade Pillai:

"We're divorced, Rahel hoped to shock him into silence."

"Die-vorced? His voice rose to such a high register that it cracked on the question mark. He even pronounced the word as though it were a form of death."

(Arundhati p.130)

In shows wherever she goes she is ignored by people and becomes isolated and sad throughout her life. Thus the twin is deprived of parental love and family love only because they are the children of divorced parents, unwanted in Aymenem house. As a result, unknowing Rahel develops incestuous love for her brother Estha.

Here from the characters of Rahel and Ammu, the researcher likes to figure out one point, the domination and exploitation of female over female. I argue that it's not only the male domination over female is responsible for woman exploitation, but today many women are also dominated or exploited by female in house, corporate field etc. Even if we are talking about the 21st century women who occupy an uplifted status, have stepped into the path of progress and treated equally, still today directly or indirectly, more or less a woman's place are conflicted in society and in her family. However she is sensitive, powerful, liberated, courageous and rational, she undergoes the most terrible of violent activities in this world.

To put it briefly, Rahel comes to Ayemenem to meet her brother Estha after several years from America where she is working at the gas station. Like Rahel, Estha or Estahppan has multiple problems. The Abhilash Talkies incident and the Orange-drink Lemon-drink man (who is homosexual) episode disturbed him so badly that he is suffering from psychological problems. Life becomes miserable for Estha and Rahel after Sophie Mol's death and that makes them suffering from natural distress. It was Velutha, the untouchable who was the only friend of Rahel, who trained her and Estha to fish, 'the luckiest ever fishing rod'. Even he is also good to Estha. Ammu loves Estha. But sometimes she has been unkind and ruthless to Estha.

After the Velutha's incident Ammu is very upset and she begins to help his mother remaining quite and longing for his mother's love. But Ammu has to leave Ayemenem house due to Velutha's death. On her last visit, Ammu arrives back to Ayemenem.

"She was swollen with cortisone, moonfaced not the slender mother Rahel knew. Her skin stretched over her puffy cheeks like shiny scar tissue that cover old vaccination marks...she carried her breath in a glass inhaler in her tattered handbag. Each breath she took was like a war won against the steely fist that was trying to squeeze the air from the lungs."

(Arundhati p.160)

Later Ammu has been working as receptionist in cheap hotel, due to her illness, she has lost her job. She is appearing to be nearing to her end and she leaves the house and there is none who bid goodbye to her. That night Ammu died in the Bharat Lodge. She is found dead by sweeper in the morning.

"A platoon of ants carried a dead cockroach sedately through the door, demonstrating what should be done with corpses"

(Arundhati p.162)

Burying of Ammu was refused by the church and that left Chacko with no other option than electric crematorium to bury the body.

"Her hair, her skin, her smile, her voice, the way she used Kipling to love her children before putting them to bed, we be of one blood, ye and I, her good night kiss."

(Arundhati p.163)

There is nobody to shed a drop of water for her, not even her own daughter Rahel. Unfortunately her son Estha is also not there at her cremation. In brief, the last segment of her life is tragic. She struggles a lot all through her life for the survival and there is no one who supports her and she has to die alone. The novel opens with a visit

to Ayemenem by Rahel after twenty three years and after Sophie Mol's death it ends up with the transgression of characters. The twin meets and shares one another and the novel *The God of Small Things* comes to an ends with sexual relationship between Ammu and velutha:

"She kissed his closed eyes, and stood up. Velutha with his bak against the mangosteen tree watched her walk away. She had a dry rose in her hair. She turned to say it once again: 'Naaley Tommorrow'."

(Arundhati p.340)

It is about a life of people in India where people are suffering from different barriers of social, political, cultural and economic origins. In India, it's a myth that a good daughter, wife and mother means to sacrifice meek and quite nature. Ammu as a woman is chastised and punished by the family as well as by the so called patriarchal society. She becomes the victim of not only her father's cruelty but also of her mother Mammachi and of Baby Kochamma.

Roy represents common Indian cultural issues in her novel such as grief, sorrow, matrimonial relationship, extra-marital relationship, punishment etc. The other issue which gets focused in the novel is urbanization and most of the characters are victims to it. E.g. Dish antennas have become a very common in Kerala and at Ayemenam house, as Baby Kochamma has installed it on the roof. The image of dish antenna installed is considered as a symbol of urbanization.

Secondly, when Chacko, Rahel and others are seating at Hotel Sea Queen which is a posh hotel on their way to airport, suggests that the villagers are also like comforts of urban life. On the other hand the novel demonstrates the social reality through the portrayal of the contemporary Ayemenem such as caste violence, brutal oppression of the past, domination and the exploitation of rural employees, impact of urbanization, privatization by Indian government after 1991. Significantly the renovation of Kari Saipu's House is the example of Urbanization and privatization.

"Kari Saipu's house had been renovated and painted. It had become the centerpiece of an elaborate complex, crisscrossed with artificial canals and connecting bridges. Small boats bobbed in the water. The old colonial bungalow with its deep verandah and Doric columns were

surrounded by smaller, older wooden houses – ancestral homes that the hotel chain had bought from old families and transplanted in the heart of darkness... the old houses had been arranged around the History House in attitudes of deference. 'Heritage', the hotel was called”

(Arundhati p.126)

The history house is re imagined as ‘God’s Own Country’ which is co modified into global tourist site,

“The hotel people like to tell their guests that the oldest of the wooden houses, with its air tight, paneled storeroom which could hold enough rice to feed an army for a year, had been the ancestral home of comrade E.M.S. Namboodiripad, ‘kerala’s Mao Tse tung, they explained to the uninitiated... they were labeled with edifying placards which said Traditional Kerala umbrella and traditional Bridal Dowry Box.”

(Arundhati p.126)

In short the Ayemenem which was small village earlier become town. The urbanization is taking place very fast at Ayemenem. Due to urbanization the cultural life has to suffer and Kathakali, an important art from Kerala has fallen. With the art, the Kathakali artist has to suffer too who is the pure at his soul as well as eye-catching by his body.

“They long to be everything that he is not. He has watched them grow up to become clerks, bus conductors and Class IV non-gazette officers with union of their own”

(Arundhati p.230)

“From the age of three it has been planed and polished, pared down, harnessed wholly to the task of the story –telling. He has magic in him, this man within the painted mask and swirling skirts”

(Arundhati p.230)

However, now he became unviable, unworkable and destined goods turns to the business of tourism in hopelessness nowadays.

“He enters the market. He hawks the only thing he owns, the stories that his body can tell. He becomes a Regional Flavor.”

(Arundhati p.230)

Cultural decadence can be seen in all the characters of the novel who suffers due to marriage and sex. It shows that marriage as an institution falls down from its old grace. Maria Mies writes about this culture – nature dilemma,

“Since the Age of Enlightenment and the colonization of the world the White man's concept of emancipation of freedom and equality based on the dominance over nature and other people and territories. The division between nature and culture or civilization is integral to this understanding. From the early women's movement up to the present, a large section of women has accepted the strategy of a catching up with men as the main path emancipation. This implied that women must overcome within themselves what had defined as 'nature', because in this discourse women were put on the side of nature, where as men were seen as the representative of culture.”

(Maria and Shiva, Ecofeminism p.65)

Novel begins with the richness of nature and a portrayal of the summer in Ayemenem, a real village located in South-Central Kerala. Human being always interacts with the world of nature in this novel which performs as a mediator and helps to arouse pity and pathos towards the characters. It is described that how Ayemenem is changed from a beautiful village with all the glory and freshness of nature to a polluted and materialistic town through all these years. The major issue is environmental problems which is highlighted and we can find the enough evidence in the novel to prove it e.g. the influence of Gulf money on the people of Kerala, cultural decadence, urbanization, impact of luxurious life – new way of life and crave for it. As we all know the fact that Nature plays a significant role in human being's life which we forget very often and made our life miserable for ourselves as well as for our future generations.

Also, there is the evidence of marginalization of women in the second chapter of novel 'Pappachis Moth' in which Roy presents the major issue of Girl education misbelieves, here Pappachi, father of Ammu, believes that college education is useless expense for a girl so she is never sent to a college, whereas being an only son of Pappachi, Chacko has been sent at oxford for higher education.

This novel also focused on the other major problems as the most important themes such as affairs of religion, the system of educational and political issues, society issues and family relation, human relation, sexuality, homosexuality, snobbery, alcoholism, health conditions, violence, the conflict between power and powerlessness etc.

The effectiveness of the title of the book, *The God of Small Things* is quoted from the passage which is inside the chapter 11-*The God of Small Things* how small people or things deserve more attention than 'big things'.

"Somehow, by not mentioning his name, she knew that she had drawn him into the tousled intimacy of that blue cross-stitch afternoon and the song from the tangerine transistor. By not mentioning his name, she sensed that a pact had been forged between her dream and the World. And that midwives of that pact, were or would be, her sawdust coated two egg twins. She knew who he was - the God of Loss, The God of Small Things."

(Arundhati p.220)

Here 'she' is obviously Ammu and Velutha is a *God of small Things*. Roy also uses 'small' and 'things' throughout the story to show how trivial things become serious and serious things become non-trivial e.g. The sexual relationship of Velutha and Ammu is a small thing but it is described as a big thing because Ammu is from upper strata and Velutha is an untouchable. However the novel ends with the death of Ammu and Velutha with no identity.

Through this fiction Arundhati Roy points out the effects of industrialization and longing for power which can destroy capitalism and dominant norms and live in accordance with environment and nature. I think there couldn't be more suitable title

for the novel than this, which reminds readers that there is always tomorrow and through the characters such as the main protagonist Ammu is hopeful for better tomorrow,

"She turned to say it once again: 'Naaley' Tomorrow."

(Arundhati p.340)

She tells to learn from past mistakes and with the hopeful tomorrow the novel ends. Thus the novel ends up with the tragic story of Ammu's love for Velutha which shows a darker side of society through the eyes of Estha and Rahel.

It is evident from the analysis of this novel that Roy has emphasized on how the nature and women have so much in common. As all the female characters of the novel are suffering from so many diverse issues in context of sex, marriage, relations and male dominance and finally lost in the patriarchal system of the society.

Similarly this novel also explores the impacts of uneven development, environmental contamination, deprivation and the damaging effects of colonization on the Indian environment and culture which continue to exploit natural 'resources'. This is where ecofeminism comes in picture throughout this novel. This novel shows that individual and ecological histories are inseparable. There is a correlation between plantation farming and the sexual operation of women and children. Ultimately about all the main and minor characters of the story directly or indirectly connected with nature. She works to uplift the condition of women and environment. The novel also narrated the painful pictures of a lovely lady Ammu who is abandoned by her husband and entirely cut off from the family. Ammu is the chief character who is the victim of the plight in the novel.

According to Roy, if we have accurate institutions, efficient courts, good quality laws, sincere politicians, participative democracy and an apparent administration and management which respect human feelings and rights affect more than anything else. Finally the researcher too agrees with the quotes of Julie Mullaney,

"Roy's representation in the British media as a public voice of India's anti-globalization movement is due to the success of her novel, The

God of Small Things and her sustained contribution to the debate about feminism, post-colonialism, and globalization processes.”

(Murari p.21-22)

This is researcher's humble attempt to have glance at how the novel deals with the term Ecofemisim-the oppressive coupling of woman and natural world that is an integral part of my research.

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CHAPTER – 3

An Exploration of Ecofeminism in Anita Desai's Fire on the Mountain

Feminism is a doctrine which tries to build up social, political, cultural, gender equality and rights for women and looking forward to transform the world to the improvement and advantage of women.

Simon De Beauvoir opines that woman's thought of herself as less worthy or mediocre than men, rely on men, springs from her recognition that,

“The world is masculine on the whole, those who fashioned it, ruled it, and still dominate it today, are Men.”

(Beauvoir 629)

But the conservative biological difference between man and woman is a very fact which is accepted by women. But the perception that woman is inferior to man is not accepted to woman in general as well as the feminists particular.

For years Nature is symbolized as woman and we accepted as true the connection of woman and nature. Griffin rightly interprets on it in her book, *‘Woman and Nature: Roaring Inside her*, that

“I know am made from the earth, as my mother's hands were made from this earth, as her dreams came from this earth...you...are earth too, and listen as we speak to each other of what we know, the light is in us.”

(Griffin, *Woman and Nature: Roaring Inside her* 227)

Anita Desai, a significant figure in Indian literature, portrays catastrophe of human souls captured in the awkward situations occurred throughout the life span. Through her writing, she has specified a new aspect to the success of Indian Women novelists in English literature. She presents tension and turmoil of women. As far as Anita Desai is concerned, she writes mostly about the miserable conditions of women suffering under the male dominance society. She is an object of gaze in the masochistic society where she is playing different roles as, a daughter, a wife, a mother, an artist or a writer. Most of her characters are distressed and alienated from the globe, humanity, the families, and even from their own selves. The most of her novels are situate among the cultural and social changes.

Introducing Anita Desai, A Michael Matin remarks that

“Anita Desai has been touted by “British Writers” one of the preeminent contemporary Indian novelists.” He argues that many of them often even refer to her as the Mother of the Indian psychological novel. This is quite obviously due to her “meticulous depictions of modern Indian life, combined with an elevated level of linguistic skill that frequently enters the poetic realm, secured her a place of honour in the pantheon of Indian authors.”

(Encyclopedia.com)

Anita Desai is indubitably one of the foremost modern Indian authors in English. She has an exception natural quality of intellect in literature. She has been recognized all over the world as a literary genius. On June 24, 1937, she was born in Missouri, a hill station near Dehradun in northern India. She became gradually grown surrounded by Western literature and music like the music of Ludwig Van Beethoven, Wolfgang Amadeous Mozart Ludwig van Beethoven and Edvard Grieg and books by Johann Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Heinrich Heine. Dhiren.N. Mazumdar, her father was a Bengali and Antoinette Nime her mother was a German. They both came together in Germany. She acquainted with him and in 1920s she immigrated to India. Anita Desai was one of four children; she had two sisters and a brothers. She spoke German because as she explains, her parents spoke German with each other. German therefore became her first language as a child. But she communicated with her friends and neighbours in Hindi.

She initially learned to write and read English language when she was in school which is why it turned out to her literary language. Initially, she was provided schooling and training in English language. On the contrary, at home, she was brought up by speaking both Hindi and German. She observes that it had a tremendous effect on her. Because it is English language that she saw, ever read and also wrote first time. Desai was always carving for to be a part of that world of books where she felt that English is a language of books. Due to her formal education in English, she went on writing in English too.

Desai herself revealed that she has been writing from the time when she was seven years old, as instinctively as she breathed. At the age of seven she issued her first story publically, and amused her family. Naturally along with unconsciously, Desai writes in English:

"I can state definitely that I did not choose English in a deliberate and conscious act and I'd say perhaps it was the language that chose me and I started writing stories in English at the age of seven and have been doing so for thirty years now without stopping to think why."

(Tandon, Anita Desai and Her fictional World)

She was sent for schooling at British Grammar school and the Queen Mary's Higher Secondary school in New Delhi. Then after for further study, in 1957, she joined Miranda House, a women's college campus of Delhi University to receive the Bachelor of Arts Degree in English Literature. During her study time, she continued to publish short-stories and articles in Periodicals. She also started working with at Max Müller Bhavan, the German cultural institute in Calcutta.

The following year, on December 13, 1958, she wedded Ashvin Desai, a famous entrepreneur; and the couple had four children, two sons –Rahul, Arjun and two daughters- Tani and Kiran. Kiran Desai is celebrated and famous writer following in the footsteps of her mother. After her marriage she continues to write as she once discoses that "The world I entered on marriage was completely uncomprehending of a life of literature. I continued to write but almost in secret, without anyone observing me at work at my desk so as not to create an open conflict." (Encyclopedia.com)

According to Wier, Ann Lowry:

“Anita Desai is the vanguard of a new generation of Indian writers who are experimenting with themes of inner consciousness. She gives her reader a valuable insight into the feminine consciousness through her memorable protagonists.”

(Weir, *The Illusion of Maya: Feminine Consciousness in Anita Desai's Cry The Peacock*. 21)

Anita Desai is affiliated to the category of women writers who have offered their experiences to literature. She is recognized today for her originality and versatility as well as the indigenous favours she has on offer in the portrayal of the characters in her fictions.

She was determined to be a writer and continued to compose and publish short stories in local magazines. Then she started her hand in fiction. She stayed in Calcutta, Chandigarh, Delhi and Pune so all her novels set in one the other of these cities as if it was by way of proof. She knew with the contemporary Indian milieu, which provides the background and characters for her novels. In one of her interviews she had given, she argued that

“Writing is a necessity to me: I find it is in the process of writing that I am able to think, to feel, and to realize at the highest pitch. Writing is to me a process of discovering the truth.”

(Encyclopedia.com)

Therefore the scholar, Brajesh Kumar rightly comments in his essay entitled, *‘Feminist Perspectives in the Novels of Anita Desai’*, that

“What is more significant about her techniques is that she never tries to justify the actions of the women protagonists in her fictional world but grants freedom to act in their own ways. In this way, she has made a sincere endeavor to contribute to the Indian fiction it has feminist concern, though she has carefully avoided associating herself with any feminist movement.”

(Kumar 71)

Desai has contributed to different prominent literary publications in the *New York Times Book Review*, *London Magazine*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Quest*. At the 26 years of age, Desai started her debut with *Cry the Peacock*. Peter Owen, a publisher mainly interested in literature of the British Commonwealth and continental Europe published this novel. At that time no publisher would be paying attention on Indian authors and their writings but because of England's natural interest in India, Desai's work came to be noticed first in England.

Moreover in India, the psychological novel was first introduced in the tradition of Virginia Woolf by none other than Anita Desai. She admits that in her twenties, when she has started writing her first novel, *Cry the Peacock*, D H Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, Henry James and Proust produce compelling effects on her more strongly. It has been considered as the starting point of stream of conscious novels in Indian writing in English. The story deals with the psychosomatic consciousness of Maya, the female protagonist, Maya means illusion in Hindi. The readers are confronted with the hopelessness of her situation: her despair, anxiety, dread, anguish and her choice in the given situation, which lead her to insanity.

Desai's second novel *Voices in the City*, offers a moving picture of the life of another female character like Maya, named Monisha. Desai has portrayed feminine psyche through Monisha in the novel. She is also a feminist novelist. The contemporary critic named Pearl Bell opines about Desai's writing

"Novels are quite short. . . . they convey a sharply detailed sense of the tangled complexities of Indian society, and an intimate view of the tug and pull of Indian family life."

(Encyclopedia.com)

Desai's characters draw forth the truth that is like an iceberg, lies in the Indian society. Hence having a mixed background of Indian and German, she explores the significant truths of life and reality in her fictions. She mostly interested in portraying the lives of Indian women rather than history and politics in her novels. She is of the opinion in that the young readers in India tended to be rather impatient of her books and even to assume of them as books about completely powerless, hopeless and helpless women. Moreover, since her writing is realistic, she believes that Women

thought that she was doing disfavor to the feminist movement. She explains in defense against this charge that she only discovers the truth and finds out the significance of it and puts it in her novels.

Motherhood is the ultimate object of the female and that is why the significance of and craving for children, play a very significant role in Desai's fictions. She continues this theme in her second novel with Monisha, but in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* And *Fire on the Mountain*, she portrayed women with children. She focuses on the theme of alienation and disharmony in these fictions.

The novel *Bye Bye Blackbird* treats the problems of adjustment of Indian Immigrants in England. After ten years of writing, Desai moves into the middle phase of her career as a writer where her characters are from the well to do sections of the Indian society. Their struggles are psychological or spiritual, not social and economical. From 1973 to 1982, she crafted three novels, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, *Fire on the Mountain* and *Clear Light of Day* which discuss the issues like conformity and rebellion, attachment and detachment. She writes about caste because she knows them very well and can understand them. *The Village by the Sea* is the only novel which ends in total harmony. Moreover it is considered to be a part of children's fiction. *Fire on the mountain* is her most powerful work.

Desai's *Clear Light of Day* is her semiautobiographical novel, although the characters are not related to her brothers and sisters. In this novel, she discovers the momentous of childhood memories in our life. It focuses struggles of a bourgeois family during the partition of India against the forces of disintegration and their often abuse and violence. One can clearly distinguish her in the character of Raja. Raja is involved deeply in all different types of literature and culture, and also is so worried about protecting the multicultural Indian heritage, much in the same way as she is. Her fears for Muslim neighbor family and in the whole worries about the loss of all the Muslim culture and literature contributed to India.

This is one novel that is about time where time plays different roles in the life of her characters. *Clear Light of Day* is a sarcastic title for the novel so thoughtful with the indistinguishable border between illusion and reality. The clear and bright light of the day, in which one can see everything, has made Bimla's life miserable because she

has the realization of her imperfect love for them all. Even so, she wants to love in shade, quite and darkness. Thus Bimla's despair and loneliness is given a spiritual and sacred element in the novel. Thus, it is time that brings about a change in the lives of the characters in the novel.

In the third phase of her career, Desai has written two novels, *In Custody* and *Baumgartner's Bombay* which present some deviation from Anita Desai's earlier novels as the major protagonists, Deven, and Hugo represent male psyche.

Then after, she has produced three novels in her mature phase: *Journey to Ithaca*, *Fasting, Feasting* and *Zigzag Way*, at that time her daughter Kiran Desai has also started writing novels.

Through her writing, Anita Desai seems to be unsparing in pointing out the orthodox, superstitious, in human, vulgar practices and rites in the Hindu society, only to go beyond it so as to capture the essence of Vedantic Hinduism- The message of Joy-Light-Truth. She has tried to achieve a significant balance of tradition and modernity, East and West, humanism and spiritualism in her novels.

Anita Desai is a guiding star for many brilliant youthful writers. If one starts from home, her own daughter Kiran Desai. She published her first novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* that was a distinguished debut in 1997. Her second novel, *Inheritance of Loss* became a classic and it won for her the famous Booker Prize. Kiran dedicated this novel to her mother, Anita Desai.

In an interview given some time ago, Kiran Desai says that all my life, she had grown up hearing her talk about writing, literature and books. She further shares that she thought it was amazing to have her mother [AnitaDesai] around when she was writing that book, and to talk to her through the whole process. For her, she had been wonderful through the whole thing. She did not provide any critical support but only emotional support, by preferring to play 'a very motherly role'.

Desai and her family, in her early years experienced and observed the anxiety and menace about the situation and circumstances in Germany during World War II. She prefers to lead a quiet life. Her colleagues who knew her in the 1950, describes her as intense and solitary. Even her choice of books reveals this tendency. She likes to read

books which explore human nature. Her favorite authors are Chekhov, Henry James, Lawrence and Dostoevsky. Most of Desai's novels are located in India and about Indian culture and society. Primarily, most of her novels are female centered.

Her fifth novel; *Fire on the Mountain* is also woman-centered drama. It was published in London in 1978, and carried international fame. She received the *Winfred Holtby Prize of the Royal Society of Literature* and *National Academy of Letters Award*. She also won the *Sahitya Academy Award* for *Games at Twilight and Other Stories* in 1979

In 1983, she was honored the *Guardian Prize for Children's Fiction* for *Village by the Sea*. She was nominated thrice for the Booker Prize for one famous novel after another, namely *Clear Light of Day*, *In Custody*, and *Fasting Feasting*.

She also received the esteemed award *The Taraknath Das Award* for contributing to Indo- American relation; *Moravia Prize for Literature* in Rome and in 1990, the prestigious award the *Padma Sri Award* from the government of India too. She is a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature of London and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She is a member of the Advisory Board for English of the National Academy of Letters in Delhi.

The most essential thing is that she never allowed her writing to come in way of her responsibilities as a mother or wife. Thus maintaining a proper balance between home and literary career, she has presented an ideal image of modern 'New Woman'.

Anita Desai's major novels are

- *Cry the Peacock* -1963,
- *Voices in the City* -1965,
- *Bye Bye Black Bird*- 1971,
- *Where shall We Go This Summer?* -1975,
- *Fire on the Mountain* -1977,
- *Fasting Feasting* -1999.

Besides these, the fiction she has penned for children includes;

- *The Peacock Garden-1974,*
- *Cat on a house boat-1976,*
- *The Village by the Sea – 1982.*

She has two collections of short stories to her credit:

- *Games at Twilight and other Stories – 1978,*
- *Diamond Dust and Other stories -2000.*

She has also contributed;

- *The Peacock Garden – 1979,*
- *Clear light of Day – 1980,*
- *In Custody -1984,*
- *Baumgartner's Bombay -1987,*
- *Journey to Ithaca -1995,*
- *The Zigzag Way – 2004,*
- *Hill of Silver, Hill of Lead -2005.*

She has been also rewarded the *Neil Gunn International Fellowship in 1944*. She worked as a Purington professor of English at Mount Holyoke College. At present, she is a professor emeritus of humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and stays in Unites States. No doubts, she is one of the world's best known authors, and a writer who has influenced generations of writers. As a person, she has a belief and a concern more with thought, emotion and sensation than with action and achievement.

After analyzing her novels, we realize that through her women characters, she tries to capture the women's inner life, their emotional world, psychology and sensibility as well as the worldly reality which we can also observe and experience today.

In his book titled, *Indian Writing in English*, Bhatnagar (1999:37) initiating a discussion of Indian women novelists writing in English by acknowledging Anita Desai 'to be the leading voice' among 'women novelists' who, he rightly believes, "has fascinating stories to tell about individuals who have to traverse a ground too tricky and treacherous to handle smoothly." These women novelists, he observes, bring to bear upon their work "movement from gross realities to inward complexities.

Elsewhere in his work, he argues that each book has an individual structural pattern of its own. She brings about a harmony in her works by weaving a complex web of incidents, people and situations and the result is that the combination succeeds in producing

'an artistic whole'.

(Ibid., p.56)

Anita Desai portrays her women characters by giving them a deep sense of humanness despite their apparent potentialities and weaknesses. Her novels have been observed as manifestoes of female predicament and creative, feminine sensibility. She closely examines the emotional world of woman kind. She describes the Indian culture, complicated Indian society and family clashes in her works and tries to show the reality of Indian women and their struggles against or helplessness to submit to the relentless forces of absurd life.

Moreover her heroines are not completely cut off from societal and family clutches. Instead of remaining within these orbits, they start protesting and raise their voice against patriarchal system, male domination, monotony, and injustice and gender issues and fight for their individuality and liberty.

She has presented them both extremes: sensitive women and the thick-skinned ones with dull sensibility and minutely examines their world of emotions.

The nature with all its phenomena governs the whole universe and it is a principal source for civilization to exist on this planet. This whole natural system cannot be controlled or governed by man. Though, being free gifts of nature, human beings started misusing these resources for their personal gain and desires. As result natural resources are being degraded and gradually fading away the natural setting with the concern of the universal threats revolving around us.

India is blessed with the wide range of natural resources, beginning from the Himalaya Regions to the Dynamics of Sunder bans and the dry land- desert in Rajasthan. With the passing of time, these natural resources are harmed by population, pollution and other avarices of humankind. Now the writers come out with the global concerns for the degradation and depletion of nature and environmental landscapes. During the post colonial era, Anita Desai is a leading Indian author in English who construct nature in their works. She remarkably writes on those aspects which she has observed. She succeeds in capturing and delineating the spirit of surroundings, places and social values.

Fire on the Mountain is generally considered to be Anita Desai's masterpiece. The title is derived from the noble prize winner William Golding's celebrated novel entitled, *Lord of the Flies*' second chapter '*Fire on the Mountain*'.

It is beautiful novel focused on two orderly women who retire to a hill station house in their old age to lead a peaceful life there and a great granddaughter Raka who comes to stay with them. The individuality of Nanda Kaul's character makes her more lonely and estranged.

Madhusudan Prasad comments on this novel:

"In fact this novel deals, in the main, with the loneliness and isolation as well as the resulted anger and agony in the deserted life of Nanda Kaul, who presents an unforgettable, pathetic portrait of old age."

Nanda Kaul had made her ready after a long time to get pleasure from the peace and beauty of the alone place Kasauli. She wished to retreat to her small house with nature. But one more strange character, Raka intruded her loneliness. Her solitary existence is rightly appeared when she was reading a quotation from a book, '*The Pillow Book of Set Shonagon*' means '*when A Woman Lives alone*';

"I greatly dislike a woman's house when it is clear she has scurried about with a knowing look on her face, arranging everything just as it should be, and when the gate is kept tightly shut." Nanda looked up with a faint smile, and then bent her head to read it over again. Each time it went down her throat with a clear, luminous passage, like chilled dry wine."

(Anita 27)

Due to lack of attention and affection from her husband and family, she desires only to be left unaccompanied to pursue her loneliness amongst the rocks and pines of Kasauli. But there is not complete escape from the past memories as Nanda is also fail in her efforts. Although as a busy and ideal wife in the past, she performed all her duties, formalities as well as relations. Her husband and her family members too never concerned about her desires which forced her to wish for privacy.

“To be left alone and pursue her own secrets of life among the rocks and pines...”

(Anita 48)

Desai has portrayed Nanda Kaul as a wife, mother, and grandmother who spent her whole life for her family, bringing up the children, and performing the all the household duties and responsibilities by ignoring her own desires, crushes, expectations, sacrifices etc and in short losing her own identity she merges with the family which is not expected as something extraordinary but considered usual in Indian context. Her traumatic marital life is presented in below lines:

“Nor had her husband loved and cherished her and kept her like a queen. He had only done enough to keep her quiet while he carried on a lifelong affair with Miss David...and her children were all alien to her nature... she did not live here by choice, she lived here alone because that was what she was forced to do, reduced to doing.”

(Anita 145)

Nanda Kaul is pleased only when she is left unaccompanied to mount higher. She hates Raka's intrusion in her life. Unfortunately, by nature or by birth, Mrs Kaul is not an alien. Her alienation is imposed upon her by herself. She desires to live in isolation because she is fed up with the state of affairs she handles daily in her old house. There is symbolic end when the mountain has been set on fire as well as a symbolic fire in the heart of Nanda Kaul. In the Modern societies and also in the traditional Indian family, elderly women to be marginalized and so Anita Desai centers her novel on the character of an old woman, Nanda Kaul, who chooses a marginal place to lie in and she identifies herself with 'barrenness and starkness' of the surrounding landscape.

Moreover Anita Desai describes the human sentiments in juxtaposition with not only their action but with the environment so well, as she did in her novel "*Fire on the Mountain*." In the very first chapter of the book, Desai portrays the Kausauli, the place where Nanda Kaul, the Protagonist devotes her best years of her life; she describes her character with everything around nature, how she is influenced by her surroundings and each at of hers defining her mental status so that we can read her mind. With the close reading of the works of Anita Desai like *Where shall we go this Summer?* and especially, in *Fire on the mountain*, one find the connection between the nature and woman, and the importance of nature. Even the title itself points out the Nature symbolism. Desai's fully involvement with the atmosphere, background and to the details of Indian scene is the leading element in the novel like trees, season, birds, mountains, gardens symbolize the grim reality of existence, originality, hope, freshness etc.

Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain* is set in Carignano in Kasauli, at the surroundings of the Shimla hills and she magnificently portrays the Indian life. The novel deals with the three women characters - the worst sufferers being the women character -Nanda, Raka and Ila's the personal struggle of and their oppressed life,. Throughout the novel, these characters have fire burning inside; confront to triumph over the societal boundaries imposed on them by the Patriarchal system. The road of self discovery is found through the characters of the novel. The novel is written in three parts which are interconnected:

- 1) Nanda Kaul at Carignano,
- 2) Raka comes to Carignano and
- 3) Ila Das leaves Carignano (Anita)

Respectively is divided into several unequal short chapters, like acts of a drama followed by epilogue in which the writer examines the significant action occurring within the psyches of Nanda Kaul and her great granddaughter Raka as well as her friend Ila Das.

The opening part of *Fire on the Mountain* depicts the geographical and Psychological setting of the protagonist Nanda Kaul to the arrival of Raka- her great granddaughter.

Part II of the novel deals with the interaction and later on the lack of it between Nanda Kaul and Raka. Despite the generation gap, they are quite similar in behaviour.

The novel deals with the marginal, unimportant, loneliness, isolation and agony in the life of the protagonist, Nanda Kaul. Nanda Kaul, a great grandmother, has abandoned her complete world living in isolation, comes to Kausauli to consume her remaining days in the peace of mountain. It was her love for nature which brought her to the desolate place Carignano: the place of isolation and bareness as her past life was full of suffering and miseries. She wants seclusion as nothing to do with any of the people in her life.

"She wanted no one and nothing else. Whatever else came, or happened here, would be unwelcome intrusion and distraction."

(Anita 3)

She would let no one enter her little paradise. Even every day visit of the postman is a futile interruption to her. She is recluse. She just wants to live her dreams, and her extreme longing- to be alone after finishing her responsibilities towards her family. Thus the first section of the novel deals with the story of Nanda Kaul- the Protagonist, living in carignano, distant from the disturbed crowd.

The novel begins slowly with the thorough description of Nanda Kaul's movement on single afternoon which reveals that in spite of her age she is elegant, graceful. With the close reading of this chapter, it has been seen that Desai has introduced Nanda Kaul as a female who has introverted and detached herself from all the duties, relations and responsibilities after an ages spent serving a husband as a Vice Chancellor's wife, many children and many grand children. But she decides to live a secluded life. She is just not bothered about worldly matters, the mechanical life and the blaming society. Rather she wishes to live in fantasies of new life as she is enjoying and rejoices the loneliness and feels happy to live with the company of Nature and Silence.

From the centuries, In India, male domination has remained as a powerful factor in familial relations. Naturally it implies sacrifice on the side of woman and not on the side of men. So Nanda Kaul has bitter experiences too. So she moves towards to the

conclusion that it is better to be free from the shackles of life and wishes to breathe freely and moves like a free bird.

Outwardly everything appears pleasant and liberated from roughness but within Nanda Kaul is burning with a fire of disappointment, dissatisfaction, frustration and suppressed emotions. She never gets time to feel for herself. In her earlier life Nanda Kaul is a successful wife and mother. As a wife of Vice Chancellor, she has enjoyed the comforts and social status. But Mr. Kaul had never had any respect for his wife, Nanda. The author reveals the root of her present situation or trauma in the form of interior monologue of Nanda Kaul. Now she feels that her busy past is like 'a box of sweets' and longs for a peaceful and quite retired life.

"The old house, the full house, of that period of her life when she was the Vice Chancellor's wife and at the hub of a small but intense and busy world, had not pleased her. Its crowding had stifled her."

(Anita p.31)

Here one can discover that at this stage of age of Nanda Kaul, she is going through the Menopause period, but no one realizes her mental and physical condition. During this phase woman needs special care and affection. As per our Indian culture or Indian tradition, as a woman, she must continue to give every second of her life, but nobody aware about that in this crowded house, she felt isolation and loneliness. Due to dejection and rejection, she wanted to free from these forced relationship and from the monotonous motherhood. . As a result she is searching for her own identity. Woman is expected only to nurture others. So as a wife of Vice chancellor of Panjab University, Nanda Kaul was busy all the time with endless household works and societal duties. Like Virginia Woolf's character named Clarissa Dalloway, the wife of Vice chancellor, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, her life is also full of social duties and activities. Her distress as a busy wife is presented as;

"The old house, the full house, of that period of her life when she was the Vice Chancellor's wife and at the hub of small but intense busy world, has not pleased her. Its crowding had stifled her...too many trays of tea would have to be made and carried to her husband's duty, to her mother in law's bedroom, to veranda that was the gathering

place for all... Too many meals, Too many dishes, on the table, too much to wash up after..."

(Anita p.29-30)

Simone de Beauvoir has observed:

"As soon as a girl child is born, she is given the vocation of motherhood because society really wants her for washing dishes which are not really a vocation. In order to get her washes the dishes, she is given the vocation of maternity."

(Beauvoir, 32)

She also recalls her busy life of bringing up children and performing the role of mother, under these household, husband and children's responsibility, she sacrifices her own will, expectations, ambitions and over all her own identity.

"They had had so many children, they had gone to so many different schools and colleges at different times of the day and had so many tutors...all of different ages and sizes and families." "There had been too many guests coming and going... many rooms of the house had always been full...there was a shortage of privacy that vexed her."

(Anita p.32)

At this point, the famous critic, Sanjeeta Dutta rightly comments on the women's identity,

"In India, a long history of mother-goddess worship legitimizes woman's glorification/deification as the divine mother, the source of energy, power and fertility while the same motherhood is an institutionalized form of oppression and subjugation of women. In a patriarchal kinship structure, a woman's status in the household is determined by her ability to produce male issues for her husband's lineage. Her identity revolves around the wife/mother roles beyond which no individuality needs to be established or recognized."

(Dutta p.84)

So is happened with our protagonist, Nanda Kaul. Even her past brings painful memories rather than sweet memories.

“Nor had her husband loved and cherished her and kept her like a queen- he had only done enough to keep her quite while he carried lifelong affair...”

(Anita p.158)

Unfortunately, Nanda Kaul and her Husband do not hold an affectionate connection. She is dutiful wife and mother but the relationship between husband and wife was unhappy. In fact, she is a submissive and due to her compromising nature, she ignores her husband's illicit relationship with Miss David, the mathematics mistress that he carried lifelong and loved her all his life. They had not married because she was Christian. He was such a coward that he could not even dare to break the social convention by marrying her.

Unfortunately she bears it lifelong and suffers. The lack of affection and warm from her husband is one of the reasons for their unhappy married life as well as her trauma. Rather he considers her as a tremendous hostess of all the parties which he held, where the invitees were more women than men. Her husband did not give his love to her rather he had treated her as a decorative piece or machine which can be useful for the running of his household. She was continuously neglected and became lonely from inside. It has been clearer that Nanda Kaul's life has been purposeless and meaningless as she describes;

“Nor has her husband loved and cherished her and kept her like a queen- he had only done enough to keep her quite while he carried on a life-long affair with Miss.David... and her children were all alien to her nature... she did not live here by choice –she lived here alone because she was forced to do, reduced to doing.”

(Anita p.145)

Her own world, her own choice was gone somewhere; she is in the state of anxiety, therefore Seema Raizada states about her trauma, “We find that Nanda like many

other characters of Anita Desai suffers from loneliness unfulfilling relationship. She weaves a world of her own; the waste in the landscape mirrors the waste of her life.” (Raizada, 174) probably she suffered from *nimiety* (*disorder*) – unpredictable overload of the existence of family members and friends.

“She had suffered from the nimiety, the disorder, the fluctuating and unpredictable excess. She had been so glad to leave it all behind, in the plains, like a great, heavy, difficult book that she had read through and was not required to read it again.”

(Anita p.32)

Here the researcher likes to compare Nanda's Taruma with Mother Nature. Like Nature, She is also giving everything and sacrifices herself to her family silently, without thinking of her own desires. Both women and Nature bear everything mutely. So there is a connection between the dominations, exploitations and subjugation of women and nature by patriarchal attitudes. These two must act to save themselves from the exploitations.

Nanda Kaul becomes a rebellion and protests against the forced relationship by freeing herself from the shackles of her married life. And becomes a part of nature and spends some time with her and indentifies her with tress, mountains and wind. She wants to be remote, solitude like the eagle soaring above the mountain, to be totally alone, and still,

“To be a tree, no more no less, was all she was prepared to undertake”

(Anita p.4)

However destiny has one new test in her old age. Raka- her great granddaughter comes in Nanda's life. She has decided to live in a calm place; once again she is called for nurturing, caring, and comforting by her children. The news of the arrival of Raka upsets her. Both have secluded themselves from external world just like the isolated place Carignano. She is disappointed by Raka's arrival at Carignano,

“ It was against the old lady's policy to question her(Asha, her daughter) but it annoyed her that she should once again be drawn into a position where it was necessary for her to take interest in another's activities and be responsible for their effect and outcome. When would she be done?”

(Anita p.50-51)

Here the author introduced another character Raka- a daughter of an ill-matched couple. Due to violence of her drunken father towards her mother, unhappy and unhealthy relationship of her father and mother, and insufficient parental care, she needs isolation and loneliness in her life. She undergoes through the anxiety and solitude and wants to live in the midst of nature. As she was suffering from typhoid, her mother decides to send Raka at Carignano with her grandmother as everyone advises her to stay at Kasauli, where nature is working as medicines. Still People believe that nature can help us in every situation and we get solution from nature. So Raka comes to nature. So by living with nature in peace and harmony she can be free from the typhoid.

Nanda is tired of her busy life and arrives at Kasauli- Carignano in search of peace and calmness, and she enjoys the company and beauty of nature at Kasauli and wishes not to interfere by her granddaughter Raka as well her friend Ila Das. P. D Dubey accurately described the loneliness of the characters in his book entitled, '*Feminine Consciousness in Anita Desai's Fire on the Mountain, Critical Essays on Anita Desai's Fiction*', that

“The Garden of Carignano is a projection of Nanda Kaul's yearning for loneliness and privacy. Nanda like many of us portrays to be an assertive, strong personality whereas inside she was totally shattered by her husband's infidelity. Nanda discovers herself in Raka, because Raka is what Nanda always wanted to be.”

(P.D.Dubey and Dodiya p.118)

Through the narration of past stories of Raka, we feel sympathy for her unhappy childhood which is the most significant as well as formative phase of life. At this

juncture Desai has highlighted the psyche or mental trauma of many children who live under these circumstances like Raka.

Here the researcher wants to draw more attention on the selection of female character to present the psyche, because compared to boys; generally girls are more affected by this situation and circumstances. It doesn't denote that Boys are not affected, but their pain and suffering get diluted when they go out and play out door games, where as girls have to remain or spend most of the time in house and due to this, the mental status of girl child affected a lot in these circumstances. So does with Raka. Raka does not have any need, except the requirement to be left unaccompanied. She wishes to chase her secrets of life on her own. On the other hand, Nanda Kaul does not have positive attitude on her arrival.

"Nanda is a recluse out of vengeance for a long line of duty and obligation; Raka is recluse by nature and instinct she had not arrived at this condition by a long route of rejection and sacrifice- she was born to it, simply..."

(Anita p.48)

Nanda kaul's secluded life at Carignano can be compared with nature- to River. As the surface of the river is clear and untouched which reflects isolation like Nanda kaul, and the arrival of Raka is like stone, when a stone thrown into the river, it creates ripples, means disturbs the isolation of the river, so Nanda Kaul's isolation is disturbed by the arrival of Raka because she needs to withdraw. Social life that is the important aspect for every human being in society, but Nanda is in opposition to it and exhausted of it. She decides to be just very formal and aloof with Raka,

"To Nanda Kaul she was still an intruder, an outsider, a mosquito flown up from the plains to tease and worry."

(Anita p.44)

Nanda expresses Raka's unwelcome arrival by comparing her name with the goddess of the full moon, she describes her,

“Raka- what an utter misnomer, thought Nanda Kaul...Raka meant moon, but this child was not round faced, calm and radiant....the black one...a pair of extravagantly large and somewhat bulging eyes... she even compares her with an animal, one of the dark crickets that leap up in fright but do not sing, or mosquito, minute and fine, on thin legs...”

(Anita p.39)

However to her surprise, Raka loves to be alone, accompanied with only mountains and pines. Naturally she doesn't want anyone to enter in her paradise. She is living in fantasies.

She seeks adventures such as looking for berries, snacks, jackals, ghosts in the loneliness and peaceful atmosphere of the mountains. Raka wanders at the different sites of Cariagnano. Even Nanda finds in Raka what she herself desires to be once.

“It seemed hard; it seemed unfair, when all she wanted was the sound of the cicada and the pines, the sight of this gorge plunging, blood red, down to the silver plain.”

(Anita p.21)

Nanda also quotes the Gerard Manley Hopkins' poem; she used to be reminded it constantly and tries to apply with her circumstances as it is about a nun's vocation,

*“I have desire to go
Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail
And a few lilies blow....”*

(Anita p.71)

She becomes conscious that Raka is really a great grandchild of her,

“Seeing Raka bend her head to study a pine cone in her fist, the eyelid slipping down like mauve shells ...perfect model of what Nanda Kaul herself was- merely brave, flawed experiment.”

(Anita p.52)

Nanda reveals her inner self by watching Raka, she declares,

“ ...she was the finished, perfected model of what Nanda Kaul herself was merely brave, flawed experiment... like her own great grandmother, Raka wanted only one thing – to be left alone...”

(Anita p.47-48)

Raka's independency and lonely roaming is compared with Nanda's dream manifestation and like her she is not fond of any company. Even she doesn't like to being cared by others. Raka is not like a normal child. Even she wants to visit alone which gives delight to her which can be proved in her visit of Monkey point,

“She had planned to come Monkey Point alone, on a solitary afternoon expedition, without anyone's knowing, secrecy was to have been the essence of it, she relished it so...I'm shipwrecked, Raka exulted. I'm shipwrecked and alone. She clung to a rock- my boat, alone in my boat on the sea, she sang...”

(Anita p.60-61)

Therefore Usha Pathania rightly comments about Raka's behaviour and nature in her book, *'The Filial Ties- A Bane: Fire on the Mountain'* that

“Embarrassing, loveless childhood fills her heart with distrust and suspicion. She therefore turns her back upon human beings and their so called safe, cosy and civilized world develops a strong fascination for the ugly, lonely, rugged and desolate aspects of nature.”

(Dawan)

So Nanda Kaul is prepared to confess that

“Raka, you really a great grandchild of mine, aren't you? You are more like me than any of my children or grandchildren. You are exactly like me, Raka”

(Anita p.71)

But very soon Nanda Kaul realizes that though they are alike, there is a dissimilarity too; her reclusiveness is self imposed while the child Raka was just born into so. Raka is pleased in her solitude life and contented with companionship of nature.

On the contrary, we find a change in Nanda Kaul, as she wants to enter the child's world; she is taking interest in the child, and also engages her in her conversation. Even she also shares her childhood fantasies, her own past world with her. She tries to mingling with her by waving the stories of her life. She tries harder, she tells her about the paradise where she was born and exaggerated the stories of Kashmir.

“Oh, the house in Kashmir was full of animals, the strange ones. He had a bear, you know, a great big Himalayan bear that he had found as a cub in the forest. The cub grew and grew and was enormous by the time I can remember – too enormous for its cage, a huge, shaggy fellow with white horseshoe on its back chest,”

(Anita p.104)

“I kept animals too, you know for my children, remembering how much I'd enjoyed having them as a child, she plunged in recklessly. Not only dogs and cats but unusual ones too Monkeys. We had a pair of Monkeys that we kept chained to the veranda rails because they were too destructive to let loose. They were gibbons- long limbed, black-faced and silvery, like languor, such fun.”

(Anita p.108)

The child listens and as a straight and blunt, she asks her Nani,

"Why did you come here then, she asked, instead of going back to Kashmir?"

(Anita p.101)

Contrary to she fails in do so, as Raka is not interested and completely ignores her. It doesn't indicate that Raka is blunt girl and she doesn't want to develop intimacy with her great grandmother, but the home environment, the circumstances and traumatic relationship of her father and mother make her reclusive, even she doesn't miss her mother or family here but she has a strange attachment with nature and she is attracted by such places

"where there was no sound, only silence, no light, only shades, and skeletons kept in beds of ash on foot prints of jackals flowered in grey."

(Anita p.91)

Her behaviour is abnormal as she never demands but loves to be alone. Nanda goes on to catch the attention and affection of the Raka by narrating the incidents of her past and about the imaginary world but her efforts are in vain as it more puzzles Raka,

"She could not understand this new talkativeness of her great grandmother's who had preferred, till lately, not to talk to her at all, nor had wanted to be talked to. Now she was unable to stop."

(Anita p.106)

Raka is restless and she does not believe the tales narrated by her great grandmother. By seeing her granddaughter's disinterest in her, Nanda Kaul says,

"I never saw a child less like a Raka- a moon..."

(Anita p.107)

On the contrary, Raka and her grandmother Nanda have some similarities, while embracing each other; they found that both are skinny,

"Each felt how bony, angular and unaccommodating the other was and they quickly separated..."

(Anita p.40)

To one side of Raka's appearance, Nanda Kaul also uncovers her loneliness and solitude but she too like her grandmother, does not want any intervention:

"But Raka ignored her. She ignored her calmly, so totally that it made Nanda Kaul breathless. She eyed the child with Apprehension now, wondering at this total rejection, so natural, instinctive and effortless when compared with her own planned and willful rejection."

(Anita p.47)

Raka always likes to wonder outside and roaming in the Kasauli landscape,

" with her brown legs scratched, her knees bruised, sucking a finger stung by nettles, her hair brown under the layer of dust, her eyes very still and thoughtful as though she has visited strange lands."

(Anita p.46)

Raka wanders at the different sites of Carignano and around in Jungle,

"Bones and ashes of dead animals"

(Anita p.44)

but later when she realises the Pasteur Institute's violation and oppression on animals in the name of their studies, she is stunned,

"She shaded her eyes to look up at the swards of the Pasteur Institute chimneys...lashes about black whips of smoke. Raka Smelt serum boiling... chloroform and spirit, smelt dog's brains boiled in vats..."

(Anita p.49)

Nanda Kaul wanders having watched the child seethe silently as,

"If she were a thousand black mosquitoes, a silly humming conglomerate of them, and did not know whether to contain or release this dire seething."

(Anita p.113)

Raka goes away from her Nani and Nanda Kaul thinks that,

"Raka no more needed, or wanted a house than a Jackal did or a cicada. She was a wild creature- wild, wild, wild."

(Anita p.113)

Here the conflict between attaching and withdrawing are the essential features of the novel. That is performing vital in the lives of the characters.

Raka is different from other children, not all the children would dare to chase it. She has built her imaginary world around her and needs nothing from life. She wants to chase her inner world of fantasy or to chase her own secret of life, snakes, animals, ghosts amongst the rocks and pins of Kasauli. It is a life, she craved and yearning for as well as watched from the outer surface –in Delhi, in Manila, but she has never attempted to enter in it. The jackals are the symbol of the mystery of life and the child wants to chase it. She wants to see the jackals. And her quest for Monkey Point is a symbolic of her search for something unknown in her life.

Desai has written this novel in unique manner with the symbolic interpretation. In this novel, Nature is used as a motif as she has blended the nature and characters. This novel is prosperous with the images of woman environment interrelatedness. Here is the evidence of it such as the motifs and imagery - Fire, Sea, Ravine, Mountains, Raka as an insect, Garden are used to present the inner turmoil and anger of the characters- Nanda, Raka and Ila das. She uses the nature to represent the symbolism and imagery of character as it has its own importance in the novel. Desai exhibits several dominant zoological, botanical atmosphere and colorful imagery through the description of landscape, jackal, and imagination of nature. Desai skillfully draws a meaningful link between human and nature to create a mosaic touch in the novel. By

mentioning the efficiency of forest fire, Anita Desai tries to emphasize on the ecological imbalance on earth due to human beings misusing it. By using the metaphors of insects and animals like mosquitoes, lizards and jackals, Anita Desai draws our attention on how her female characters loathe the absurdity of their existence.

In *Fire on the Mountain*, Desai symbolizes, Nanda Kaul as a Mountain or forest which signifies her self-esteem and Raka represents as a wild nature or fire as well as their mental trauma. So by the arrival of Raka, her life becomes hell. On one very fine day, Raka is surprised to see flames or bonfires,

"A splendid bonfire that burned in the heart of the yellow cloud. The whole world was livid, inflamed."

(Anita p.58)

Raka in her curiosity asks the cook- Ram Lal,

"Will it set the hill on fire?" and Ram Lal replies, "This is how the forest fire starts. Some have come up as far as our railing. You can see how many of the trees are burnt, and houses too..."

(Anita p.58)

The forest fire causes the degradation of natural resources.

"I've seen trees, all burnt...she heard the cries of animals and birds burning in that fire."

(Anita p.83)

But in the world of today, we live in this fast turning life, and we get used to it which has exploited nature like anything. We forget the fact that this nature gives us peace and energy, and everything we can find in the lap of nature.

In this modern era, Man becomes machine by using modern technologies and inventing new ones day by day. To satisfy his quest or desire, he uses natural resources. Here Anita Desai rightly gives the proof by the example of a Garden

House. It was one of the most attractive homes in Kasauli. Now it has been adopted by Government as an army camp.

“A pity, it used to be so beautifully kept at one time, and look at it now.”

(Anita p.62)

Nature which gives peace and makes human being in harmony, the man tries to destroy this harmony and peace. Desai compares the incident of Ila Das's rape, with the darker aspects of Nature and woman concern in this novel. Though in her whole life she serves the human society, she was killed. Similarly, the Nature servers the society and by the side of it is destroyed or oppressed by the male dominated society. It shows the control and exploitation of women and nature in society. The woman in India, has always been psychologically and socially oppressed and suppressed, she even sexually harassed and biologically subjected by male dominated society. And if an honest attempt is made by a woman to challenge the problem and rise to eradicate them like Ila Das did, has been mercilessly curbed in the name of social dignity.

Ila Das visits Carignano to meet Raka who is Nanda Kaul's childhood friend and the third woman protagonist of the novel, having marginal role but leaves impact on readers. She is pathetic, lonely as well as comic person. She is recluse of another kind, as she has no choice, she has no one. She lives her life on the margins of isolation and solitude. She has a hard life. She has only one friend Nanda, who even doesn't offer her company. Besides her anti-social and unlikeable voice, Ila das has experienced lots of other misfortunes in her life. Yet she cares for social problems like subordination women, child marriage and labor etc in India. She cares as well as fights for women and child,

“... the women are willing, poor dears, to try and change their dreadful lives by an effort, but do you think their men will let them? Nooo, not one bit.”

(Anita p.129)

When Ila Das telephones Nanda Kaul and asks about visiting her, Nanda realizes that her peaceful single life is in threat as if this was not enough, Ila Das who is a childhood friend of Nanda Kaul, in short the reminder of her past days which Nanda Kaul doesn't feel like to remind, or enters in her life as an inevitable intruder.

Though, Ila Das comes to meet her old friend Nanda Kaul. She talks about their old times, they have experienced and spent together. Ila Das has served as a lecturer in Home Science in Punjab University. Though she deserved the job, she got a job because she knows the vice Chancellor of the college. But soon after the death of the Vice Chancellor, Mr. Kaul, She had lost her job from the University. But after the lots of struggles, she has been appointed as a Social Welfare Officer in government office. Out of the concern for the entire women population, she fights against child marriage and other nuisances which spread in India. She also tries to enlighten the local people and makes them aware about the evils of these nuisances. Though Ila Das has hard life, and has suffered a lot in her life, still she cares for the social problems in which many girls become victims of it.

If we compare the life of Ila Das and Nanda kaul, Nanda kaul lives comfortable life and lives alone but has never bothered about or even thought about the others or the problems of the society- mainly women in India. She even doesn't think about her friend Ila Das' shelter. Due to traumatic experiences in life, Nanda becomes selfish and barren and prefers the life of isolation and recluse. Nanda Kaul's allotment and disillusionment with the society and human relation can be display in her approach towards the unexpected entrance of Raka and Ila Das. She always thinks about herself and her own need of privacy. On the other hand, Ila Das is trying to manage her life by facing many obstacles or problems,

"...thirty rupees would cover the cost of feeding me." (Anita p.138)

She struggles for survival. She also has suffered poverty, lonely self yet she goes on with zest and cheerfulness. She is flexible and even unmindful of the other people who ill treat her.

"... I think how much better off I am than the poor, poor people around me."

(Anita p.138)

Ila Das actually in need of shelter- home as she asked the help from Mrs. Wright and she has given her spare bed in a corner. Ila Das hopes that Nanda, her old friend will offer shelter or help to her. She expects help from her friend. But being an independent and self determinant woman, in spite of her struggle for survival, she doesn't express or speak out her need to Nanda. On the contrary, Ila is shocked by the reaction of Nanda Kaul as she remains silent.

"Dumbly, Nanda Kaul shook her head...would ruin her existence here in Carignano. She simply shook her head."

(Anita p.139)

On the contrary, Ila Das is totally different from Nanda Kaul, she still continues her conversation. She even fights against the local priests who deny treating the poor sick children in the hospital and letting them die. She is also trying to prevent the child marriages. She relates the story of Prit Singh, who is setting up to get married the little girl who is about just seven to an old widower and having six children for the sake of a small piece of land and two goats. She tries to convince that girl's mother but unfortunately this invites wrath of Prit Singh and many villagers as well. Ila Das is trying to raise her voice against the male dominance society but being a helpless woman, her voice is silenced by the Prit Singh.

Though Ila Das has been good to others and humble in her approach, she has to suffer and lose her chastity at the end. After Ila Das's visit to Carignano, at night on the way back to her home, she is harassed and raped. Prit Singh kills her brutally to take revenge of her interference in his personal plan of her daughter's marriage. Hence it implies the men's domination over women. His brutality and violence can be seen in below lines,

" tighter, tighter, tighter, about her neck... tore at her cloths, tore them off her...and raped her, pinned her down the dust and the goat dropping, and raped her...Crushed back, crushed down into the earth, she lay raped, broken, still and finished. No it was dark."

(Anita p.156)

Desai herself in her interview with Ramesh Shrivastava admits,

"Ila Das is based on a real person whom her mother knew and who occasionally visited their home in Delhi, and that she caused much hilarity and scorn among them. Later when Anita Desai was in Kasauli, the lady had met the violent death in a nearby village."

(Shrivastava)

From the ecofeminist perspectives, the violation and rape of the women is linked with the violation and rape of the earth, and it's evident is, The Pasteur Institute, in this institute, they used animals for their researches;

"they have rabbits and guinea pig there, too many animals. They use for tests... they empty the bones and ashes of dead animals down into the ravine..."

(Anita p.44)

The report of Ila Das's dreadful demise is transmitted to Nanda Kaul through the phone call just like her arrival. By hearing it, she is terribly stunned, shocked and shattered. She is unable to believe that her friend would end up like this. It is unbearable and worse. Nanda breaks down and wants to cry but cannot make a sound. By not inviting Ila to move with her, Nanda becomes real culprit for the attack on her friend. She is depressed and suppressed in her heart by the shocking news of her friend's rape and death which leads her too towards the death. At that very moment, Raka returns home, excitedly informs her about the setting of the fire to the forest,

"Look nani, I have set the forest on fire. Look Nani look – the forest is on fire."

(Anita p.158)

Here Fire highlights the mental trauma of Nanda Kaul and Raka. R. S. Sharma opines that

"the fire consumes the fictive world of Nanda Kaul and leaves the reader smouldering under the impact of a tragic awareness that he

had never anticipated. The only reality of fire symbolizes the funeral pyre- the ultimate consummation. Apparently, Raka is only survivor of this three woman story and she is identified with the triumphant knowledge. “

This fire (the constructive and destructive force) symbolizes the characters of Raka and Nanda Kaul. Ila Das symbolizes as a strong and at the same time as purifier. The dreadful death of Ila Das who was raped and murdered, set fire in Nanda's heart. By setting a fire everything will be destroyed so Nanda Kaul also wants to set fire to her life and wants to find a new life.

R.S Sharma exactly points out,

“Raka's words are expressive of her resolve to destroy a world where a woman cannot hope to be happy without being unnatural.”

(R. Sharma, Anita Desai p.145)

With unawareness of her great grandmother's demise, Raka hustles into the house and raises her voice by shouting that she sets the forest on fire. She doesn't recognize that her great grandmother is passed away.

“Tapping, and then drumming, she raised her voice, and then raised her head to look in ...”

(Anita p.159)

At this point, Anita Desai relates that Nanda kaul is a symbol of Mountain or Forest that Raka has set it on fire. She has explored the perfect example of Greek tragedy in this novel by presenting the three noble characters. Nanda Kaul her aloofness and disillusionment, Ila Das with her flexibility and anti social and screeching voice and Raka with her independence transgress the expectations of femininity that is care giver and dependence. And they suffer and sacrifice not only because of their personal flaw or lack but because of social limitations, and failure to recognize the worth of woman.

Through these three female characters, Nanda Kaul, Raka and Ila das, Anita Desai facilitates us to determine the unseen and darker aspects of the human being. It presents the real position and fate of a woman in India and trauma of a married woman who suffers from injustice and social inequality that takes refuge such as - A widow like Nanda Kaul who is economically independent, inflexible, incapable to accommodate anyone else in her small world of Craignano, the other Ila Das , flexible, and ready to make all amendments and adjustments in life but fail to maintain dignity in the society and a girl Raka though a child psychologically stronger than her great grandmother, chooses to live recluse life as her life has been miserable by the disharmony of her parents. But like fire they find the resolution and light in darkness. Desai's characters always attempt to triumph over the societal limitations imposed on them by the patriarchal culture.

As a result, these three women lead to miserable life. Externally everything looks smooth but within, the fire which burns in the heart of Nanad Kaul with frustration, disappointment and suppressed emotions, she suffers in the voice of silence like Maya and Monisha. Whereas Ila emerges as an independent individual and fights against local priests. Thereby Nanda and Ila become representatives of all women who sacrificed for others.

In Desai writing of this novel, Nature and human nature are very intricately woven. And one would agree that *Fire on the Mountain* is a marvellous narrative by Anita Desai. She has given narrative voices to her women characters to explore the experiences of Indian women and also focused on the environmental degradation taking place in a modernizing and industrializing India. she also examines the psyche of women in isolation and far from the civilisation.

Anita Desai, through her writings makes us aware about the ecological hazard and deprivation of nature. It has become a global concern in recent times.

Hence, Anita Desai resides an unassailable position in the galaxy of Indian English women writers. She is recognized as one of the strongest feminist voices in India today. In this wonderful novel Desai has pierced into the prized solitude of a regal, dignified, elderly woman, and given us a look inside her heart who makes us

"... understand and feel what is to be woman, know how a woman thinks and feels and behaves."

(Desai and Butcher. p.54)

Through the oppression and domination of her woman characters: Nanda, Raka and Ila Das, Desai reveals the ecofeminism in her novel and also brings the association between women and nature by proving herself as a ecofeminist. She also gives a message to make efforts for the welfare of the human kind.

To sum up, C. G. Shyamala ponders about Anita Desai that,

"Desai has the power to express sensibilities in her canvas using images from nature...she is an artist who has the ability to carve such deep emotions within dexterous use of imagery that announce the introduction of the explorations of the selves within the ecological framework."

(pp.7)

Here the researcher concludes with the fact that ***"we have to return everything that we have borrowed from nature."*** Life means not just existing, life must be lived not on one's own terms, but as it own terms.

The next chapter will discuss connection between women and nature in Sarah Joseph's *Othappu : The Scent of the Other side*.

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CHAPTER 4

An Exploration of Ecofeminism in Sarah Joseph's *Othappu- The Scent of the Other Side*

The fundamental objective of this chapter is to deal with Sarah Joseph's selected novel in the context of ecofeminism. For this purpose of analysis, the research scholar has selected the novel *Othappu- the Scent of the Otherside*. A humble attempt is made here to find out the elements of ecofeminism in her novel. The present chapter tries to reveal the features of ecofeminism through the portrayal of character–Margalitha in the novel.

SARAH JOSEPH: A LIVING LEGEND

Introducing Sarah Joseph, the author, environmentalist, a social activist, and an artist is a living legend of the present generation. She is the most renowned contemporary Indian female writer in Kerala. She occupies a prominent place in Indian writing in English. By contributing 'Ecriture-feminine' (writing seen as a feminist concept, in which the writer makes use of female constructions of identity), (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page) a stream in Malayalam literature through her collection of short stories 'Paapathara (1989), she becomes the God-Mother of feminist movement in Kerala. She has also seen the impact of her writing as she says it has changed the perception of young people:

"I think it created a moment, a change internally. I have had many boys telling me that it changed the way they looked at their mother and sister."

(www. thehindu.com)

The celebrated critic and poet, K. Satchidanandan imbued with the spirit of Sarah Joseph to invent the word, 'Pennezhuthu', corresponding of *Écriture feminine*. This short story collection also won the Muttathu Varkey Award in 2011.

In December 2012, she was awarded the esteemed Padmaprabha Literary prize, consists of Rs. 75000 cash value and a citation. She chooses a vocation as a lecturer in Shri Nelakanda Verma Govt. Sanskrit College, Pattampi and Government Victoria College, Palakkad and in Government College, Thrissur.

Born on 10th February 1946 into a conservative and traditional Christian family in Kuriyachira in Thrissur city in southern India, she grew up with her parents. Her father Louis was inclined to Marxist ideology by reading a variety of journals, newspaper and magazines etc relevant to Marxist Ideology. Her mother Kochumariam was a typical Christian house wife. Like other conservative mothers, she was also taking special and keen interest to join Sarah in marriage sooner than the age of fifteen. With the result, at the age of 15, when she was in IX standard, was married to Joseph. For Sarah getting married at the early age is being inclined to an unfamiliar person. But in a conservative Christian family, a girl has no right to be heard. However the couple have one daughter whose name is Sangeetha Srinivasam. After marriage, she could continue her education and went on to the teacher's education course and going ahead for her specialized career as a school teacher. Afterwards she enrolled as a private candidate for Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in Malayalam subject at Sanskrit college, Pattambi. She also was appointed as a Malayalam Lecturer in Government Sanskrit College in Kerala.

However it is a turning point for her as she started participating in social activities and movements. According to her,

“Pattambi, which was coloured in blood red with the strength of revolutionary movements and unified vigour of the leftist movement, is responsible for the deep changes that happened in my life.”

(Joseph Sarah. Ormakal Chrishalabhangalalla, Bhashoposhini
Varshikapathippu, 2005. P. 20)

She also became active in student group activities and in theatre. She observes that the phase of her teaching career as a professor had a major role and tremendous effect in changing her life which was resulted in Sarah Joseph as a feminist. It also gave opportunity to face the realities of her life. She discovers that through education, one, especially woman can change the whole society. After the retirement from the administration job, she continues to reside at 'Geethanjali' Mulamkunnathukav situated in Thrissur.

Sarah Joseph is indisputably one of the leading figures in Kerala. She initiated her career very early by writing poems in her teens. In the ninth standard, her poem was come out in Mathrubhumi weekly. She was also excellent in reciting her poems as if she can easily express herself through poems or it is her first mode of expression. Even she was often invited at poet's meets to recite her poems. The renowned poets like Vyloppilli Sreedhara Menon and Edasseri Govindan Nair acknowledged her poems too. Even at the age of 14, she was influenced by Thakazhi's Randidangazhi and wrote poem on woman.

V. R. Sudhesh also divides her writing into three phases as a pre-feminist, feminist and post-feminist. Even Sarah too agrees with it as she herself says in her preface:

“Early stories are training site...as the person who tells the story grows and transforms, the story within him too undergoes growth and transformation. This change and growth have happened to my stories too: in structure, in narrative mode, in ideology, in vision of life and so on. So to make a journey through a writer's stories becomes a journey through his life.”

(Problematizing Absolute Otherness)

Even after her marriage, Sarah Joseph wrote poems and all together 15 poems were published which describe the theme of love, affection, showing melancholy, dejection and starlit darkness of the night. Once, the well recognized Malayalam poet Vyloppilli gave her an advice to focus only on poems.

So after the short phase of ambiguity, she became conscious that not only poems but fiction too was her genre and she moved to fiction. Moreover she started writing short stories and novels. Her short story collections consist of;

- *Manassile Ti Matram (1973),*
- *Kadinte Sangeetham (1975, anthology of short stories),*
- *Paapathara,*
- *Oduvilanthe Suryakanthi,*
- *Nilav Nirayunnu,*
- *Puthuramayanam,*
- *Kaadithu Kandaayo Kaanthal,*
- *Namathinmakalude Vriksham (anthology of short stories) and*
- *Grumb (clove).*

(Joseph, Kerala Writer)

Among them *Paapathara* is measured as a milestone in her feminist writing in Malayalam. Her short stories are based on the theme of the underprivileged, deprived and marginalized women and their struggling to free themselves from the operation and supremacy of social, cultural and economic constitutions as well as from the so called patriarchal system of the society. She also got fame from her distinctive narrative technique by her subversive reading of Ramayana, "*Ramayana Kathakal*'

Belonging to the conventional Christian family, she states that

"Nature is a natural companion. In Alahayude Penmakal, Annie stands in the space between three jackfruit trees. My childhood was like that amidst trees of all kinds, bamboo, coconut etc. I walked amidst them, feeling the breeze and hearing the rustling leaves. Minute things made me happy and I noticed creepers that grew wild and those that stuck to a tree."

(Anima, Her voice)

Therefore she not only loves and cares but admires nature from her childhood. Out of curiosity for nature and its beauty as well as her more closeness and oneness with nature in the past, she becomes the representative of nature and woman in literature.

Being a feminist and an environmentalist, Sarah Joseph focuses on the women and nature themes, issues of inequalities, injustice, issues related to development and materialism that lead to the ecological destructions, especially in her first trio –

- 1) *Alahayude Pennmakal*,
- 2) *Maathathi* and
- 3) *Othappu- The Scent of the Other side*

Sarah Joseph won Kerala Sahitya Awards and Kendra Sahitya Academy Award for her first novel- *Alahayude Pennmakal (Daughters of God- The father)* in 2001. She was also honoured with the Valyalur Award in 2003 as well as Literary Award in 2004 for her first novel.

She has returned her award condemning the murder of rationalist writer M M Kalburgi. She said,

“The Sahitya Academy has remained silent all of this, when it should have been the first to speak out. I am returning my award in protest.”

The novelist Shashi Deshpande has also given her resignation from the Sahitya academy General council.

The woman-nature links are visible in her novels as she coins her characters with nature. The well known poet as well as a critic, Sachidanandam rightly said about Sarah Joseph,

“She brought about a paradigm shift in Malayalam Literature.”

(Devasia)

In *Alahayude Pennemakal* which was published in 1999, Sarah Joseph tells the story of marginalized people and the struggles of certain women for the survival of their family who are deprived of their nature land and indirectly become the victims of displacement and Urbanization at Kokkanchira – a place which was once garbage of dead bodies. It is a place of lower strata of the society; literally it means ‘*a place of wild animals*’.

An eight years old girl named Annie narrates the story of the novel. According to her, people living or belonging to Kokkanchira are inhuman. They are considered as Gundas, prostitutes, latrine cleaners and over all marginalized group of people lived in Kodichi angaadi – the street of bitch. The women nature links can be observed through the characters in this novel. Thus through the portrayal female characters in novel, Joseph talks about how women are always marginalized and how urbanization, globalization and exploitative culture have degraded their lives.

Her second novel in trilogy – *Maathathi* also grabbed the first O Chand Menon Award and Abu Dhabi Arang Award and also Kuwait Kala Award in 2004. This is the story of an unwanted and abandoned child of her parents named Lucy, lives with her aunt Brijita. Lucy is just a servant for her aunt. She never enjoys any freedom in her life. Like Lucy, Cheru another character in the novel is also suffering from inequality of the society.

Through her writing, Sarah Joseph proved that art and activism could bring changes in male dominated society and culture. It could also create the eco-friendly atmosphere as they are necessary or essential means of social change and transformation. As a result, she was severally criticized and condemned by others because she is mostly blending art and activism in her writings.

However, she never bothers about it and she has published her third novel- *Othappu* in 2005. Valson Thampu translated it into English. It received recently Vodafone Crossword Translation Award in 2009. For the present study, the researcher has selected *Othappu* which depicts the story of a nun.

Her next novel is *Aathi*. And the conversion of '*Gift in Green*' was also done by Dr. Valson Thampu published in 2011. It deals with the human's connection with water and also explores the environmental issues. In *Aathi*, she continues with the same theme by narrating the story of Aathi - an island, untouched by outside life. Initially Aathi was abounded in water area, birds and butterflies or we can say secluded from the human oppressions. The village and the innocent girl Kunjimathu who became the victims of patriarchal system, as Kumaran who tried to transform Aathi in Modern city and also as a beloved of Kunjimathu betrayed her by never keeping his promise. Through this novel she depicts man's umbilical cord with nature and she writes,

“Not the darkness of a forest of clouds. No, not the darkness of night, either. Darkness, unfathomably deep, rising and spreading from beneath the earth, turning the earth into shadow... it drew the earth back into its cavernous womb.”

(Santhosh, Water of love seeps through)

Here both woman and nature become the victims of male supremacy. While on the surface of it, this novel treats the conflict of native people who are facing the threats of diseases, pollution, displacement and migration. It involves the issues of ecological destructions and aftermath of environmental degradation.

“To be a man, one must have a body made firm by working hard on the land, tilling and sowing. To know the mind of woman, he has to know, first the mind of the land.”

(Sarah Joseph, Gift in Green, p.20)

Here we find that the association of woman and nature through the Aathi and Kunjimathu and Kunjimathu decided to save Aathi by sacrificing her life for the sake of Aathi as she believed that,

“Water knows everything and forgets everything”

“Nothing was beautiful any more neither night nor day, neither leaves nor flowers, neither the earth nor the water, neither mother nor father.”

(Joseph, Gift in Green 23)

And she became an inspiration for all by protesting against Kumaran. In the end, finally the decision of court was in favour of her.

One of feminist writers Janet Biehl rightly said that the inevitable connection with nature is part of being woman. Sarah Joseph focuses here the impact of development and invasion over nature and women and their negative and harmful effect on the entire system of our planet earth. Moreover, here she uses an anonymous woman character that is village. She portrays village's (her) worries, helplessness and anguish.

The sixth novel *Ooru Kaval* (2008) is the winner of Basheer Award. 'The Vigil' is the translation of it by Vansathi Sankara Narayanan that depicts the story of Angada - the character taken from the Valmiki's mythological epic Ramayana. Angada is a monkey, the son of Bali who took revenge to Rama as his father, an icon of love and peace was killed by Rama. He had a great connection with nature as Kiskindam is full of greenery, variety of flowers and trees.

In her novel she has given more importance to mother and nature. Through all the women characters, she has depicted that women are strong enough without the support of their husbands and family. This novel is written against war, Rama's war against Ravana. People of Kiskindam were forced to prepare weapons for the war, which was resulted towards famine in Lanka and affected the normal life of people at Lanka. On the other hand, to find Sita and conquer Ravana, Rama was building a Setu (bridge) in the sea by uprooting thousands of trees and rocks which leads to the ecological destruction but it was described that these trees and hills were waiting to give sacrifice for Rama. And finally through the sacrifice of soldiers, people and nature, Rama regained his wife sita.

Sarah Joseph's next novel *Aalohari Aanandam* roughly translated as 'Per Capita Happiness' which was appeared in 2013. This book deals with man-woman relationships and sexual orientation which is set in a big Christian household family. This text is on extra marital affairs like *The God of Small Things* that investigates on Love Laws. It is also like Anna Karenina; it begins with the remarks of an unhappy family from happy family. These are the evidence of Sarah's oneness with nature.

The 67 years old writer Sarah is also known as the eminent figure and social activist of feminist movement in Kerala, since 1980. She has fought hundreds of cases of dowry deaths, sexual slavery, women trafficking and domestic violence.

In 1986, she founded 'Manushi', a political women's organisation which is the organization of thinking women, the first of its kind. This organization worked on women issues like dowry death, trafficking, domestic violence and sexual slavery and fought hundreds of offences against women including the case of Thankamani (Mass rape of women by the policemen in the village of Thankamani), Suryanelli continual rape case, Kaviyoor case and many more in Kerala. Since then no incidents of violence against women were reported. It does not be present today, but she has no

regrets as it was a floating body and it has done a great work. In one of her interviews she says,

“The work of Manushi and other feminist groups in the past three decades has enhanced the status of women in Kerala, challenged rigid moral codes, furthered gender equality and found space in society for alternative sexualities. Much more remains to be achieved.

(Santhosh, A voice against violation)

Recently in January 2014, Sarah Joseph has joined Aam Aadmi Party and contested parliament election. She lost to C. N. Jayadevan from Communist Party of India. She became the active member of it as she thinks that it is time to clean up the system and the power should be back with the people. She is impressed by the AAP's people friendly projects as it offers a ray of hope to the down trodden people in the society. She has also supported Amnesty International known as AI (a London-based non government organization focused on human rights) in the controversy against ABVP in 2016.

Valson Thampu is a fortuitous translator from Malayalam to English. He is Christian theologian, Indian educator, and priest of the church of north. He is the principal of St. Stephen's college university of Delhi. His translations are unique as it is translated as the original work being written by the author. He is a peace campaigner, activist and writer too. As a writer he is interested in religion, spirituality, political and socio cultural issues. He has written more than 400 articles on politics and socio cultural issues and 10 publications on religion and spirituality. As a translator he has translated Sarah Joseph's '*Othappu – The Scent of the Other Side and Gift in Green* in 2011. *Othappu* won the crossword award.

OTHAPPU: THE SCENT OF THE OTHER SIDE

“We can sanctify others only if we purify ourselves. To give knowledge to others, we have to know. To give light to others, we have to be lights. Only after attain the presence of God, should we venture to lead others there...”

(Joseph, *Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side* 122)

Women of today need to seek the power within them. Ecofeminism is both the philosophy and movement. It explains the interrelation between the domination and exploitation of women and of nature with the same male centred attitudes, system and traditions of the patriarchal society. Ecofeminism is also embedded with literature as literature is a truthful expression of the contemporary era.

Thus nature seems more like a woman to be raped and violated too. The protagonist of Sarah Joseph's novel rightly gives the answer of Ayn Rand's question, "*It's who is going to let me? It's who is going to stop me?*" by their revolutionary steps throughout the novel. This research also examines the cultural and spiritual ecofeminism as ecofeminism is an ideology for the recognition of women, for the preservation and conservation of nature and mostly for the sustenance of life on earth.

Ecofeminism as a philosophy and a movement aims at the welfare of women and nature. Ecofeminist writers portray the twin supremacy and oppression of women and of nature by capitalist - patriarchal attitudes and practices in their writings. Today our situation as a human being on this planet are as following: the beautiful system of our planet is being violated, polluted, degraded and resulting in damaged yet very less people showing their concerns towards the GAIA-That is the Earth.

As Carolyn Merchant points out,

"We make by act trees and flowers to come earlier or later than their seasons, and to come up and bear more speedily than their natural course they do. We make them by act greater, much more than their nature, and their fruit greater and sweeter and of differing taste, smell, colour and figure from their nature."

This transformation of nature or climate change occurred due to the exploitation and operation of growing capitalism and materialism. As a consequence, human reduce the value of nature and the natural phenomenon as well as women and the patriarchal society took hold on both. The Mother Earth and woman must be valued and consider with respect to worth because all are reliant upon them to sustain existence on this planet. Women have the harmonious relationship with the environments and their surroundings. Due to this reason women are mostly get spoiled through the environmental degradation and exploitation in patriarchal society. So woman is at high

risk. They have been constructed under a thick slack layer of prejudice, ignorance and convention. However education has brought a change and awareness as well as empowerment in the life of women today.

As far as tradition is concerned, under the tag of 'culturally acceptable' many things are passed off or overlooked such as violence and crime against children and women, domestic abuse and many other. Thus culture plays a role of our curse and our hope as well as the problem and the solution. These women have been the victims of humiliations, oppression, torture and exploitation in western development. Hence due to cultural and social institutions, woman's life lies in between pleasures and danger. The three foremost wings of ecofeminism are Cultural, Spiritual and Social Ecofeminism and their prime importance is to define the natural connection of woman and upholds the notion of "***Mother Earth***" and "***Femininity of Nature***".

The focus of Ecofeminism is to save trees, animals or soil, the whole environment as well as woman as it is sacred or it is necessary for the continued existence of people. In this chapter, researcher focuses on analysis of the novel *Othappu: The Scent of the other side* with reference to Social, Political, Economic and Psychological impact on women and nature from eco-feminist perspective.

According to Vandana Shiva and Maria, Ecofeminism is about the correspondence of society's relationship with natural world and woman. Ecological demolition and industrial catastrophes constitute a direct threat to everyday existence. They also talk about the rising of women everywhere and protect life from the industrialist patriarchal world system.

Sarah Joseph, an eminent writer and a woman activist, in her author's note, talks about her teenage yearning to become a Nun and wanted to be one with Christ. But Sarah Joseph did not get Jesus' call. As an alternative, she chooses to turn out to be writer but never neglected Christ. *Othappu* is her exploration of Christ as well as her quest for spirituality. The novel discusses the social, economic norms and gender justice. It also throws light on other issues such as sexual pity, malayali family and culture and most importantly the independence of self and lacking of it.

In *Othappu*, an effort has been made to depict the life of a Nun who belongs to conservative Christian family. The story highlights the influence of religion on the

protagonist which often guides her. She has also presented the character of Margalitha who holds strong inner chaos under the oppressive mechanism of the closed society. But she does not want to be a puppet. So aspired by self reliance and in quest of her own identity and in search of real Christ, she dares to cross defying patriarchal rules and norms.

The novel unfolds a woman's strive who dares to fight in opposition with family, tradition and brutal customs centring to women's surrenders to the rigid system of convent. The silent suffering and exploitation of nuns and priests in the past, due to the customs of convent was described by Margalitha's superior Aabelamma in the convent. She says,

"Once you are caught in a system, it is best to cooperate with it dictates. If you walk out, your rebellion will exact a crushing physical and spiritual cost."

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 5)

Margalitha with deep sigh takes off her veil and opens the door of convent and walks out into the wider world;

"I am leaving.

Like the wind that never returns...

Margalitha walked down the steps."

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 07)

In fact now one can openly rebel against the traditional Christian society by questioning the church just like Margalitha and Sister Jesme. As Sister Jesme through her book '*Amen: the Autobiography of a Nun*' and Sister Mary Chandy's autobiography '*Nanma Niranjavale Swasthi*' (*Peace to the One filled with Grace*) explored the life of a nun in a convent which caused a quite embarrassment to church as it throws light on the life of a nun. The 67 years old sister Mary, who walked out from the convent like Sarah Joseph's protagonist in *Othappu*, describes the harrowing story of a pregnant nun who is trying to kill her baby in convent:

“After I broke open the door with the help of another nun, I grabbed the child and held it to my chest. I thought I was doing the right thing but the sisters turned against me. I want to know why. In a previous incident, when I hit a priest on his head with a stool when he tried to grab me, the nuns sympathised with the priest. From then on, I was watched carefully.”

(Varsha)

Sarah Joseph realizes,

“Most of the nuns and priests suffer in silence for suffering is a quality that they are conditioned to accept as a virtue. What you see here is the expression of the individual's conflict with the establishment. They did not have the courage till now to take on the establishment but now they are openly questioning it.”

(Varsha)

Othappu, the book with a blemished female face and yellow round patch, is originally written in mother tongue of Kerala, Malayalam and translated in English by Valson Thampu. It is third in a trilogy of novels - the other two being *Alahayude Pennamakkal* (1999) which won a Central Sahitya Akademi Award and *Mathathi* (2001). *Othappu* (2003), a winner of two state level awards and recently won the Cross World prize and also won the 'Vodafone crossword Translation Award' of 2009. The novel revolves around Margalitha who is a nun and narrates the consequences of the nun's departure from the convent and dealing with the other side of Christian faith. She always suffers through a conflict and faces troubles of being a nun and a woman by male suppression and restrictions of traditions. The novel raises the issues like the freedom of the individual and the lack of it, spirituality, family, self consciousness and religious society.

The story of the novel portrays the Margalitha's bitter experiences in her life as well as also explores the grim reality of the churches and its notion that regards the Dalit Priests as their objects of charity. The novel is about the protagonist's yearning for true Christian spirituality and faith and search for her own sexuality which runs throughout the novel. Inside the convent to seek and bare her soul, Margalitha confesses through writing letters to the Roy Francis Karikkaran, a young idealist priest which are full off Margalithas doubts, views on various subjects like nature, prayer, God, Faith, endurance, reason and love.

It throws light on the socio - psychological proposition of convent life in Christianity and female subjectivity in the Malayali Christian family. Through the description of the Gosaikunnu-Margalitha's house, Sarah Joseph throws light on how life is changed so much at Gosaikunnu. Once there was a stiff challenge, today it has no challenge at all for anyone. The lawns, flower gardens, ornamental lamps, high rise walls and long rows of attractive houses had altogether transformed Gosaikunnu into wonderland:

"Today cars, buses and trucks beamed their headlights and climbed Gosaikunnu effortlessly with heavy vehicles too. Auto rickshaws loaded with sawdust, firewood, rice sacks, provisions, vegetable, and cattle feed swept uphill."

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 63)

"All that remained were puddles of polluted water, black and dense like asphalt lying stagnant in small, scattered cesspools... the canal had degraded into garbage dump. They were filled with soil from an alien land. Concrete covered the surface."

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 238)

The contrasts between old and new make Margalitha dissonant and degrading. She too is shocked to see the sight of her house,

"There were no cool shades or shadows. Sunlight blazed in the courtyard. The ancient mango tree had been cut down..."

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 239)

This text is also based on the Sigmund Freud's Psycho analytical theory – conscious and unconscious levels of human mind. At the beginning the protagonist Margalitha is in confused state of mind, 'to be or not to be' like Hamlet in Shakespeare. The novel begins with sister Margalitha's agony, who steps outside the convent as she was confronted with a crisis of faith in the convent. So in order to seek her God, She chooses to walk out by succeeding to unlock the gate of the convent. She walked out like the breeze that never returns. She tries to accomplish the goal of her life to be free from the religious practices and society by accepting her personal freedom and views. Fransis Roy Karikkan rightly describes her with a bird,

"She was a bird released to the sky: let her fly to her heart's content."

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 67)

And about her revolutionary decision,

*"The wind blows this way and goes. The same wind blew yesterday.
After wandering about it will return as the wind of tomorrow"*

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 67)

In conscious state of mind Margalitha wants to get out from the convent but she is unaware about the struggles and difficulties she has to face from the patriarchal society after her revolutionary step.

Both Margalitha and Karikkan come from different families. Margalitha is from wealthy and aristocratic family where as Karikkan is from poor family. His father is a coolie. In Christian family, having a nun and priest is a matter of pride for other family members vice versa. It is a deep shame or shock when nun and priest returns home and it brings troubles for family.

According to Valson thampu,

"The book is a case study about any individual in any religion who is seeking the truth of faith and that's the universality of it. He believes that Christianity is not ready for powerful questions those Sarah asks. The hope of the individual, according to him lies with biblical

Christianity not church Christianity.”

(www.thetimesofindia.com)

For Margalitha to enter in a convent to become a nun and to go out of a convent to turn to the society as an unfrock nun, are equally hard decisions. As per the tradition, her former declaration to become a nun is appreciated by the family and society; but later on this the same society has condemned her on her second decision to run away from the convent. As the structural and ideological circumstances has affected on the limit of the total freedom and absolute choice of human. This thing also profoundly affected on the mind of women to remain silent sufferers or to take a risk of their lives. Margalitha becomes a right feminist by taking risk in her life. In search of God, Margalitha first took the vows of chastity, poverty, obedience to god and till the end she never breaks that vows after defrocked. Hence Margalitha proved a rebellion that rebels against the brutal social customs and create her own identity. Sarah Joseph presents how women are prevented from freedom and their sufferings as well as restrictions on woman to survive as a human being. Sarah Joseph says as a feminist:

“I am proud that I am born a woman. I feel fortunate to be living in an age that harkens to the promising voice of women. As I am not male writer, I have no compulsions to reproduce the values of the ruling class. The culture of the dominant class is against woman, just as it is against those low of caste[.....] my duty is to write fearlessly about women- woman who denied self determining rights over their own bodies by oppressive gender regime.”

(Jayasree)

She thought, wrote and worked intensely for women's liberation, mobilizing women's movements to resist suppression and denial of dignity. She has an abiding faith in the potential of women.

Except her, there is no other writer in Malayalam who has shown such courage in word and deed. The Malayalam word *Othappu* is a case in point. It means faltering and thereby causing others to falter or 'stumble' or to go astray, that is the cause for someone to lose faith and turn to evil ways. The fear of causing '*Othappu*' is to

enforce nervous conformity in others with motive of controlling people. In every society, every individual faces this dilemma. According to Sarah Joseph the closest equivalent is '*scandal*'. But the word '*scandal*' approximate to *Othappu* simply in a partial, lexical sense

With close reading of this book, the research scholar believes that translating *Othappu* as a scandal would be unfair to the spirit of the text. Accordingly the translator has translated the title *Othappu* as '*The scent of the other side*' which is not literal but imaginative and thematic and appropriate.

'*Lokame Yatra*' (farewell, O world), an autobiographical poem by sister Mary Benigna is a very powerful and poignant poem on the theme of leaving a life of worldly attachments and joining cloister which is sublimated into accepting a lofty plane of spiritual communion with divine love from where '*There is no return.*' Sarah also writes about the return of such a nun, the scandalous nature of which act has not diminished in intensity.

The protagonists are interwoven between the strands of celebration and sentiments. She portrays a story of a socially and economically privileged woman who leaves the nunnery, who fights against religious social institutions for the search of her freedom and space in this patriarchal society. Here I quote from the Bible which is rightly resembles with Margalitha's radical step;

"If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than your whole body to go into hell!" (New Testament, Mathew)

The protagonist Margalitha belonging to opposite backgrounds having entirely different expectations and notions regarding religious vocation for which she decided to become a nun and responded in opposite ways till the ends to situations which came to her path. Her entries into and exits from the religious calling are based on opposing causes.

Karikkan, who is a slum dog millionaire, comes from a poor family. He is a coward and disillusioned about his role as a priest. This priesthood gives him and his family many opportunities or possibilities for his new life. In the process of seeking peace,

when he decides to leave priesthood and brings Margalitha to his parents, indirectly he destroys their peace and in this shock, his father commits suicide. And here at his funeral process, I find the association between nature and human being as his father's friends and neighbours are lashing love and kindness for this good man by cancelling his debts and saying that,

"Mother earth, here is your son. Take him and give him the wind, water fire and air. Give him back to us as the thunder that makes the seeds sprout and the rain that rouses the leaves to unfurl. Return him as fire and sunshine."

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 181)

The researcher also remembers some lyrics of one album related to it, Main Rahoo Ya Na Rahoo by Rashmi Virag, which touch my soul every time when I listen,

*"Kisi roz barish jo aaye,
Samajh lena boondon mein main hoon,
Subah dhoop tumko sataye,
Samajh lena kirno mein main hoon."*

Today we forget the vivid truth of life in which Christianity also believes that human (man of dust) is the dust and turn to the dust one day. God make man out of dust and he is a unique and exceptional combination of natural material. It shows that all creatures' lives are absolutely reliant on God and Mother Nature as both created man and woman in the image of God. This below biblical verse also declares the human equality and liberty,

"It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion for him who corresponds to him."

(Genesis)

But today this patriarchal society has misused this verse, instead of live and unites in love and harmony which is natural; they exploit the woman and nature. Now

humankind has become irrational garbage. They will spoil everything by breaking and eating this earth in the name of religion and caste. Today man is habituated to make plenty of money through corruption, bribe and crime. Unfortunately he is far away from earning honest money which requires hard work and sweat. Even the God is too blind to see his corrupted offering to him which goes in vain. We forget that it is our responsibility to treasure life and nature.

In this fiction, Sarah Joseph through the characterization is trying to analyze the institutionalized church system and practices, particularly through the description of Yohannan Kaseesa's home and Pattipunya's eccentric forest mission.

Both Margalitha and Karikkan escape from the religious vocation though their specifics are different. Firstly, they choose the religious vocation from entirely different family backgrounds. Even in the novel, Margalitha's character itself contains two binaries; a calling of a nun and the call for her womanhood. Further it also portrays Rebekka, Margalitha's aunt marries to Puthukkat Thomas Vaidyar, the famous doctor for mental illness out of her beauty. But due to Vaidyar's mistrust on her, she decides not to play the role of a perfect wife. She neither denies nor accepts having a lover. Finally Vaidyar breaks her spirit and souts,

"This'll settle your mad lust!" Thomas Vaidyar's historical laughter was hoarse.

(Joseph, *Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side* 30)

Due to her step mother's behaviour towards her, dowry system, woman trafficking and physical and mental harassments by her husband, she is forced to leave the house. However later she returns as a dutiful wife when she is insisted by Vaidyar. In course she looks more beautiful by giving birth to two babies. And she starts to join Nasthikan George's drama company that brings rumours and issues amongst the public regarding her chastity:

"Tongues began to wag. There was nothing people left unsaid: wild stories spread. As a result, the relatives of Vaidyar and Rebekka alike were furious at her for becoming a 'drama woman'. They treated her as an outcaste and vowed never to let her set foot within their four

walls...Both groups were sure that Naasthikan George was keeping her as her woman.”

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 33)

There after she raises her voice and does not bother about what other talks and thinks about her and her relation with Naasthikan which is not true at all and she leaves his company.

Like Rebekka, Margalitha in search of her identity too faces the insult by the society and her lover Karikkan. The young Karikkan in the quest of peace, who grew up in poverty and social neglect, enters in the world of peace, love and service. He finds comfort in the practices of the church. It makes accessible to the new possibilities in priesthood. He knows that marriage becomes the custody in the form of various burdens so become a priest is the only way of escape for his family. Paradoxically, it was a far greater renouncement for him to give up the priesthood, betraying his parents and siblings and family than it was to embrace it. He seeks peace for himself. Karrikan is attracted towards Margalitha. At the same time he is aware about the harsh reality of life that the Church and Society will never allow. The Church discriminates on the base of its followers' class, society, and financial position. He is sickened with the practice of the church. He realises that:

“Priesthood did not help me to find what I sought. Also, what I have found is not what I sought. I prefer to be a commoner with the face of life, rather than a ruler with the visage of death.”

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 165)

Later on Karikkan tries to join Margalitha on her path and he expects to live together. For some interval of time, they stay together without fearing and bothering about all the conventions of the society. But the society does not allow them to live peaceful and immortal life within the society. They became social outcasts in their own society. He becomes aware with the fact that his respect and status in the society as a representative of God was gone. Due to the frustrations aroused by his family and society behaviour, He is paralysed by hopelessness;

"I shall leave this place and find work somewhere else, Margalitha. I can't stay here."

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 191)

Margalitha tries to console and encourages him to live life,

"Get up Karrikaran! Think of life."

"They had not done anything that warranted their flight from society. We have to open the door and step out into the sunlight. Let us not assume that every human being is against us."

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 191)

As he is psychologically and emotionally too weak that he abandons her with their unborn child as almost immediately as he realizes that Margalitha is the mother of his unborn child. He departs to a distant place where no one can recognize him. And he takes refuge from the world of conflicts and challenges by accepting strenuous world. Here writer compares them with soil and water. They both are good if separated but if we mixed them, they become slush;

"This very notion was unnatural and artificial. What would happen to the earth if soil and water did not mix? What would happen to the colour of the earth?"

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 59)

On the other hand, Margalitha, the only daughter of a catholic family who sacrificed an affluent home, enlightened father, wealth, charm - everything to join the religious order because she wanted to shift from being served to serving others.

"For days and nights, every moment, I considered and reconsidered. I reasoned with

Jesus. He tells me not to come to Him in grab and prayers of hypocrisy or to choke my soul."

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 04)

She could not justify to herself, the prospect of remaining confined to the nun. The same courage of conviction that inspires her decision to part with worldly life - "*I want to join Convent*" rings in her voice as she asks the ration dealer's wife for help to earn living: "*May I sweep the ration shop?*" Her self reliance and courage is also shown when she refuses her mother's gift of her share of the family property.

In search of God, first she departs from an affluent family permanently. She devotes to oneself to the service of God and of chastity, poverty and obedience. To her surprise, she experienced, chastity, timidity, meekness, poverty and obedience are only mere words, nothing more than that at the convent. She realizes that this institution does not fulfill her wish:

"I made my first vows with many hopes and thoughts in my heart. I dreamt that I would share my life with the poor as the suffering, live and die for them... and the Jesus they worshipped there was a wealthy Jesus. There seemed to be no connection between God and the suffering poor."

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 91)

But after her depart from convent and during the service of the community, she never becomes detached to the vows that she has taken as a nun.

The decision of her returning home or society brings dishonor to her family. Her Mother, brother and sister in-laws are shocked with her second choice of coming back from convent. As a result her outraged family confines her and she is abandoned into virtual dungeon, the place outside the house which is used for keeping the raw bananas for ripening. She is imprisoned for three days with no food and water.

"I thirst..." Margalitha groaned.

Even after quenching the thirst of the earth, the rain continued its downpour."

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 46)

The rain is divine, she quenches the thirst of the mother earth and reduces her heaviness again and again, but this tenderness is lacking in human behavior. Margalitha is shocked to see the drastic change in the attitude of her family members as this is the same family who had stood together at the door and waved good bye to her on the day she was going to become nun. But that family scene is shattered somewhere after her revolutionary step. And only the fresh air alone can keep Margalitha alive and conscious for some time in that forbidden place of her house. She faces the wrath of her mother and brother. Though the three children – John, Paul and Margalitha had equal rights on their father's property legally, irrespective of gender, however she is abandoned from that too.

After realizing her family's decision that the family does not show any concern for her, she leaves the home and goes from one refuge to another at Angamaly. She wonders around in search of shelter. But Margalitha knows that those who were cast out of their society, especially for a woman like her there is no place to stay, sit and rest or if she find the space in society, she would be violated at any risk in this male dominance society. Margalitha, full of hope and influential girl, finally realizes that,

“For the time being, circumstances are hostile to me. But it need not be so forever. I see the light of hope on the face of tomorrow...I am free to delete, erase or correct. Can incorporate what I choose. Can flow like water or fly like a bird.”

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 74)

Soon after, Fr. Karikkan carries Margalitha to Kasseessans, a Syrian Christian couple's home. Karikkan is slowly attracted by Margalitha. He realizes his fascination for Margalitha;

“The way she looked at him, the curls that lay sideways over her temples...he felt that every moment away from the sight and sound of all theses was a huge loss. All he needed was her mere presence, nothing more.”

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 58)

Meanwhile Karikkan comes nearer to her;

“Margalitha became conscious of a rare fragrance from near her ear. Karikkan – it was his scent. That fragrance continued to grow with breeze that blew, caressing her... Margalitha had grown up alienated from her own body. The flowers those bloomed, the birds those chirped and the breeze that blew there were strangers to her. The light of love salvaged the shame-submerged zone of her body, like islands surfacing a new in the wake of an earthquake.”

(p.106)

Margalitha's name is linked with Karikkan and when the Syrian family becomes aware about their scandal, Margalitha is forced to leave their house too. And she goes to Rebecca, her cousin who is a preacher and healer, in search of humanism she later on to the jungle retreat to meet father Augustine who is a social reformer and Christian free thinker. Here one can found that deserted from the family and society, nature gives shelter to her, as Margalitha chooses to go to jungle in search of peace:

“The cool breeze comforted her. Her eyes closed. No sound of any kind. No one around. No greed, no violence. No loud repetitions of falsehoods. No entertainment that blasted one's ears. Only water! Water that shone like silver. Water that surged unhindered, free to assume any shape and go whither it pleased. New every moment! Fresh at every heart beat...”

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 132)

Margalitha is spellbound to see the awesomely beautiful nature and she decides to love and serve the poor and would like to share their miserable life,

“Live with them and become like one of them; sharing their poverty and living with them.”

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 135)

In the Meantime, she is devoted herself entirely to an orphan child Naanu given to her to look after by Augustine. Margalitha takes charge of the baby as he needs love more than medicines. Moreover she finds supports from nature as environment-wood, water and sky help us to live life peacefully;

“The scent of the rabbits would somehow prolong his life. That his days would multiply if the colours of the porcupine approached his eyes, if parrots and minas could caress his ears, if fragrance of foliage filled his heart... everything was meant to help him live.”

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 145)

Margalitha's stay with Augustine with no relationship anguish Karikkan. Like manly thinking, He believes that a woman does not have control over sexuality. And out of his complex, he asks:

“Giving up the day long struggle to hold back the question karikkan ventured to ask: ‘where does Augustine sleep?’”

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 167)

At this point, Margalitha is speechless and avoids his question by remaining silent on it,

“Margalitha despised the question. Its origin lay in an age old curiosity. It smelled sour, burped, rancid indigestion, she said nothing,”

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 167)

It depicts the firmness of a woman in her own decision and does not bother about the society and system as she herself is acquainted with her virginity and her vows of chastity. She undergoes mental and physical pain, but she truly transcended the concerns of the world and reached that state, when she can forgive all and accept all in a blend of selfless love and compassion - the orphan child of an unknown street woman and her unborn child, whose father-Karikkan has fled from her as escapist. As she started believing in the Gospel words:

“Man shall not live by bread alone”

Luke 4:4(New Testament)

*“Do not worry about the food and drink you need in order to stay alive
or about cloths for your body...”*

Mathew 6: 25-34(New Testament)

However by adopting and attaining motherhood, she becomes confident and realizes the true meaning of life and fights against the social norms and practices by refusing the wealth of her mother and trying to fulfil her individual identity. She confronts the traditional roles and image of woman in the society. Thus the story turns into a spellbinding and hypnotizing tale of joy and sorrow and magical power of one special woman.

Sarah Joseph is also making use of Biblical references like the Magi brings gifts for infant Jesus referring to three nuns comes with gifts to meet Margalitha and her unborn child. She nurses Naanu by providing pure love and enormous nature. Like Mary who came to greet Elizabeth, the wife of Zechariah,

“I have come to serve you. Rejoice and sing praises unto the lord.”

(St.Luke 1:39-45),

Rebekka came to meet Margalitha and placed his hand on Margalitha's belly and whispered:

“I feel the baby in your womb leap with your joy.

Rejoice! You are blessed!”

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 211-212)

And the miracle of '*Jesus feeds five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes*' teaches us that Jesus shows the way to distributing a nation's wealth to extremely hungry people and share and divide equally five thousand times. Every one is sure to get his share and it will fill not only stomach but also the heart with love.

By the end of this novel, Karikkan would withdraw from Margalitha and separated from her.

"She came awake with start.

Karikkan was not by her side."

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 215)

She is left unaccompanied with a small orphan Naanu and her unborn baby. In this modern world good people are not allowed to live peacefully where as people who cheat and exploit others can live happily. In search for peace of mind, she prefers to live a different sort of life and to walk the path which is preferred by her heart and to live free from the worries about the body inspired by the parable of birds from The New Testament, Mathew:

"Therefore I tell you do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than cloths?

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns and yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? ...therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

(New Testament, Mathew 6:25)

Jesus utters, *"don't worry, be hopeful."* We all agree that worrying is just a waste of time on nothing as it will snatch away everything such as our mood, relations with friends, family and with God too. So instead of worrying on problems try to resolve some difficulties in our life.

So finally Margalitha understands this and she wishes to lead a humbler life, humbler than ever before,

"If my mind is serene and peaceful, I will find the way to happiness."

(Joseph, Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side 233)

And she has discovered her mission which will spread a new Gospel - *the Gospel of Faith in the saviour of the poor and the wretched*. She has accepted that her life is now for others and rebels against the set system for her and tries to have own freedom to grow and develop her personality or at the end of the novel, she proves that empowered woman can do anything against related oppressions with her strong will. Margalitha's character reveals that woman can live alone with freedom in this society and can also raise her voice.

Margalitha is an *Othappu* or we can say an offence to all the patriarchal institutions - family, church, law and even educational pedagogy. In Indian history, we have female forces of liberation as a part of Bhakti Movement such as Mirabai, Akkamahadevi, Janabai and so on. In *Othappu*, Margalitha's personal escapism, inherent in such liberation stories as she takes up the mission of service-the service of humanity through a maternity and motherhood that can mother the children of the earth, born and unborn.

To sum up, The Researcher must say that an empowered woman like Margalitha who represents all women, with strong will power and determination can do anything against this patriarchal system and against the gender discrimination and oppression on her. This text also glances on faith, rebellion and devotion to a path outside of the church positively. This novel is really the reflection of contemporary Kerala.

Sarah says, "*Nature became an adversary. Man was the centre. We celebrated man, and trees and water were to sustain him. Now, we are experiencing the after-effect of taming Nature,*" she says. Sarah mourns that the writer's collective that stood firm to protect the Silent Valley is not united for the Gadgil report and Western Ghats.

"We have only been hearing solitary voices.

(Anima, Her voice)

Here the researcher concludes with Margaret Atwood's mocking lines from poem "*Dream Of the Animals*" that truly describes the sharing of space and freedom to exist in relation to all elements (mountains, rocks, trees, grass, animals and all spices on earth) including individual.

"You want to go back

To where the sky was inside us

Animals run through us, our hands

Blessed and killed according to our wisdom.

Death made real blood come out.

But face it we have been improved, our heads float

Several inches above our neck...

Our bodies are populated with billions of soft pink numbers

Multiplying and analyzing themselves, perfecting their own demands

No troubles to anyone."

(Kathryn Van Spanckeren 168)

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CHAPTER - 5

Conclusion

The last chapter draws forth the conclusion of above chapters. The fifth concluding chapter is stating on multiple perspectives the researcher has come across during the process of analyzing the selected novels of writers of extraordinary caliber.

Studied from this perspective and angle, the selected novels, Arundhati Roy-‘*The God of Small Things*’, Anita Desai’s ‘*Fire on the Mountain*’ and Sarah Joseph’s ‘*Othappu-The Scent of the Other side*’, depict the connection between Human (especially women) and nature which is inherent and cannot be broken easily. Throughout the world, the treatment bestowed to women is same from the years. Hence, analysing the role of woman and nature in the respective novels, exploring the miserable condition and struggles of woman against the mind-set of conservative society and culture, how they mash the male domination for their own identities and for self-respect of a woman, have been the objective study of the research.

“We cannot end the exploitation of nature without ending the human oppression and vice versa.”

(Birkeland 19)

In the context of ecology and feminism both are connected and related as well as this connection is inherent which cannot be broken. If Nature is not real then we are too not real.

“Then a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change... there was a strange stillness... the few birds seen anywhere were moribund; they trembled violently and could not fly. It was a spring without voices. On the morning that had once throbbed with

*the dawn chorus of scores of bird voices there was now no sound;
only silence lay over the fields and woods and Marsh.”*

(R. Carson, *Silent Spring*)

The above lines are taken from a book '*Silent Spring*' written by a born naturalist, Rachel Carson. United States Fish and Wildlife Service honoured Rachel Carson. She led an environmental movement in America and government to ban the DDT pesticide. Through the above lines, she tries to scare all of us due to the rise of environmental threats upon human. There is no harmony between living and non-living habitants which was in past, where all, living and non-living habitants of planet lived in harmony with its surroundings. This book brings complete change and attentions of millions, looking forward to a new dawn where there are no exploitations prevail against women and nature. Today the association between Nature and women become more explicit. At present, one could think about how to manage the environmental changes that affect the humankind so badly. One must react against consumerism and materialism and resort more simple ways of life if global disaster is been avoided.

Humanity is an integral part of nature and human being shared and experienced a glorious and unique unity of women and earth in the past. In ancient time, this special connectedness of women to earth was valued too. Human being was direct depended on nature. However, patriarchy and dominated society has destroyed this connectedness. The craving for development separated humans from nature. This process continues to broaden the gap between them. Hence, nowadays, that golden age is gone, where there was a balance between nature and humankind and people valued the resources too.

In present scene, looking widely around, one can identify that the ecosystem process, human ecological relationship and their interconnectedness separated. In fact, all lives are sacred, destroying the living life resulted into disaster, and this exploitations still continues. As a result, today, all are facing the global ecological and economic crises.

According the chapter 1- '*Genesis*' from the '*The Holy Bible*', in the beginning, after creating earth and heaven, God presented earth to the Adam,

“Be fruitful and increase in number;

Fill the earth and subdue it.

Rule over fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

(The Holy Bible- English Standard version 1:28)

Under the dominant anthropocentric belief of a man, *‘All belongs to man’*, Man uses earth for his personal gain. He regards himself as a central and most important element of existence. Moreover, man also dominates women considering woman too for his consumption. According to a well-known eco critic, Lawrence Buell, *“Human beings are ecologically or environmentally embedded.”* Nevertheless, he is trying to destroy the beautiful planet that we live on. From the very beginning human being act as if the natural resources are not living being like human and they could never end. But today we realize that what we will do in the absences of natural resources as we have mystical relationship with nature and we can’t survive without them. All know that nature is fragile and powerful though human assumes superiority over nature. When the natural resources are gone, we realize their voices.

The American poet Robert Frost personified nature in one of his famous poems, *‘The gift Outright’*:

“The land was ours before we were the lands,

She was our land more than a hundred years

Before we were her people, she was ours.”

(Frost 4)

This poem reminds our past and makes us to realize our responsibilities and duties towards the whole planet. All know that ecofeminism movement is not yet that much powerful and global. This term still needs strong support and recognition in all over the world. Therefore, it is researchers’ responsibility to capture the attention of the entire globe through their research works on it. The present study also confirms that the women writers through their writings try to open individual’s eyes to offer some solution to it.

The emergence of ecofeminism (a diverse movement and a philosophy) in 1980s, leads to the union of ecology and feminist thinking. It connects the violation of women and nature, and gaining its prominence in the early 1990s. This movement led the concept '*rape of the land*' and argued that its root rested in a patriarchal system, in which not only women but nature also undergoes into the same category as '*other - outside of the perceived norms - except male*'.

Ecofeminism is working on the interconnections of feminism and environmentalism. They are concerned for the ecological survival that needs an intellectual transformation, social transformation, non-hierarchical system and non-dualistic system.

The group of popular ecofeminists; Carolyn Merchant, Susan Griffin, Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies, Karen Warren and other creative minds rightly compare between the 'rape of women' and 'rape of land' or in other words, exploitations of woman and nature. (Ross)

There is a correlation between women and environment e.g. we worship goddess in nature and women can reclaim the imagery of goddess. And the best example is 'To Autumn' by John Keats in which he describes autumn as a female goddess. But patriarchal society dominates and exploits them and controls in the name of established cultural rules. Even the fertility of women linked to the fertility of the Earth (birth giver) and their sustaining abilities. (M. Staran)

It means throughout many cultures, women are the life givers and the great conservators of the nature by birth. As they both give life, they both have to bear pain as if ploughed, pierced and dug. Still they give unconditional and selfless love and concern to their children and their future generation. Perhaps both women and nature become the victims of over exploitation and violation. Hence the answer of the question of the difference between raping a woman and raping the earth, can be found in below poem, titled as *Rape*,

"Rape her again!

There still some left

If she crawls away

Cut off her arms...
Sear out her womb
Make sure it's barren,
Never again to pollute
This earth with life
If she still breathes
You can have her again..."

(Muma)

Here the anonymous poet and the ecofeminists too connected the body of woman to body of the land. In fact the word rape culture used by feminist, in this twenty first century. In rape culture, rape is considered as a common though on women or earth. So we cannot identify the rapist but we can convince the crowd or people that rape is occurred, so ideally knowing the fact, we can show apathetic attitudes towards these environmental destruction.

"Woman ... is the ally of nature, and her instinct is to tend, to nurture, to encourage healthy growth, and to preserve ecological balance. She is the natural leader of society and of civilization, and the usurpation of her primeval authority by man has resulted in uncoordinated chaos."

(Davis)

The above statement is taken from Elizabeth Gould Davis's book *The First Sex*, in which she talks about existed women- centered society in the past. As a result it brought incredible impact on US feminism in that time. (M. Mellor, *The Politics of Wome and Nature: Affinity, Contingency or Material Relation*)

Then after, this movement flourished worldwide. In 1974, India's Chipko Movement or tree hugging movement by thirty women from Himalayan forests became popular to save their forests for their livelihood- fuel wood, food.

Similarly, few years later, Green Belt Movement also took place in Kenya to protect their natural environment. Not only Chipko Movement but some Small movements like Love Canal and Green Belt movements also quickly received wide attention at that time.

Ecofeminism links the domination and exploitation of women to of nature. This theme has appeared in literature from last decade. Ironically the role of woman to male and the role of nature to human have been regarded as an influential. Both have been valued in terms of their usefulness to others. On the other side, similarly both have been dominated or exploited by man and human. Many Ecocritics give their views on ecofeminism. They tell us that; ecofeminism is political (Sargison); Sturgeon says, ecofeminism is practical; whereas according to Mies and Shiva, ecofeminism is ethical science, ecofeminism is complex, (Birkeland,1993) and Spretnak believes that ecofeminism is the salvation of the world. Starhawk also opines that women are closer to nature than men are, so only they can save the planet. Her ecofeminism links life-giving Mother Nature with the life giving of women through birth, as well as the link between ecological destruction and patriarchal oppression under male-dominated Western political economies. (Starhawk)

Just like feminism, ecofeminism too is not one but all the ecofeminist philosophers believe that there are varieties of ecofeminism perspectives about the connection as well as exploitation of woman and nature like- historical, experiential, symbolic, and theoretical.

Primarily the first connection is historical connection between women and nature. Vandana Shiva historically links the oppression, violation and subordination of women and of nature, especially in Third world women. The third world women became the victims of development that led to devaluations, marginalization etc. Not only women but nature also have violated and exploited by western technology and development. She also argues on gender equality through the Shiva – Shakti Tradition, in which ‘Shiva (the Purusha-passive element), the symbol of conception and demolition is as powerless as a corpse without Shakti (Prakriti - a feminine principle). Some ecofeminists opine that ecofeminism means the conceptual relationship between woman and environment. As per human psychological connection between woman and nature, women due to their creating and nurturing

nature develop softer ego, whereas due to masculine consciousness men become dominant and allow them to alienate from earth and women. From the childhood, this sex differences are resulted into psychological separation from mother earth and women, on the contrary, women maintain their connectedness with everything from the beginning.

Some ecological feminist philosophers have experienced the empirical evidence. They link the woman and nature connection through pointing various health issues and risk factors caused by urbanization, pesticides, toxics and other pollutants. Other ecofeminists also claim that ecofeminism has a symbolic association of women and nature in arts, literature, religion, language etc. Moreover, many ecofeminists explore the ethical interconnection between human being and non-human natural world.

Hence, the main aim of the ecoeminists is to develop the ethical concerns to human and environment that will not be male biased. In 1974, Franclouse d'Eaubonne introduced the term Ecofeminism to bring political awareness and concerns towards ecological revolution. That explains the systems of domination over woman and nature through the various issues related to them e.g. health issues, violations against women, the treatment of animals, deforestation, globalization and many more in list. They opine that the core cause of dominance of women and environment is patriarchy. Françoise is of the opinion that woman can save this sphere as she is the life giver and life preserver, whereas man is destroyer and exploitative who considers woman and nature subordinate.

The main goal of all the ecofeminists is to restore the natural surroundings for people, other existing living and non-living population on the Mother Earth. Further, this concept also reflected in an environmental science book titled, '*Silent Spring*' Rachel Carson, in which she concerned for the use of DDT that had caused damage to environment and even human too. It opens with a true story '*Fable for tomorrow*' that gave impact on readers and it resulted to nationwide ban on DDT for agricultural uses. Here one can see Carson's concerns for the future on the globe.

In this context, the present research is a sober and sincere effort to explore the relationship between woman and nature through the study of various literary genres: '*The God of Small Things*', '*Fire on the Mountain*' and '*Othappu – The Scent of the Other Side*' by Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai and Sarah Joseph respectively.

After the critical study of the selected novels of these novelists, it finds that there are profound elements of ecofeminism as well as plight of women, gender discrimination, oppression and violence, social taboo, identity crisis, and modernity. The chief protagonists of the select novels are females and projected realistically and typically who are always in quest for an identity are successful to assert their identities in their own ways. Most of the characters exhibit a positive and optimistic way of life. They emerge as sensible and understanding person. The present study intended to examine the selected novels that add new dimensions to the ecofeminism discourse by narrating the real Indian environmental problems and incorporation of Indian English novelists' insight into ecofeminist discourse.

Ecofeminism grew out of the notion that Women's ethics are adjoining to nature than men by rectitude of their biological Phenomena (e.g., the period of Menstruation, Birth, and Lactation). However, men are exempt from it. All agree with that women are mothers; they know how to nurture a child, seedlings need, tender touch that men cannot provide. Therefore, ecofeminist movement tries to show the imbalance between men and women in all the facet of life in this patriarchal system and civilization. This patriarchal society harms not only women and nature but men too by controlling self and avoiding connecting with women and nature.

Ecofeminism considers human being as a part of nature and their interconnectedness, which recommends that every organism or inorganic matter on earth and entire environment, serve a larger purpose on this planet. Thus, human beings are not above nature or not being detached from nature. The entire natural world including humans is mutually dependent and equally important. To end this human oppression over nature and women, human must cultivate love, gentleness and care instead of domination, supremacy and power over nature and women.

Therefore, in this entire research work, the researcher has tried to analyze the concept of ecofeminism, the theory of ecofeminism, its important elements and arguments on it. It also examined woman and nature interface, their association, how women and natural world are the victims and sufferers of deprivation of natural world due to their intimate relationship as well as their reliance on it.

In this research work, Novelists' concern for globalization and women especially those from the background like traditional norms; clutches of familial restrictions etc

have deeply examined. In all three novels, the women protagonists discover themselves rising to the occasion by declaring their individuality, their preference to live their own lives and overcome strange and difficult circumstances and emerge victorious. They create best of what they can of their lives. When the protagonists have a possibility, they struggle and discover happiness, and at other times they settle for whatever they can achieve, rather than stagnate under containment and suppression.

Throughout the history of humanity, in all the spheres of social activities, woman considered at a secondary place or one can say the insignificant especially in India. Woman's situation was worse than the west in India. Since ages, she is under the authority of man. Like Rabindranath Tagore's '*Gora*', Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay also tries to discover new society in India in her first Indian allegory '*Rajmohan's wife*' (1864) through the female protagonist of the novel – Matangani who represents the suffering of all women, tolerates the suffering and tortures from patriarchal society. She rebels and raises her voice against traditional social system and patriarchal oppression. Just like Matangani, Ammu also becomes the sufferer of patriarchal cruelties and oppression that researcher has mentioned in the previous chapter. R. S. Sharma rightly said regarding the inevitable tragic condition of women, "*The forces opposed to the private desires, interests and pursuits of small people are ruthless and deterministic.*" Even the great poet S.T. Coleridge and John Keats describes women and nature in their poems.

If one looks back over the years of ecofeminism, from Universal and civic level, the essential strolls have organized to assimilate women, gender and class issues within certain policy. Ruth Sidel by making the comparison between the sinking of the unsinkable *Titanic* and the state of the Global economy - the Affluent U.S, in her book, "*Keeping the Women and Children last: The Plight of Poor Women in Affluent America*". (Sidel)

She revealed that how women and children saved first on that night from the unsinkable *Titanic*, indeed those are from first and second class. Majority of women and children belonged to third class did not survive on that dreadful night. On the other hand, in Affluent America, the politicians have scapegoat single mother families and as a result, millions of children became the victims of poverty and suffered from hunger, homelessness, inferior education and health issues etc. The eco-feminist

theoreticians and activists carry on exposing the concerns for feminist equality concerns that is usually a part of environmental decision-making.

The word, DEVELOPMENT brings a model of progress for all which is derived from western industrialized economies. Primarily the focus of the development was to create improved well being for all humankind. Instead it has brought inequality, poverty, discrimination and environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, Soil fertility, water and genetic wealth are also diminished. The reason behind above issues is that Nature and human resources are not operated properly instead we misused them in different ways to fulfil human desires and expectations or satisfying the fundamental human needs in the name of development. As a result, it generated poverty, inequality in the distribution of power, privilege and scarcity of natural resources. The negative impact on world especially for women and children is largely unrecognised and denied by a new colonialism.

Gayatri Spivak also through her essays tries to challenge the colonialism. In civilizing East, India divided in the name of religion, caste, culture, gender and citizenship. Racial discrimination started in order to carry out European strategy. In her feminist essay, '*Can the subaltern speak?*' She refers that the subaltern women cannot speak against the oppressions because they are subalterns and no one has the patience to listen to them. (Spivak)

Through this work, the research scholar has discussed the interconnectedness among human beings, the natural world, and non-humans. Ecofeminists reject dualistic thinking of patriarchal society and thinking about sustainable balance.

Today all are familiar to the environmental disasters around us such as mounting evidence of global warming, slower radiation effects, threats of nuclear holocaust, growth of the world population, devastation of the ozone layer, impact of acid rain, desertification of forests, scarcity of water and topsoil, toxic dangerous of the oceans, extinction of animal species and plants etc. The renowned English historian, Arnold Joseph Toynbee rightly said in his essay entitled, '*Mankind and Mother Earth: a Narrative History of the World*' that

“our present biosphere is the only habitable space we have, or are ever likely to have, that mankind now has the power to ‘make the

biosphere uninhabitable and that it will, in fact produce this suicidal result within a foreseeable period of time if the human pollution of the globe does not now take prompt and vigorous concerted action to check the pollution and the spoliation that are being inflicted upon the biosphere by short sighted human greed.”

(G. A. Love)

We are facing the major problems like environmental degradation, urbanization, hunger, exploitation and many more. However, in this phase of threats, unfortunately, we continue to place self-interest first in place of public interest under the tag of *'love ourselves best of all.'*

Hence, Njousi Abang truly describes this degradation or threat upon the whole globe in her famous poem entitled, *'Stop environmental Degradation'*,

“...then let it be known that

People and nations come and go

But nature and God live forever.

The will of God reigns supreme:

'Neither will I ever destroy the world with brimstone nor with flood waters'

If you do what God disallows,

You will have yourself the blame.

You may get temporary satisfaction

But after you, a thousand years

Will be a short period for God

To regenerate the earth with all its splendour...”

(Abang)

Human is responsible for this abolition because he relies on development and technology as a solution that proved to be a massive disaster in the name of creativity and invention and imitating others for the sake of mere desires.

In this modern world, we are breathing in the age of environmental anxiety and human mind has regarded the environment ignored as a subjective or a mere background. According to Carolyn Merchant, ecology gives a new approach for the sustainable of the biosphere,

“The assumptions of the ecological paradigm contrast with those of the mechanistic, resting on a different set of assumptions about nature:

- 1) Everything is connected to everything else in an integrated web;*
- 2) The whole is greater than the sum of the parts;*
- 3) Non human nature is active, dynamic, and responsive to human actions;*
- 4) Process, not part, is primary; and*
- 5) People and nature are unified whole.”*

(Merchant, Ecological revolution: Nature, Gender, and Science in New
England)

The focus of the study is to contribute in this sphere and a humble effort to aware all humankind to work on to create an enduring lifestyle for all dwellers of the planet.

Even literature too reveals the man and nature relationship through the ages. Literature has been playing a vital and constructing role in promoting the environmental ethics over the years. These environmental issues also affect literature. However, we see the environmental influences upon literary works. Literature has started concerns for maintaining and restoring the right connection between human and nature. For example, The Great *Holy Bible* also opens with the banishment of Adam and Eve from the Eden Garden, being unfaithful to God; the poem, *Divine Comedy* begins with Dante who is lost in a dark wood because of his sins. He is falling into it from where he cannot find any path due to low sunlight or darkness.

Even the *Odious Rex* also opens with a terrible curse on the city Thebes as it is suffering from a plague and people are mourning as they are suffering from hunger, death and sorrow.

So literature is dealt with to explore and express the relation of human and nature, directly or indirectly as both are the important components. From the literature of Homer to classical author; from renaissance and early seventeenth century writers to eighteenth century writers; from Goethe to Wordsworth to Emerson and even the twentieth century writers have accelerated the practice modern worldview of human control over natural forces.

The renowned writer, Michael Branch rightly mentioned in his work entitled, *'Ecocriticism: The Nature of Nature in Literary Theory and Practices'* that literature has exerted a tremendous influence upon changing conceptions of natural systems and man's role within them.

Here the research scholar would like to quote from the essay, entitled *'Women and Nature'* by Judith Plant, who rightly stated that,

"Before the world was mechanized and industrialised, the metaphor that explained self, society and the cosmos was the image of the organism. This is not surprising since most people were connected with the earth in their daily lives, being peasants and living a subsistence existence. The earth was seen as female...the earth was seen to be alive, sensitive; it was considered unethical to do violence towards her..."

Thus, ecofeminists believe that human is a steward of the living earth so human should be careful and responsible. Human is not the master of the planet but he is an equal part of it. In this context, Gita Mehta explores her views on subordination, exploitation and domination of women by Patriarchal society through *'The Courtesan's story'* in *"A River Sutra"*,

"The city (now) is owned by men, who believe every human being has price, and a full purse of power... we are only women... they throw

cigarettes cases, watches and dirty bank notes at or feet as we dance...”

(Mehta 167-168)

Indeed, Kamla Markandya's *Nectar in a Sieve* deals with women embedded with nature and their hesitancy towards natural world and the notion of development.

The understanding of all the characters from three selected novels brings relevant and ample interpretations as well as arguments to shed light on the research topic. It also tries to clarify the meaning of the research topic.

In this research work, the researcher has discussed how the women protagonists in the novels face the existential crisis. The work also explores their relationship with nature or opposite to patriarchal organization, urban development, as well as oppression of women and nature that are interconnected. In these novels, the research scholar attempted to depict the life of women under patriarchal burdens and women's strives for the establishment of their own identities. The research even attempts to trace out the discrimination concerning gender and its effects on the overall development of the plot as well as characters. The work has presented ecofeminism as a matter of deep concern; an array of matters that include issues such as gender, identity, equality, race, racism, and ethnicity.

The Indian environmental movement has spread rapidly in last two decades. In all over the world, women, involving number of people from all over the areas, led the powerful environmental and social movements and activities. For example, in 1973, the Chipko Movement is the emergence of Indian environment movement that brought an eco-critical consciousness. Women were taking concern to protect and preserve the surroundings around them. Hence, it has helped women to recognize their connectedness with nature. In India 90% people are dependent on natural resources. Due to environmental degradation, industrialization and lack of employment opportunities, this movement carried forward to protect the environmental degradation and for the fundamental privileges of woman in all over India in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Orrissa, Madhya Pradesh- forest issues and Gujarat, Karnataka - overuse of ground water resources.

Thus, the ecofeminists aim is to adopt a new attitude towards nature to bring vividly to the mind, about the interrelationship of an individual and nature and not to treat nature as only resources for the so-called human desires and needs. The reason behind adopting new attitude is the desire to end the oppression of women as well as nature. In examining ecofeminism, the researcher concludes with an interesting observation of two serious problems in our society that are woman and environment and it should not ignore.

Many women novelists started writing Indian fictions in English in the eco-critical filed to voice their concerns for globalization and exploitation of women and nature such as Vandana Shiva, Medha Patkar, Mahaswetadevi, Arundhati Roy, Gita Mehta, Sohaila Abdulali, C.K. Janu, Anita Desai, Sarah Joseph, Kiran Desai and many more in list. Their works highlights the association of women have with the environment and provide theory, perceptions, protests and activism that the research scholar has discussed in the chapters. In the three novels '*The God of small things*', '*Fire on the Mountain*', and '*Othappu - The scent of the Other side*', the researcher found that the main protagonists (women - Nanda, Margalitha and Ammu) struggle throughout their life with the society they reside in, only due to their womanly characters and qualities. In the fictions, Anita Desai, Sarah Joseph and Arundhati Roy explore the Indian issues such as grief, sorrow, extra marital affairs, problematic marital relationship and punishment on breaking the rules of the society, caste system, male domination and woman harassment, woman's physical, emotional and mental exploitation. All the women characters in the novels are trying to seek their own identity as an individual and they have personal courage to come out from the patriarchal boundaries and stand against the male dominance system.

The research work analysed the three women protagonists who represent the different shades of women personality and their lives, e.g.

- Ammu who is from upper caste with her broken marriage,
- Nanda Kaul as a typical Indian wife and besides married woman,
- Margalitha- a Nun.

Not only have the protagonists of the novels but other minor female characters too become the victims of domination and exploitation of patriarchal society and system. All the female characters seek shelter in the lap of nature and find peaceful life. Most interesting thing of these characters is that despite an oppressive patriarchal system and society, they make efforts to negotiate their silence and freedom. It also portrayed that with the support and encouragement women can be stronger than men with experience can or time can.

Today the relationship between Nature and women become more explicit. Hence, each one of us must react against consumerism and materialism and resort more simple ways of life that is possible if all prevent global disaster or encounter with the destruction. At present war has become required like battle against earth, women's bodies, local economy, and against democracy. Along with, it is essential to glimpse into the connection among all practices of violence that influence women most, as all are connected as one piece. In this war, the rape of the women is the crucial issues nowadays. Therefore, by force all have to end this war. All must distinguish that all are the integral facet of the globe. Liberty of women and earth and humanity is our responsibility to bring peace worldwide as a member of Vasudheva Kutumbakam that means all are the family of earth and as a member of earth community all have to save this universe.

As the ancient Ishopanishad says this universe is for all beings and for happiness. So each one of us have to enjoy the every gift or not to violet it. Consequently, we are in the state of emergency. We must do something now to shield and guard woman and nature for saving upcoming generations from the hazards of environment changes as well as for a new economic model that is earth centered and women centered.

Hence, violent behavior against nature and women are connected or interrelated, particularly in India, due to gender inequality and the stereotype Indian culture that holds women in societal bonds.

Arundhati Roy's, Anita Desai's and Sarah Joesph's, selected works try to raise the issues that all are facing both locally and globally occurring from the development, deforestation, uprooting, environmental pollution, urbanization, tourism, hunger, exploitation etc. Today ecological and environmental concerns have become very

important issues in the field of human/gender relations' aspects, especially in women's lives. The interaction between nature/women and colonial patriarchal domination beg for ecofeminism analysis. Ecofeminists look for non-violent solutions to world problems. Attention of this work focused on the qualitative, analytical and critical interpretation of the ecofeminism. The researcher also discusses the feminism and ecology, spirituality, loss of identity and accommodation that the native people are confronted with the familiar world in the selected novels: *The God of Small Things, Fire on the Mountain and The Scent of the Other side*. They make us aware about ecofeminist protagonists and instance of struggling to conserve their habitats. All know that women and environment are inseparable part of every culture and civilization because both women and environment have contributed in the progress of humankind; their relationship is defined, classified and determined by many ecologists and writers.

Civic Chandaran, an active spokesperson of this period states about Sarah Joseph,

“Sarah moved out of her room and built connection with Dalit, Tribal, environment movements. She transformed these experiences into material for her fiction in a way that only writers with originality are capable of.”

Othappu, finely translated novel distinguishes her from contemporary Malayali writers. Sarah says the contemporary women will find voice that echoes their tales. But she insists freedom in the globalised era is chimerical. (Anima, Her Voice)

“A girl on a two-wheeler stopped mid-way by a man is still not in a position to retaliate. We propagate size-zero that weakens her physically. We have still not been able to strengthen her within. The mission is still unfinished.”

A female child has lot many things to fear from our society since her birth. Since her childhood, she is force to sacrifice many things for her peaceful life in this society. Still that is not enough as our society always biases for giving first priority to males than females when the point of benefits arises. Females are always ignorant in that phase and this negative impact has to be rectified soon for the betterment of our future. In this era of globalisation if we want to resolve the nature crisis, women has to be considered equally in balancing the development while sustaining natural resources as

women and nature have lot many attributes in common that enables women to understand the nature behaviour more efficiently than men.

Arundhati Roy writes an article, *'The Greater common Good'* to judge and discuss the construction of Sardar Sarovar Dam, which is one of the most challenging projects in the history. She wrote,

"Curiosity took me to the Narmada Valley. Instinct told me that this was the big one. The one in which the battle lines were clearly drawn, the warring armies massed along them. The one in which it would be International Aid..."

(A. Roy, The Greater Common Good 34)

Today the rapid development has caused misery to poor and marginalized people and has helped rich and upper strata people. Roy also puts the fact in one of her famous essays that,

"Day by Day, river by river, forest by forest, mountain by mountain, missile by missile, bomb by bomb- almost without our knowing it – we are being broken."

(A. Roy, The Greater Common Good 96)

Moreover, all the women protagonists of the novels such as Ammu, Nanda Kaul and Margalitha and other minor characters too tolerated the oppression of man and became the victims of humiliation, suffering, mental, and physical torture from Patriarchal system.

Here the researcher would like to conclude by quoting famous lines of one of the famous ecofeminists Maria Mies,

"We are not responsible for this destructive technology. We do not want it. Let those men, or those patriarchs who are so enthusiastic about their technological dominance over nature now clear up the mess. We are fed up with being the world's housewives."

(Vandana Shiva)

As Martin Heidegger rightly said on this,

“Man is not the lord of the Universe. Man is the shepherd of being.”

(HEIDEGGER)

Human is an essential part of the nature. Its value can be changed through our views and our interaction with nature as nature has unqualified inherent value with human. Firstly, all should value the human and non-human existence on earth. Human has no right to interfere non-human life only to satisfy the vital needs of his. On this earth, human and non-human life have equal share of food, water, air and shelter. The separation of human from nature brings environmental degradation on us. Therefore, to sustain the ecosphere and ecocriticism, all humans have to value it. It knew as ‘green criticism’, which is originated to promote the environmental activism which William Rucckert used firstly in his essay, ‘*Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*’ in 1978. Cheryl Glotfelty made it popular in 1989. Moreover, in 1992 ASLE an organization – (the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment found) to support eco-critics to fight for the rights of environment by examines various issues related to it.

Literature is playing such a constructing role in promoting the environmental ethics over the years. Here the research scholar refers one of the greatest poets Robert Frost, a true realist and pastoral poet, wrote about nature which is a source of inspiration and enjoyment. He filled his poems with universal subjects or themes – rural pastoral scenery, woods, country roads, apple picking, valleys, crowded trees, wildlife and many more. It revealed the relationship of mankind with the mother earth as nature is the best teacher of human race throughout his life span that can be reflected in his one of the celebrated poems ‘*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*’:

*“Whose woods these are I think I know. His house is in the village,
though;*

He will not see me stopping here, to watch his woods fill up with snow.

*My little horse must think it queer, to stop without a without a
farmhouse near*

Between the woods and frozen lake, the darkness evening of the year.

He gives his harshness bells a shake; to ask is there is some mistake.

The only other sound's the sweep of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep, and Miles to go before I sleep."

(Frost 275)

Robert Frost mentioned that Nature is a guide and a philosopher to man (traveler in poem) which teaches secret lessons of life. The traveller enjoys the company and beauty of nature. He also mesmerized by the scenery of wood that stops him to gaze the wood. But today man is indifferent towards the beauty of nature, he is separated and going away from woods.

The mother earth besets with serious environmental degradation. Many people and organizations from the worldwide contribute in different ways as much as possible to deal with the relationship between human and nature and environmental preservation. For example, the 'green grabbing' or land grabbing process, their agenda is its appropriation for a range of uses in future. They try to repair the damaged nature. Then, that nature becomes a source of profit and valuable for what they offer us. Through virtual spectacles, new representations and ideas in the news, media, through internet, popular imagery and advertising brochures, one can urge the people about the present scenario of globalization and try to appeal to value the mother earth. In such context, actors are emerging to contribute by go green campaign. Nevertheless, such a vision or transformation will not just happen. All have to take a stand against the modern society's treatment towards the natural world as well as women and about the seriousness of global environmental crisis. All agree that all life on this planet is sacred. All should value and live in unity with each other to develop healthy relationship with nature.

Currently, it becomes apparent that people from worldwide being aware about environmental degradation, much interested in environmentally friendly and safe products or Go Green effect. Women as caretakers of families and the whole planet are more concerned about it. If women can be educated or raising consciousness

through different education programmes on development of the 'Green Citizen' that plays an important role to cope up with this environmental crisis. In this context, Hirschman rightly says that *'Think Globally, Act Locally into the market place.'*

Moreover, The TV show named 'TEDTALK' has featured such episodes dealing with new ideas to resolve several environmental issues like deforestation and pollution. It featured the journey of people who invented some out of the box ideas to deal with some problems like pollution resulting from vehicles and deforestation. They invented a machine which converts carbon particles coming out of vehicles into black ink and a unique technique of planting particular combination of plants and trees according to the surrounding environment and land characteristics with minimal use of land. Such inspiring works and people are the real needs of the hour for us and our earth to handle the natural crisis and improve it.

It also elucidates some episodes related to women empowerment, child bearing and upbringing, child psychology as well as on human behavior towards minor people, caste system which we should work on it to change the society and an individual's perspective.

As life goes on, still the question arises in our mind, how human should maintains the ecological balance. One would hope, man by enlightening himself would try to impose a unique image by keeping necessary connection between Man and Nature and transforming into a better human being to protect the environment and raise awareness around the world. All are equal and all have right to live together in harmony.

After researching on this topic, one question arises in one's mind that how to clean this mess. Women alone cannot stop the violence against them or resolve these problems. On the contrary men should take initiative to work together to eliminate the menace from the society.

At the same time, we cannot create a healthy urban watershed or clean up the air but if we have green space and parks in our communities then it can solved. We should all together take serious steps to save our planet and all should support and encourage others actively for slowing the climate change which we are facing today by reshaping our daily practices such as preserving park space, breathing clean air,

drinking clean water, use ecological services like cycling, car sharing, ecological designs in homes etc.

Here from the characters of the three novels, the researcher likes to figure out the dominant or independent woman who exploits others too. It's not only the male domination over female is responsible for woman exploitation, but today many women are also dominated or exploited by female in house, corporate field etc. which is existed too. Even if we are taking about the 21st century women who occupy an uplifted status, have stepped into the path of progress and treated equally, still today directly or indirectly, more or less a woman's place are conflicted in society and in her family. However she is sensitive, powerful, liberated, courageous, and ration, she undergoes the worst of violent activities in this world.

All would agree that the whole world has entered into a new millennium, but till today the women continue to be oppressed, exploited and ill-treated in the most of the part of the society. Such writings and research would bring about the change in the condition of women as well as environment.

Thus Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai and Sarah Joseph have portrayed the efforts of sensitive, educated, modern women and their rebel for transformation to their own lives as well as others. A wave of the awareness of women and nature domination are witnessed in these novels. To eliminate the discrimination of women on the basis of gender bias and dominance through violence, it is very important to change the psychology of society towards women from a grass root which is only possible by infusing proper education and moral values in children by parents and teachers. We should promote gender equality. Indeed women have achieved success in last few decades, but if there is to be a truly women empowerment, much remains to be done. To be brief by providing their deserved rights, women can change their silenced nature into brave and confident voice. The researcher concludes that the study offers an attention-grabbing observation on woman and nature.

Here the researcher would like to refer the celebrated lines of Swami Vivekananda who truly said,

“There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing.”

Fiction is always rooted to nourished reality or is a kind of mirror which reflects the realistic life of the society, its practices, system and problems. On the other hand it also indirectly portrays the picture of the ills of society, operation and violation of women and nature hand in hand or dissatisfactory social and family life which enable the reader to think and act on it. Keeping this in mind, the close study of this thesis will be helpful to the students of literature for the further research in the field.

Finally the work is also executed through the secondary sources including – reviews of books, newspapers, journals, research reports, interviews of eco feminist writers and other secondary materials.

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- Anjali, Daud. "DIASPORA AS ONE OF THE RAYES OF DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN GLOBALIZED WORLD." Mahida, Dr. Beena and Dr. Neena Shrama. Future of Humanities and Social Sciences in Globalized World. V.v. Nagar, 2012.
- —. DIASPORIC ISSUES IN ANITA DESAI'S BYE BYE BLACKBIRD. Lambert Academic Publication, 2018.
- —. "ECOFEMINISM: RECOGNITION OF SELF EXISTENCE IN OTTHAPPU-THE SCENT." Review of Research Journal (2018): vol.7,11.
- —. "HUMOUR IN 'THE FINANCIAL EXPERT' BY R.K. Narayan." Review of Research Journal (2014).
- —. "INDIAN CULTURE THROUGH BRITISH EYE." Indian Stream Research Journal (2012).
- —. "SHADES OF WOMEN IN BHARTI MUKHERJEE'S 'WIFE'." ACME International Journal of Multidiciplinary Research (2013).