

An intensive study of ecofeminism in the Selected Works of Indian Writers

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Abstract

Ecofeminism is a significant concept that highlights the deep nexus between the exploitation of women and the exploitation of nature, demonstrating how patriarchal power structures perpetuate both social inequality and environmental degradation. This study explores the ecofeminist elements present in the novels of Indian authors Amish Tripathi, Kavita Kane, and Sara Joseph placing particular emphasis on the reinterpretation of myths within their works. Drawing upon the theoretical foundations of Ecofeminism and Postcolonial Ecofeminism, this study seeks to understand how these literary works portray women's relationships with nature in both symbolic and tangible forms and how colonial histories and patterns of capitalist development intersect with nature and literature to amplify the voices of marginalized women, thereby articulating ideas related to resistance, reparation, and human rights. Their work demonstrates that nature is a living, sentient entity indispensable to humanity not merely a 'resource' to be utilized, but a 'medium' of connection interwoven with human life, culture, and values. Ultimately, this study illustrates that Indian literature, viewed through a feminist-revolutionary lens, not only critiques contemporary social and ecological challenges but also offers a framework for sustainable, equitable, and enduring livelihoods grounded in indigenous knowledge, cultural traditions, and shared social values.

Keywords: Ecofeminism, inequality, environment, tangible, marginalized, revolution

Introduction

Emerging as an important intellectual and political discourse in the 1970s, ecofeminism can be understood as an important framework deeply linking women's oppression and natural environmental degradation which are presented as passive entities to own and exploit. Rather, it is an organizing principle of socio-political-economic life. It legitimizes a broader culture of extraction, conquest, and control over women's bodies, labour, reproductive autonomy and social agency, and also on land, water, forests, and other natural resources. Each offers specific explanatory frameworks such as socialist and materialist contrast ecofeminist approaches that prioritize values and broaden the scope of analysis, gender injustice in capitalist relations of environmental destruction and production, class hierarchies, systems of profit-driven development, radical ecofeminism and patriarchy. Such diversity within a field considered a primary source of ecological and gender oppression. It demonstrates the intellectual richness of ecofeminist discourse and its ability to address intersections of gender, class, ecology and power which remains insufficiently theoretical. Deeply embedded in everyday life are material realities especially for rural and marginalized women for whom survival directly depends on access to water, forests, land, and soil. From this perspective, environmental degradation is not just a theoretical concern, but an immediate socio-economic and gender crisis. Scholars such as Vandana Shiva and Beena Aggarwal have greatly expanded the scope of this discussion. They criticise the tendency of Westerns and Western feminist models to universalize women's experiences without adequately attending to colonial history, material inequality, and indigenous knowledge systems and the relationship must be understood through the lens of labour, livelihood, and survival. This ideology paved the way for postcolonial ecological feminism, in which critical interventions like Donna Haraway challenged

binaries emphasizing how colonialism and capitalist development disrupt traditional ecological practices, alter gender roles, and intensify social and environmental exploitation of culture, bodies and environments provided in nature. The emphasis on relatedness and interspecies interdependence expands ecofeminist discourse into a broader ethical framework, suggesting that human existence itself is inseparable from the broader web of life. This shows that justice, sustainability and gender equality are achieved through an ethic of coexistence, vulnerability and shared ecological responsibility. Rituals and symbolic structures that continue to shape collective consciousness. Contemporary writers like Amish Tripathi, Kavita Kane, Sarah Joseph creatively reinterpret these inherited narratives to bring forward questions of gender, ecology, power and memory. Contemporary social and environmental concerns can be critically re-examined. For example, in Tripathi's narratives myths reimagine traditions emphasizing religion, cosmic balance, and humanity's moral responsibility to nature, environmental consciousness represented in socially oppressive ecologically fragile contexts. It suggests that ecological disruption within society is inseparable from moral decay with indigenous epistemologies, traditional knowledge systems and culturally specific modes of resistance. It combines significantly and expands the scope of ecological feminist critique. From this perspective, these literary works not only critique gender injustice and ecological violence, they are actively participating in reshaping a more integrated and transformative approach to social justice, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. Thus, ecological feminism, especially when understood through postcolonial Indian literary contexts, emerges as a critically engaged and politically relevant framework that seeks to tackle the interrelated crises of patriarchy, environmental degradation and social inequality from a morally grounded cultural nuance.

Literature Review

Ecofeminism emerged as an idea that did not consider the exploitation of women and nature as mutually exclusive (Shiva and Mies 23; Agrawal 119). Françoise d'Eaubonne coined the term in 1974: Humanity would be self-destructive if it continued to destroy its ecological communities (Françoise d'Eaubonne). Movements of women, tribals, peasants have been associated with organized protest (Agarwal 119; Kaur). Ecofeminism has inspired larger movements since its inception and provided an active approach to capitalist development, war and domination (Shiv-Miss 23; Jain 274).

Ecofeminism as Literary Criticism

Ecofeminism has also made significant inroads into literary studies. Ecofeminist criticism regards literature as a site of protest and reimagining rather than mere reflection (Jain 274; Patil). Voices of nature, memory, and resistance voice through female figures. This approach also shows how myths and folk memories can be used in the service of environmental justice (Jain 274; Rangarajan). Reading literature within the scientific colonial narrative of modernity, historians like Caroline Merchant showed how the concept of "death to nature" became a means of silencing women and non-Western communities (merchant). They warned and urged against the inclusion of nonhuman voices (King; Plumwood).

Indian literature has a long history of myth-telling, with writers reclaiming voices unheard in the male-dominated literary tradition (Patil; Rangarajan). Through myths linking environmental crisis, memory, and community, recent writers create a new ecofeminist idiom (Patil; Jain 274).

Research Methodology

This study seeks to understand the emerging ecological feminism within Indian literature and is entirely based on a micro-qualitative and critical analysis of literary texts. This research is strictly text-centered. The selected studies are based on close reading, analysis, and interpretive criticism. Employing a source-based approach

and mainly using concepts of ecofeminism, postcolonialism, and ecofeminism as interpretive tools, this approach reveals not only the symbolic meanings inherent in the relationship between women and nature but also colonial history, class structures, and in the context of capitalist development. It also highlights cultural and symbolic constructions. This research used analytical categories such as reinterpretation of myths, historical expression, memory and environmental consciousness to understand how these factors affect the environment, women and their lives. In Tripathi's novels, the moral balance between religion and nature is imbued with new significance; Closely related thematic analysis and comparative methods have been used to understand this. Secondary sources include papers, books, and reviews on feminism, postcolonial theory, Indian myth studies, and socioeconomic history. This research explores the cultural, historical, and philosophical dimensions of each author's works to understand how women's expression and environmental sensibilities pave resistance and recovery. The limitations of this research are clearly acknowledged. This study is limited to texts that demonstrates the interrelationship between myth and environmental understanding.

Textual Analysis

Amish Tripathi

Amish Tripathi's works present a modern and critical reinterpretation of Indian myths, rethink traditional stories of male-female relationships and environmental aspects. His storytelling style is entertaining. At the same time, it makes us think about the imbalance in our time. This effort not only critiques socio-cultural conditions but also redefines the harmony of human nature inherent in Indian philosophy. Tripathi portrays female characters in a way that breaks their traditional vulnerable image. *Sita: warrior of Mithila* embodies in Sita not only the pride of Mithila but also the role of Vishnu and takes the responsibility of destroying the evil for the good of the society. He portrays the male gender in female characters, showing that strength and wisdom are not the sole prerogatives of men. Such a story presents a satirical morality for the patriarchal system, portraying women as guardians of natural society. In Tripathi's writing, the character of Sita is distinguished not only by her physical strength but also by her fond relationship with nature. At the beginning of the novel, Sita is shown wrapped in red silk. It is a symbol that shows her wild and unknown nature. Her foster mother Sunaina is herself a courageous and visionary teacher under whose guidance Sita learns war, art, statesmanship and law. Tripathi embodies the divine essence by incorporating human conflicts and moral dilemmas into his characters. She raises new questions about religion, karma, and social order that encourage readers to make their own decisions. The strength of the female characters in this sequence lies in their constant dialogue with nature. Sita develops her leadership skills through a deep relationship with the soil of the fields. And for her, earth, rivers and water are not just geographic entities but living moral forces. Especially the Shiva Triloki atmosphere of Tripathi is a stepping stone. She highlights questions of balance prominently. In "Meluha Amara" she captures the natural beauty of rows of Kashmir trees on the banks of the placid Jhelum River, with flowers blooming so artfully that the reader feels a Wordsworth and Keats-like experience.

Amish Tripathi vividly depicts nature:

The mighty Jhelum, a roaring down tigers in the mountains slowed down to the rhythm of langorous cow as she entered the valley. she caressed the heavenly land of Kashmir, meandering her way into the immense Dal lake. Further down, she broke away from the lake, continuing her journey towards the sea... (Tripathi, *The Immortals of Meluha* 10-11)

King Daksha reveals that this nectar can only be made using water from the Saraswati River. Jupiter, himself a scientist, informs Shiva that river water has been diverted in vast underground caverns to make this elixir. This diversion has cut off the river from the sea, resulting in desertification in southern Rajasthan, and the desert continues to expand across the region. The narrative delves into the human factors and their ecological consequences. Moreover, through the drying up of the river Saraswati, Tripathi presents a symbolic story of contemporary water crisis and communal strife. These examples are part of the Tripathi mythology. Linking the task of rewriting the cosmos to postcolonial ecologies, Tripathi argues that patriarchal systems and models of development fuelled by postcolonial greed justify the exploitation of women and nature. In the beginning of the novel Nandi tells Shiva about the belief system of Meluhans. Women have many rules to follow:

"There are many rules that Vikarama women have to follow. They have to pray for forgiveness every month to Lord Agni, the purifying for God, through specifically mandated puja... They are not allowed to touch any person who is not related to them... There are many other conditions as well". (Tripathi, *Immortals Of Meluha*, 95). "Meluhans have very illogical traditions and believe Shiva boldly protest against their customs she was says that sounds pretty ridiculous to me a woman could have given birth to a still born child simply because she did not take proper care while she was pregnant or it could just be a disease how can anyone say that she is being punished for the same offer previous birth?" (Tripathi, *Immortal of Meluha*, 93). He believes that social justice and the preservation of nature cannot be achieved without reviving the sacred bond of duty between humanity and the environment. Thus, his stories not only entertain but inspire the contemporary reader to play the role of a responsible citizen and present a profound interconnection between women's environmental ethics and cultural commitment.

Kavita Kane

Kavita Kane redefines the long tradition of myth through a feminist lens in her literary experiments, resurrecting memories of characters often overlooked in original texts. Within the eco-feminist framework of Indian literature her novels emphasize that women's experiences and nature are inextricably linked. It can reconstruct cultural memory and moral order through sensory engagement, labour, memory, and resistance it demonstrates. Her novel *Sita's Sister* retells the Ramayana tradition from Urmila's point of view. Sisterhood here is not just a relationship, but a collective moral force. Urmila, Sita, and their sisters are bound together in a complex web of mutual affection, jealousy, cooperation and rivalry. Kane shows how these women express their feelings, hopes and aspirations even in the face of stereotypical patriarchal structures. They are important personally and also politically, as in these places the future is family. The state and community decided it (Kane, *Sita's Sister*). Urmila's silent resistance, her craft, her studies and her practice all suggest that a second, more passionate and moral battle is being fought by women in the home parallel to the male battlefield. Urmila's childhood plays in the fields and gardens of Jesus; they are an active part of her self-development. Her education was not limited to the Vedas, Upanishads, music, painting, etc.; She also learned from ordinary with whom she constructed relationships. The stories of Urmila's patience, her waiting for the rain, her relationship with her father-in-law, even in the middle of the forest, and her attention to the management of society are cut from the previous issue. Rather, they call for moral harmony, patience, and tolerance. Arguably, Urmila displayed a kind of "housewife bravery", the bravery of traditional heroines: less grand than expected but more enduring. In *Lanka's Princess*, Surpanakha, the sister of Ravana, is the central character. Here she is described not only as "evil" or "corrupt", but as a sad and lonely woman whose desires, anger and courage are born in the socio-political environment. Through Surpanakha, Kane shows how a woman's desire for revenge can be a symptom of a larger ecological imbalance than a war between gods and

demons. Vidyujiva's death breaks out surpankha. "The only words echoing in her ears were her mother's "you'll make life hell for us." (Kane, Lanka's princess) After the death of vidyujiva, she said, "I shall go to Mareech at Dandak forest. I have always loved the jungle preferred it to the palace in fact she smiled wistfully. "I would like to live the remaining years of my life." (Kane's Lanka's Princess). In this novel, the sea and mountains of Ashoka Garden are not only background but living characters whose memories and energies echo within Surpanakha and politics destabilizes women's bodies and nature. In Ahalya's Awakening, Kane revisits the story of Ahalya, who was turned to stone. In the traditional story, Ahalya, deceived by Indra, is turned into stone by the curse of the sage Gautama; Kane sees this "deportation" as a symbol of violence against the female body and nature. When Ahalya is resurrected by the touch of Rama's feet, it signifies not only the return of the personality but also the resurrection of the environment: the resurrection from the rock represents the desire to be reunited with nature, in which a woman's memory and worldly consciousness are intertwined. Here, Ahalya's silence is seen not as a broken stone, but as a rewritten story that critiques male-dominated justice and religion (Kane, *Ahalya's Awakening*). Other novels in the series, such as *Menaka's Choice*, depict Menaka Devi not only as a dancer like Urvashi Tilottama, but also as a figure full of female desire, responsibilities and spiritual struggles Kane, *Menaka's Choice*). Standard's conflict between ambition and duty echoes the natural world as her desire, like a river, seeks freedom, while her social responsibility controls her in all these works. Kavita Kane contests development models driven by patriarchal morals and colonial attitudes, recognizing that women's bodies, domestic space and nature are equally interconnected, and showing that ecopolitics is not just about protecting forests. Connecting nature, home and myth, this book reminds viewers that no understanding of the environment remains incomplete until women's experiences, labour and love are equally recognised.

Sarah Joseph

Sarah Joseph's work belongs to a group of writers who deeply connect the socio-economic realities and environmental ironies of local settings with women's experiences. Her novels reveal direct connections to patriarchy, class divisions and natural resources. They take the form of collective memory and fight for social justice. When we read the novel deeply we find that there are so many incidents related to nature:

Water! Wherever they looked, water was allowed they found. swimming and walking they reached this place. The trees here no taboo or untouchability. The birds parroted no religious bigotry. The trees, the birds, the fish, the earth, the water all beckoned them. "come, come..." (Joseph, Aathi, 44). Kunjimathu wants to save water bodies which are destroyed by the municipality. He says that people have no attraction towards water bodies:

"Paddy field, parched Trees, and withered. The earth, cracked wells, dried up. Cattles tormented by thirst. Birds, perishing. Children, howling in hunger... The burning sand it brought along, covering the land, Red hot rocks "(196-197).

Aathi-Knitathon-Shila-Gita women are not only farmers but also custodians of water, soil and heritage. They interact with streams. The novel explores environment issues. In this novel we find the connection between nature and women:

"No human hand was allowed to touch that water, for the goddess of rice and fish dwelt in it. For the delicate water goddess to survive, the ceiling of the marsh had to remain wet. The water mansion would collapse if the marsh were to go dry (Joseph, Aathi 102)." Waves are listening and taking responsibility for food safety and cultural preservation in their

communities. When Kumara, who represents modernity, comes to Aathi and proposes to build a bridge and a shopping mall, he is not just speaking the language of development; His words reveal a patriarchal view of women and nature as objects. Women's resistance in this struggle is directly linked to land conservation. They regard the land as "mother" and see urban development as a violence against its sanctity, resulting in ocean pollution, large-scale displacement of people and the breakdown of society. Joseph's second important novel *Othappu (Smell of the Other Side)* reimagines the relationship between religious institutions and female autonomy in an ecological context. Her conversations with Father Augustine in the forest, her love story in the river, patient service not religion or charity and it takes the form of a kind of ecological rebellion. In novels like *The Vigil*, Sarah Joseph draws on myths to critique environmental destruction in the name of war and development. The story tells the story of the bridge-building process from the perspective of the Ramayana's character Angada. Cutting down millions of trees and mountains destroys marine life. This destruction is not only for victory in the war against Ravana, but for political selfishness by leaving the voices of women and monkey species unheard. Here Joseph challenges the anti-nature war machine, showing through female characters such as Sita and Tara that ecological destruction is in fact an extension of patriarchal power (Joseph, *The Vigil*). Viewing these three works together, it is clear that for Sarah Joseph, nature is not a distant, romanticized backdrop, but a living presence deeply embedded in the daily lives, labour, courage and sensitivity of local women. Like Aathi's women, her characters feel a moral obligation to protect their country and bodies of water; Like Margalita, they challenge patriarchal institutions by connecting their bodies and souls to nature; And through Angad's story, she strongly opposes the government's environmental degradation under the guise of development. It can be said that Joseph's writing not only connects feminism and environmentalism, but also links the struggles of both with local culture, memory and mythic experiences creating a new Indian ecological feminist discourse.

Findings

This study clearly shows that selected works by Amish Tripathi, Kavita Kane, and Sarah Joseph not only present ecofeminism as a conventional equation of women and nature, but also turn it into a vehicle for profound cultural, ethical, social and political resistance. Women themselves are not simply objects of pity or victims of oppression, but are particularly clear to emerge as central forces of meaning-making, moral intervention, and resistance. Restructuring of Amish Tripathi's works, we find characters as persons capable of leadership, morally strong, and nature-oriented. Saraswati, Somras, and Environmental Imbalance shows that misuse of natural resources results not only in physical destruction but social and moral disruption. Based on Kavita Kane's work, this study concluded that rewriting mythic women is in fact a process of reclaiming female memory, female body, domestic experience, silence, waiting and cultural neglect. The body, the forest, memory, and objectification, all become interconnected sites of resistance. Analysis of Sarah Joseph's works also shows that ecofeminist criticism remains incomplete without a simultaneous understanding of local ecologies, women's experiences, religious structures, evolutionary processes, and community memory. There is no retelling. Not to be understood in terms of the metaphysical or symbolic, but to be read in the complex relations of land rights, water, labour, race, class, colonial history, cultural hegemony, local knowledge systems and gender justice. These are not separate but interconnected ethical demands.

Conclusion

This study concludes that selected works by Amish Tripathi, Kavita Kane, and Sarah Joseph situate ecofeminism in Indian literature not only as a traditional metaphor for women and nature, but also as a critical cultural sociopolitical perspective in which nature emerges as an active force in communal life. Similarly,

women are not just victims or objects of pity, but central agents of resistance, memory recovery, meaning-making, and moral reconstruction. This study shows that these three authors used myths not only to revisit the past but also to highlight current social-ecological ironies. Questions about the water crisis and ecological balance are intertwined. The paper revisits Kane's art of rewriting mythical women: women's memories, women's bodies, domestic experience, silence, and cultural neglect. The tension between local ecology, community, women's experiences, evolution, and domestic violence takes on a strong, confrontational voice while in Sarah Joseph's work Ecological feminism cannot be understood solely from a Western theoretical framework. Ultimately, this study highlights the power of ecofeminist consciousness in contemporary Indian literature to transcend the role of literature beyond mere aesthetic appreciation, transforming it instead into a powerful field of social intervention, cultural reappraisal, and more just, sensitive and sustainable. In this sense, this research firmly establishes the importance, depth and creative potential of ecofeminism within the broader landscape of Indian literary discourse.

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