

Practising Ecofeminism in India: A Sociological Study of Various Environmental Movement

Abstract

India has seen various types of movements like social, economical and political. They has been many environmental movements also to pressurize the government to do something which the common people demand or they need. However, not every movement is successful. From time to time various voices had been raised to protect our environment from the clutches of big businessmen, industrialist and government. These collective voices turns into movement. This paper will discuss in detail various environment related movements.

Keywords: Ecology, Ecofeminism, Movements, Environmental Movements.

Introduction

Ecological feminist claim that there is a very close connection between women and nature. Today's technological and patriarchal society had undermined the concerns of both- women and nature. Due to this humanity as a whole is facing the threat of their existence. The patriarchal society has dominated women and nature. If women and nature are liberated than humanity as a whole will flourish. It is important for all of us to find solutions to the problem of environmental destruction as well as subordination of women. By doing this ecofeminist philosophy can be successful.

Women are the main sufferers of environmental degradation because women have to travel long distance every day to collect fodder and fuelwood. Women along with their children collect water for everyday purpose. Due to natural resource depletion, women have to walk one to fifteen kilometres approximately to fetch clean water.

Around eighty percent of the world's food production is being done by women but when it comes to training and use of machines, tractors, plows and irrigation then men take the lead. Men are the decision makers about forest management and cash crops.

Objectives of the study

1. To understand about the ecofeminism and the areas covered by it.
2. To have a understanding about environmental movements and its impact on Indian society.
3. To understand the relation between environmental degradation and natural resource depletion with various environmental movements.

Review of Literature

Shiva (2015) in her book 'Earth Democracy' says that the corporate globalization sees the Earth as something which can be owned as well as sold for the purpose of profit making. Earth is not a private property of corporates but it belong equally to all i.e. women, children, tribals, common people etc.

Bradley (2014) in her article 'Keeping the Soil in Good Heart' says that since a very long time task of weeding is being done by women with the help of plow. But they are not paid well for this job. It is one of the poorest paid job in the world. With technological innovations herbicides are being used today to kill all the weeds, but this herbicides also damages soil and its fertility.

Curtin (2014) in the article, "Women's knowledge as Expert knowledge" says that technological innovations such as plant monoculture irrigation, green revolution had a very negative impact on women. According to an estimate 73 percent of world's water is being used in irrigation but only 20-30 percent of water is being used in the right way.

Sarika Singh

Assistant Professor,
Dept. of Sociology
Raja Harpal Singh Mahavidyalaya,
Singraamau, Jaunpur
India

Zia Jafri

Senior Research Fellow,
Dept. of Sociology,
University of Lucknow,
Lucknow, U.P., India

Such waste of water has a tragic impact on women's life. They are responsible for collecting water for the purpose of cooking and drinking.

Karth (2014) in her article, "Ecofeminism and Children" says that children and women in patriarchal society suffer from various kind of discrimination like they are privatized, singularized and stripped of their agency. Children affected at Chernobyl, burned by toxic gases in Bhopal Gas Tragedy and children dying of starvation in Ethiopia are such few examples.

Methodology

The method used for this research paper is based on detailed case study of various environmental movements in India. Hence, it is a qualitative study based on secondary data. Case study provides a detailed study of any event or phenomena by which we can have better understanding towards any research problem. The research paper tries to cover various environmental movement that happened in India.

Participation of Women in Various Environmental Movement

Chipko Movement

Chipko Movement began in April 1973 in Reni village of Chamoli district, Uttarakhand where hundreds of women came together to save trees from cutting. It was a non-violent movement. In 1987, the Chipko Movement was awarded the Right Livelihood Award. **Gaura Devi, Suraksha Devi, Sudesha Devi, Bachni Devi and Chandni Prasad Bhatt** were the main participants in this movement.

Appiko Movement

Inspired by Chipko this movement was started by Appu and Mamtha is Gubbi Gadde in Uttara Kannada district. This movement forced the forest department to change the forest policy on felling of trees 'Appiko' means to hug a tree and save it from cutting on Sep.8, 1983, Pandurang Hegde inspired from Sunderlal Bahuguna started this movement.

Bhopal Gas Tragedy

Over 6,00,000 people out of 9,00,000 were affected by methyl isocyanate in 1984 in Bhopal. It was a pesticide plant Union Carbide India Ltd. in Bhopal M.P. 38,478 people were temporary injured while approximate 3900 were severely and permanently injured. In June 2010 seven Indian nationals who were employees of UCL were convicted of causing death by negligence. **Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Udyog Sangathan**, Sadhana Karnik of Bhopal Zehreeli Gas Kaand Sangharsh Morcha are various organizations who had played a crucial role in mobilizing women and breaking the traditional bond of Purdah System to fight for their right and compensation from Union Carbide India.

Narmada Bachao Aandolan

It was a most powerful mass movement started in 1985 against the construction of huge dam on Narmada river. People were against the project because it would displace more than 2,50,000 people. The main concern was the rehabilitation and resettlement of these affected people. The Indian

government took loan of US \$ 550 million through World Bank. The opponents said that these hydro project will devastate human life and bio diversity. Medha Patekar was the main female leader in this movement.

Save the Western Ghat Movements

It was a padyatra organized by a number of environmental groups in 1998 and covered 1300 kilometres across the states of Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Western ghats covers six states and have incredible diversity of species as well as moist deciduous and tropical forest. To preserve this biodiversity hub is the main concern of environmentalist. The movement forced the government to ban tree felling and poaching of species inside the protected area.

Conclusion

The relationship between women and environment is not new, especially in India. This relationship can be found in our traditional spiritual text. Many poems, stories has been written, which clearly explains the relationship between women and environment. However, with our increasing modernity, we are somewhere ignoring our age old relationship and connectivity with environment. But this ignorance has taken a heavy toll on our lives and our own existence is under a threat. But women of today are very much aware of environmental issues and had also started raising their voice against patriarchy, over exploitation of nature and against the science by which human beings are increasing toxicity in their lives.

This paper highlights the role of women in saving environment and saving humanity as a whole.

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