

AN ECOFEMINIST ANALYSIS OF CHANDRASHEKHAR KAMBAR' JOKUMARSWAMI: UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF PATRIARCHY IN SUPPRESSION OF WOMAN AND NATURE

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ABSTRACT:

The term 'eco-feminism' was introduced by Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974 and he referred to the influence of women in environmental rebellion. Eco-feminism is mainly considered as a third wave of the feminist revolution. Ecocatastrophe can be avoided with the promotion of the feminine values of nurturing, non-violence, cooperation, assistance, helping, collaboration and cherishing will help to connect humanity with nature. Therefore, Eco-feminism is an attempt to apply feminine strengths to bring an ecological revolution to save the mother earth and to bring in focus new gender relations between man-woman and humanity- nature. It identifies women as protectors as they could understand and heal environmental destruction. Kambar offers several discernments into the issues of feminism as well as ecology; and discloses the role of tyrannous patriarchal culture in the belligerent ruthless oppression of women and nature. Following characteristics of such patriarchal society is discussed in the present paper- depiction of patriarchy through religion and culture, itch to control other fellow creatures, insinuation of women with nature for dominating the both, negligence towards the wisdom, capabilities of women, underlining their inferiority with socio - cultural norms, power politics through conceptual structures, and representation of women at the physical dominion and men at the mental dominion. Kambar emphasizes that as women and nature have an age-old bond between them - it is acknowledged that the devaluation of women leads to the destruction of nature - so they can attain liberation altogether.

Introduction:

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Vol. 8 Issue 2

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November, 2021

Website: www.langlit.org

Contact No.: +91-9890290602

Indexed: ICI, Google Scholar, Research Gate, Academia.edu, IBI, IIPC, DRJ



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The term 'Ecology' is derived from Greek 'oikos' which literary means house is the science of household. The altogether focus of ecofeminists is based on the 'interconnectedness' of women and environment and worthy moral considerations of women towards the betterment of humanity. Eco-feminism has its roots in different feminist practices and philosophies; they moreover reveal different understanding of the nature of and solution to environmental problems. For the first time in 1980, the cultural feminists identified how both women and nature could be liberated together. As women have reconciled the association between the earth and the house, the association between nature and women and between ecology and feminism has been explored.

"(Eco-feminism) is a philosophy and movement born from the union of feminist and ecological thinking, and the belief that the social mentality that leads to the domination and oppression of women is directly connected to the social mentality that leads to the abuse of the environment" (Sinha 2008).

It is clear that women and nature have an age-old connection between them. The interconnection of feminism and environmentalism has been surprising over the past few decades and both the movements rely on the capability of women in the conservation and preservation of environmental integrity. It helps in understanding the issues of feminism, environmentalism and environmental philosophy.

"any feminism, environmentalism or environmental philosophy that fails to recognize important women-nature connections is simply inadequate" (Warren 1987)

Jokumaraswami (1972) is a play by Dr. Chandrashekhara Kambar which focuses on identifying various manifestations of patriarchy and its impact on the lives of women. This play shows one of the leading male characters, Gowda, who is the offspring of the Indian patriarchal society. The fatal characteristic of the ruthless patriarchy is sustaining a conceptual framework that preserves the structures of domination over women as well as nature. He considers female and nature as foolish lots that are present to be dominated and exploited for the needs of men. Shari and Ningi- his opposing female lead characters in the play, examine the weakness and hypocrisy of Gowda and stand testimony to the patriarchal systems of domination that oppress women and reveal the false ideologies of patriarchy. Radford Ruether (1975) wrote:

"Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of



domination. They must unite the demands of the women's movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this (modern industrial) society." (Ruether, 1975)

In 'Jokumaraswami,' Kambar reveals how the patriarchal society customises religion and culture by disrupting them for women and nature. In this play, only the male gods are accredited virility and are represented as the representations of manly power. In the name of religion and culture, men preserve all the activities which help them to sustain their authority in the society. They contemplate all men masculine and accuse women for their barrenness. Though barrenness is for both men and women, Sutradhara links barrenness only with women and says that if barren women offer worship to Jokumaraswami and afterwards make a curry out of him to feed their husbands, '*dozens of children will be born in a jiffy.*'

Moreover, in the play, futile men are not termed barren and are allowed to accuse their wives. Most of the women suffer due to the shame of barrenness. Though they are not responsible for their lot and expose their husbands who could not bless them with a child. But they are submissive before their husbands. They do not have any strength to challenge their husbands for their false allegations. On the other hand, they are controlled by the systems of patriarchy that restrain their forte before their husbands without questioning them.

Men follow all means to hide their own weakness or inability as they are supposed submissive and feminine in the patriarchal culture. On the other hand, they handle the permit granted by the patriarchy to use women as scapegoat. It is this state of mind that leads them to relate barrenness with land forgetting their role in the cause of barrenness. Men have a role in the barrenness and lack of productivity of both women as well as nature. As they are guarded by the patriarchal system, they refuse to accept their responsibility. Moreover, they assume all their mistakes and blunders as lawful, truthful and normal.

In a traditional patriarchy, women do not have a voice of their own; they are meek and mellow. They are unable to voice against their sufferings and injustice by the male members in family. In the play, Kambar unveils how the association of women with nature results in the domination of both women and nature.

Through this play Kambar unfolds the cleverness of women and illustrates how the wisdom of women is neglected in the patriarchal society. The society does not acknowledge sleeping with single woman as virility as it wants continuous demonstration of masculine performance through a variety of women. The connection between masculinity and virility is a cultural construct and it does not have a strong reason to be perpetuated. Men themselves fall prey due to the false notions promoted by this system. This systems does not affect men alone and they lead to the subjugation and suffering of women too. Women lose their self-respect and dignity and they are dominated by the masculine force. It is this force that compels men to act against the nature too which leads to its brutal manifestation.

The depiction of the link between the oppression of women and the domination of nature as a cultural construct in the play is commendable. Eco-feminism declares that the idea of dominating nature stems from the domination of human by human and an ecological

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society is possible only by ending all systems of domination. Gowda is a oppressor who oppresses women as well as nature through his status and authority. Kambar points out the false ideologies of patriarchal culture and its impact on women and nature. He also expresses how patriarchy assumes its own masculine values that disregard both the feminine wisdom and the abundances of nature and the Mother Earth.

Conclusion:

Kambar emphasizes that as women and nature have an age-old bond between them - it is acknowledged that the devaluation of women leads to the destruction of nature - so they can attain liberation altogether.

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