

Role of Women in Environmental Protection

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Abstract- Women have been the source of indigenous wisdom to preserve and safeguard natural resources for centuries around the world, yet society has continued to overlook this beneficial role of women in environmental conservation. The environment is the natural and surrounding environment in which all plants, animals, humans, and other living and nonliving things exist. Women, on the other hand, make up the better half of society. Women are playing an important role in environmental protection and preservation. Ester Boserup's 1970 publication of "Women's Role in Economic Development" emphasised the significance of women in environmental protection and preservation. Now that women recognise the consequences of environmental deterioration on society, they are trying to conserve the environment for future generations. According to a World Bank research from 1991, women have an important role in the management of natural resources such as soil, water, forest, and energy, and they also have past and present knowledge of the natural world or environment around them. It also tries to document and examine the contributions of women, the Indian government, non-governmental organisations, and other actors to environmental protection, as well as other topics relating to women and the environment. The role of women in environmental protection will be discussed in this study.

Keywords: Women, Environmental, Protection, Conservation, Economic Development, Natural Resources, Food Culture, Global Warming, Biomass-Based, Chipko Movement.

Introduction:

India is regarded as the earth's mother. As a mother nurtures and cares for her children in her womb, the earth too cares for the people who live within it. However, the super animal human being has ruthlessly exploited the natural environment to meet their own demands. Overpopulation and technological advancement are constantly endangering the environment and depleting natural resources.

At the same time, some environmentally conscious individuals, known as environmentalists, raise their voices in support of environmental protection and conservation.

The term "environment" refers to the totality of all situations and influences that affect the growth and life of organisms. The environment is intertwined with human beings' daily lives, and man may play a significant role in protecting and developing the environment for the purpose of a better future. Various development activities around the world are hastening the rate of environmental degradation. This accounts for natural resource scarcity, which threatens long-term productivity and development. [1]

As a result, in order to achieve long-term development, every country must have a strict environmental policy in which people are held accountable.

The term Environment is derived from the French word 'Environ', which meaning "surrounding." The environment is the natural environment in which all plants, animals, people, and other living beings live and function. It is the interdependence of land, water, and air, as well as all living and non-living things. Our human culture and the environment, or nature, are inextricably linked. [2] Because society evolved in response to the surrounding environment, people's living styles, clothing, food culture, language, and festive occasions differed correspondingly.

People living in mountainous locations, for example, have a distinct culture and way of life from those living in plain areas. The environment is classified into two types: natural environment and man-made environment. With the increase in human population, the environment began to deteriorate rapidly, resulting in today's global warming, frequent earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, floods, acid rains, and droughts, among other things.

People are becoming more aware of the importance of the environment to human survival, and they have begun to work to protect the environment. Societies have become involved in the effort of environmental protection.

Women and Environment:

Women are an important part of the Indian economy, accounting for one-third of the national labour force. Women are also thought to handle various agricultural operations, animal husbandry, and livestock, and in doing so, they are an important segment of society that plays a vital role in environmental management and the application of its principles.

Women see the environment as humanity's life support system and the source of all life, on which people rely. Women have numerous responsibilities in their families, communities, and in the conservation and management of natural resources. Their varied roles result in various responsibilities. Furthermore, the state of the environment has a direct impact on women's responsibilities because women are the primary users of resources such as water, forest resources, and other land resources.

Involving women in environmental protection would help cultures create the sense of responsibility required to maintain a balance between humans and the earth's resources; in general, women are more aware than males of the importance of environmental protection for all humans. Motivating them to participate in environmental protection and disaster management would increase their passion for the effort.

Role of Women in Conservation of Environment:

The majority of the biomass-based subsistence economy is unmonetized. Agriculture, forestry, and minor forest produce, as well as village crafts based on biomass as raw materials, are the most important sources of employment. Development imperatives have unavoidably resulted in some biomass destruction via deforestation and environmental degradation.

Women have traditionally been responsible for subsistence and survival in terms of water, food, fuel, fodder, and habitat, however they are rarely given credit for maintaining these life support systems. Added to this environmental degradation, women's difficulties are exacerbated in a way that men's problems are not.

The objective is to rebuild the symbiotic relationship between communities, women, and natural resources, as well as to counteract the harmful impact of current developmental paradigms. Women have historically been the primary protectors of biodiversity. They still do things like seed selection, multiplication, and conservation. Rural and tribal women's on-farm conservation traditions with regard to agro-biodiversity are well documented. [3]

The Role of women in Protecting the Environment

- Women have a symbiotic relationship with the environment. As a result, women are critical to any measure aiming at environmental conservation and sustainable development. Women have always made significant contributions to conservation movements.

- The clearest example is the Chipko movement, in which women led by Gaura Devi protested vehemently against commercial exploitation of Himalayan forests. She was in charge of rescuing trees and establishing ecologically appropriate trees.

- Women were also active in protests against deforestation, massive dam development, and mining activities elsewhere. The women of the Bishnoi community fed all wild animals and safeguarded them from intruders. Medha Patkar is the face of the 'Narmada Bachao Andolan'. Arundhati Roy is also associated with the Narmada Bachao Andolan.

- Women have long played an important role in environmental conservation. Furthermore, women can help reduce population explosion, which has been one of the key reasons in the horrible conditions of the environment. Women are in the best position to contribute the most to family planning.

- Women have traditionally played an important role in satisfying the energy needs of their households and communities. Inadequate energy resources and a lack of access to effective energy utilisation technology force people to rely on their own labour, animal power, and biomass energy to meet their daily needs.

- Women are accountable for the cleanliness of the household, which affects the health and wealth of the family members. With proper environmental education and knowledge, women can preserve energy resources significantly more efficiently than males. Most water, food, and airborne disease encounters and incidences can be reduced with sufficient education and training.

- Women have traditionally been kept out of decision-making positions. Their unequal access to education and lack of decision-making capacity at all levels have diminished their social standing. As a result, it has harmed income, nutrition, health, social support networks, and household knowledge. [4]

Women and Environmental Protection:

Women have an important role in environmental protection and sustainability, both as change agents and as field leaders. Women's experiences and knowledge can help to improve the effectiveness of policies and practises that address the complex environmental concerns we face.

Women's environmental leadership is visible in the various grassroots initiatives and organisations led by women. Women have been instrumental in the establishment of community-based conservation projects, sustainable agricultural practises, and renewable energy initiatives.

Participation of women in environmental decision-making processes is also essential. Women's views and perspectives can help to ensure that environmental policies and practises are inclusive of all members of society, especially women and marginalised groups. [5]

Review of Literature:

Environmental interventions come in a variety of kinds. Environmental management or action in nature or eco-management, i.e. direct action in the environment, consumption action, the conscious or unconscious purchase of certain products, persuasion by individuals or groups to others on environmental issues, political and legal action activism, secondly, environmental actions in the non-activist public sphere, such as public policy support or willingness to pay higher taxes, and thirdly, environmental actions in the activist public sphere, such as public policy support or willingness to pay higher taxes. (Stern, 2000). [6]

Women's daily lives in developing nations in relation to the natural environment and its protection, as well as their environmental initiatives, are of particular importance (Jahan, 2008;). They are involved in environmental preservation initiatives on a daily basis as part of their customary home activities. Because of the variety of their operations, they manage and use natural resources, and hence play a significant part in their management. They have intimate touch with the natural environment and a direct relationship with it since they harvest key species from nature such as fruits, vegetables, herbs, wood for fuel and water. They consider woods to be a source of fundamental household necessities. Women and the natural environment have a tight interaction. Women's lives are entirely dependent on the environment. The majority of rural families rely on nature to survive. As a result, without the support and recognition of women's contributions to environmental management, sustainable local development cannot be realised. [7]

In underdeveloped nations, the profound connection between environment and women is more realistic because they are the ones who spend the majority of their time working in farms to feed the households. The role of women in environmental conservation is well documented all throughout the world. In reality, several environmental conservation initiatives credit their success to the engagement of women. The Chipko movement was one such movement. The powerful image of rural women in northern India's

hills standing with their arms around trees to keep them from being chopped has become etched in the public's psyche. Similarly, in recent years, campaigners like as Medha Patekar and environmentalist and politician Menaka Gandhi have played critical roles in environmental conservation and management. As a result, conservation of natural resources and environmental management are not viable without integrating women in planning and training to promote conservation and environmental management values (Sharma November 2011). [8]

The ecofeminism perspective, which is anchored in feminist theory and spiritual ecology, raises women's involvement in environmental issues in a complete way. According to Ellis (2002), the aspects of society most responsible for environmental conservation are at the household level. Endogenous elements such as relationship/relationship in social, institutions, and organisations affect citizen involvement at the home level, whereas exogenous factors include policies and trends, as well as threat/nuisance in community. [9]

Objectives:

- Research the history of women's involvement in various environmental movements.
- To comprehend the diverse environmental movements in India.
- To investigate government policies and programmes concerning women and the environment.
- To explain and debate the common aspects of a health-care system's operation in the given socioeconomic, sociocultural, political, and ecological contexts.

Research Methodology:

This study's overall design was exploratory. The current study is based on secondary data sources such as books, journals, newspapers, government records, and internet sources. Women environmentalists such as Vandana Shiva, Wangari Maathai, Metha Patkar, and Menaka Gandhi, for example, have all left their imprints in various facets of environmental conservation. The current paper discusses the role of women in environmental preservation, legal fights faced by women environmentalists all over the world, and achievements accomplished by women organisations. This paper also discusses current topics such as menstruation hygiene and the proper disposal of sanitary napkins, as well as innovative environmental protection approaches. The important themes of this study are the issues of women's innovations that enable them to manage the environment and how they adapt to rising environmental challenges. [10]

Result and Discussion:

The necessity for environmental conservation is urgent. 'Environmental Conservation' is a relatively new term. It is a methodical approach to environmental protection. It encompasses the entire environmental system, which includes plants, humans, animals, and every other living entity on the planet. The goal is to keep the environment in balance and to save particular species of living beings from extinction. One of the ultimate goals of conservation is to protect biodiversity. This is feasible because to advances in science and technology. New conservation methods are being developed and deployed. [11]



Figure 1: Women in Environmental Protection

Challenges Faced by Women in Environmental Protection

Despite the critical role that women play in environmental protection, they frequently face substantial obstacles in their efforts to contribute to long-term development. Gender discrimination, limited access to resources and opportunity, and lack of representation in environmental decision-making processes are among the difficulties.

Gender inequality can make it difficult for women to participate in environmental preservation activities, especially in civilizations where women's roles have traditionally been confined to domestic and caregiving roles. Women may also face difficulties in gaining access to education and training opportunities that are essential for their participation in environmental preservation activities.

Women may be unable to fully participate in environmental protection initiatives due to a lack of resources and opportunities. Women may lack access to cash, technology, and knowledge, all of which are necessary for the creation and implementation of long-term solutions. [12]

Another issue that women encounter is a lack of representation in environmental decision-making processes. Women are frequently underrepresented in positions of authority and decision-making in environmental policy and practise. As a result, their ability to influence laws and practises that affect their communities and the environment may be limited.

Women's Role in Environmental Management and Protection:

- Agricultural and Soil Conservation
- Forest Management and Tree Planting
- Water Resources Management
- Solid Waste Disposal
- Drainage Management

The results of a questionnaire survey on women's participation in environmental management in plateau state are discussed in this section. Table 1 shows the women's ages and marital status. Only 13.6% of the women polled are under the age of 20. The majority of women (72.8%) are in their Middle Ages (20-49 years), with only 13.6% being above 50 years old. The upshot of this age distribution is that the majority of women are still in their prime years and thus have the energy to participate actively in environmental management efforts.

Table 1. The Spread of Response:

Local Government Area	No. of Women selected	Percentage
Jos- North	30	24
Jos-South	25	20
Bokkos	15	12
Mangu	20	16
Shendam	23	18.4
Lantang-South	12	9.6
Total	125	100

According to Marital Status, 76.8% of women are married, while just 23.2% are unmarried. Because of their jobs as housekeepers, married women in the research area are more likely to be more responsible in protecting and keeping the environment clean.

As previously stated in the review, women make substantial contributions to land/soil conservation. Mulching is the most popular method of soil conservation used by women in the research region. Planting trees is one method of conserving the environment and lowering hazards such as wind storms and erosion. According to the poll, nearly 78.4% of the women in the research area have planted trees or flowers in the recent five years. This supported previous findings that women actively participate in tree planting. When asked where they planted their trees or flowers, 44.8% specified their complexes, 22.4% put trees on the farm, and 32.8% planted them elsewhere. Fruit trees (e.g., mango, citrus, etc.) account for the vast majority of trees planted by women. This is done for two reasons: to safeguard the environment and to provide fruits for the home. [13]

Table 2. women involvement in environmental management:

Involvement In Farming	Number	Percentage
Yes	99	79.2
No	26	20.8
Conservation methods being used	Number	Percentage
Mulching	72	57.6
Planting across the slope	28	22.4
Terracing	25	20
Planted trees in the last 5 years	Number	Percentage
Yes	98	78.4
No	27	21.6
Where planted	Number	Percentage
On the farm	28	22.4
Around the compound	56	44.8
Others	41	32.8
Species planted	Number	Percentage
Fruit trees	79	63.2
Flowers	21	16.8
Other tree species	25	20.0
Frequency of cleaning the environment	Number	Percentage
Daily	99	79.2
Weekly	15	12.0
Occasionally	11	8.8
Major activity in environmental Cleaning	Number	Percentage
Weeding	40	32.0
Sweeping	72	57.6
Cleaning drainage	12	9.6
Others	01	0.8

Women's Role in the Environment:

According to statistics, women do 80% of home shopping. As a result, environmental-related purchasing behaviour is predominantly in the hands of women. She is the one who must sort through all of the contradictory evidence regarding Styrofoam recycling. She must make difficult choices between non-biodegradable plastic diapers and water-wasting reusable diapers. She must be aware of labels that may be misleading or outright wrong. [14]

Conclusion:

Women have an important role in environmental conservation because they are disproportionately affected by environmental deterioration and climate change. Women's experiences, expertise, and viewpoints can help to improve environmental policies and practises, as well as the creation of long-term solutions that meet the requirements of both people and the environment. Despite the difficulties that women experience in contributing to sustainable development, efforts are underway to empower women and enhance their engagement in environmental protection efforts. According to the results of the field study, people have become more aware of the importance of environmental protection and management. The forest's density has also risen in comparison to past times. People have stopped engaging in unlawful forest-related activities as a result of the alternatives presented by various non-governmental organisations; as a result of such alternatives, people are profiting while also raising awareness about environmental conservation.

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