



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Political Science

ECOFEMINISM IN THE LIGHT OF KAREN J. WARREN

KEY WORDS: Environmental feminism, gender, feminism, patriarchy.

Rakhi Chowdhury

Department of Political Science, Triveni Devi Bhalotia College, Raniganj, West Bengal, India.

ABSTRACT

The goal of both environmental feminism and feminism is to remove from society the values of masculinity towards women and nature. The conceptual framework is creating gender inequality on the one hand, and building a wall of inequality between nature and man on the other. According to Warren, women and nature are being oppressed for this conceptual structure. The goal of environmental feminism is to explain appropriate inequality and to place women and nature in a dignified position from a moral point of view. In this context, an attempt is made to shed light on Warren's concept of environmental feminism.

Introduction: The Third United Nations Women's Conference, held in Nairobi in 1985, was one of the first international gatherings to openly link sustainable development to women's empowerment, gender equality, and equity. According to the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies, the environment is a source of concern for women.

Relation between Environment and Gender

Gender and environmental concerns are represented in specific components of policymaking, such as participatory decision-making and stakeholder involvement, both of which are critical not only from a gender perspective but also from a larger environmental perspective. Gender equity is also important in addressing major sustainable development issues like natural resource use and management, as well as environmental degradation and pollution prevention [1].

Environment - Feminism is as a philosophical approach

Environment - Feminism is a philosophical approach that emphasizes women's just rights and the protection of the environment in order to prevent environmental catastrophe. The goal of environmental feminism is to highlight the different aspects of masculine domination and oppression of women and the different aspects of human oppression of nature [2].

Karen J. Warren's concept of environmental gender inequities

Karen J. Warren (1987) Ecological feminism encompasses a variety of viewpoints that stem from feminist acts and ideals. Despite significant differences between ecofeminists and the feminisms that inspire them, there is one point on which they all agree: there are important connections between the dominance of women and the dominance of nature, which must be understood by feminism, environmentalism, and environmental philosophy. Ecofeminism's main goal is to make these "woman-nature ties" more visible and, when they are harmful to women and the environment, to destroy them [3].

Karen J. Warren gave a theoretical view of the nature of patriarchal societal values on the subjugation of women and the environment. According to her, the values created by society are in fact based on both 'conceptual framework' and 'oppressive conceptual framework' [4].

Warren goes on to give a philosophical explanation of environmental feminism, saying that patriarchal dualism is responsible for the oppression of women and the environment. The patriarchy oppresses women both by 'naturalization' and 'feminization'. The naturalization of women occurs when patriarchs describe women in the animal kingdom; e.g., cows, foxes, chicks, bitches, pussycats, cats etc. Similarly nature is feminized when nature is called she. She is the feminine of he. Nature is thus imagined as feminine, 'she' is

raped, mastered, conquered, controlled, penetrated, subdued and mined by men and nature is interpreted as mother [5].

She thinks that when masculinity considers itself the owner of nature, it sees women in the same light as nature and treats women and nature in the same way. Environmental feminists, however, agree that there is a deep connection between women and nature. Women have an inevitable relationship with nature. She sees women as anti-men as a whole and associates them with nature, arguing that just as women are oppressed by oppression, so is the environment exploited by men [5].

Patriarchy as the cause of the oppression of women and nature

Explaining environmental feminism, Warren blames the dual values created by patriarchy as the cause of the oppression of women and nature. According to her, the dual values give rise to the idea that women and nature are inferior, that they have the right to dominate and that this dominion will be masculine. They do not want to admit that masculinity oppresses women and nature; rather, they rationalize their authoritarian and domineering attitude or oppressive behavior in such a way that men are strong, independent, courageous, self-reliant, self-confident. On the other hand, women are weak, dependent, timid, emotional, unable to make decisions, etc. Masculinity has the same idea about nature. So people have been cherishing this argument of masculinity for so long, they have not contradicted it. Until the sixties of the twentieth century, people accepted this logic. But in the late twentieth century, in the seventies, people became aware of the Frasoa Doban environment-feminism and tried to understand it. Environmental feminists therefore seek to justify and end the injustice of these values of masculinity. Here Warren blames the patriarchal negative view of society for the oppression of women and nature. That is to say, in his opinion, the unequal condition created between men and women due to the patriarchal attitude of the society also exists between man and nature. Due to dual values, women and nature are mainly oppressed and survive in the subjugated state of society [4].

Conceptual framework

Warren, in her essay The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism, called the oppression of women and nature a "conceptual framework." 'Conceptual framework' refers to certain basic beliefs, values, assumptions and attitudes that help one to form one's own ideas. These ideas are rooted in society, which is embedded in the mind of the individual. The conceptual framework acts as a visual aid to the person, through which the person perceives or accepts himself and the world around him. Warren said that this stereotype is the creation of a patriarchal society, a patriarchy created to establish itself in a higher position, which puts men in the best position and places women in the lowest position [6].

Warren has again called the conceptual framework oppressive. Warren mentions three important features of the oppressive conceptual framework. First, the quality step by step. That is, that which creates stratification between certain conditions and classes; for example, women-men, people-nature. Men consider women to be inferior. Men consider nature also inferior to them. Second, dual values, which create divisions between men and women; for example, male reasoning - possessing intelligence, female emotional: male strong, female weak, male superior, female inferior - these ideas are formed from dual values. Third, another feature of the oppressive conceptual framework is the rationality of domination. This is a more important feature because it rationalizes some of the ideas in the society which have gained a lasting form in the society. This framework also works in the field of environmental feminism. In other words, the same attitude has subjugated women and the environment. People are rationalizing the subordination of nature in such a way that nature is unconscious; which cannot bring about any change in the surrounding world. Since man can do this work, man is the best of the natural world and the inanimate world. As the best nation, human beings will be able to keep nature under their control. Environmental feminists oppose this kind of subordination rationality as opposed to oppression. Warren wants to point out that the idea that people have developed in society due to dual values has been rooted in the human mind for ages - the opposite of which people cannot think. According to her, man oppresses nature by imposing the same view or concept on nature. That is, according to Warren, the same conceptual framework that applies to the oppression and subjugation of women applies to environmental feminism as well. Warren's aim is to liberate women and eliminate gender inequality by highlighting the absurdity of the rationale for oppressing and subjugating women and nature.

There are different sects of feminism, although the common goal of these sects is emancipation of women, there are differences of opinion. Warren wants to show that while there are differences between the different conceptions of feminism, feminism is only anti-masculine, and since environmental feminism differs from environmental feminism, since environmental feminism is anti-masculine, there is a similarity between feminism and environmental feminism. And this analogy is to explain the futility of the rationale prevailing in the society to dominate the subordinates within the oppressive conceptual framework [4].

Conclusion

According to environmental feminism, women and the environment and both are considered as inferior classes in society and are victims of discrimination due to their patriarchal negative attitudes. According to Warren, there are similarities between gender inequality and nature inequality, and for this similarity environmental-feminism is included in feminism. The prevailing view of society is that women are weak and inferior, while men are strong and powerful; so this claim of male domination over women is logical. Applying such an idea about women in the case of nature, it is said that nature is weak so man has arbitrary right over nature. In other words, Warren wants to imply that women and nature are being persecuted because of the same characteristics. Environmental feminism protests society's perception of women and nature.

The alternative explanation of women's experience that Warren gave in explaining feminism is thought to be far more helpful than patriarchal considerations. Incidents of women are never judged in the eyes of women, if that happened then such incidents would not be repeated in the society.

References:

1. Laki, K. (2016). Poribesh naribad: ekti tulanamulok bishleshon. Nari o progoti.

23(1):22-35.
 2. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. (2009). Gender and Environment A guide to the integration of gender Aspects in the OSCE's environmental projects. OSCE Office of the Secretary General - Gender Section. Vienna.
 3. Adams, C. J., & Gruen, L. (Eds.). (2021). Ecofeminism: Feminist intersections with other animals and the earth. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
 4. Khanam, R. A. (2005). Naribad o darsonik prekhapat. Sahityika, Dhaka.
 5. Tong, R., & Botts, T. F. (2018). Feminist thought: A more comprehensive introduction. Routledge, USA.
 6. Warren, K. J. (1990). The power and the promise of ecological feminism. Environmental ethics, 12(2): 125-146.