

Women's Way of Nature Conservation- Tradition to Convention

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Abstract: *Human beings are largely dependent on nature for livelihood. Since then women are playing major role in wise consumption and sustained use of these resources. Conservation means protection as well as sustainable use. Indian culture highlighted importance of and being grateful to nature by various customs and traditions. Ecofeminism says that women are closer to nature than men are. This closeness, therefore, makes women more nurturing and caring towards their environment. Women have contributed larger share to it by various movements and forming organisations to protect it. Various women centric policies for nature conservation can be considered for initiation at government level.*

Keywords: Women, Nature conservation, sustainable use

I. INTRODUCTION

The treasure of our traditional knowledge roots back to the era when human beings were dependent on natural resources for livelihood. Besides food and shelter, it provides us with lifesupporting gas Oxygen, medicines, dyes, resins, stable climate and recreation. India's role is commendable in the contribution of biodiversity as it contributes about 7.8% the total life forms found in the world despite the fact that its geographical area is only 2.4% of the world (MoEF 2009). Conservation means protection as well as sustainable use. Various traditional rituals and festivals highlight the importance of nature conservation. Indian culture has always emphasized on being grateful to nature for its resources. Different festivals highlight the importance of trees and nature in various states of India like Vata-pournima, Tulsivivah, Gudhipadwa etc. Also, animals and birds are worshipped eg- Pola celebrated in Maharashtra, India worships cattle. Indian culture greatly has women centric approach in nature conservation and has largely assigned various roles to them. There is a mention of Aranyani, the Goddess of forests in the Rig Veda. Ecofeminism says that women are closer to nature than men are. This closeness, therefore, makes women more nurturing and caring towards their environment. Ecofeminism encompasses a variety of views but has a focus of patriarchal oppression and the social constructions relating to women and the environment.

1.1 Quality of Women to Protect Nature^[2]

1. Incentive effect: If women are given secure land rights, there will be a greater incentive for higher production rates. Women will be motivated to use the best technologies, increase cultivation, and make longterm investments.
2. Credit and input access effect: Titles would enhance women's ability to raise production by improving their access to agricultural credit, as well as by increasing women's independent access to the output, savings and cash flow for reinvestment.
3. Efficiency of resource uses effect: Studies have shown the possibility that women use resources more efficiently than men. This could mean anything from making a more productive use of loans of money earned to the ability of women to achieve higher values of output based on cropping patterns.
4. Gender-specific knowledge and talent pool effect: Many women have specific and often greater knowledge about certain crops and planting patterns. If women are included as farm managers, a more diverse and talented, informed pool will be created.
5. Bargaining power and empowerment effect: Providing women with the opportunity to own land will increase their sense of empowerment and could help women to assert themselves more in various situations such as

policy creation other government schemes.

In India, many types of agriculture activities are taken up by women- sowing, nursery management, transplanting, weeding, irrigation, fertiliser application, plant protection, harvesting etc.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study is on literature search of role of women in nature conservation seeking information through various traditional and conventional ways. Traditional practices like festivals and traditions in India that emphasize the importance of nature through various practices like worship etc and contribution and role of Indian women in nature conservation, their practices towards it.

III. DISCUSSION

Making use of the resources for living has been major task of women in every civilization and society and women have exercised their important share in this. Women have contributed largely by participating and initiating movements to save the nature (Table 2). Various women led organisations are contributing in natural resources and biodiversity conservation. Gender specific approach is important in nature conservation. The quality of women to make rational use of things and reusing wherever necessary should be made use of while framing various policies.

IV. CONCLUSION

Women have a key role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is, therefore, is essential to achieving sustainable development. Women, particularly those living in rural areas or mountain areas have a special relationship with the environment. Traditionally, women have been responsible for subsistence and survival for water, food, fuel, fodder, and habitat, though they rarely get the credit for nurturing these life support systems. Harvesting is a key process affecting sustenance of nature and many time there are chances of over harvesting due to lack of knowledge. I think women can be effectively trained in such areas. Various schemes of government like NMPB medicinal plants subsidy etc should be made available to or should be made use of by women to achieve sustainable use of nature and conservation.

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Tables

Table 1. Various festivals & Indian traditions highlighting importance of nature

Sr no	Festival /Tradition	Plant/animal importance	State
1	Vatapornima	Banyan tree	Maharashtra
2	Tulsivivaah	Holy Basil	Maharashtra
3	GudhiPadwa	Neem tree	Maharashtra
4	Pongal	Sugarcane, rice	Tamilnadu

Table 2. Some Women in movements of conserving nature

Sr no	Name of women	State	Movement
1	Amrita devi	Rajasthan	Gave her life to protect <i>khejari</i> tree
2	Gauradevi	Uttarakhand	Proponent of chipko movement
3.	SuryamaniBhagat	Jharkhand	Save forest of Jharkhand movement
4	Vandana Shiva	Delhi	Navadanya movement

5	Sunita Narain	Delhi	Green concept of sustainable development
6	Salumarada Thikkamma	Karnataka	Planting and tending to 385 banyan trees between hulikal and kudur
7	Tulsi Gowda	Karnataka	Afforestation program
8	Almitra Patel	Gujarat	Antipollution activist
9	Medha Patkar	Maharashtra	Narmada bachao andolan
10	Rahibai Popere	Maharashtra	Known as seed mother, seed bank initiative