

# ECOFEMINISM IN BODO POETRY

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**Abstract** - Diverse form of new thoughts and experiences are in continued emergence in the field of literature. Ecofeminism is also a new branch of literary criticism. Ecofeminism emerged from ecocriticism. In today's globalization world, the analysis on ecocriticism discusses about the world's natural environment and their placement depiction in varied forms in the creation of literature. Like other literatures of the world, the depiction of the natural philosophy, weakness in beauty, joys and sorrows of nature, environmental pollution, transformation, purification, conflict with the nature and the state of natural living creatures can be witnessed in Bodo literature. According to western critics, the way nature is being dominated by man, in the same way women have been being dominated by men in the society. It is because of this the ecofeminist writers and literary critics are flowing in a single wave. This study will focus on the creation of literature through ecofeminism in the field of Bodo poetry.

**Key words:** Women, Nature, Oppressed, Feminism.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ecocriticism theory has primarily found its origin in western literature. This theory has slowly taken its worldwide expansion. The theory that got its birth in western world has widespread in India and its wave can be felt today in Northeastern India too. Ecocriticism is formed of two comprised words – 'Eco' and 'Criticism'. The word Eco is derived from Ecology and Criticism is derived from the literary analysis. It can be said that Ecocriticism is the critical study on literature and nature. This literary criticism depicts the presentation of nature in the literary creativities like prose, poetry, novel, play, travelogues etc. Moreover it is a portrayal of nature which also is known as Green Study in English literature.

On the other hand, Ecofeminism is another branch of the literary studies of ecocriticism. As nature is being dominated by humans, so also women folks are also being dominated in society by the men. Apart from that Nature and women have many similar characteristics. The theory based on the critical analysis on the connection between women and nature is called the ecofeminism. It also includes the philosophy of social, culture, arts, economics and politics. In the year 1974, French writer, Françoise d'Eaubonne has for the first time used the word Ecofeminism in his book named "Le Feminist Ou La Mort (1974)". Specially, this philosophy emphasizes the way both nature and women are treated by patriarchal or male centred society.

According to Wikipedia – “Ecofeminism analysis explores the connections between women and nature in culture, religion, literature and icons graphy and addresses and the parallels between the oppression of nature and the oppression of women”<sup>1</sup>. In the study of Ecofeminism, philosophers have expressed it in this way –

*Man / Woman*

*Culture / Nature*

*Possibility / Weakness*

*Brain / Body*

The influence of ecofeminism is remarkable in literature. The wave of the theory on Ecofeminism which got birth from the hand of Francoise d’ Eaubonne and Cheryll Glotfelty came flowing in the hands of Indian writers like Raja Rao, R.K Narayan, Kamala Markandaya, Mahasweta Devi, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Ray and others and it slowly set its step in Bodo literature as well.

In this study, critical analysis will be done to focus on the selection of Ecofeminism theory in the world of Bodo poetry.

## II. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aims of this study are –

- i) To concentrate on Ecofeminism through Bodo poetry.
- ii) To examine the relation between nature and women present in Bodo poetry.
- iii) To analyse the contribution of Ecofeminism in Bodo poetry.

## III. METHODOLOGY

The present study has been undertaken in an analytical method. The data for the present study has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary consists of the text of the poetry. The secondary data has been collected from different sources like books, journals, magazines as well as critical writing by different critics and scholars.

## IV. DISCUSSION

Ecofeminism is a branch or part of feminism where presentation of natural world can be witnessed. Ecofeminism deals with a basic philosophical truth. This truth is the close relationship between the nature and the women as they share their similar characteristics. Some characteristics can be witnessed in both women and nature like, nurture, caring, reproductive, loving etc. The earth is considered to be a mother as it possesses the ability of reproduction. The creator has created the earth for both man and nature. The natural creations include trees and plants, hills and valleys, rivers and lakes, the sun, the sky, the stars, the moon and the living creatures of nature like birds, animals, insects etc. This nature maintains a close relationship with the man. Man had been depending on nature prior to civilization. Nature had been considered to be the greatest creativity of God. Bodo

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ECOCriticism>

community has been devoting worshipping the five philosophic principles of nature: the air; water; earth; fire and the sky through Bathou religion taking Sijou plant as a symbol. Thus it goes saying in Bodo language –

*“Shijouni Shiriya Shiriba  
Taigir khonga khongba  
Shipungni gudung gudungba  
Mwnshihsing bwraini raa pongba  
Shubungni asharabw asharba”*

English rendition:

*The stairs of Shijou plant is of five  
The covers of Elephant apple is of five  
The hole of Flute is of five  
The words of old man Mwnsingsing is five  
The thoughts of man is of five*

Human beings have been living with the strength of these five philosophical principles. In the same way the earthly dwellers like trees and plants, birds and animals, rivers, valleys and mountains etc are depending on these five philosophic principles. Man has adored the earth as a mother since ancient times. Humans’ beings, being the energetic and intellect creature among animals have observed the natural beauty; the artists have started to portray pictures; the sculptorshave done their carvings; the poets have created poetries and the composers have composed lyrics etc. But along with these, humans have also destroyed the wealth of nature to fulfill their selfish desires, leading to the change of environment and Global warming as well like environmental pollution, change of climatic conditions, prevalent of different types of problems and sufferings on man etc. It is against such destructions that various movements can be seen and read in the history. For instances – Chipko Movement (1973), Bishnoi Movement, Save Silent Valley Movement, Jungle Bachao Andholan, Appiko movement, Narmada Bachao Andholan (NBA), Teri Dam conflict etc.

The scientists through their scientific warfare try to protect the nature from effect of global warming. On the other hand, the writers started to bring revolution to the environment through literature. In the way the writers created their writings based on nature, in the same way for the cause of women’s domination, the writers try to bring consciousness through a new wave of revolution through the writings based on the ideology of feminism.

The ideology on ecofeminism has laid an impact on the domination of the patriarchal society’s values and beliefs and the nature. This ideology speaks that nature is an image of a woman. Its duty is to reproduce and bring up its children. So to say the duty of woman is natural. So the nature is considered to be a mother. The belief on men’s outlook on nature and women are:

- i) Men dominate both women and nature.
- ii) Men think and act that women and nature should be suppressed by men.



The depth of the influence of ecofeminism in Bodo poetries can be observed. Below is the study taken through some poems as an exemplar-

Ideology on ecofeminism can be witnessed in the poetry book “*Nwibe Lamajwng Dwijlang Phwiyw*” by Junu Brahma, published in the year 2000. In her poem “*Dwima*” which means the river, she has taken the river as a symbol. In it she tries to present water as a form of universal creation of nature’s purity and peace. It can be said that God’s creation, air, water, earth, fire and the sky are pure and powerful. But the river which has been in continuous use by man from the past remains clear and purity today remains the question. Humans have brought impurity and polluted the rivers, lakes and seas of the nature. But despite of various obstacles, the river continues to flow. In the same way, the dreams of women have been shattered in the patriarchal society but had got through all hindrances. Just like how nature is compared to woman in the same way while uttering the word “*Dwima*” it directly mentions the feminine gender. The ideas, thoughts, desires and dreams of women are inferior to man’s point of view for which their dreams are not fulfilled and thus they are to live in dark and lonely, keeping within them their thoughts and feelings to themselves. This ideology is clearly reflected in her poem,

*Mwblib mwndangthi*  
*Bwhwiyw*  
*Dwngprwm rwdajwng*  
*Shwdwb khobama*  
*Ma rao railailangw*  
*Gwshw sher sher.*  
*Ayo*  
*Angtho shanw*  
*Didwmwi bwhwinw*  
*Nwng manw hwphwiyw*  
*Dwithun*  
*Nwibe dwimani bikhaiao”*

(*Nwibe Lamajwng Dwijlang Phwiyw*, P-45)

English rendition:

*Minimal experience*  
*Flow*  
*Through every veins*  
*The sweet words*  
*Utters*  
*Oh*  
*I think*

*To flow smoothly  
Why do you bring  
Waves  
In the heart of this river*

Through the given below extract from the poem, she has treated the nature as the symbol and try to portray the oppression, subjugation and domination of women to throw message on the others. As –

*“Dindangwi manw nwnng  
Jwngthi Hathorkhi.  
Mani daiao,  
Shaja be jebrwngwi.”*

(Nwibe Lamajwng Dwijlang Pwiyw, P-45)

English rendition:

*Why do you hang  
As a shining star  
Which crime  
Brought you unending punishment*

The sacrifice of women from the bondage of traditional accepted views of the society on women, regarding them as inferior, since ancient times and even today is inexpressible with words. It is because of the necessity of both male and female on this earth that apart from human beings, God has created also the animals, birds, trees and plants in the form of two genders. Like the nature gives birth on its heart, so also women give birth to children. Therefore women and nature are considered as same. It is because of this, that there is a blind belief and consideration that women are only for households, only to give birth, not to interfere with the outside world and though they wanted to earn something, they have to stay under their men and worked, their wage should be much lesser as compared to men and women have to be always under men and are to be dominated. Taking all these depressions and sorrows, the poet Indira Boro, awardee of Probon Borgoyay Literary Award, in her poem “Aizw” expressed thus –

*“Khwndw khwndw khamanini  
Khwndw khwndw jengna  
Khwndw khwndw bubilini  
Khwndw khwndw gena”*

(Aizw: Khwndw Khwndw Jengna, P-7)

English rendition:

*Part by part task*

*Part by part problems*

*Part by part time*

*Part by part dirth*

Since the time immemorial, in the traditional patriarchal society, the tradition of men going to the forest and being the wood cutter, hunting of birds and animals and endangering of the weaker animals have been in practised. On the basis of gender, discrimination on women considering them as trees, plants, animals and birds of nature have also been in practised. Kamala Das, the poet of Indian literature and the recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award and Asian Poetry Prize, said through her poetry thus: -

“Ask me why his hands away like a holed  
snake before it clasps my pubis. Ask me why like a  
great tree felled, he slums against my breast and  
sleep..... ask me.....what is bliss and what is its  
price.....”

(The Stong Age)

The poem, “Mwnse Oron arw Gongse Kolomni Batra” taken from the 2014 publication poetry book “Ang Mabwrwi Dong Daswng” by one of the renowned poets of Bodo literature and a Sahitya Akademi awardee, Anju may be taken for this study. In this work, she expressed that the poetry is dedicated to rangers and all those forest lovers. This poem comprise of the meeting of each other in the resting place of Mohon ranger in the deep forest and the struggle for survival of animals, birds and insects of the mother nature against hunters hunting for animals and birds. Ranger protects the forest and teaches mankind to love and be intimate to the forest dwellers and also advises them to keep greeny look to the forest. The beautiful nature of the earth has been in exploitation by the humans day by day.

AS the line goes:

*“Ang Mithigwo*

*Nwngni rough and tough outfit*

*Arw attitude ni shingaobw*

*Mwnshe gurwi gwrbw dong ja gabw*

*Pholanjwng bima gaotharjanai mwi phishaphwrjwng*

*Jai phwrwngw buthargraphwrnw jiu khangnaini phari phari.”*

(Ang Mabwrwi Dong Daswng, P -4)

English rendition:

*I know  
your rough and tough fit  
and within attitude  
lies soft tender heart deeply cries  
Along with fawns whose mothers are killed by hunters  
Who teaches the killers to maintain their living in series*

Man has been destroying and leading to extinction the beautiful nature of the mother earth day by day. The deep forest of the past had been deforested, animals had been lead to extinction and the forest lands became the inhabitants of the mankind. The dwelling place of the birds and animals, the hills and mountains are now converted with houses and buildings and to industrial places. The fields of green vegetations are converted to market and commercial places for which the open green and beautiful nature can be seen rare today. Thus the nature is being subjugated and dominated by the mankind. Just like the lives of women are devalued in the society, so also nature is being exploited by mankind. Thus the poet, Anju, using the rape of women as a symbol, appeals to the mankind of the world through her poem, *Dublipwrkou pwtangnanwi Laki*. The line goes thus:

*“Dahw bubliao thwi bwhwinw  
Khoran jagwn angkhal pwigwn  
Dakhalam jinahari bini gwthar gwrbw  
Pap nangwn khwiphwd phwigwn”*  
(Dublipwrkhwo phwthangnanwi lakhi, P-138)

English rendition:

*Don't allow to flow blood in the field  
Drought and famine will occur  
Don't rape its sacred soul  
Will be cursed and misfortunes will occur*

## CONCLUSION

Man and natural world both depend on each other to live on the mother earth. One lays an utmost impact on the other. As man cannot live without oxygen so too trees and plants need carbon-dioxide to live. But it would not be much wrong to say that man is not necessary for the nature to survive, instead nature is very much necessary for survival of man. Science has invented what already exist in nature to its new form, but without ignoring what cannot be found in nature as well. On the other hand there cannot be a family and the growth of race without women. The thought and belief that women are weak and domitable is opposite to nature.



In The present day world, environmental science subject has been included in the education system, so also in the field of literature too, along with the writings on environment; there arises the importance of the study of ecocriticism as well. In the developing Bodo literature, there is still the dearth on the study of ecocriticism. So to fill up the storehouse of literature and to bring to the development of Bodo language and literature and to bring comparison to the other literatures of the world, there is the necessity on the study of the literature on ecocriticism and ecofeminism.

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