

ECOFEMINISM THROUGH THE LENS OF VANDANA SHIVA: SEEDING WAVE FOR GENDER EQUALITY AT THE HEART OF CLIMATE JUSTICE

Sameeksha Suri

M.Phil. Research Scholar

Department of Social Work

University of Delhi

Email: samysuri03@gmail.com

Abstract

The world has evolved around the food process for healthy living and long life. But the adulteration and lab produced seeds have taken a shift from plate full of nutrition to plate full of chemicals. The adding pinch of salt is that the leading companies which are artificially creating seeds are mostly led by men. To address these generational and lab produced seeds' changes, Vandana Shiva, an Eco-feminist has taken an initiative to take back the soul of food back and challenge the patriarchal mindset of these big companies' owners. Thus, this research highlights the concept of real food linked with women's efforts of producing the food and challenging the climatic change.

Keywords

Ecofeminism, climate justice, seeds, artificial seeds.

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Sameeksha Suri

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Mother Earth and Women

Agriculture is an important aspect of livelihood for the masses across the world but most specific to women. They were the domesticators of crops who carried knowledge of seeds, food and mother earth. The ecofeminist and founder of Navdanya- a non-governmental organization for creating seed banks and securing women's position in farming views women as original producers of food. Like the roots and branches of the trees are connected to the quality of its fruits similarly women are connected to the cycle of food from seeding, sowing, growing to serving the nutrition on plates; all of this is inclusive of the domain of women as per the social divisions of the labour. Remarkably tells that woman owned farming. These tenants of feminism and environmental relationship uniting earth & women (mother earth) is what ecofeminism conceptualises.

Women's Food Knowledge and Dr. Vandana Shiva

However, Vandana proclaimed that this practice of producing foods and incorporating seeds on the farms are based on the principles of sharing in communities within families and caring about the very cycle of the biodiversity which women have contributed since ages has been devalued and women's s feminine food knowledge has been gendered. The seeds historically owned by women is taken from women's hands and transferred to corporations like Monsanto run by global corporate patriarch. The very example of what capitalist patriarchy did to the world. This whole food chain from production to market acquisitions are gendered and have been taken away from women and given on the hands of the masculine power similarly as capitalist patriarchal systems of colonization did to the women.

Capitalist Patriarchy and Women's Farm Work

The project of capitalist patriarchy who converted the lands into mere trajectory of private properties to changing human beings as algorithms of machine systems (seeds produced in labs); the same colonization has been done to women in agriculture to take the monopoly from them as farm producers and convert farm food and farm seeds into commodity controlled by corporates or capitalist patriarchs who treats women as emptied bodies objects meant for control and exploitation by powerful men. The initial creation of 'productive' work started from England where peasants were picked and brought to the mines and was then labelled as 'jobbed' and were included in the world of GDP. The ecofeminist claimed that the same systems who forced productivity and its interconnections to the idea of the formal economy called the work of women as unproductive however these women were self-organized, in fact living with the propositions of dignity and liberty in the farms and knew how to distribute resources of water, vegetables to the entire world and

rather refused to become the slaves. The knowledge of women was termed as unproductive as second sex or second opinion on the lands. The same capitalist patriarchy insisted by the view of Monsanto who claimed nature is dead to exploit the freedom of seeds and attain patents have been similarly pervasive to the thought process that women are non-human beings and are meant to be exploited and their patents are subjected to the men.

Ecofeminism and Monoculture of Mind

The very basic rights of farm women which eco feminist fights for i.e., land power, farm power and resources power in the hands of women is hammered by the similar concept of patriarchy plus capitalism that defines women as second sex, as unproductive human beings and hence allots this power of land, farming, technical skills of framing in the hands of global patriarchs. This same world that views world ecology as dead for profits treats women as invisible and part of re-production (just body) and not productions. Vandana however encountered this monoculture of minds and through the freedom of seeds tried to inculcate the forgotten idea that given the diversity into women's hands and we get rid of vitamin deficiencies. Profitable giants take away the seed and land rights from women and sell it to the capitalist patriarchy who patents it and re-sell it to the households by adding nutritious labels to it which in Shiva's language is known as the value addition of the patriarchal economies, very much similar to the labels added to the comparison of the so called second sex to become as par with men. This very acceptance of power and knowledge of women to keep the mother earth alive is deducted by patriarchal ecology which sustains the view that women are to be kept at home for household chorus, farm activities and men are meant to go to the market and sell their produce. In bond conference, Vandana highlighted the challenges of globalization i.e., substantial increase in junk food rather than food that was given to us through the small farms or kitchen gardens of women who did nutritional intensive farming but the same set of global patriarchs- those 8 men who controls half of the world and who run our lives by destroying the ecological balance by creating economies of greed and climate fear that mother earth is dead and we are ready to go to the mars by forcing fear of protective immunity for profits through creating bio labs' seeds- that same system created fear for women owning land or seed patents or going to the markets. It devaluated women's work by creating a production boundary as 'productive work' and sold it to the economy which was confined to the market places owned by men.

Changing Farm Rights through Social Work

Through her NGO Navdanya, Dr. Vandana Shiva started women's movement by creating seed banks and getting its ownership to women specifically calling out

to the structures who imposed superiority of humans to nature (production of bio labs' seeds) and women to men but she challenged with various studies and statistics like that done in 80's of OXFAM, claiming 85% of rural Indian women are engaged in farming and counts to almost 80% food producers yet only 13% land is owned by them. In the ADRI report of Bihar namely 'Women in the informal economy' reported that 50.1. % of total women workforce engaged in farming activities. However, all that our advertisements have forced us to idealise is the word 'farmer' when comes into our mind is the photograph of a male farmer sitting in the tractor. This is how women have been washed off from the systems of food, agriculture and the very chronology of maintaining ecological balance. Women were forced to bend down when Chipko movement took place which according to Dr Shiva was a major achievement of women's & ecology's rights.

Destruction of Ecological Resources and Climatic in Justice

The destruction of forest was not merely a climatic destruction but women's destruction in the lives of ecological balance. It was them who would have been forced to walk extra miles to fetch food and water for their families. The deforestation would have impacted their livelihood and left them homeless. It was them who would have been left without food just for mere profits of the man who sold themselves to the contractors for money. These non-sustainable practices would have burdened women but these brave beings fought for what Vandana shiva calls them as "shaktis" This was the first rise of climatic gendered justice and eco feminism whose goals are equality and protection of women's rights by creating ecological balance of diversity. When any natural disasters happen, it is a woman who faces more than the man, it is them who have to look upon the food of the family and it is them who faces violence whenever any destruction takes place. (Peterson, K. 2007) examined that natural disasters lowers the life expectancy of women and analysed that women are 14 times more prone to deaths when any destruction occurs. They become the part of climatic refugees, faces violence and are trafficked. It happens because they have unequal access of resources and information. They are mostly under-represented in decision making because of the capitalist patriarchs who tries to disturb the natural balance of the diversity by removing the most knowledgeable sex from the field to creating bio labs for the development of the seeds and removing their ownership from the land.

Gendered Climatic in Justice

The ecofeminist path of acknowledging land and resources' ownership to women paves a way for climatic justice as more women holdings of nurtured and protected lands less will be climatic disasters as women knows how to create

balance of ecological diversity. As we notice the social inequalities faced by women in the farms which leads to exploitation of lands, water and other resources, we can interpret that further aftermaths of hammering women's land and seeds knowledge may destruct the ecology which can lead to climatic disasters. Women grow more range of crops which reduces the risk of climatic food insecurity while men raise commercial agriculture crops. FAO, 2011 evaluated that if women are given access to productive resources equivalent to men, they would have improved the farm yield by 20-30%. Then again, it is women who have to face more burden of any climate related event pertaining to violence and more deaths. The UN report on facing a changing world was of the view that we cannot afford to the world's 3.4 billion women to the role of victims (an incident of Hurricane Dorian) rather as agents of change. Nevertheless, the dominant feminization of agriculture diminishes productivity of women's accessibility to farming, technology and market owned values. This interconnectivity from land to seed ownerships has been the most essential component in proclaiming gendered climatic justice as women's greater reliance is on natural resources like forests and rivers especially rural women who are mostly dependent on agriculture for their food security. Wangarai Maathai, (2004 Nobel prize winner) was awarded for implementing the Greenbelt Movement throughout Kenya by employing more than 30,000 women in forest management is one of the greatest example to the fight of climate in view of land and gender justice. Dr. Shiva has been categorised by various thinkers as radical in her approach claiming women own the farms & the farming cycle likewise they own their bodies. The power of women was devalued and sold to those who were subjected as powerful or the highly productive gender of the society which was fearlessly interrupted by brave radical feminists. There was similar resistance to the attempt to give power to women in agriculture and ownership of their own bodies by transferring resources to so called powerful global patriarchs. Vandana Shiva rightly fought for women's recognition and women's work as productive because when any climatic destruction happens, it is women who does four to five people's work and is burdened with household responsibilities as well. The very death of feminine principle in the knowledge of seeds, farms and masculinization of biodiversity has led to destruction and violence of the mother earth and women in particular. Hence, by giving property rights on the hands of the women and recognizing them as curators of biodiversity is the only way to attain gender based climate justice and instil Dr. Vandana Shiva's vision of gendered-food justice.

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