

Ecofeminism in environmental ethics



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Ecofeminism is a term that covers a variety of response to environmental problems and theorizing about them. This paper will look briefly on how the Ecofeminism has to do with Environmental Ethics. In the first section, will look briefly concept on Ecofeminism and environmental ethics and how do they apply. Next this paper will appear on the nature of Ecofeminist, critique of Ecofeminism and the implication of Ecofeminism to women. An attempt has been made in this paper to initiate a discussion about how the issue of how environmental degradation and exploitation of nature became a feminist issue also been discussed.

Introduction

The word or term of “ Ecofeminism” was introduced by Francoise d’Eaubonne which is member group of feminists in France. This woman actually tries to pull out and bring out the idea and the attention to women’s potential upon the crisis of ecological revolution during that time (d’Eaubonne 1994). Ecofeminism basely come out from idea on which the

women or also known as Eve are closely with the nature compared to the men or Adam. This statement are said so because the behavior of women are feminine and fragile so do nature which are can depleted and destroy if there is no care about it. In last two decades, there are many topics and discussion especially on these Ecofeminism which are relates closely to the environmental ethics in order to prevent nature being degraded by human itself. In 1974, when the Ecofeminism come out with the issue of women and nature, the number of feminist and environmentalist on that time is increasing because of the attraction issue in Western country. The increasing of number of both parties actually is due to the concern of the link between the domination of women and the domination of nature in Western culture especially in United Kingdom. Although the concept of Ecofeminism has come out to different meaning far from those day during Ecofeminism area in 1974 but at least it still follow the criteria and following claim (Karen 1990):

- (i) There are important connection between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature.
- (ii) Understanding the nature of these connections is necessary to any adequate understanding of the oppression of women and the oppression of nature.
- (iii) Feminist theory and practice must include an ecological perspective.
- (iv) Solution to ecological problems must include a feminism perspective.

Nature of Ecofeminism

There are many Feminist that are supportive on Ecofeminist and highlighted on the fact that ecology is a feminist issue. The feminist that highlighted on this issues is Susan Griffin (1998) and Mary Daly (1978), Carolyn Merchant (1980), Ynestra King (1981), Ariel Kay Salleh (1984), Karn Warren (1987, 1990), Val Plumwood (1993) also discuss about the link between the oppression of women and nature in order to understand the connection “ why the environment is a feminist issue” and “ why feminist issues can be addressed in terms of environmental concern”(Gaard 1993). There are many feminist agree that ecology is a part of the feminist issue, which only they differ in term of nature and desirability. Ecofeminist can be based on variety of and certain of fundamental claims that point of view which link between oppression women and nature. Supposedly to understand and have wide of view in this discussion, one have to deep understand on nature of these link in order to understand more on oppression women and nature (Warren 1987).

For ecofeminist, the idea of domination between women and nature is basic of in ideology (Warren 1990). In order to overcome, once has to reconstruct and re-concept of the underlying patriarchal value and structural relation of culture and promote equality, non-violence, non-hierarchical forms of organization to bring out new social forms (Warren 1987). Based on the feminist point of view, they said that one should inter-connect of all life process and revere nature and all life form. They also said that human should not control the nature but co-operate with it (Warren 1990).

A characterization of Ecofeminism

Ecological feminism is name given based on the characterization or position in different aspects of philosophies. Ecofeminism actually can interpret in much perspective of environmental ethics in the way of ecological such as understanding of the nature concept and how to mitigate or solve of environmental problems (Waren 1987). The understanding of ethics not only refers to one aspect only such as liberal, radical and socialist but it is wide world and it including of nature (Merchant 1992). So to be genuine Ecofeminist, it actually depends on how once describes it or conceptualizes of the Ecofeminist position. This is because to be the genuine Ecofeminist, it depends on how much, which or what level of the position in environmental philosophy to claim it as Ecofeminist.

The different configuration of Ecofeminism is react in different way and it depends on how the linked connect between these two topic that discuss which is women and nature. It also depends on how people define it.

Different people have their different understanding and view. In addition, it also differ the nature of women's oppression and how the solution been taken, the philosophy of human nature, equality and the how people response on freedom. All these aspect is depends on how each of the feminist theories to describe it (Merchant 1992).

During 1960s, the issue on women in the workplace and education has become demanding for the feminist to bring out the topic in order to achieve a fulfilling life. Around the same year, the book " Silent Spring" written by Rachel Carslon which is feminist in 1962 that focus more on effect of

pollution on the human and non-human world which give thousand question of life on earth and it become as a public issue.

For an example of liberal in Ecofeminism, this perspectives actually are already been applied in Western country that are focus on political and philosophical framework that build in society to provide freedom in order to pursue their own interest. The liberal perspectives in Ecofeminism to be acceptable is actually depends on how people define it. Many Ecofeminism actually so far has do the concept of liberal feminist work such as keep intact oppressive and patriarchal ways of conceptualizing nature (Roach 1991). For an example, they actually focus work on problematic human- nature that global facing now.

For liberal mode, environmental problem is one of the aspects of the degradation of natural resources which the issue are should blame on the lack of regulation of pesticides and other environmental problem. This issue can be mitigating with social production that is environmentally voice. To overcome this issue, combination of science, conservation and law is the best. Opportunity to women should open widely so that this gender can be conservator, lawyer and so on, like men. To change women profession in more professional work as discuss above, it is not the way that can decrease the environmental problem that the world facing right now. As the answer to the view that associated women and nature, these actually were devalued in Western country especially in United Kingdom which the Ecofeminist group with a radical are being analyzed the environmental problem with their critique and idea of patriarchy which could liberate both women and nature (Merchant 1990).

So, the argument that always been said is that women are restricted by being closer of nature because their ability to bear children. In fact for the reality, women are actually are already gifted for feminine traits to become close to nature and earth.

Critiques of Ecofeminism

There are few feminist scholars such as Cecile Jackson (1993), Janet Biehl (1991), Meera Nanda (1991) and Bina Agarwal (1992) have voice out that Ecofeminist perspective which is "ethnocentric, essentialist, blind to class, ethnicity and other differentiating cleavages, a historical and neglects the material sphere" (Jackson 1993).

The existing of Ecofeminist are results as historical exploitation and domination of women and nature as goes by which are seen as victims of development. If any harm to nature, it actually harm to women equally which is act as self-evident to certain Ecofeminist, since the women are close to nature compared to men. None of the claim or argument is link to both of those statements (women and nature). This claim is looking so personal observation and takes its position as self-evident. It actually looks as the maximization to the women and nature in ideology which neglecting the others such as the economic advantage and political power as well as the gender of labor and opportunity (Agarwal 1992). The view of women are become stereotype which men are expect women to become such as caring and nurturing without thought as a full range of women abilities to do other thing (Biehl 1992).

Ecofeminist such as Susan Prentice (1998) argue about the combination of women with nature and politics imply that what men are do to earth is destroying or bad compare to women which nurturing to earth. This statement was argued which ignoring that men can also develop to care of nature. This argument actually is going beyond the radical which put Ecofemenism forward a critique that focusing on the relationship between “ production and reproduction and between ecology” (Merchant 1992).

Basically, women also provide knowledge of nature which helps in sustain life. The development of Ecofeminism was disrupted because of intervention and capitalist development in society. This which results men are concurred in production of exchange commodities in capitalist system economy while women are more in domestic sphere which specific work-force and social relations. In capitalist system, it actually focuses more on production which sustainability are being neglect. For socialism it focus more on production which to satisfy people need not greed. Based on Ecofeminism view, the socialist ecology should focus more on reproduction and nature rather that focus on production. But it does not happen because they homogenize the category of women. This is because they hardly to see women in other view basics in-term as caste, class, race and ethnicity. Because of this limitation Ecofeminists make effort to join and work together with the socialist framework

Implication of Ecofeminist ethics for women.

It is fact that females actually give socialized in certain way to achieve and maintain the appropriate system, that it also have been true that socialization aspects which must examined before they can be reclaimed and

consider useful (Cuomo 1992). It actually not surprisingly by which the famous claim and argument that mentioned women are Ecofeminism compared to men throughout their behavior are much more closely to nature. The argument of this claim actually can tell that it reinforces the patriarchal ideology of the domination and limit Ecofeminism's own effectiveness which the results noted as the biology actually determine the social inequalities between men and women (Cuomo 1992). Based on the implication that has been studied, it belief that, women are actually very connected to nature with their feminine trait to preserving the environment in order to save the earth from being degraded. Men are actually cannot as feminine as women because the trait are reserve for them which why men cannot be expected to participate in the restoration of any environmental projects. This is because; men actually are lack of sensitivity sense to nature that women have it. Therefore, women actually are respectfully to in charge of cleaning up the global problem especially in environment sense as to full fill that they already been done such as nurturing mother. In the nutshell, the implications of Ecofeminist ethics are should appear to women not for men.

If one believe that women have all the traits to preserving nature, so it qualifies to save the earth compared to men in a way to doing restoration projects since men gender are less sensitivity to nature. In the nutshell, women therefore can be leader in preserving earth as to full their biological traits which is nurturing mothers. For the conclusion, it actually difficult appears to be emancipator for women.

Conclusion

Understanding about humanity concept in this world and reality life actually can be build up based on the effort to comprehend those men-women into humanity-nature concept. The account of Ecofeminist that are actually separate both men-women are lead to the exploitation of women which this gender are more likely to viewed as closer to nature compared to men. The perspective of the Ecofeminist and Environmental ethics actually lead to the sense of interdependence of all individual and also human-nature.

Interconnection between women and nature of dominant traits actually lead to show the Ecofeminism are mutually supporting each other, the conceptually are linked and the explicit of the acknowledgement of both is vital to any responsible to environmental ethics. The Ecofeminist philosophy actually not mainly focuses on one section that is understand of women characterization but also understanding of liberate women with nature in order to prevent it from the structure of oppression. It has been prove that women actually are very feminine with the nature through their biological behavior. Although it has historical oppression about woman, the Ecofeminism seem agree that trait in women genetic such as caring and nurturing their kid or baby should be include in environmental ethics.