

## *Editorial*

### **“SUSTAINING GAIA: WOMEN, ECOLOGY, DEVELOPMENT.”**

The contemporary world is facing an imminent global environmental crisis and it has become imperative for us to address it. Women have been traditionally associated with nature and its reflection can be seen in widespread use of the terms- Mother Earth and Mother Nature etc. Moreover women are more intimately involved with nature, harbouring centuries old home remedies. With the challenging role of nurturers and providers, women have to bear the brunt of the changing dynamics of the environment. From rural to urban centers, from gathering firewood to providing sustenance to the family amidst new threats to the environment. Family health has also deteriorated due to the increasing levels of toxins in the environment. Women have been proactive in leading campaigns against climate change like Greta Thunberg and Medha Patkar closer to home. Development is inevitable but it should be compatible with sustainability. The theme of 2022 International Women’s Day as declared by UN is” Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow”. We would like to extend this theme to explore possibilities for a sustainable road map in which women play an integral part. The proposed volume would try to suggest and look into the relationship between women, ecology and development which would be sustainable. The research articles in this journal highlights the different aspects of the broad theme in a very comprehensive manner.

Dr. Preetinicha Barman in *Environmental Ethos in Koch Rajbangshi Poems* presents the Koch Rajbangshi ethos regarding ecological sustainability through a reading of certain select poems written in Koch Rajbangshi language. The poems of Kamalesh Sarkar, Nikhilesh Ray, Alalladin Sarkar, Dipak Kumar Ray, Jyotirmoy Pradhani and others is analysed to examine how nature has been a common heritage of the Rajbangshi poets.

*Sustainable Women Entrepreneurship: A Study on Muga Silk Entrepreneurs in Sualkuchi Village of Assam* by Sabita Bhagawati and Dr Sanjeeb K Jena studies the sustainability of women entrepreneurs engaged in muga silk production at Sualkuchi village. The findings indicate a gap between demand and supply of muga silk, which can be reduced

with adequate steps. There is profitability to the producers and value addition in each stage of value chain. It has economically empowered the women entrepreneurs, even during the tough pandemic period and the business proves to be sustainable.

Priyanka Bharali in *A Midsummer's Nightmare, a May-queen in Mayhem: Channelling Ari Aster's Movie Midsommar from an Eco-Horror Perspective* deals with a group's disturbing encounter with a Pagan cult of Scandinavia in a midsummer celebration festival. The paper not only portrays the gruesome bloodbath that occurs in the ritualistic celebration, but, also interrogates into the question of identity, power and ecofemininity. This paper intends studies this very site of power that resides both within the natural world and humans, but, within the realms of terror and horror.

In *Negotiating Coleridge's Poems from an Ecofeminist Perspective: A Select Study*, aims for an ecofeminist reading of three selected poems of the Romantic poet, S T Coleridge namely, "Christabel", "Frost at Midnight" and "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie: A Fragment". The poems taken up for study argues for a rethinking and realignment of gender roles that impose patriarchal hegemony on the marginalized sections of society that include women and the environment

Farzia Yashmeen Chaliha's research on *Brahmaputra River and Its Significance to Mising Tribal Women's Socio-Economic Status and Sustainability: A Case Study of Botiamari and Dhapak Village of Majuli District of Assam* reveals that during floods, the standing crops and poultry of the respondents are damaged and 60 percent of the flood affected have to take shelter in relief camps with unhygienic conditions and scarcity of drinking water. Nearly 58.8 percent sampled women have been forced to work as agricultural labourers after flood recedes. The women also lacked skill and knowledge regarding preservation of fish which are abundant during floods and other herbal plants which can be sold dry and supplement their household income.

*Women Activists as Vanguard against threat to Environment* by Aparna De tries to uphold the life and work of renowned Indian women environment activists starting from Gaura Devi to Medha Patkar, who played a significant role and contributed towards protecting the environment. With the sacrifices of women vanguards in India, mass awareness regarding significance of environment protection and nourishment of nature was developed.

*Fisherwomen of Loktak Lake, Manipur: A Social and Economic Analysis* by Sagolchem Sophia Devi reveals that 90 percent of the sampled respondents are engaged in fishing industry. Loktak lake is the lifeline of the people of Manipur with 9 percent of the

population of Manipur residing by the lake. Besides fishing, the lake also provides drinking water for domestic use, power generation and promotes tourism activity.

Rituranjan Gogoi in *Women, Magic, and Environment: An Eco Feminist Reading of Rachel Griffin's The Nature of Witches* shows how this trope of women and nature is deconstructed and redefined, in order to explore nuanced ways of depicting the environment, ecology, climate change and their interconnectedness in fiction, especially fantasy literature. The paper explores a new way of seeing and perceiving the consequences of the destruction of the natural world, humanity's impact on environment, and the possible solutions to ecological degradation.

Ragini Mahanta in *Tracing Affinities between the 'Nature-Nurture' Continuum: An Ecofeminist Reading of L.M. Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables* reads the patterns of nature overlapping and at most times being one with that of the idea of nurture. The paper studies whether the experience gathered by the protagonist through her association with nature has indirectly nurtured her persona into a confident young lady and also underlining the possibilities of observing the relationship between woman and nature in its intrinsic totality.

Deepa Bhagawati in *Prakriti aru Nari : Prakriti Naribador Aadharot Mamoni Roisam Goswami Neela Kanthi Broja* presents an ecofeminist reading of the novel in the context of the writer's other works.

Rimjhim Gogoi in *Luko Sanskriti Joriyote Tholua Gyanor Hosgroikhyonot Narir Bhumika* explores how women have been instrumental in presenting traditional folk knowledge through various rituals.

Tarun Loying and Anwasha Mahanta in *Mising Jonojatir Luko Khaadya Hongroikhonoyt Narir Bhumika* explores how women have carried out traditional methods of preservation of food in Mising community

Lalsanlevis Nampui in *Merging Identity with Nature: Reading Mamang Dai's The Legends of Pensam from an Ecofeminist Perspective* underlines the perspectives of identity conjoined with nature and also to highlight the ecocritical perspectives and more of ecofeminism through an analytic study of *The Legends of Pensam*

*Women Agripreneurs in Mushroom Cultivation and Food Processing: A Step Towards Sustainable Agricultural Development* by Purnima Newar and Mayuraxee Barman analyses how micro ventures like mushroom cultivation can contribute towards agricultural development and sustainable business for women in rural areas. The study reveals that higher the educational qualification of the women, higher is their annual turnover in their business. There is also significant difference in the mean score of annual turnovers between trained and untrained women agripreneurs.

Namrata Pathak in *Of 'in-between' Spaces and Varied Transgressions: Reinterpreting Women-Nature Relationships in Tamsula Ao's Writings* ropes in instances from Ao's collection of short stories, *Laburnum for My Head* and looks at women-nature relationships which unfurls a fertile site for developing a praxis of 'in-betweenness'; a node of intersection between the human and non-human that relies deeply on shared nourishment, love and sustenance.

Ms Ananthi Pillai and K Sambathrani's research article on *Special Education Teachers' Knowledge on Universal Design for Learning Skills in Inclusive Education*, conducted in selected rural and urban areas of Tamil Nadu clearly states that the special education teachers for diverse learners are aware of universal design for learning for a successful inclusive education program. Its main findings are that there is no significant difference between male and female special education teachers and also between rural and urban teachers for inclusive education. However, the special education teachers with less than 10 years experience has more knowledge than the teachers with more experience. This is due to innovative curriculum and teachers upgradation through training of the new teachers.

In *Nature is My Temple*: *Revisiting the contours of Ecofeminism in Alice Walker's The Temple of My Familiar* Ritushmita Sharma explores the contours of ecofeminism as projected by Walker especially in her novel *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989). This paper considers Karen Warren's theoretical interpretations of Ecological Feminism in order to investigate Walker's conceptualisation of the non-human 'other'

Barnali Sikdar's *The New Narrative of Green Women Influencers* shows how in achieving the goal of circularity in the fashion industry many committed women influencers are leveraging social media as a platform to influence people and educate them on how we can minimise the human footprints on the environment while adopting sustainable ways of producing and retailing fashion.

The article on *Linkages between Women's Education and Environmental Quality: Evidence from India* by Dr Anup Sinha and other authors shows that there is a positive association between girl's education and environmental performance and hence environmental quality. Using a scatter diagram, regression analysis and coefficient of correlation, the model displayed that if the girl's gross enrolment in higher education increased by 1 percent, environmental quality will improve by 10 percent. Thus educated women can make sustainable choices which will help manage and preserve natural resources.

*Entrepreneurship, Sustainability and Economic Empowerment: A Study in the Context of Bishnupriya Manipuri Women* by Tapsi Sinha tries to establish a link between women entrepreneurs for economic empowerment keeping in mind sustainability of the

environment. Her findings reveal that these women face problems of financial access and are dependent on their male counterparts for any major decision relating to property or business. There are also clearly defined gender based roles and problems of infrastructure to start any business.

Kirtika Uzir and MK Chowdhury's article on *Factors Affecting Potential of Ecotourism* influence on the development of places in Assam. The results indicate that preservation of environmental assets should be rigorously taken to optimize the strengths. At the same time unmanaged ecotourism, trash disposal, pollution act as threats which should be taken into account by legal reforms and stringent enforcement and preservation measures. Opportunities like awareness, training of local workforce and creating indigenous handicraft etc. can boost employment.

The compendium of research articles in this journal bears the prospect of providing incentives to students, research scholars and academicians to initiate new ways of reasoning and research in the concerned area. With this hope the editors and the editorial board has brought together well researched articles under the broad theme "Sustaining Gaia: Women, Ecology, Development."

The articles pertaining to literature follows the MLA 8 edition whereas the articles related to social science follows the APA format of citation.

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