

***CONTEMPORARY ECOFEMINIST FICTION: A STUDY OF SELECT
WORKS OF MAMANG DAI, SARAH JOSEPH AND ANITA NAIR***

(Thesis submitted to Nagaland University in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for Award of the Ph.D. Degree in English)

By

KEVIBEINUO NGUZHÜLIE

Registration No. Ph.D/ENG/00150

Under the Supervision of

PROF. ROSEMARY DZÜVICHÜ



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION
NAGALAND UNIVERSITY, KOHIMA CAMPUS MERIEMA**

2022



CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I, Kevibeinuo Nguzhülie, hereby declare that the thesis entitled *Contemporary Ecofeminist Fiction: A Study of Select Works of Mamang Dai, Sarah Joseph and Anita Nair* submitted for the award of Ph.D. Degree in English is a bonafide record of research done by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Rosemary Dzüvichü, Professor, Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema, during the period of my research (2018-2022) and it has not been submitted, either in full or in half, to any other university or institution for the award of any other Degree, Diploma or Title.

Place: Kohima
Date: 23rd November, 2022

Kevibeinuo Nguzhülie
Research Scholar

COUNTERSIGNED BY:

(PROF. NIGAMANANDA DAS)

Head
Department of English
Nagaland University,
Kohima Campus, Meriema.

SUPERVISOR

(PROF. ROSEMARY DZÜVICHÜ)

Professor
Department of English
Nagaland University,
Kohima Campus, Meriema.



NAGALAND

UNIVERSITY

(A Central University established by the act of parliament, 35/1989)

Department of English

Kohima Campus, Meriema, Kohima-797004

NU/ENG/2018

November 2022

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled *Contemporary Ecofeminist Fiction: A Study of Select Works of Mamang Dai, Sarah Joseph and Anita Nair* is a bonafide record of research work done by Ms Kevibeinuo Nguzhülie, Registration No. Ph.D/ENG/00150, Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Merierma during 2018-22. Submitted to the Nagaland University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, this thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or other title and the thesis represents independent and original work on the part of the candidate under my supervision. This is again certified that the research has been undertaken as per UGC regulation 2019 and 2016 and the candidate has fulfilled the criteria mentioned in the university Ordinances-OC-4, sub section-5(i) of the section-9 for submission of the thesis.

Ms Kevibeinuo Nguzhülie has completed her research work within the stipulated time.

The 23rd November, 2022
Kohima

SUPERVISOR

(PROF. ROSEMARY DZÜVICHÜ)

Professor
Department of English
Nagaland University
Kohima Campus, Meriema.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Above all, I praise and thank our Almighty God for giving me the strength to carry forward with my research work and helping me to complete the research work in the allotted time successfully.

I am greatly thankful to the Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema, for the kind approval of the topic of my thesis entitled *Contemporary Ecofeminist Fiction: A Study of Select Works of Mamang Dai, Sarah Joseph and Anita Nair*.

I am extremely grateful and deeply indebted to my compassionate and supportive research supervisor, Dr. Rosemary Dzüvichü, Professor, Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema, for her continuous encouragement, valuable supervision, and insightful guidance to complete my Ph.D. research work within the stipulated time. I am exceptionally privileged to work with such a highly learned person, who is kind at heart and has a thumping patience. She is truly a source of inspiration to scholars to pursue a research-oriented career.

Besides my supervisor, I would like to thank the faculty and staff of the Department of English, Nagaland University, especially Prof. Nigamananda Das, Head, Department of English and former Dean, School of Humanities & Education, Nagaland University, and Prof. Jano S. Liegise, former Head, Department of English Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema for their encouragement and support.

Finally, yet importantly, I express my special gratitude to my parents, brother and sisters for their love, prayers, care, patience, sacrifices and believing in me with their constant moral support. Also special thanks to my friends for helping me out during the completion of my research work.

Place: Kohima
Date: 23rd November, 2022

KEVIBEINUO NGUZHÜLIE
Research Scholar

LIST OF FIGURES

- 1.1. The Chipko Movement
- 2.1. Nupi Lan – a non-violent uprising erupted in Manipur in 1904 and 1939 against British Colonial Rule
- 2.2. Twelve Meira Paibi members staged a nude protest against the rape and murder of Thangjam Manorama in Imphal, 2004
- 2.3. MHIP (Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl)
- 2.4. Irom Chanu Sharmila- Iron Lady of Manipur
- 2.5. The Naga Mothers’ Association
- 2.6. The Asom Mahila Samiti
- 2.7. Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society
- 2.8. Sikkim students take to streets to protest crimes against women
- 2.9. SHE CAME, SHE SAW, SHE CONQUERED: Recounting the Women’s social movements in Northeast India
- 2.10. Mamang Dai
- 3.1. Sarah Joseph
- 3.2. Sara Joseph reading her book ‘Aathi’ at Valanthakad Island
- 3.3. Backwaters
- 3.4. Raw sewage poses livelihood threat
- 3.5. Pollution of the Vembanad lake surrounding the island has affected the water bodies in Valanthakka
- 4.1. Anita Nair
- 5.1. Chathe river
- 5.2. Chathe river
- 5.3. The Disconnect: Living without Sanitation.
- 5.4. Dumping of medical waste from Kerala sparks concern
- 6.1. Urban Stakeholders discuss Dimapur and Kohima’s Waste Problem
- 6.2. More than 400 trees cut down in Nagaland’s commercial hub Dimapur

CONTENTS

PARTICULARS	Page No.
Declaration	ii
Certificate	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
List of Figures	v
Chapters	vi-vii
Preface	viii
 CHAPTER-I: INTRODUCTION`	1-31
1.1. Ecofeminism: Introduction	
1.2. Ecocriticism	
1.3. Psychoanalysis	
1.4. Aims and Objectives of the Study	
1.4.1. Introduction: Authors	
1.5. Literature Review	
 Chapter II: The Transitional Life.....	32-75
2.1. Women Movement :Introduction	
2.1.1 Movements in Northeast	
2.2. Mamang Dai: <i>The Legends of Pensam</i> and <i>Stupid Cupid</i>	
 Chapter III: Ecological Concern.....	76-95
3.1. Sarah Joseph: Introduction	
3.1.1 <i>Gift in Green</i> and <i>The Scent of the Other Side</i>	
 Chapter IV: Women Chained by Social Conventions.....	96-111
4.1. Question of living for self or by self	
4.2. Decision Making	

Chapter V: Comparative Analysis.....	112-137
5.1. Inter-tribe/caste marriage	
Chapter VI: Conclusion.....	138-145
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	146-155

PREFACE

Ecofeminism has become an increasingly important field in both contemporary feminist and environmental studies. As a branch of ecocriticism, ecofeminism analyses the oppression of women and nature and how they are interconnected. It draws parallels between the domination of men over women and land. It is a theory that has evolved from various fields of feminist inquiry and activism: peace movements, labor movements, women's health care, and the anti-nuclear, environmental, and animal liberation movements.

Women, most of the time, have been regarded lower than men and in a country like India that practices the patriarchal structure, it is no less than a battle for women to survive each day. The various norms adopted by the patriarchal society do not offer much liberty to women. There are multiple restrictions in every aspect of their lives, be it private or social. However, with the arrival of modernity many of the restrictions are lifted and women today do not go through as much as they had in the past.

Therefore, perspectives about such issues whether it be related to women or nature needs to be upgraded. It is time that the attitude towards such issues undergo a major transformation so that the society progresses not through technology alone but mentally in their approach as well. Needless to say, it focuses on representation of women and nature to uproot the stereotypical notion set on gender and to project the importance of nature in the life of an individual.

KEVIBEINUO NGUZHÜLIE

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ecofeminism: Introduction

The ecological crisis and feminist issue has eventually occurred to be a major concern chiefly for the rapid deteriorating status of both Nature and Women in the contemporary era. It is the Modern Industrial development that has led to the exploitation of nature resulting from the ever growing human needs. Women as well were and are still dominated and exploited through time by the existing Patriarchal structure. Nature and Women are regarded as the agents of life. They provide man with life and livelihood. However, in spite of appreciating and protecting them, starts misusing, exploiting and dominating in all possible ways. This is the very root why the need for such a theory like *Ecofeminism* emerged. It is one of the significant ecological and feminist movements. An increasing consciousness of the relationship between women and nature primarily resulted in the advent of this movement.

Ecofeminism as the term applies is a portmanteau term, the combination of the words 'ecology' and 'feminism'. Thus *Ecological Feminism* also called *Ecofeminism* emerged in the 1970s predominantly in North America. It is a branch of Feminism that examines the connections between women and nature. The term Ecofeminism was coined by the French Feminist, *Francoise d' Eaubonne* in '*Le Feminisme Ou La Mort*' (1974). It is a third wave of feminism meaning a convergence of ecology and feminism into a social theory and political movements that addresses gender relations, social systems, the use of science, the formation of cultural values and human self-understanding in relation to the natural world. It views that racism, classism and

sexism are interconnected and liberation of women cannot be fully achieved without the liberation of nature and vice versa. With this rising and unavoidable issue many writers have enhanced this very idea of ecofeminism through their works. Indian Writers like Mamang Dai, Sara Joseph and Anita Nair skilfully paint the issue in their works. Indian environmental problems are related to forests, dams, and the impact of mining on land, especially cultivated land. Regarding these environmental issues, major movements protested against environmental crises- the Chipko movement protested against the commercial felling of trees by hugging it and the Narmada Bachao Andolan protested against the building of large dams on the Narmada River, considered one of the most catastrophic environmental disasters in the world.



Fig. 1.1: The Chipko Movement, <https://rightlivelihood.org/the-change-makers/find-a-laureate/the-chipko-movement/>. Accessed 18th July, 2019.

The three writers to be dealt with have clearly portrayed this issue in their works. The way nature reflects women, the societal and patriarchal notion of women, how the patriarchal structure dominates women and nature with a sense of superiority over the two, regarded inferior by the patriarchal structure. Mamang Dai in her novels, *The Legends of Pensam* tells about the hard life that women in the hills goes through for survival, of a remote state of the North East, Arunachal Pradesh, while *Stupid Cupid* deals with the attempt of the protagonist, Adna and other women characters like Mareb and Jia who leave their native places to achieve freedom and independence in the city of Delhi. In the novels of Sarah Joseph- *Gift in Green*, she narrates the story of Aathi, an island which lies with its natural beauty and primitive purity untouched by the outside life but Kumaran comes back to transform Aathi into a city, for a huge profit, and *Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side*, depicts the story of Margalitha's yearning for finding godliness outside the closet of convent and releasing herself to the nature and natural life processes is narrated and amalgamated with the concept of ecofeminism. Then, Anita Nair in her novels *Ladies Coupe* (2001), narrates the life stories of six women travelling in a Ladies Coupe, each of them describing their life to Akhila, the protagonist, who is travelling to find out what she really wants in life and in *Mistress* (2005), Radha is locked up into the traditional housewife's role. Stewart's and Radha's affection for each other, the perplexed situation of Radha's husband Shyam and Koman's life story and his relationships, are slowly revealed in the story. These writers thus, depict through their female characters and landscape, the connection between them. Hence, they urged the need to preserve nature in order to survive and give equal worth to both nature and women through their works.

The Oxford Dictionary defines *Ecofeminism* as “a philosophical and political theory and movement which combines ecological concerns with feminist ones, regarding both as a resulting from male domination of society”. The Japanese ecofeminist Natsuko Hagiwara defines ecofeminism as a “women’s resolution to create an ecological revolution for the subsistence of human beings on this planet” (Hagiwara, 46). Thus ecofeminism aims to address phenomena that affect contemporary society, particularly gender equality and environmental preservation to understand oppression and a structural process in order to eliminate domination. The concern of ecofeminism is to deconstruct the existing societal structure and form anew with the foundation that all living things have equal value and worth. Hence, ecofeminism is such a theory that sheds light and connects the exploitation and domination of women to the environment. It believes that the connection between women and nature is depicted through the traditionally ‘female’ values of reciprocity, nurturing and cooperation present in both. Ecofeminism calls for an end to all oppressions arguing that no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature. This movement advocates for environmental protection as well as protection of women, preservation of indigenous cultures, traditional values, sustainable development and other such issues that can bring a social change. Hence, today, the gradual degradation of the natural environment and the acts committed upon women are inevitable issues under the existing system. So if we value life and seek for a greener and peaceful world, the need to transform the cultural and institutional infrastructure is a must. It has become an increasingly important field in both contemporary feminist and environmental studies. As a branch of ecocriticism, ecofeminism analyses the oppression of women and nature and how they are interconnected. It draws parallels between the

domination of men over women and land. Hence, it examines these hierarchical, gendered relationships, in which woman is naturalized and nature, feminized.

Feminists from Simon de Beauvoir onwards have argued that it is the woman's biology and her role in procreation that has been responsible for her allocation to the side of nature. In Kenya, women of the Green Belt movement band together to plant millions of trees in arid, degraded lands. In India, they join the Chipko (tree hugging) movements to preserve precious fuel resources for their communities. In Sweden, feminists prepare jam from berries sprayed with herbicides and offer a taste to members of parliament: they refuse. In Canada, women took to the streets to obtain signatures opposing uranium processing near their towns. In the United States, housewives organize local support to clean up hazardous waste sites. All these actions are examples of a worldwide movement, increasingly known as "ecofeminism," dedicated to the continuation of life on earth. Ecofeminism is a theory that has evolved from various fields of feminist inquiry and activism: peace movements, labor movements, women's health care, and the anti-nuclear, environmental, and animal liberation movements. Although women may not relate themselves as an ecofeminist, they assume or act on the connections between women and nature. For instance, when radioactivity from nuclear power-plant accidents, toxic chemicals, and hazardous wastes threaten the biological reproduction of the human species, women experience this contradiction as assaults on their own bodies and on those of their children and act according to that, ultimately becoming an ecofeminist in one or the other way. Thus, feminist environmental justice campaigners, such as Vandana Shiva, point out also that women and children are disproportionately vulnerable to environmental hazards.

The theory emerged in the 1970s with the increasing consciousness of the connections between women and nature. The adoption of the term ‘ecofeminism’ had also been preceded by much women’s poetry and fiction in the 1960s and 1970s and has gained increasing prominence through the work of philosophers Val Plumwood and Karen Warren. It had also been adopted by other disciplines through the writing and activism of Arundhati Roy and Vandana Shiva. French writer Francoise d’Eaubonne founded the Ecology-Feminism (Ecologie-Feminisme) Center in Paris in 1972 and, in 1974, used the term, “ecofeminisme,” in her book, *Feminism or Death*, in which she called upon women to lead an ecological revolution to save the planet. Thus, such an ecological revolution would entail new gender relations between women and men and between humans and nature. D’Eaubonne saw pollution, destruction of the environment, and run-away population growth as problems created by a male culture. Hence, ecofeminism’s basic premise is that the ideology which authorizes oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species is the same ideology that sanctions the oppression of nature.

Ecofeminism calls for an end to all oppressions, arguing that no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature. Connections between women and nature and women and ecology were made in works by Sherry Ortner (1974), Radford Ruether (1974) Susan Griffin (1978), and Carolyn Merchant (1980). In their analyses of oppression, socialists, animal liberationists, ecologists and feminists each distinguish between privileged and oppressed groups, where the privileged are upper- or middle-class, human, technologically and industrially “developed,” male, and the oppressed are poor or working-class, nonhuman animal, “undeveloped” nature, and female, respectively. Ecofeminism thus, describes the framework that authorizes these forms

of oppression as patriarchy, an ideology whose fundamental self/other distinction is based on a sense of self that is separate, atomistic. In 1974, an influential essay by Sherry B. Ortner, *'Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?'* sought to explain, in terms of structuralist anthropology, the presence in diverse cultures of the idea women were subordinate to men. The underlying idea, Ortner discovers, is that women are closer to nature. Beliefs that legitimate the oppression of women also legitimate environmental degradation. Certain fundamental binary oppositions fit nearly over one another, creating the ideological basis for both sorts of harm:

Male/female

Culture/nature

Reason/emotion

Mind/body

In Western thought and literature, one of the oldest binaries has been nature versus culture. Further, the two sides of the binary carry gendered values: nature is feminine and culture, masculine. A whole series of such gendered binaries can be seen proceeding from this primary one:

Masculine Culture	/	Feminine Nature
Mind		Body
Objective		Subjective
Rational		Emotional
Public		Private

In the United States, “eco-feminism” was developed in courses by Ynestra King at the Institute for Social Ecology in Vermont around 1976. It became a

movement in 1980 as a result of major conference that King and others organized on “*Women and Life on Earth: Ecofeminism in the ‘80s*” and of the ensuing 1980 Women’s Pentagon Action in which two thousand women encircled the Pentagon to protest anti-life nuclear war and weapons development. Numerous books and newsletters continue to appear, and conferences and environmental actions have taken place around the world as women embrace ecofeminism or engage in actions dealing directly with women’s connections to nature and the environment. Ecofeminists have described several connections between the oppressions of women and of nature that are significant to understanding why the environment is a feminist issue, and, conversely, why feminist issues can be addressed in terms of environmental concerns. For example, the way in which women and nature have been conceptualized historically in the Western intellectual tradition has resulted in devaluing whatever is associated with women, emotion, animals, nature, and the body, while simultaneously elevating in value those things associated with men, reason, humans, culture, and the mind. Many ecofeminists advocate some form of an environmental ethic that deals with the twin oppressions of the domination of women and nature through an ethic of care and nurture that arises out of women’s culturally constructed experiences. As philosopher Karen Warren conceptualizes it:

An ecofeminist ethic is both a critique of male domination of both women and nature and an attempt to frame an ethic free of male-gender bias about women and nature. It not only recognizes the multiple voices of women, located differently by race, class, age, [and] ethnic considerations, it centralizes those voices. Ecofeminism builds on the multiple perspectives of those whose perspectives are typically omitted or undervalued in dominant discourses, for example Chipko women, in developing a global perspective on the role of male domination in the exploitation of women and

nature. An ecofeminist perspective is thereby...structurally pluralistic, inclusivist, and contextualist, emphasizing through concrete examples the crucial role context plays in understanding sexist and naturist practice (Merchant 195-196).

One task of ecofeminists, therefore, has been to expose these dualism and the ways in which feminizing nature and naturalizing or animalizing women has served as justification for the domination of women, animals, and the earth. Another connection between feminism, animal liberation and environmentalism has been made by documenting the effects of environmental pollution and degradation on the lives of women and animals. Many writers note that toxic pesticides, chemical wastes, acid rain, radiation, and other pollutants take their first toll on women, women's reproductive systems and children. These hazardous chemicals are often initially tested to laboratory animals to determine levels of toxicity. Thus, by documenting the poor quality of life for women, children, people in the Third World, animals, and the environment, ecofeminists are able to demonstrate that sexism, racism, classism, speciesism, and naturism (the oppression of nature) are mutually reinforcing systems of oppression. Hence, instead of being a "single-issue" movement, ecofeminism rests on the notion that the liberation of all oppressed groups must be addressed simultaneously. Anne Cameron asserts, "To separate ecology from feminism is to try to separate the heart from the head" (Gaard, 18). Following the dominant Patriarchal culture, the structure of society is categorised according to gender, and a higher value is placed on characteristics for instance, strong, powerful, masculine, intelligent and more are associated with masculinity, a construction that is called "hierarchical dualism" (18).

Hierarchical dualism is presented in terms of reason over nature where reason denotes men as women are considered incapable of participating in certain activities that require intellectual capacity and nature represents women for the motherhood quality that nature and women share in particular. Thus, in this sense, women have been regarded as historically closer to the earth or nature. Nevertheless, the very essence of ecofeminism is its challenge to dismantle the presumed necessity of power relationships that is prevalent in society. The objective of such a theory is about the transition from a morality based on “power over” to one based on reciprocity and responsibility (“power to”) (Gaard 19). Hence, a society recast in the “feminine” would not mean power in the hands of women, but no power at all. There will be equal share of power between men and women and once the idea of equality and equity is brought into practice, the want of power from the human mind set will diminish.

Further, the ecofeminism approach can be divided into two views. The first is called radical ecofeminism that reverses the patriarchal domination of man over woman and nature, exalting nature, the non-human, and the emotional. This approach embraces the idea that women are inherently closer to nature biologically, spiritually and emotionally. The second states that there is no such thing as a “feminine essence” that would make women more likely to connect with nature. Thus, it is diverse in its approach. Ecofeminists believe that we cannot end the exploitation of nature without ending human oppression and vice versa. Ecofeminist writers try to empower women in the preservation and conservation of the environment through their writings and activism. Ecofeminism regards women as possessing the potential to bring about a change in the ecological system. The core assumption of ecofeminism includes the following four aspects, (a) oppression of women and oppression of nature have

important links; (b) understanding of essence of these connections are necessary to fully understand the oppression of women and nature; (c) theory and practice of feminism must include the ecological perspective; (d) resolution of ecological problems must contain the feminist perspective. Therefore, ecofeminism tries to eliminate patriarchy, emphasizes the role of women experience in ecological movement, and stresses that ecological movement should closely connect with regional and global women liberation movements in order to realize women's liberation. The ecofeminists met to discuss the ways in which feminism and environmentalism might be combined to promote respect for women and the natural world and were motivated by the notion that a long historical precedent of associating women with nature had led to the oppression of both. They noted that women and nature were often depicted as chaotic, irrational, and in need of control, while men were frequently characterized as rational, ordered, and thus capable of directing the use and development of women and nature. Hence, it tries its best to resolve the ecological crisis and rebuild a new relationship between people and nature. Carolyn Merchant, an American ecofeminist philosopher and historian of science, in her book *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World* (2005) list down the Categories of liberal, cultural, social and socialist feminism, so as to illustrate the efforts that women around the world has put into and also how each approach contributed towards forming the ecofeminist perspective.

1. Liberal Ecofeminism:

Liberal ecofeminism was inspired by Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) and by Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). De Beauvoir argued that women and men were biologically different, but that women could transcend their biology, freeing themselves from their destiny as biological reproducers to

assume masculine values. It is concerned with equal status for women in the workplace as well as in the social, cultural, economic and the political sphere. Liberal ecofeminists are of the view that exploiting nature in the name of development is the cause of ecological degradation. Women, if given equal opportunities to become scientists, natural resource managers, regulators, lawyers, and legislators, can contribute to the improvement of the environment, the conservation of natural resources and the higher quality of human life.

2. Cultural Ecofeminism:

It was developed in the late 1960s and 1970s with the second wave of feminism and was a response to the perception that women and nature have been mutually associated and devalued in western culture. Technological development, considered masculine by cultural ecofeminism, is responsible for degrading and exploiting the 'feminine' nature. In Sherry Ortner's 1974 article, *"Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture"*? she argues that cross-culturally and historically women, as opposed to men, have been seen as much closer to nature because of their physiology, social roles, and psychology. Physiologically, women bring forth life from their bodies, undergoing the pleasures, pain, and stigmas attached to menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing, while men are free to travel, hunt, conduct warfare, and engage in public affairs. For the cultural feminists, human nature is grounded in human biology. The gender or sex relations give men and women different power bases. Women's biology and nature are celebrated as sources of female power. Thus, this form of feminism has focused on the area of consciousness in relation to nature- spirituality, goddess worship, witchcraft and the celebration of women bodies.

3. Social Ecofeminism:

Murray Bookchin (1921-2006), an American social theorist and a radical activist and his essay *Ecology and Revolutionary Thought* (1964), solicited to bring in ecology and anarchist thought to form Social Ecology. This philosophical theory observed that the exploitation of nature arises due to hierarchical social institutions, derived from gerontocracy and patriarchy. Janet Biehl (1953-), author, copy editor, graphic artist, in 1988 stated that Social ecofeminism, “accepts the basic tenet of social ecology, that the idea of dominating nature stems from the domination of humans by humans. Only ending all systems of domination makes possible an ecological society, in which no states or capitalist economies attempt to subjugate nature, in which all aspects of human nature- including sexuality and the passions as well as rationality- are freed” (204-206).

In the table below Janis Birkeland illustrates in the simplest form the problem and the objective of different branches of environmental theories:

	Problems definitions	Dimensions of major concern	Instrument of social change	Desired ends
Eco-Marxists	Capitalism	Forces of production	Class struggle	Socialism
Eco-Socialists	Individualism	Economic forces	Political reform	Communitarianism
“Greens”	Industrial growth	Government policy	Ecological understanding	Sustainable practices
Deep Ecologists	Anthropocentrism	Perception of world	Expanded identification	Biocentrism
Social Ecologists	Hierarchy	Institution forces	Social organization	Anarchism

	Eco-feminism	“power paradigm” Androcentrism & hierarchical dualism	Patriarchy: psychosexual motivation and systematic forces	Delinking masculinity as power. Social redesign on feminist principles	Beyond power

Radical Environmental Analyses (Janis Birkeland, *Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice*, 31).

1.2 Ecocriticism

Environmental criticism also known as ecocriticism and green criticism is a rapidly emerging field of literary study that considers the relationship that human beings have with the environment. Ecocriticism, or green studies, both are used to denote a critical approach which began in the USA in the late 1980s and in the UK in the early 1990s and since it is still an emergent movement. It began with the assumption that cultural texts construct particular notions of nature which then tie into material practices. It believes that literary visual and other representations of nature are very much to do with an age's views and treatment of nature. Further, it seeks links between literary studies and environmental activism between human and social sciences and environmental discourse. Early writers on nature in the twentieth century- Aldo Leopold, John Muir and Rachel Carson are the most famous- suggested different ways of looking at the environment. A basic definition of ecocriticism was provided by an early anthology, *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996) which calls it ‘the study of the relationship between literature and the environment. In the USA the acknowledged founder is Cheryll Glotfelty, co-editor with Harold Fromm of a key collection of essays entitled ‘*The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary*

Ecology. Ecocriticism as a concept first arose in the late 1970s at the meetings of the WLA (the Western Literature Association, a body whose field of interest is the literature of the American West). Michael P. Branch traces the word 'ecocriticism' back to William Rueckert's 1978 essay 'Literature and ecology: an experiment in ecocriticism.' Ecocriticism as it now exists in the USA, takes its literary bearings from three major 19th century American writers whose work celebrates nature, the life force and the wilderness as manifested in America, these being Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Margaret Fuller (1810-1850) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862). Emerson's first short book *Nature*, published in 1836 is a reflective (rather than philosophical) essay on the impact of the natural world often voiced in words of powerfully dramatic directness. *Summer on the Lakes, During 1843*, by Margaret Fuller is a powerful written journal of her encounter with the American landscape at large.

Thoreau's *Walden* is an account of his two-year stay, from 1845, in a hut he had built on the shore of Walden Pond, a couple of miles from his home town of Massachusetts. It is the classic example of dropping out of modern life and seeking to renew the self by a 'return to nature.' Thus, these three books by the mentioned writers can be regarded as the foundational works of American 'ecocentred' writing. Simon Estok argues that Ecocriticism is more than "simply the study of Nature or natural things in literature, rather, it is any theory that is committed to effecting change by analysing the function- thematic, artistic, social, historical, ideological, theoretical, or otherwise- of the natural environment, or aspects of it, represented in document (literary or other) that contribute to material practices in material words" (Estok 21). Feminist criticism has been a major influence in the growth and development of ecocriticism. According to Cheryll Glotfelty the three stages in the

development of feminist criticism “provide a useful scheme for describing three analogous phases in ecocriticism” (Glottfelty xvii). The first stage in feminist criticism as shown by Elaine Showalter is the “image of women.” The second deals with the function of consciousness where literature is rediscovered, reissued, reconsidered and restudied and the third is the theoretical phase. Similarly, the first stage of ecocriticism studies the representation of nature, the second, re-evaluates a given literary text in order to find out the place of nature as well as the nature of place in it. The final and the third stage try to theorize different power-relations in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, etc.

Ecocriticism is interdisciplinary, calling for collaboration between natural scientists, writers, literary critics, anthropologists, historians, and more. Lawrence Buell, one of ecocriticism’s founding fathers defines ecocriticism in *The Future of Environmental Criticism* (2005) as “the environmentally oriented study of literature and (less often) the arts more generally, and to the theories that underlie such critical practice” (138). Buell is of the view that an ideal ecocriticism text will have the following features:

1. The nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device, but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history.
2. Human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest.
3. Human accountability to the environment is part of the text’s ethical orientation.
4. Some sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text.

Thus, if a literary text fails to incorporate all these ecocritical standards, it is the work of the ecocritics to point it out where they failed. Buell further identifies the two phases of ecocriticism, “the first wave ecocriticism” and the “second wave ecocriticism” or “revisionist ecocriticism.” The first wave ecocritics focused on such genres as “nature writing, nature poetry and wilderness fiction” (138). While the first wave ecocritics upheld the philosophy of organism, the second wave ecocritics inclined towards environmental justice issues and a “‘social ecocriticism’ that takes urban and degraded landscapes just as seriously as ‘natural’ landscapes” (Buell 22). Similarly, many writers as well divided ecocriticism into two waves, the first as taking place throughout the eighties and nineties. It is characterized by its emphasis on nature writing as an object of study and as a meaningful practice. Central to this wave and to the majority of ecocritics still today is the environmental crisis of our age, seeing it as the duty of both the humanities and the natural sciences to raise awareness and invent solutions for a problem that is both cultural and physical. The second wave is particularly modern in its breaking down of some of the long-standing distinctions between the human and the non-human, questioning these very concepts. The boundaries between the human and the non-human, nature and non-nature are discussed as constructions and ecocritics challenges these constructions asking how they frame the environmental crisis and its solution. This wave brought with it a redefinition of the term “environment,” expanding its meaning to include both nature and the urban. However, the two waves are debatable of which wave constitutes what. Ecocriticism launches a call to literature to connect to the issues of today’s environmental crisis. In other words, ecocriticism is directly concerned with both nature (natural landscape) and the environment (landscape both natural and urban). It calls for a paradigm shift from the human-centric to the biocentric, which transcends

the mutually exclusive categories of centre and periphery. As a theory, ecocriticism examines the representations of landscape and of nature in its original state: pastoral and the wilderness. It may also examine representations of nature in government reports, developer's plans, ecological studies, and wildlife documentaries and other texts and films in which nature plays a role. Further, ecocriticism has several disciplines, such as deep ecology, ecofeminism, social ecology, and environmental justice. The word 'ecology' is used frequently in connection with the 'green' movement.

Deep ecology is a radical version of environmentalism, conceived in the early 1970s by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess and developed in the 1980s by US environmentalists Bill Devall and George Sessions. Deep ecologists reject the notions which separate humans from nature and advocate a biocentric view, which recognizes the non-human world as having value independently of its usefulness to human beings, who have no right to destroy it except to meet vital needs. Annie Booth and Harvey Jacobs state that "Deep ecology attempts to examine the deeper root question concerning human interactions with the natural world, rather than the 'shallow' issues such as pollution or species extermination, which it identifies as the more symptoms than the cause of environmental breakdown" (5). "Deep ecology calls for a new ontology (science of being), a new epistemology (way of knowing, a new psychology (idea of self), and a new metaphysics (assumptions about the world). It offers a new science of nature, a new spiritual paradigm and a new ecological ethic" (Merchant 92). Fritjof of Capra believes that deep ecology offers a holistic worldview that emphasizes the whole over the parts and does not separate humans from the environment. The ecological paradigm entails a new ethic that recognizes the intrinsic value of all beings, one that will replace the anthropocentric ethics of the past.

Anthropocentrism places humanity at the centre of everything and regards the other life forms as resources to be consumed by human beings. Lynn White Jr. described the religion of Christianity as the most anthropocentric of religions because of God's command in Genesis 1:26, that man should have dominion over the other creatures of the earth or over the other life forms. Thus, ecocentrism places the ecosystem at the centre of everything. It considers the other life forms as existing equally to that of human beings. However, George Bradford criticizes the deep ecologists for their lack of a political critique. They fail to recognize that all things in the biosphere have an equal right to exist is just as much of a projection of human socio-political categories onto nature as is the anthropocentrism they criticize. They make a sharp distinction between wilderness and anthropocentrism but fail to consider that humans are also animals. Many deep ecologists regard the root cause to be the over increasing population of the people. Catton, for example, proposes the need for a New Ecological Paradigm on the fact that human members have exceeded the carrying capacity of the existing environmental resources.

Deep ecology is criticized for its vagueness. Shallow ecology on the other hand fights against pollution and resource depletion. It looks at the narrower problems of population growth, environmental pollution, and resource depletion from the viewpoint of science and human affairs. It advocates preservation of the environment for the benefit of people, especially the people of the developed countries. Unlike deep ecology it places human beings at the centre of any ecological discourse and hence it gives importance to their wellbeing. Shallow ecology is of the view that saving the world is necessary because of the reason that it sustains human life on it.

Cheryll Glotfelty is a professor of literature and the environment at the University of Nevada, Reno. She is an important figure in American ecocriticism for her publications in the field and a founding officer of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment. In her introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader* she states that, “nature per se is not the only focus of ecocritical studies or representation. Other topics include the frontier, animals, cities, specific geographical regions, rivers, mountains, deserts, Indians, technology, garbage, and the body” (Dreese, 4). Therefore, it is clear that human beings are interconnected with the world around us and studying the environment involves studying how human beings affect and interact with the environment.

Ecocritics however, rejects the notion that everything is socially or linguistically constructed. ‘Nature’ for the ecocritics exists out there beyond ourselves, not needing to be ironised as a concept by enclosure within inverted commas, but actually present as an entity which affects us, and which we can affect, perhaps fatally, if we mistreat it. The basic tenets of ecocriticism may be identified as follows:

- i) Green Cultural Studies: Interdependence of Nature and culture.
- ii) Ethical component of literature: Recycling of old moral and mythological stories into new ones.
- iii) Ethical wholeness and living places.
- iv) Household, family and community (Oikos and Habits).
- v) Life and death, time and change, pattern and rhythm.
- vi) People, Nature and versions of pastoral.
- vii) The city as second Nature.
- viii) Local and Global.

ix) Ecofeminism.

1.3 Psychoanalysis:

The Merriam Webster defines psychoanalysis as, “a method of analysing psychic phenomena and treating emotional disorders that involves treatment sessions during which the patient is encouraged to talk freely about personal experiences and especially about early childhood dreams.” Psychoanalysis was founded by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939).

The goal of psychoanalysis is to bring what exists at the unconscious or subconscious level up to consciousness. Sigmund Freud’s attention was captured by the experience of a colleague, Dr. Josef Breuer and his patient, the famous Anna O, who suffered from physical symptoms with no apparent physical cause. Breuer found out that his patient started recovering after he helped her recover memories of traumatic experiences that she had repressed or hidden from her conscious mind. This incident gave the initial kick to Freud’s interest in the unconscious mind and with it, produced some of his most influential ideas. Thus, the theory deals with the psychic nature of humans, especially the unconscious mind. Freud’s early works revolved on the analysis of neurotic symptoms which were derivatives of memories that had been repressed and existed only in the unconscious. Similarly, the dream is a message which has to be decoded as it holds the key to resolve the original traumatic memory. Though it was not a realistic concept to interpret dreams, Freud was confident on his part that with proper training it would provide reliable and scientific results. He argues that dreams have two kinds of content, the manifest and the latent. The manifest is the dream itself, the object of interpretation; the latent level is the actual

thought that cannot be known or expressed consciously because it has been repressed or censored.

Psychoanalysis therefore, studied neurotic symptoms in conjunction with dreams, jokes, and the psychopathology of everyday life- that is mistakes of all sorts, such as slips of the tongue or of the pen, bungled actions, as well as art, literature, and religion, with a view towards establishing the laws of functioning of the mental apparatus as Freud called his hypothetical model of the mind or the psyche. All of his work depends upon the notion of the unconscious, which is the part of the mind beyond consciousness and has a strong influence upon our actions. Linked with this idea is the idea of repression, the forgetting or ignoring of unresolved conflicts, unfulfilled desires or the traumatic past events which are then forced out of the conscious awareness into the realm of the unconscious. Freud further came up with a three-part, rather than a two-part, model of the psyche, dividing it into the ego (consciousness), the super-ego (conscience) and the id (the unconscious). He believed that these three parts of the mind are in constant conflict because each part has a different primary goal and when the conflict is too much for a person to handle, his ego may engage in one or many defense mechanisms to protect the individual. The defense mechanisms are: repression, denial, projection, displacement, regression, and sublimation. All these led to the most controversial work of Freud, his theory of psychosexual development and the Oedipus complex. He believed that children were born with a sexual urge and they seek pleasure from different objects at different stages of life which are divided into the oral, anal, phallic, latent, and the genital stage. One must undergo all the stages to be mentally healthy. If a stage is not completed properly he or she tends to remain fixed in the particular stage called the fixation stage.

Psychoanalysis is a form of psychology developed by the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud in 1896. He advocated it as a form of therapy to cure hysteria, a mental illness that caused behavioral disorders putting the patient through sometimes intense physical and emotional suffering. Freud opined that “human beings are motivated, even driven, by desires, fears, needs, and conflicts of which they are unaware . . .” (Tyson, 14-15). Freud’s personality theory of 1923 proposed the idea that the human psyche can be divided into three parts which vie for supremacy over the other, they are the id, the ego, and the superego. In brief, the id is led by our primal instincts, whereas the superego is led by our moral compass which has been shaped by society’s definition of said morality while the ego tries to achieve a balance between both without causing harm to itself. Freud opined that for a person to have a healthy psyche, the ego must be in control of both the primal urges of the id and the high perfectionist stance of the superego. The id is the part of our psyche which demands instant gratification to its desires regardless of whether it would harm the person or whether it’s socially unacceptable behavior. According to Freud, the id is composed of Eros (the libido) and Thanatos (the aggressive instinct). The id develops from the time of the baby’s conception which is why we can see the new-born children crying if their needs, like mother’s milk, are not instantly met. The id is present throughout a person’s life and is unchanging - free from external influences as it operates within the psyche’s unconscious part. The id operates on what Freud termed as the “pleasure principle” (Freud, 1920) – which means that when the impulsive needs of the id are instantly met, we experience “pleasure” and when they are not met instantly, we experience discomfort.

The ego, according to Freud, is “that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world” (Freud 25). The ego, unlike the id, operates on the conscious as well as the unconscious parts of our psyche. It is the decision-making part of our psyche – helping us negotiate between the unrealistic demands of the id and the demands of reality. Whereas the id operates on the “pleasure principle”, the ego operates on the “reality principle”. This principle helps the ego to calculate the risks as well as consequences that might be entailed by blindly following the id’s reckless impulses. It helps the ego to meet the desires of the id in a more secure and rational way. The ego does not necessarily deny the id but rather delays the action until a later more suitable time. This delay is called “secondary process thinking” which helps smooth over the friction caused by the unmet urges of the id. Thus, the ego also craves pleasure, however, it goes about gratifying itself in a more sensible way, without harming itself or the id.

The superego, in simple terms, is the moral compass that seeks to keep us from going against the accepted norms of society. While the ego strives to achieve realistic goals, the superego tries to achieve ethical goals. The superego comprises the conscience and the ideal self. The conscience makes us feel guilty whenever we go beyond what the superego considers moral. For example, some teenagers who drink alcohol and hide it from their parents might feel guilty about their actions. The ideal self, as the name suggests, is the picture that we have in our minds about our “ideal self”. It represents things such as our aspirations, our behavior among friends, our way of talking to people, etc. Whenever we fall short of our ideal self, the superego makes us feel guilty and vice versa. The ideal self and the conscience, since they are

part of the superego, are susceptible to external influences and as such, are established during our childhood.

Freud suggested that the constant friction between the chaotic id which is aggressive and the superego which desires to maintain social order results in the building up of certain defense mechanisms as we grow from infancy to adulthood. These defense mechanisms help to keep the impulsive reckless and chaotic desires of the id at bay, thereby protecting us from the repercussions that we must face if we give in to our baser desires. However, when the unconscious part of our psyche becomes overwhelmed and the defense mechanisms are too restrictive, the individual begins to show signs of mental illness. The aim of psychoanalysis is to help us recognize these rigid unconscious defense mechanisms and to modify them, thereby creating more flexible defense mechanisms that afford us the ability to express those impulsive desires in a rational manner.

A theory of Freud which gained notoriety for its suggestion of incestual desire as a determining factor in the growth and development of the psyche of a child was the “Oedipus complex”. Oedipus was a mythological Greek king who unknowingly killed his father, Laius, the king of Thebes and married his mother, Jocasta. Freud used the mythological story of Oedipus to forward his theory of the “Oedipus Complex” which is about a son’s feeling of sexual attraction towards his mother which makes him covet her and hate his father. Freud, in this regard, mentions the “castration complex” which he thought, is a fear that young boys have about being punished by their fathers for having sexual fantasies about their mothers. When boys finally overcome this fear, they identify with their fathers and seek to possess a woman like their mother. Regarding girls, Freud suggested that the girl would shift

her sexual desire from the mother to the father and eventually would desire to possess a man like their father in their later life. Freud believed that the unconscious, the id, the ego, the superego, the defense mechanisms and the Oedipus complex all play a vital role in determining the behavior of an adult - This is what forms the basis of psychoanalytic criticism.

One critic who was influential in advancing the field of psychoanalysis was Carl Jung, a swiss psychiatrist, and psychoanalyst. While Jung was an active supporter of Freud at the beginning, they irrevocably split up in 1912 when Jung openly criticized the Oedipus complex and Freud's emphasis on infantile sexuality. Jung's contribution to the field of psychoanalytical criticism was the notion of the collective unconscious and the Jungian archetypes. Jung in his book *Structure & Dynamics of the Psyche* (1960) states that "The collective unconscious contains the spiritual heritage of mankind's evolution, born anew in the brain structure of every individual." Jung opined that although we cannot access our collective unconscious directly, but, in times of crisis, our psyche taps into the collective unconscious – which comprises dormant memories from our ancestral as well as evolutionary past. It is in this collective unconscious that Jung identifies the shared archetypes of humankind which he believes to be the reason for the similarity in symbols from different cultures. He identified several archetypes but out of these, he gave special emphasis to four, and they are: The Persona, the Anima/Animus, the Shadow and the Self. The persona represents the mask that we put on while interacting with the outside reality. It conceals our true self. Jung described it as the "conformity" archetype. The Anima/Animus represents the unconscious feminine (anima) and male (animus) attributes in men and women respectively. The Shadow is akin to the id, in the sense that it is the source of our creative as well as destructive energies. The Self

is that which provides for a cohesive experience and for Jung, achieving selfhood was the goal of each individual.

In psychoanalytic criticism, the critics view the text as inseparable from the author and that it is an extension or rather, a manifestation of the author's unconscious. However, it is pertinent to note that psychoanalytic criticism concerns itself with finding out the latent intent of the author and not what the author intended to convey. The critics of this theory decode the underlying meaning of a literary work from the point of view of psychoanalysis. For example, the characters of a literary work may show the childhood trauma, family problems, sexual tensions, etc. of the author through their behavior. In the case of a Jungian critic, he would analyze the literary text by searching for archetypes – such as the mother, birth, rebirth, anima/animus, the hero, etc. The Jungian critic assumes that all stories and symbols are based on mythic models from mankind's past.

1.4. Aims and Objectives of the Study

With the rapid progress of the world in all its aspects, the need to discuss the growing issue of women and nature comes to the picture. While the society has gone through tremendous changes under the term 'modern' or 'development', discrimination or belittling the women gender has not found a permanent cure in this fast changing world. Restructuring of the mind and perspective towards women is a requirement in today's 'modern' world. In addition, the similar can be mentioned for the ecological crisis that has grown to become a global crisis. The perplexity of the contemporary world is such that each individual has lost touch with the idea of enjoying a walk under the shade of a tree, to take a rest and admire the beauty of the

lush greens around, to appreciate nature for the food which provides nourishment to humans and all other living organisms and also to respect all the lives on earth.

Needless to say, the concern of this study is to critically analyse the ecofeminist perspective in the select works of Mamang Dai, Sarah Joseph and Anita Nair. The major concern is to expand the idea of issues related to women, nature and all living organisms for a peaceful and harmonious coexistence alongside each other. Further, the study will enhance the readers to consider that women and nature have a parallel status with the others in the society which stands equally an important matter to be taken forward.

The study will also propose the thought to the womenfolk in understanding and thinking anew for their worth and value. Most importantly, this study will be a step of realisation for the readers as it will provide a new outlook and perception towards nature and women as well as the relationship that human beings and nature share. Alongside, it will certainly present the importance of women and nature in a man's life. The sole issue therefore, will be of parallelism among all living things. Therefore, this study will pave the way and arouse a keen interest for further research in the area.

All the chapters substantiate in one or the other way in developing and achieving the concerns put forward. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the *Ecofeminism Theory* and the three authors to be discussed further in the thesis. It has also focussed and explained on the different theories to be employed in the analysis.

The second chapter will explore how the women characters step out of the tradition to start a new life in the city. It will give a picture of the transitory period in a woman's life and the select text is Mamang Dai's *The Legends of Pensam* and *Stupid Cupid*.

The third chapter will deal with Sarah Joseph's *Gift in Green* and *The Scent of the Other Side*. The way the writer presents the ecological concern through her works will be explored in this chapter.

The fourth chapter will explore the struggles that women undergo to make a living. It will also deal with how they are weighed under various responsibilities and have to go through hardships to live a life of their own and how the society directs certain norms and conventions to make their living harder. The texts to be analysed are Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* and *Mistress*.

The fifth chapter will provide a comparative analysis of the women characters of the three writers- Mamang Dai, Sarah Joseph and Anita Nair from their selected texts. It will also capture the traumatic experience faced by the women characters throughout the text.

The final chapter will recapture the findings and observations arrived at in the foregoing discussions of the previous chapters. It will sum up the relation and connection between women and nature with reference to the selected texts.

1.4.1. Introduction: Authors

Mamang Dai (1957) is one of the most well-known and acclaimed writers writing in English from the state of Arunachal Pradesh belonging to the Adi tribe. In 1979 she happened to be the first woman from her state to be selected for the IAS (Indian Administrative Services) but cast aside the post to pursue her career in journalism. She often draws inspiration from Nature. As a writer she portrays the way of life of the northeast people, especially of her people and has written extensively about the culture and history of Arunachal Pradesh. She has published several short stories, poems, fiction and nonfiction works as well and is a member of the North East

Writers' Forum. Her first publication *River Poems* gave her the limelight to be considered as one of the most intensely poetic voices from the North East region. As a writer she worked with the Hindustan Times, the Telegraph and the Sentinel newspapers as well as the President of the Arunachal Pradesh Union of Working Journalists. Dai was further honoured with the state's Verrier Elwin Award in 2003 for her book *Arunachal Pradesh: the Hidden Land* that projected the culture and customs of her land. She was also awarded the Padma Shri in the year 2011 by the Government of India.

Sarah Joseph (1946) is an eminent Malayali author and social activist. She won the Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel *Aalahayude Penmakkal* (Daughters of God the Father). She also received the Vayalar Award for the same novel. Sarah has been at the forefront of the feminist movement in Kerala and is the founder of Manushi (organisation of thinking women). She and Madhavikutty are considered among the leading women writers in Malayalam.

Anita Nair (1966) is an Indian novelist writing in English. Her first book, a collection of short stories called *Satyr of the Subway*, won her a fellowship from the Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts. Her novels *The Better Man* and *Ladies Coupe* have been translated into 21 languages. In 2002, *Ladies Coupé* was elected as one of the five best in India. The novel is about women's conditions in a male dominated society, told with great insight, solidarity and humour. In 2012 she was awarded the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award for her contribution to literature and culture and in the year 2014 The Hindu Literary Prize shortlist for *Idris Keeper of the Light*.

1.5. Literature Review

The works to be reviewed for the study deals with certain aspects of the three writers. Anindya Syam Choudhury and Debashree Chakraborty in their article, “The Representation of the Ethnic Life- World of the Adis in Mamang Dai’s *The Legends of Pensam: An Ecocritical Reading*,” presents the life of the tribal people and how they are connected with the ecology for survival. Then, in his article, “Writing for the Earth: An eco critical Reading of *Gift in Green* by Sarah Joseph,” Milon Franz depicts how the harmony between people and nature is disrupted by the interference of urban and commercial forces. Even the water of the Aathi Island gets contaminated unfit for drinking. In the article, “Images of Women in Mamang Dai’s Fiction,” Esther Daimari has dealt with how the women characters in Dai’s fiction struggle to live a life of their own with the coming of modernity. Further, Niyathi R. Krishna and Pashupati Jha in their article, “Ecofeminism in the Novels of Sarah Joseph and Anita Nair, has made a fair analysis of the importance of nature in the works of Sarah and Nair’s works- *Gift in Green*, *The Scent of the Other Side* and *Ladies Coupe* and *Mistress*, respectively.

Chapter II

THE TRANSITIONAL LIFE

2.1. Women Movement :Introduction

In the tribal villages of Northeast, men and women have their allotted space, with different responsibilities. Women in the tribal communities play a major role in, and outside the house. They spend their time in the kitchen preparing food and carrying out tasks like, cleaning and washing clothes, utensils, looking after children, weaving, etc., and also do other jobs which are normally done by men like cutting wood, collecting roots and vegetables and cultivating. They offer parallel contributions to build a home like their male counterpart, nonetheless, the practice of inequality is still in place and women are not allowed equal access in the public spheres. Limitation is placed on women's access to knowledge and it is men who are the decision makers in both public and private affairs. Women undergo both internal and external conflicts and her individual identity alongside her group identity as a member of the family and community, place her between the dilemma of individual and community interest. They are more vulnerable in times of conflict and violence between the center and the state or among the different tribes of Northeast. Their bodies become sites of various complexities subjected to male gaze, sexual and physical violence. Women during the Vedic period enjoyed high social status, though it followed the patriarchal structure, eventually bequeathing prime importance to the son, even so, a daughter was equally entitled to all the privileges given to a son. She could marry at a later age and also had the autonomy to choose her partner but, then again, the position of women declined drastically in the post Vedic-period, where they were treated as mere properties of men. In addition, the literacy rate of women

depreciated during the Muslim period as well, because of the prevalence of the Pardah system.

Further, the Bhakti movement, the British period and the modern period with the Educational Dispatch of 1854, female education entered a new phase and emphasized the need for encouraging and actively supporting women's education in India. Hunter Commission (1882) attempted a detailed study of the glitches of women's education in India and proposed many reforms. It vouched for the payment of liberal grants-in-aid, offer of scholarships, establishment of women's hostels, etc. The period from 1901-21 experienced progress in women's education because of the great public awakening and the First World War and in 1913, the British government of India was forced to prepare a new educational policy for women, which recommended special curriculum of practical utility for women, like needle-work, music etc. By 1921-22 there were 19 colleges for women, 675 secondary schools and 21,956 primary schools for girls. Great Indian social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Pandit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar and Keshab Chandra Sen, Swamy Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekanand, G .K .Gokhale, Mahatma Gandhi, etc., greatly worked in uplifting the position of women by encouraging the kind in various fields with their individual contribution. Raja Rammohan Roy played a significant role to abolish the practice of sati, stressed the need for women's education and advocated women's right to property. G.K. Gokhale initiated a bill for Universal Compulsory Primary Education in India. To add, Mahatma Gandhi ignited a new spirit and urge in the hearts of the women to serve the nation and also uplifted their position by indulging them in the national liberation movement.

On the one hand, while different movements were initiated for the upliftment of women, the Northeastern part as well did not stay quiet but started off its own fight against the atrocities and patriarchal mindset deeply rooted in the region as a whole. Northeast- the easternmost region of India consisting of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura, has been labeled as the most conflict-ridden regions of India and South Asia. It is home to diverse ethnic groups, engaged in self-preservation and movements for autonomy turning to violent struggles, leading to proliferation of armed insurgent groups: ULFA (United Liberation Front of Assam), NLFT (National Liberation Front of Tripura), NDFB (National Democratic Front of Boroland), NSCN- National Socialist Council of Nagaland (I-M) (K) and many such outfits. The region has remained aloof from the 'mainland India' because of marginalization of the region. Like the rest of the world, the tribal women of this region went through different junctures in order to make their presence felt in the society which follows the patrilineal mode of system, except the state of Meghalaya which takes on board the matrilineal structure.

In the words of Lucy Vashum Zehol, it is to be noted that tribal women are not homogenous though they are labeled as 'tribal women' en masse. "It is important to remember that 'tribal women' are diverse, ethnically, linguistically, geographically and also historically. Often progress made by middle-class tribal women is taken as an indication of their high position" Zehol further mentions the dual disbenefit, also faced by the tribal women, "in the first instance as tribals and in the second as women" However, "the ground reality" is much different as majority of the tribal women can be found residing in the rural area. This makes them lean towards the disadvantaged section of the society which can be measured in terms of their

education and occupation compared to the women of the urban area. (Zehol Vashum Lucy, <http://dspace.nehu.ac.in/bitstream/1/2733/1/Status.pdf>).

Dr. Ira Das in her article, “*Status of Women: North Eastern Region of India versus India*” puts forth the picture of the status of women in the Northeast region compared to that of mainland India. The article gives a detailed expression of how the tribal women enjoyed a better status, comparatively. To a certain point, it can be agreed that tribal women experience slender liberation as represented skillfully in Easterine Kire’s, *A Terrible Matriarchy* (2007), where the decision of the smallest to the largest, exists around the grandmother Vibano. Kire, debunked the conventional representation of women being subjugated by men alone and formed a different view of how women are equally responsible in creating this rift of inequality.

Temsula Ao in her novel, *Aosenla’s Story* (2018) depicts a similar illustration, where the character Aosenla is silenced and made to bear the brunt. Her in-laws, chiefly her mother-in-law, contributed a great deal in making her life miserable, in addition to her unhappy married life with Bendang. The above two works, stand for the agreement of the little flexibility offered to women in the tribal society. Women enjoyed her position as the matriarch of the house; the invisible structure and power that she held and played her part well enough. Nonetheless, one cannot confidently declare that gender inequality does not exist because that act as a camouflage, dominant all around the world, giving birth to worldwide movements like feminism that was initiated for women upliftment. Women were denied even the most basic right to receive formal education unlike their male counterparts because of the fact that they were women and not men.

Gender inequality and discrimination starts from the family itself where the male child is preferred over the female child which is an acknowledged fact practiced in every corner of the world, though in the modern era, it has reduced to a minimum number. This preference stems from the very notion that men are superior in every aspect, thus, will contribute more to the society unlike women who are considered as fragile, sensitive and less intellectual. This has led to the unfair distribution of wages between a male and a female employee, excluding them in the decision making process and their participation in the social affairs of the society. Yet, they fought for their equal right, as depicted by Kire's character Lieno, who transforms herself into a modern woman in align to her zeal of being one among few women to have received education, finds a job and look after the family, deflating the age old traditional concept of gender role and inequality dominant in the society.

The characters in Mamang Dai's, *Stupid Cupid* (2009) as well, illustrate a similar picture where, Adna and Mareb strive to get off with the setup of the patriarchal structure. It has never been easy for a woman to live her life the way she wants with the meddling of the patriarchal structure, not entirely because of the various norms put forth by the society but also for the patriarchal approach that is imprinted on their minds which makes it impracticable to abandon such state of mind.

2.1.1. Movements in Northeast

Such issues gave rise to multiple movements in the Northeast states by women to voice against the varied discrimination and social injustice shelled out towards them. Some of the movements are mentioned below:

1. Nupi Lan (1904 and 1939-40), Manipur:

Nupi Lan or Women's War in Manipuri- two historic wars waged by the Manipuri women in 1904 and 1939, considered to be one of the most important movements in the history of Manipur. It started in 1904 as a response to the British order- Lalup (a form of forced labor where the male members of the society within the age-group of 17-60 would work freely for 10 days in the period of every 40 days) system to rebuild the then Police Agent's Bungalow after it was destroyed by fire and were sent to Kabow Valley to fetch timber. The heirs-apparent of the earlier ruling family were equally not happy with the selection of Chura Chand Singh as the King of Manipur in 1907. The women remonstrated alongside this order since the male members had to suffer and following the protest they (women) had to confront various socio-economical obstacles. Almost 5,000 women participated and the movement lasted for a week. Initially the British suppressed the movement, but had to withdraw the order later.



Fig. 2.1: Nupi Lan – a non-violent uprising erupted in Manipur in 1904 and 1939 against British Colonial Rule. (<https://feminisminindia.com/2017/05/04/six-womens-movements-north-east/>). Accessed 18th November 2019.

The second phase stirred in 1939 aligned with the oppressive economic and administrative policies directed by the Manipur Maharaja and the Political agent, Mr. Gimson of the British Government (1933-45). The role of Manipuri women in the economic sector was admirable for their contribution: production to selling and marketing the food grains. They managed the internal trade of food and clothing, however, the trade policy was set forth which was to export rice from Manipur without considering its limited production which is only sufficient for Manipur's subsistence. This policy led to a famine in Manipur even though it was harvest season, also, an economic crisis in Manipur. The women of Manipur once more protested against it and though the police forces were deployed, they did not give up and vigorously fought the forces, without any arms resulting in the loss of lives of some

women. It survived for several months but came to expiration with the outburst of World War II.

2. Meira Paibi, Manipur:



Fig. 2.2: Twelve Meira Paibi members staged a nude protest against the rape and murder of Thangjam Manorama in Imphal, 2004.

(<https://kapilarambam.blogspot.com/2016/02/meira-paibi-brief-story-of-women-torch.html>). Accessed 18th November 2019.

Meira Paibi (women torchbearers) is a women's social movement in the Indian state of Manipur, described as the "guardians of civil society". The name is derived from the flaming torches which they carry while marching through

city streets, often at night. They started to keep night watch along with the local youth clubs by setting up *meira shangs*, meaning “bamboo huts” in areas around Manipur, in order to forewarn the arrest of youths, deaths and disappearance from the clutches of the Armies. This nonviolent movement was the trademark of the Meira Paibis and one can say that they endured a lot before staging one of the landmark actions that took place on 15th July 2004 widely known as the nude protest. “It is not the first time that something so monstrous has occurred. Such happenings have become routine in the state just as protests have,” (xxxi) states one of the Imas in Teresa Rehman’s book, *The Mothers of Manipur: Twelve Women who made History*, where she documented the incident. It was this very act of protest against the Assam Rifles in front of the main paramilitary headquarters in Kangla, Imphal, Manipur, that twelve mothers of Manipur staged a nude protest to fight for justice concerning the rape killing of a 32-year-old woman- Thangjam Manorama from Bamon Kampu.

3. Mizo Women’s Movement under MHIP (Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl):

Established on the 6th of July 1974 with its headquarter at Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram.



Fig 2.3: MHIP (Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl. (<http://www.sinlung.com/2013/10/mizo-womens-big-push-for-legal-reforms.html>). Accessed 19th November 2019.

The *Mizo Women's Movement* edged closer to their victory when the *State Law Commission* was in the final process of reviewing The Mizo Marriage Bill 2013, The Mizo Inheritance Bill 2013 and The Mizo Divorce Bill 2013. This is the outcome of an exclusive struggle that the organization (MHIP- an apex body representing several local women's groups) has carried on for over a decade. It fights for the rights of women against rape and murder cases involving minor girls and adult women and objecting towards such inhuman behavior. Since its inception it has worked tirelessly for the upliftment of women in the society.

4. Irom Sharmila (Face of Anti-AFSPA Movement), Manipur:

Irom Sharmila, often referred to as the Iron Lady of Manipur is a civil rights and political activist, and a poet, widely known also, for her 16 year-long hunger strike in protest against the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) implemented in Manipur for the past 60 years. Following the line, she was arrested several times under Section 309 for ‘attempt to suicide’ which she always denied and has been force-fed. As a woman driven by strong will and determination she told the Supreme Court that she has the hope to live but asked for the amputation of the AFSPA from her home state. The ill-famed incident known as the Malom massacre prodded Irom Sharmila to initiate a hunger strike against the act of violence in Malom by the 8th Assam Rifles, who allegedly gunned down 10 civilians in November 2000, at Malom Makha Leikai, near Imphal’s Tulihal airport. Her hunger strike later found a firm ground and developed into an extended hunger strike against the AFSPA. Her fight therefore, set off with resistance against AFSPA, but now she also fights patriarchy, structural sexism, and other forms of oppression.



Fig 2.4: Irom Chanu Sharmila- Iron Lady of Manipur. (<https://feminisminindia.com/2020/03/13/irom-sharmila-manipurs-iron-lady-mengoubi/>). Accessed 19th November 2019.

This was a reaction against the systems that tried to control and dictate her life. Nonetheless, the act of choosing what she wanted was the first step towards liberation. Further, she was the *Indian Nobel Peace Prize*, 2005 nominee for her hunger strike, and she is also the world's longest striker.

5. Naga Mothers' Association (NMA), Nagaland:

The Naga Mothers Association (NMA) was formed in 1984, Kohima. The initial concern of the NMA was the rampant use of alcohol and drug addiction which had a hostile effect on many households and disturbed the peace. They also tried their best to uplift the status of women in the society both in the private and public affairs.



Fig 2.5: The Naga Mothers' Association.

(<http://vikalpsangam.org/article/the-mothers-of-nagaland-are-taking-it-upon-themselves-to-keep-the-peace-yet-again/>). Accessed 21st November 2019.

Their fight has been about the 33% women reservation in the state. The NMA along with the Mira Paibi demanded the government to withdraw the AFSPA in order to maintain peace in the state and stop armed forces. They have lived with their motto 'Shed No More Blood' every day.

6. Asom Mahila Samiti, Assam:



Fig 2.6: The Asom Mahila Samiti (<https://feminisminindia.com/2017/05/04/six-womens-movements-north-east/>). Accessed 21st November 2019.

The Asom Mahila Samiti (later Asom Pradeshik Mahila Samiti) was formed in 1926 under Chandraprabha Saikiani. This organization has been working for the welfare of women, children and the society, since its creation. They have done commendable jobs in fighting against violence inflicted upon them and gender inequality imposed upon women and uplifting their self-esteem in the society.

7. The Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society:

Like the rest of the state Arunachal Pradesh, considered to be the largest state when talked about area- wise in the North-East region also had its own share of struggles and challenges on women issues. Following the situation, the Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society (APWWS) was formed in the year 1979 to confront multiple issues faced by women; child marriage, polygamy, and educational opportunities for women.



Fig 2.7: Arunachal Pradesh Women Welfare Society.
<https://www.apwws1979.org/>. Accessed 21st November 2019.

The society later got registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, on 21 September 1981, with Dishu Mihu Mallo as its president. Further, this organization was the only Women organization who had concern for the

codification of customary practices with fewer modifications where women and children rights are to be protected, particularly property inheritance rights of a girl child within the ambit of customary laws. The movement initiated by the APWWS enabled for the establishment of State Commission for Women, Gender Budgeting, and also for inclusion of 33% of seat reservation in Panchayat Level so that women's political issues and opinions are seen and heard in a wider platform. Thus, the organization with more than thirty branches is tirelessly working to resolve the issues since its inception.

8. Sikkim:

The Government of Sikkim with the concern to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women, has established the State Commission of Women (SCW) as a statutory body under the State Commission for Women Act, 2001. Chungkipu Lepcha is the current chairperson of the State Commission of women.



Fig 2.8: Sikkim students take to streets to protest crimes against women.

<https://www.eastmojo.com/sikkim/2019/06/26/sikkim-students-take-to-streets-to-protest-crimes-against-women/>. Accessed 21st November 2020.

9. Meghalaya:

Following the matrilineal system unlike the rest of the State, Meghalaya has a rich history of Women's Movements initiated for the welfare of the society in general.



Fig. 2.9: SHE CAME, SHE SAW, SHE CONQUERED: Recounting the Women's social movements in Northeast India. <https://www.northeasttoday.in/2019/04/01/she-came-she-saw-she-conquered-recounting-the-womens-social-movements-in-northeast-india/>. Accessed 21st November 2020.

Ka Synjuk Kynthei: This is the oldest voluntary welfare organization established in 1947 in the areas of Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Socio-economic progress providing better opportunities to women was the objective behind the initiation of such an association. Under its umbrella, it has opened up certain centres which provide education in crafts, embroidery, knitting, adult education, maternity and child welfare clinics. The organization also supports women to become self dependent by selling the products made by the women in the market. This provides a platform for women to learn the art at the same

time to earn for their livelihood without being dependent on any one but the self.

Needless to say, with all these heroic movements, North East also makes its space in the arena of women's movements, which must be acknowledged. It clearly gives the readers an insight into the struggle that the Northeast women had gone through but also, projecting the bold steps that they took and their undying resilience creating a niche for themselves to be at par with their male counterparts and to have a parallel stand in matters of opportunities and status in the society.



Fig 2.10: Mamang Dai. <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/337770040779545575/>.

Accessed 28th November 2020

Looking back to Mamang Dai (1957), she is regarded as the most celebrated writer of her state- Arunachal Pradesh, is an Indian poet, novelist and journalist. As a writer she reflects the life of a closely knitted community living in the remotest part of the villages. She has always tried to represent the cultures and traditions of her land to the outside world through her writings. Many of her books deal with the history, the different tribes, rituals, and customs of the northeast people, but more insight to the way of life of the state of Arunachal Pradesh. The writer presents the picture of how the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh have always lived in harmony with nature. The tribes preserve traditional customs and spiritual beliefs that make it possible for peaceful coexistence with nature and the natural world. In her works she has written extensively about the culture and history of Arunachal Pradesh. Her poetry, fiction and articles have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies. Dai's published works include a poetry collection, *River Poems*; a book of interlinked stories, *The Legends of Pensam* (2006) and a novella *Stupid Cupid* (2009). She received the Verrier Elwin Award in 2003 for her book *Arunachal Pradesh: The Hidden Land* (2002) and was awarded the Padma Shri in 2011 in recognition of her contributions in the fields of literature and education.

Stupid Cupid (2009) is set in Delhi but Mamang Dai fills it with her characters from the state of Arunachal Pradesh. The narrative opens with a distinct phone call enquiring about the Four Seasons hotel owned by none other than the character Adna. After her Hotel Management Course in Guwahati and Calcutta Adna plans to open the mini hotel for lovers and friends to catch up without being scorned by the society as she experienced the same in the course of booking hotel rooms. For that reason she intended to provide a platform so that people can meet peacefully and enjoy a quiet time with their loved ones. Alongside this line of story, the work also represents the

experiences of the Northeast women who have constantly undergone their own struggle against various kinds of subjugations or ill-treatment grounded on their race, ethnicity and gender both in the urban and the rural space. This very struggle binds them together with the rest of the world and also within their own region. The manner in which Northeast women are looked by the people in cities are worth the mention. North-eastern women are considered immoral with no character, as a result looked down by others when they move out of their village or town boundaries into big cities.

Mamang Dai projects strong, independent women characters as well as the submissive ones- the way they tend to obey to the norms set by the society without raising their voice like Mareb's mother, while women like Adna, Mareb and Jia attempts to step beyond the boundaries set by the society and live a life of their own.

Mareb describes and remembers her mother as someone who adheres to gender roles proposed by the society and dwells in those spaces. This presents a picture of Jacques Derrida's model of deconstruction, where the center needs to have space in order to move freely in relation to post-structuralism, trying to break away from the set structure. Likewise, women need to be given space, and equal treatment needs to be shown for a parallel world. As long as the society does not break away from the rather fixed frame of mind that women are menial and want to overrule the men through the varied movements, it is not possible for the kind (women) to come out and play equal part as that of their counterpart. Mary Wollstonecraft in her essay, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), puts forward her concern for women to know her value. Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), talks about the educational, social and financial disadvantages faced by women and how equal distribution of all these will also result in the blooming of brilliant women fictional writers.

Mareb's mother is presented as someone who forfeits her wishes and desires, in her effort to be the perfect housewife that the society demands of her. She recalls how her mother looked after the house, "obeying the instructions of her father" (SC, 37). The image of her mother was that of a dutiful wife attending the domiciliary activities, setting up curtains and sewing lace for the tablecloths. She was a woman who loved reading and Mareb learned about this only when she was taken in with a serious illness. During the time of her illness all she asked were some old magazines to read, something that she had loved doing but suppressed it for years. This gives a picture of how women have a habit to put an end to the things they love to do, their desires having been shut under the weight of the patriarchs. Such incidents occur because they have been trained to do what the patriarch of the family designates them to. Thus, women are still pushed to the margins. Consequently, Mareb's mother ends up being a woman entwined to the conventions of the society and does not turn against what has already been set for her.

While on one end Mamang Dai captures a woman like Mareb's mother, she also casts the bold and self-regulating women like Adna and Mareb. They do not follow the arrangement set by the society for them and rather escape the patriarchal customs of the village: traditional familial expectations, submissiveness, unemployment, etc., by migrating to cities. Cities like Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore, etc., which are considered favorable destinations for most Northeast women as education and work are possible in those places. These cities are perceived as or imagined by the people of Northeasterners as very different from their own home towns and villages.

Adna, the protagonist of the novel as well leaves her home town Itanagar with her passion to settle in the city of Delhi for better opportunity and to lead a free life of

her own. She inherits a property of her aunt who also settled in Delhi by going against the norms of the village and her family. Adna's aunt married a diplomat, someone out of their village. Thus, her family does not talk much about her since she chose her own partner that was too out of their boundary. However, after her death she left her bungalow to Adna. This is where Adna inherits it and leaves her village to start a new life in the city where she can live without any restrictions of the village and her family. The elders of the village constantly warn them of the cruelty of the cities like Delhi. They make statements like, "No one will help you there, because no one will know who you are" (SC, 14). However for a woman like Adna who is trying to get away from the restrictions of the village nothing could stop her and she mentions how this very anonymity was what she liked about the cities. For, in the metropolitan cities everyone seems to be busy with their own lives. No one has the leisure time to stop for a second and indulge in gossip about the new faces that they encounter in their daily life. Thus, Adna, chasing her freedom, lands in Delhi and transforms her aunt's bungalow into a place where men and women as well as lovers and friends can meet peacefully without becoming the talk of the society. This is a clear depiction of how, in the villages as well as in the so called towns, the conversation between a girl and a boy as well as between friends are monitored by the norms set by the society.

Perhaps Adna may also have gone through the same experience leading her ultimately to set a place so that such kind of acts will not be monitored by suspicious eyes. She questions, "What is wrong with the world?" (SC, 1) because the only thing that people want is to spend some time together with their loved ones. Adna had a broader perspective towards life. As an individual she did not really care that the man he is in love with is married to another woman. The only concern was the fact that she loves him and he also shows affection and cares for her whenever he happens to meet

her. Throughout the entire novel, Adna's lover is addressed as 'the man,' which in a way depicts the temporary affair they are in. The interpretation on their relationship is open and one can consider that the man is only using her to fulfill his loneliness whenever he travels out from home as he is in the real estate business nevertheless, Adna does not care of what he is doing or who he is as she is blinded by the false hope of love in their relationship. Needless to say, such a similar situation can be observed widely in all corners of the world where women tend to love irrespective of any reservations that might hold them back. Following the story, no one ever questioned her lover or about his actions or the relationship they had until the character Mesochenla known as Green in the novel put forth the following questions to Adna, "Why doesn't he take you with him on his travels? Why do you have to wait for his convenience," (SC, 69) she rightfully and out of concern for her friend puts the seed on her mind because she knows that a married man like Adna's lover just hangs around with them without any future for the growth of the relationship. Thus, she tells Adna "cut your losses" (SC, 69) for it is never too late.

Mamang Dai through the character Green also represents another type of woman, someone who is bound by the inner restraints. As a friend she does not really approve of Adna's relationship with the man because he is already married to someone else. Yet, she also does not give any hint to the readers that she is against the relationship because he is not a man from their own village. This is a representation of the evolving broader perspective of women towards life because they do not differentiate people based on race or color. While back in the villages there were strict restrictions on inter marriage. The elders emphasized on the notion that men and women should marry from their own locality and village. However, for Adna, these things do not count much. The only thing that concerns her is that love should be

involved in any kind of relationship. Green for once influences her to question their relationship and this is seen through the lines by Adna, “I liked receiving his phone calls and dreaming about him in peace. Everything was clear and simple until someone wanted an explanation!” (SC, 69) but till the end it can be seen that Adna never cuts off her relationship from the man he loved, representing her as the new modern woman who does not care what the society thinks and will live according to her own terms and conditions. She is an example of the new woman in the present time. It depicts her acceptance and boldness to carry on the relationship with a man whom she does not really have any future with.

Further, one of the major characters Mareb also lands in the city of Delhi as she wanted to stay away from her home after the death of her mother. Her father remarries a young girl of her age and realises that he is a greedy man. Thereby, asks her father to go for further studies in Delhi to which he agrees. In the summer when Mareb arrived in Delhi with a school friend she did not really like it. However her friend took her to a place and there she met Rohit, who later became a part of her life. Mareb decides to pay a visit to her aging father and return to Delhi, but on her visit she is made to marry Dayud, a wealthy widower. This represents the status of women in the decision making process where barely any consultation is made to decide about her life. Ultimately, Mareb is bound to adhere to the decision taken by her father for her marriage. Soon after the marriage she gets involved in the household activities blending perfectly like an obedient housewife, yet after the birth of their daughter Asinda, she starts her longing to visit Delhi particularly to meet Rohit. She recollects the memories of how their love started and what Rohit would be doing at this time since they had lost contact with one another after Mareb returned to her hometown. Constantly hit by these thoughts she decides to visit Delhi and does that by following

her heart. Over there she meets her lover Rohit whom she landed in Delhi again and he mentions how he tried contacting her. Thus, Mareb after revisiting Rohit, and though aware of the fact that she was now a married woman, falls for him all over again and starts an affair. Rohit as well encourages her for the affair though he knows that now Mareb is someone else's wife and also a mother to a daughter. Mareb goes to the extent of letting her daughter study in the city of Delhi so that she will have a reason to travel to Delhi to meet Rohit. Mareb is thus a woman who will not sit back, accept or do what the society expects her to do. She is able to convince Dayud and ultimately Asinda lands at a boarding school in Delhi. These two characters, Adna and Mareb, are a representation of how women have had a transition in their outlook and perspective towards life. While on one hand Mareb's mother and Green were still restraint by their inner thoughts of not to break the traditional norms, Adna and Mareb were the opposite of that, they went against the stereotyped image of a woman, where she is to obey the rules set by the patriarch of the family or society. Then Adna's cousin Jia is also an example of a modern woman. Through the story the readers are made aware of Jia's past life. She was only eighteen when she got pregnant and lost the baby. The father of the child deserted her or rather she had kicked him out of her life because he was so abusive and irresponsible towards her that the baby died at childbirth. She could not take it and thus, quarreled with her mother and left the village. Here, her action of quarreling with her mother makes it clear that her mother must have been pressing her to stay and hold on with the man as it is the general notion of the society that a woman needs a man to protect her. Anita Desai as well in her novel, *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), represents a similar picture where Tara does not support her daughter Asha's decision to leave her husband because of the physical abuse that he inflicts on her. She just says that Asha does not know man.

Thus, women like Jia's mother and Tara fit in the stereotypical image of women set by the society. If Jia was also a similar kind, she would have accepted her situation without raising her voice. However, she did not submit herself to the structured ways of the society and emerged as a new woman by going against the society. She does not let her past dominate her future and sets out of the village to start a new life of her own. She is undoubtedly the image of a modern woman because unlike others she does not submit herself to the wrong things around her. In an incident we see how she replies back to her friend TD when waiting for a taxi with her friend TD. The moment a taxi drew up near her, a woman pushed her and entered into it and when Jia tells her that she was first in the line, the woman shouts angrily with the remarks, "Hey you! Jao! JAO! Go back to your own...DESH!" and Jia, unable to take that, replies back that it is people like her who create hatred among mankind. This is an act of courage that she shows at that moment because even though TD was a man and standing right there he does not say a word to such an abusive statement made by the woman towards the Northeast people and later on takes pleasure by laughing at Jia's reaction. This novel thus touches on the aspect of the various discriminations that the Northeast people constantly go through in a metropolitan city. Through Mareb's man, the writer represents how the mainland people view the Northeast women as loose and out of character because when Mareb tells him that his wife might also be having an affair, he confidently replies that she will never do such a thing, creating a clear demarcation between the women of Northeast and the mainland. This fictional work in a way triggers the very question of the characters of Northeast women in the real scenario as they are looked down as being very low who would do anything for the love of money. Thus, the writer goes beyond the usual representation of women in her work. She represents through her characters various

issues concerning the Northeast State. Her female characters do not simply exist for the sake of existence. They are portrayed as bold and decisive, able to create a niche for themselves. The discussed novel is filled with mostly women characters and they dominate the entire story. Each story of her women characters are carefully chosen and depict the decisions they have made in their life to debunk the stereotypical image that the society has of women in general. The writer also represents how women tend to be more emotional than men through Adna and Mareb. They place the idea of love foremost in their lives leading to the continuation of their relationship with the man they love even though there is no future for such a relationship, for the man whom Adna loved was a married man and Mareb was wife to another man and a mother of a child as well. However, this is the very act of evolving into a modern woman not only physically but mentally as well. Therefore, Mamang Dai has represented different images of women through the experiences they have had in their lives.

On the subject of the origin of the universe, according to the Paadam (Adi), earth and life was filled with emptiness 'keyum-kero' which means shapeless and sizeless. Mamang Dai brings her personal knowledge of the primitive customs and beliefs of her people to recount the many legends that influence the lives of Adis. She is in search of her own roots and documents these tribal lores` so that they are preserved and not forgotten or lost with the arrival of modernization. *The Legends of Pensam* (2006) is a set of nineteen stories interconnected across a few generations of a family and the same character appears in a different chapter following a different story which is why the book can be considered more of a novel. The story begins with an entire chapter dedicated to Hoxo's suppositious origin as he is considered to be "the boy who fell from the sky" and Rakut's father stated, "He fell from the sky" (TLP 38) and "There were great noise and fire in the sky and then our son fell to

earth” (40) when he was being questioned about Hoxo. It is a novel with strong ecological concern as the writer chooses a particular North East state- Arunachal Pradesh in all its beauty and greenness. It revolves around one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh- Adis along with the history, myth, tradition and culture. It presents the ethos of the Adi tribal life and their belief system and is bifurcated into four different sub-titled sections, scilicet “*a diary of the world*,” “*songs of the rhapsodist*,” “*daughters of the village*,” and “*a matter of time*”. The stories present the transitory period of a group of Adi people from a primordial society into one, evolving towards a modern set up of the world, living, dreaming and experiencing life at a certain point in time.

The book also throws light on the conflict between modernity and tradition. She has established an identity for the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh by relating the tribal life and their activities with nature. The essence of ecofeminism is caught sight of in the third section of the novel titled “*daughters of the village*” with tribal myths, legends and folklores. The relationship between women and nature is reaffirmed through these traditional tales. Women in general, solicitude for her immediate family and the society at large. The first part “*a diary of the world*” is about the first generation of villagers. The village is presented in the primitive age with residents sustaining on hunting and primitive agriculture. The love for the land by the people is brought to light in the author’s note “But the old villagers who walk miles every day say: ‘When you look at the land you forget your aches and pains’” (TLP). Further, none of the villagers were surprised with the death of Hoxo’s father in a hunting accident because they were used to such kind of tragic accidents. The book engages a lot of the pictures of the belief system of the Adis- myths, legends, taboos, etc. Being

a society based on animism or practicing the animal faith, their belief system largely rests on the seemingly supernatural.

The book presents the picture of how people coped with the arrival of modernity into their homeland where they were very much comfortable in their own little corner structured on the traditional norms and values. The writer beautifully brings in the core concept of modernity and tradition with the beginning of the text itself. She starts the prologue with the image of a helicopter which is a symbol of the arrival of modernity and shifts to the image of a river, symbolizing the natural world and the description of her “village where boys kicked rocks around pretending at football.” (3) Further she builds up the book by representing the color green, “it was the colour of escape and solitude” (8). This projects the way how modernity and tradition is represented, one with machines and the other with the calmness of nature.

The writer presents a narrator who goes back to her village in search of her roots along with her friend Mona- proprietor of the magazine, *‘The Diary of the World’*. Throughout the novel, the two characters try to unearth the myth and legends of the villages they visit- Duyang, Yelen, Sirum, Pigo and Gurdum in the Siang Valley. As part of the modern world and bred in the city, this is the means they choose, to preserve the fading roots of a particular tribe.

The writer further weaves the geography of the state in the novel. The images from the regions run throughout the entire book. In the beginning of the text itself, Dai makes use of the strong image by referring to the colour green. The narration starts with that of a calm, sustainable and peaceful coexisting picture and gives the minute description of the setting where the river is seen cutting through the land and during the spring the red flowers blazed against the sky. “But, the old people now, the

few of them alive, turn slowly in their sleep as the fires burn down to a heap of ash”. Then the narrator continues to exclaim how “in the middle of the night the bird swoops low and calls out in a wild, staccato note. The thatch rustles. The bamboo creaks. The darkness is full of breath and sighs” (4).

The description of the initial setting is contradictory to the later setting as the novel progresses nearer to the end. As a reader, by the end of the concluding stories, it takes a different turn. The narration becomes that of constructing roads, learning the magic of letters and politics. In other words the picture is projected of how a village or villages transformed itself with the intrusion of modernity, to adopt the new traits of the modern world, where multiple families were seen leaving the old home and villages and leading towards the town in search of open land for permanent settlement. It was as though almost all the villagers were vacating their village opting for better opportunities in the city except, “Kao was one of the few who kept his distance and he never left the village again” (129).

The statement gives a clear indication that modernity did play its part and the shift is seen in the lives of the village people. The transition from a primordial society to a developing one has been rightly captured in this book. Further, the omnipresent narrator offers a detailed description of the setting in the beginning and as one reads through the last chapter of the book, the contrast in the beautiful green setting gets a different makeover. We see how education crept in through Kao’s observation, in the story titled, ‘*rites of love.*’ He goes on to state how, “he saw the children changing and learning new things, and he smiled when he heard them speak in a new tongue while writing words in new scripts that no one in the village could read” (130).

Through this statement it is made clear to readers that Kao intended to talk about the English language which came into being with the arrival of modernity.

“Across the river, young men and women walked to a school that was more than a mile away from their homes in Duyang” (130). The writer presents a paracosm to the readers. The two different pictures that are described in the above paragraphs gives a sense to the reader that Dai weaves the real and the imaginary in order to narrate the lives of men and women of the Adi community. This justifies the title of the book, where Rakut’s father along with Hoxo and other major characters become the legends and we see people approaching them to hear out and take note of their experiences so that the stories can be preserved in the written or audio visual format. Moving forward to the particular word ‘Pensam’ which in the language of the Adis means ‘in-between,’ perfectly fits to the content of the book because it does give a picture of the balance maintained between tradition and modernity. It also depicts the way people were pushed into the middle ground of which side to lean upon:

It suggests the middle, or middle ground...It is the small world where anything can happen and everything can be lived; where the narrow boat that we call life sails along somehow in calm or stormy weather; where the life of a man can be measured in the span of a song. (Dai)

The book presents the different images of the belief system of the Adis. It starts with the image of the inauspicious mythical river creature which becomes the cause of Hoxo’s father’s death after he had a glance at it: “I heard a splash and when I turned I saw the edge of the river lifted up and the waters falling off the back of this long shining fish...or snake...I thought I saw a head with horns” (9). This followed the story of the water serpent Biribik. No one knew the description of the creature except the first person- a fisherman, who had encountered it and as the people

predicted he never recovered and died within a year. The similar case happened to Hoxo's father who after encountering the river creature was killed in a hunting incident where he was mistaken as a prey. "Deer? Bear? The distraught man who shot him could not say. He only remembered a movement, a dark shape that he swore was definitely not human" (10). The image presented here is very convincing for the fact that this is a pattern that can be seen among the tribals. There are varied stories passed down from generations that gives us the similar picture of how a person is killed in a hunting incident because he was mistaken as a prey and the accused has to perform various rituals and is also cast off from the village for some specified years. Though we have adopted the intrusion of modernity in our lives, these are things that connect us with our progenitors and no matter how modern or broad we are in our thought, the root is always dominant which is why even today we believe in the existence of such incidents. Thus, it can be seen how Dai represents the Adi community as a microcosm of the entire North Eastern belief, which can be traced in the roots.

When the fisherman and Hoxo's father died, no one was surprised because they knew that a tragedy was to follow up. Further, Dai presents the picture of the Adi people who were capable of predicting the tragedies or happiness that will follow up,

In these small clearings in the middle of the forest, people have premonitions.

Women dream dreams. Babies are born who grow up unnaturally fast, like deer or lion cubs...Old women still braid threads of vine and pray for safe passage (10).

Easterine Kire also presents a similar belief in her work 'Mari' where the character Mari is constantly disturbed by the fly which indicates a bad omen and the next day she informed of the tragic news that her fiancé Victor was killed in the long

battle. Dai as well emphasizes on this particular occurrence by presenting another story of a hunter, Kalen who was killed by a man called Loma from the hunters group as he mistook him for a monkey. Northeast has been a rich place when talked about the supernatural elements or beliefs in the region. The belief and the spirit of weretiger is a common narration found in almost all the communities of the region. In the past people believed that the soul of a man is linked to that of a tiger and such stories are still passed on today.

No doubt, Mamang Dai presents the readers the belief system and practices that a particular community followed but on the larger scale she also represents the entire North Eastern states and the way they laid their faith in living to the belief system. Along with preserving the folklores of the Adis, there is a touch of social awareness that can be identified in the writer's work. Wildlife hunting is a practice widely followed among the indigenous tribes and the similar image is projected in the beginning of the book through the characters. As the story progresses we encounter the death of characters- Hoxo's father, Lutor, Kalen and Lekon. The cause of their death was definitely not natural, however, the villagers were not surprised as it was expected and man killed during the hunting period has more or less taken the shape of a habitual form. A very convincing notion put forth by culture and tradition. Nonetheless, it also presents the burning issue of environmental degradation and the need to preserve it. Trying to play with the balance that has to be maintained between the human and the natural world can have huge adverse effects on either part.

Through the text, Dai emphasizes on the issue of hunting practice that needs to be stopped for the betterment of both the world. Stories after stories have been weaved and passed down on the number of people who lost their lives while hunting and this is an occurrence that takes place even today. People do not think about the

after effect of death, which goes to the family. What about the wife? If the man who died was already married, what about his children, or his parents or sisters and brothers? No one really takes this into account while preparing for the hunting activity, not even the one who died. What then, is the point of trying to do something you love or trying to get hold of, in order to survive if you will actually lose your life? These are questions that definitely disturbs the thought when we read through the book. The writer also uses the particular term “village of widows” (12), this depicts the death rate that has become part of the village’s daily lives. In another instance Pinyar states, “Every year at least three men die in hunting accidents in our parts” (28).

Further, the practice of hunting also causes harm to the animals which needs to be stopped as it ultimately disturbs the natural cycle of survival, putting the animals into the category of endangered species. Man needs to preserve the natural resources as it is only through this that there will be perfect harmony. Only the amount required should be taken without being too greedy. Today, there are improvements and wildlife hunting has been banned in many areas or villages which comes along with a penalty if caught doing the same. Therefore, as readers the need to know what the work is being directed upon is of significance. There is a need to unearth our compassion and humanity towards the natural resources that are made available to us with no cost.

Mamang Dai represents the woman characters from both the worlds and how some are caught in-between. The book is filled with more women characters playing major roles and also describing the living condition or status of the same. The book opens with the woman who becomes the mother of Hoxo. Hoxo’s description of the woman the moment his eyes set on her was, “he instantly recognized her as someone kind and good...her face was vivid with love and anxiety” (8). This debunked the

stereotypical image of women who are supposedly thought to be a group, who love their children more and disgust the others. Hoxo was not her biological child, but she never considered that fact and loved him like her own very child, irrespective of whose child he might have been. Hoxo on the other hand was equally proud of this woman for the love she has given him, “Hoxo felt his heart swell with love and respect for this wonderful woman who had kept him safe and happy and given him everything all these years, since the death of the man who had rescued him from the burning hills” (132).

Mona, an Arab-Greek extraction is another character that forms the major part of this book. In a way many of the stories unfold because of her. The omnipresent narrator introduces her as the editor as well as the proprietor of a Magazine, “Diary of the World that carries unusual true-life stories” (17-18). The very nature of her work depicts the contrasting lifestyle she has, compared to the others in the Duyang village where she pays a visit to unearth the unusual stories for recording it. As a reader it is clear that she has some privileges when it comes to living her social life. She was a city bred and did not have to go through the daily hardships compared to the women in the villages. However, that does not mean that she is not being subjugated. We see an instance where her husband blames her for the condition of their daughter Adela, though he is the one who travels and seldom stays home. It reaches to a point where Jules (her husband) shouts and lashes out everything on her as though she is the only one responsible to look after their daughter. A similar picture is that of Togum’s son who faced the similar case and the husband as usual blamed the wife for the condition of the son, “Togum did not speak to his wife all of that day and night, till she shouted at him for holding her responsible for their misfortune” (21). This presents the bigger picture where looking after the children has been considered the responsibility of the

mother. The man is never disturbed or bothered about raising the child by anyone. It gives a clear statement that women are never free from the web woven by society. Since the woman gives birth to the child, the responsibility of looking after the child falls on her shoulder by default. It is amusing to consider the fact that when a child does something good the credit always goes to the father and when otherwise happens, the blame falls on the mother, accusing her that she did not raise the child in the proper manner. Also that she is not the ideal mother.

Society does not consider what women go through and bluntly shoots off without any consideration whereas in the case of men, women are supposed to be careful with the usage of words. The incident where Jules shouts at Mona and she is raged with anger, “Jules manner and tone seemed to imply that it was her fault and she was so angry and hurt by this that she thought she would spit on his face and walk out of the house for ever” (19), but the fact that women are attributed with the stereotyped label to be considerate, Mona does not act according to her anger, perhaps because they have a daughter to be raised. It also adds another picture of how Mona, a modern woman, is trapped between tradition and modernity. Though she was an independent woman, we see how she is not able to take a side because of her consideration to the traditional values and the image of the collective stereotyped image of a mother. She can neither leave though she wants to as the unconscious part of her brain influences her actions. This presents a picture where the thoughts or the opinion of women are laughed at.

Another example is taken from the movie- *Salt of the Earth* (1954) an American drama film written by Michael Wilson, directed by Herbert J. Biberman, and produced by Paul Jarrico. Where all had been blacklisted by the Hollywood establishment due to their alleged involvement in communist politics. However, this

drama film was one of the first pictures to advance the feminist social and political point of view. The plot centers on a long and difficult 1951 strike against the Empire Zinc Company in Grant County, New Mexico. The majority of the miners being Mexican-Americans wanted decent working conditions as those of white or Anglo miners and the workers went on a strike but the company refused to negotiate. It starts with the strike where women suggest the men include hygiene as of the agenda but is ignored with the saying that there are much more important things to be considered. Furthermore, when the company passes the Taft-Hartley Act to the union which means that any miner who pickets will be arrested, the women come and volunteer to picket in place of their husbands. This raises a question among the men towards their pride and ego and starts thinking that they will never hide behind the skirts of their wives. Majority were against it but with no other option they went forward and the constructed reversal of role came in. The men now worked at home while the women out of home and this is where the men realized the urgent need of hygiene that was put forth by the housewives. This strengthened the participation of women into the social and political sphere. Men alone could not succeed and women too, though, to a certain extent did, was not wholly achieved. However, when both the parties joined hands they were successful in overthrowing the dominating structure of the Company towards them. Thus, this is the perfect example of how both the genders need to come together on a common ground in order to empower one another. The practice starts from the root, where every person should be taught to consider the other side of the thought as well. The same is the case while raising a child. The responsibility has to be divided equally between the partners, only then, a portion of the issue will be resolved as everything is intertwined with one another.

The character Pinyar, the widow who had been living the widowed life though she was not yet twenty-five years of age. Her life brings out so many aspects that a woman goes through. She fell in love with Orka and declared her pregnancy with his child after which elders were called in for negotiation and to solemnize the marriage. However, Orka though acknowledged paternity of the child he had different intention, "...within a year of the birth of their child he was preparing cold heartedly to abandon Pinyar" (26) and he does that. He took Kamur with him, "...for the child was a son" (27), and said he will returned but he never did. This put Pinyar in shame because she went against everyone to marry this man of his life. Then she remarried Lekon, but the happiness was short-lived as he was killed in a hunting accident. These incidents however, did not discourage her to stop living her life and she continued a normal life. With no help and living alone she would work in her field all day alone and try to survive. As a young woman she was going through a lot already until one particular day a tragedy falls on her again. A young man comes shouting towards her and she sensed something was wrong and as expected heard the word, "Fire! 'Hai! Her house had burned down" (27). She was banished to the outskirts of the village as was the tradition followed, without any kind of empathy towards her. So during this ritual, it was considered a taboo to go and eat with her, "for fear of provoking the tiger spirit that causes fires and tempting it to follow them home" (28). She felt a sense of resentment as we see in the lines uttered by her, "The fire swallowed everything with an evil appetite" (28) and also, "It seems my destiny is cursed!" (28). These were all, that Pinyar had gone through, nevertheless, she never gave up and in a way projected the notion that women can live and survive alone too, in the economic perspective. Women need to start thinking out of the box and not remain glued to the structure created by society. Suppressing the inner self because of the existing structure

constructed by the society will only lead to a life of subjugation. No doubt, women went through a lot to be considered as equals in the society and the condition of women are comparatively lighter now, but that does not mean that exploitation or biasness of gender are completely eliminated. It very much forms a part of the world till today.

Further, the struggles of women are represented in the book by the writer as she dedicates an entire chapter, *'daughters of the village,'* to women characters. Dai, here delved into the everyday struggles of women living in the village. The constructed idea of women staying at home looking after the household is questioned by the kind of works that the village women performed every day. Apart from taking hold of all the household chores they also walked to the steep forest to collect firewood, "They have been in the forest all morning, cutting wood...to be carried back to the village" (73). Arsi, one amongst them, thought that she would ultimately die with the heavy load she was carrying as she could not lift her head. A pathetic image is presented of how these women had to wrestle every day in order to keep their house burning, as "her shoulder muscles would remain fixed forever in a stoop" and her hands clutching at the belt of a cane bruising her head resulting to her not able to turn around "so tautly held were head, jawbone, ligaments, veins that her neck might snap if she tried" (73). The lines extracted from the text are powerful enough to trim down the labour of women in everyday life.

The other women in a way seem to have grown accustomed to climbing steep slopes every day and have lived the way it has been without a word of why. This debunks the stereotypical image of women as weak and fragile beings best suited for the light household chores. Arsi, on the other, had a different mind of her own. She had all the questions stored in her mind as to why should they live such a life, "Why?

Why do we have to kill ourselves like this? Is this a life? Is this all there is?” (74). She was not ready to accept the life that they have been living for years. There was a spark of rebellious nature in her. She was definitely not happy with the life bestowed on them, yet, she did not give up, though tired she carried on, “...she was losing her vision. But she would not stop...and rose blindly, climbing, forcing energy and will to obey out of long habit and practice” (74). This throws light into another quality that women hold. No matter how unhappy they might be in their lives, they never make decisions based on their anger as we have seen in Mona’s case and it is always the multiple thoughts of consequences that follows up.

Arsi’s questions carried on, for she was not able to accept the conditions they were in. She was unable to set a garden as there were rocks everywhere, “...there was no soil and no moisture” (74), and further states “Why did our forefathers choose this place? Surely we are outcasts dumped in this bone and knuckle part of the world” (74) adding to that she says, “...we are unhappy. I am unhappy. Unhappy, unhappy, unhappy!” (75). Thus, the raging mind of this particular character is observed through her statements. While she was questioning the already existing structure, the others have merely accepted their way of life as it is and is made clear through Mamo Dumi replying to Arsi, “This is our world” (74). The narrator’s friend also enhances the image of carrying a different mindset and not being submissive to things that were happening to her. Her resilience can be seen when she punched her husband after knowing that he was involved in an affair. This action of hers deconstructs the very notion that women should bear everything because they need a man to protect them. Hence, we see the variation in thoughts amongst women characters. Some like, old Me-me considered education to be a waste of time and suggested this to the narrator’s mother when she was sent to college. Here Me-me tries to put forth her notion of

marriage for a woman, “A woman’s marriage beads and the obligations she fulfils as wife and mother are the true measure of her worth” (76). This was the similar thing she was doing with Arsi who had a strong desire to continue her studies but could not as her father died. Ultimately, Arsi succumbs to the structure of marriage created by the society as Me-me states, “If a woman becomes too clever no one will marry her” (76). Arsi not being able to complete her schooling because of her father’s death also presents a bigger picture of the life system then, where the majority of women depended on the husband’s income to light the house and still is in practice because of the gender roles assigned to them by the society. No doubt, it is not the same for every woman as can be seen in the above paragraphs like Mona, the omnipresent narrator, Pinyar, etc., who very much shared the responsibility and was economically independent.

However, though influenced by the twentieth century lifestyles and finding a place of their own, the tussle can be seen in their thoughts where they are in a way trapped in between the old and the new. This very much aligns with the title of the book itself, *The Legends of Pensam*, where the word ‘Pensam’ means ‘in-between.’ With the narrator’s friend arriving in the village, who travels to big cities and back with their products moved to remote villages as a saleswoman with, “...the new bright clothes, the delicate fabrics, the cosmetics and herbal remedies” (81). This attracted the village women and it can also be a symbolic representation of the two different lives coming together at a common ground.

The writer however, also depicts the village women as strong beings through the ritual they follow to collect firewood in the steep forest carrying the load and trying to climb up the mountain, “They were bold, hardworking, forthright” (76). It is through the conversation of these elder women- Me-me, Dumi, Yayo, the writer tries

to paint the picture of what happens in real life and how it forms a part of everyday life around the world. Dumi is reminded of her husband's action as he decides to take another wife when their children are already grown up. She was in rage and followed up by invoking the attention of the sun and the moon to ruin his life which was a very big thing to do. Therefore, Yayo tried to silence her and all the women there became quite uncomfortable because they knew the fact that, "Words have magic, and powerful words have powerful magic" (77). Mamang Dai further adds the picture of society's attitude towards women and men and also how women tend to wish for the goodness of their men though they are being cheated or not given any worth. Despite everything they face, at the end of the day women always prayed, "Let no harm come to our men" (77). Through close knitted villages, we see how Dai presents the larger picture of how men are untouched by any kind of norms, "...the men slept peacefully with no blame to touch them" (77).

Therefore, through the study of various aspects in the two books discussed, Mamang Dai attempts to represent the perplexed mind, torn between the modern life and the traditional life through the women characters, where the narrator herself, after her mother's death feels how she is trapped in between the two, "I decided I should be practical; I should leave. But the pull of the old stones would not ease. That was the day I decided to settle in Gurdum town" (79). The emphasis on the idea of belonging and root also adds as an important element to the novel. A concern that is prevalent in the present times especially among the younger generation. Back to the root or appreciating and considering one's own root has been emphasized tremendously in the present time among the youth of today. The generation has become such that there is barely any respect towards one's own culture or tradition. They are more influenced by the western culture, majority of which can be seen in imitating the Korean or the

Japanese culture at large. It is not wrong imitating or adopting the culture of a different community but the problem arises when one stays ignorant with their own culture and instead is more engrossed in learning the culture of others. Both needs to go hand in hand in order for a healthy promotion for the cultures.

Eventually, Dai represents the phases and the layers of life in the life of a woman with the advancement of modernity and the transition that took place.

Chapter III

ECOLOGICAL CONCERN



Fig. 3.1: Sarah Joseph, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Joseph_\(author\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Joseph_(author)). Accessed 25 August 2019.

Sarah Joseph (1946), a well-known activist and considered the God-mother of Feminist Movement, has emerged as a fine writer speaking for the subaltern women

in Kerala. As a writer, she has etched a niche for herself alongside women writers like Saraswathi Amma, Kamala Das, with a distinct style in representing the traditional oppression towards women and nature in particular. Sarawathi Amma (1919-1975) “outsoken, brave and empathetic, Amma broke the condescending picture of a ‘Modest Woman’ in which they tried to fit her in. She was called “Vattu Saraswathi” (crazy Saraswathi) as she was bold and unafraid of speaking to men. She was nothing like a conventional Kerala woman of the early 20th century” (<https://feminisminindia.com/2020/02/28/k-saraswathi-amma-pioneer-feminist-literaturemalayalam/>).

Kamala Das, in her poems gave voice to a generation of women who were confined to the four walls of the house and were treated like a commodity to exchange through marriage. In her poem, *An Introduction*, she presents a strong resentment against the constructed gender roles, and expresses her desire to break away from it, as she mentions in her poem, *Then...I wore a shirt and my Brother's trousers*. Further, she mentions her hair as the beauty of a woman is judged through her hair. Therefore, she cut her hair short and ignored her womanliness as a means to voice against the societal image of a good and beautiful woman. As a woman she was continuously asked to “*dress in saris, be girl, Be wife*” and be an embroiderer or a cook “*Be a quarreler with servants. Fit in*” (Choudhary 106).

Joseph's works lay out the social, political and economic status of the marginalized section of the society. Following the postfeminist line of thought she works toward forming an egalitarian society- free from terms like ‘hegemony’ and ‘power hierarchy’ for an equal society between the genders. She structures her works in the form of political statements to give voice to the subaltern women. As a writer she has delved into the subject of class, gender and caste. She founded an organization

of thinking women called Manushi. In an interview with Githa Hiranyan, Sarah mentions how she suggested the name of the organization to make everyone aware that similar to the presence of a human species 'man' (manushyam) there is also the another human species 'woman' (manushya stree), leading to the coining of the name. She further mentions the reason for the birth of this organization, which ultimately started taking shape with the suicidal case of a school girl, which stirred the other girls to hold a demonstration for her. Following this achievement considering the time factor, i.e., during the eighties. With the formation of Manushi, she made it clear that the organization will not affiliate itself with any political party. Nonetheless, it will adopt a Marxist vision without being a part of it, chiefly, for the issues of women extensively discussed in Engel's books. It was further decided that the issues of women will be dealt with as specific issues rather than viewing it as class issue alone. Manushi, as an organization, saw its active phase in the eighties with its contribution in creating awareness among its kind, however, it could not stand for long because of varied factors and dwindled in the nineties. The inclination towards Marxian ideology is seen through the influence of her father who himself followed the vision. Her mother, on the other hand, was a typical Christian conservative.



Fig. 3.2: Sara Joseph reading her book 'Aathi' at Valanthakad Island, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2011/jul/13/valanthakad-listens-to-its-own-tale-270934.html>. Accessed 28th August 2019.

Gift in Green (2011), is a work replete with the exploitation and destruction of nature in the greed to accumulate more wealth in the name of development by the hands of man. It is an attempt on the part of the writer to preserve the ecology for a balanced life. The concept, characters, images, and setting of the novel itself is cleverly plotted by Sarah which makes the reader view it through the lens of an ecofeminist text along with the picture of ecocriticism.

The novel brings to life the relationship that the people of Aathi share with the land and the water. The importance of water is mentioned at the start of the book in the form of a story narrated by the first storyteller- Noor Muhammad. He puts forward the story of Hagar and her son's sufferings as they are left in the wilderness. Days and nights without a drop of water, hungry and helpless, her prayers never stopped for her son, ultimately the spring gushed out from the earth as the bird continued to thump the earth. The bird here can be the symbolic representation of Hagar's anguished desire for water. From interpreting a Biblical character in the

work, the writer talks of the value and importance of water. No one but Hagar knows best the struggle for water which led them almost to death had it not been for the intervention of the bird. Her compassion towards the thirst can be seen in the lines where she, “could understand the thirst of a people, the infinite value of water and the secret of life scripted into it” (Joseph 14) as she allows the nomads to drink from the newly discovered lake”. As someone who has struggled with the thirst of water for days with her infant child she utters, “I know the value of water. To me the value of the first drop of water is the value of the life of my firstborn” (14). A water covenant, hence, took its birth with Hagar as the caretaker and that not a single drop of water will go in waste. In no time the people benefitted from the abundance of water ultimately leading to the formation of new lives. A clear consequence of how people will suffer if proper precautions are not taken in regard to the available natural resources.

There is a before and after effect that can be seen vividly throughout the text. The modern versus the traditional values set in, in this literary piece of art. The novel is similar to the technique of time lapse where, the island in the beginning is represented as one, with no outside influence, the water and the land providing food and shelter to the people, the description in short, is rather soothing as the novel opens. Aathi, a fictional place is an idyllic island that nourishes her people and the animals with food and water. It is an ecosystem where all the living organisms live in peaceful coexistence. However, the ecological balance is disturbed by the intervention of urban and commercial forces without any concern in the name of development that will benefit the people around. Water therefore, is almost used as a character for whom the entire island suffers. The friendly environment of Aathi is transformed drastically to the extent that everything dries up. The water becomes polluted, paddy

fields parched and no longer in the position to be cultivated, trees dry up and withered away, wells dry up resulting to the shortage of sufficient drinking water, animals die in thirst, children starts suffering with no proper food to fill their empty stomach dying away with their hungry howl, “Children? Where are they? Are there children still left in Aathi to listen to stories?” (294), etc. All these painful images are the result of modernization building its way through a primordial land. The face of development can be seen at the expense of completely swiping out an entire generation, species and their natural habitat.

Likewise, the similar awareness of ecological concepts can be seen in Easterine Kire’s *Son of the Thundercloud* (2017) where Pele, the protagonist, describes the earth as “death-grey” (Kire 17). He gives a clear picture through the following lines, “The earth was so dry that the soil no longer looked like soil. It had cracked apart, every brittle vein and ligament exposed, looking more like sun-dried sponge with big holes running through the soil” (17). Kire presents the repercussions that humans have to face for the ill-treatment meted out to nature. Famine will step in along with drought which will ultimately lead to the loss of life and sufficient natural resources and food. The earth will experience a traumatic phase of climate change which is no longer a new phenomena in the present times as the effects can be seen around the different corners of the world.

Aathi (Gift in Green) by Sarah Joseph was written originally in Malayalam. It narrates the relationship that the people of Aathi had with the land and the water. It was modeled after an island, Valanthakkadu in Ernakulam district of Kerala, inhabited by about fifty families. 81 year-old Prabhakaran Naduthundiyl states how Valanthakkadu had its golden years, when the entire island was full of Pokkali fields. “We’d cultivate rice for half of the year, and then use the farms for

prawn cultivation. The farm fed us and we were never short of money. But all that has changed now” (<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Kochi/beneath-the-calm-many-a-tale-of-woe/article28265667.ece>). The author powerfully represents the problems that the island has landed in, with the arrival of modernity, where once the self-sufficient island turned simply into a waste with no drinkable water.

Kumaran is the symbol of the modern man, who steps out of the village into the city and drops back as a changed man after thirty-six years possessed with the greed of money, “For him Aathi no longer means rice, grain or fish. It means only money, money, money!” (205). He leaves Aathi in want of a new life, “because his desires were bigger than the mountains” (205). In the third chapter titled, ‘He Who Abandoned the Water-life’, Kumaran questions, “Should the son of a fisherman be only a fisherman? The offspring of a farmer nothing but a farmer? ...Staying here is a waste of time. If we are to get any work at all, we have to get out of this place and go somewhere else” (18,19).

Driven by the materialistic thought of the world, he starts thinking by breaking the traditional line of thought that the people of Aathi have followed for ages, protecting their land from the touch of the outside world. He is a character who perfectly represents the rebellious modern man. However, his intention of leaving the land was marked by a difference in view of others. Kumaran was not happy in the land he was born into. He wanted to flee away and ultimately he left behind all his loved ones and his land chasing the touch of modernity. His arrival after years is a symbol of the destruction that will come to the once celebrated land of Aathi. On the other side, characters like Dinakaran, Ponmani, Markose, Kunjimathu and others do not fall into the trap of the shimmers of the modern touch. They were not influenced by the flattering words and promises of employment, a better life and the touch with

the outside world. Love for the land is what binds them together to fight against Kumaran, for they understand that their culture and identity are tight to the land they inhabit.

Nature or the land touched by the greedy hands would mean losing the very essence of their lives and this they knew better than any other character in the book. Likewise, Kunjimathu's father also was a man who believed that humans give life to the land, "He belonged to a generation for whom the water had been salted by the rain of human sweat and not by the swell and sweep of the sea" (20). They were not swept away with greed but contributed to the development of the land through their hard work. Kumaran, on the other, had a different view from the rest. He did not love his own land, where he was brought up and despised it, "Kumaran was the first in Aathi to sell his land and leave" (22). He seemed to have lost any human feeling projected through the remark for his future wife-to-be Kunjimathu, "You stink of fish....Serves you right" (20). This sets a thought in Kunjimathu and she starts to question Kumaran whom she dearly loved:

What did Kumaran lack here? ...you could make enough to feed a whole family. Fish or mussels: enough to meet one's daily needs. Add to this the two Pokkali harvests from the paddy fields every year that anyone could reap. It was quite sufficient to live free from want (20-21).

Sarah Joseph also presents the picture of the abundance of what nature has provided the land with, in the following lines, "Everyone cultivated pumpkin, white gourd, spinach and beans for their own use. Every household had a cow, a buffalo, hens and ducks" (21).

Eventually greed overpowers Kumaran leading to the downfall of Aathi. The dream of Kumaran to transform Aathi into a developed city of huge profit turns into reality at the end of the book. In the name of development, he tries to transform the entire course of the village, cutting away the life line of the village. His plan of building bridges and roads halts the water life. This is the problem that modernity brings along with it. People of the modern era are absorbed with the idea of money. This brings to light the poem *Money Madness* by D.H. Lawrence:

“Money is our madness, our vast
Collective madness.
...It has got us down, we grovel before it
in strange terror.
...for money has a fearful
Cruel power among men .

Lawrence, a major twentieth century English writer, wrote this poem as his perception of the materialistic world. He presents the obsession of the world for money. An individual's worth is measured with the amount of money he holds. His concern here was a world that will be free of the greed for money, where people will realize the value of life and also serves as a prophecy of the future possibilities of killing one another for money. A glimpse of this terror can be seen in today's world where a person's life has no worth compared to money. Likewise, with the intrusion of modernity through Kumaran in Aathi, loss of lives became a regular sight as the ecosystem was disturbed to a great extent. Loss of lives was not particular to the people's lives but it included the other living organisms. A pictorial representation will be Aathi's Green Bangle that was once the life line of the people as well as other

species charred to ashes by the order of Kumaran to fill it with soil for development. The village of Aathi has sustained itself for years through the water bodies. The water provided them food and clean water to drink. It was known for the water bodies around the other villages. Every neighboring village heard news of Aathi's water bodies which results to their dismay as the village starts to shatter under the new forced control of Kumaran. The exploitation of land and water emerged with the arrival of Kumaran who only came back to Aathi viewing it as a means of making money for himself. The way of life of the villagers were drastically altered as their water-life was replaced with the touch of modernity like construction of roads, buildings, bridges which ultimately resulted in the spread of toxic waste and destruction of natural habitat. This led to the diversity of opinions among the people giving rise to death in the village, which was once free from all kinds of conflicts. Exploitation and pollution of land is a problem that comes by default in modern times.

Joseph, being a vocal critic of environmental degradation, holds on to this concern in the two selected works to be studied. Following this line, *Gift in Green*, revolves around the theme of eco-spirituality along with various environmental issues that have in a way plagued her hometown Kerala. Though the author gives special reference to Kerala, it also touches the universal problem of ecology throughout the world. The fight against the destruction of nature is explicitly shown through varied incidences in the novel. While Kumaran disguises his own profit in the name of development and promises to make the thatched Thampuran shrine covered in gold, much of the people fall for his words, despite of the fact that he is on the verge to alter the sacred shrine of the villagers, a reflection of which is also seen in the lines, "People prefer to believe what is more plausible rather than what is miraculous" in Kire's *Son of the Thundercloud* (116). Kumaran goes on to state that, "The pitiable

state of Thampuran's shrine is unacceptable to me"...The roof must be of beaten gold, the walls panelled with gold, the steps gold veneered, the lamp hut of burnished gold" (51-52). Kumaran's play of words here is a reflection of the modern man. People today have mastered the art of hypocrisy. The dark intentions are always hidden beneath, to fulfil one's corrupted desires and the writer projects it through the character Kumaran. Kumaran is therefore, a perfect representation of the modern rational man who has no emotions or sympathy for his people and is rather blinded by the hunger of money and power.

As the story unfolds, the eco-friendly culture of Aathi is seen through their practices on mutual love and care, respecting Mother Earth, story nights, selling and buying of land which was strictly prohibited to people outside of Aathi, not giving the greedy developers the chance to put their feet in the land, preservation and sustainable use of natural resources, "He would gather prawns worth Rs 300 to Rs 400 and then stop. Why gather more, as though there was no tomorrow" (47) etc., depicts their independence and empowerment for the people. As their ancestors fled the land of their ancestors because of ill-treatment and reached Aathi, they found water in abundance, "Water! Wherever they looked, water was all they found...The trees, the birds, the fish, the earth, the water- all beckoned them: 'come, come...' " (44). This was the picture of Aathi, untouched by human hands known for its water, the forest and the green bangle:

The crabs in the mangrove forest were green in colour...Not only were the crabs, the frogs, the butterflies, the grasshoppers and the snakes green in colour but even the wind that blew in the forest seemed green For that reason, the forest was affectionately called the 'Greenforest' (210).



Fig. 3.3. Backwaters. <https://www.google.com/search?> Accessed 25 May 2021.

Not soon, a reversal of the living condition then and now can be seen through the character Shailaja who was married off to Chandramohan in ChakkamKandam which was relatively a progressive place compared to Aathi. She was horrified at the sight of Chakkam Kandam, “The wells, the ponds, the channels, the streams and backwaters, which spread like an ocean in front of the house, were all covered with layer upon layer of shit” (80).



Fig. 3.4. Raw sewage poses livelihood threat.
<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/Raw-sewage-poses-livelihood-threat/article16142302.ece>. Accessed 22 August 2021.

She could not, “...think of giving birth to children after watching the children of Chakkam Kandam play in that black, gluey thing they called water?” (82). This leads her to going back to Aathi as she came from a place of abundance. Nonetheless, when Chandramohan visits Aathi in the midst of the conflicts to show his support he is dumbfounded, “How? How has this place come to such a sorry pass?” (226). The earlier question of Shailaja now lingered in his mind, “How could she touch this thick black liquid they called water? And live, enduring this stench strong enough to knock anyone unconscious?” (227). With all the pictures going around Chandramohan recalled how his wife would praise the water of Aathi, “Water was Aathi’s life...” (228).



Fig. 3.5. Pollution of the Vembanad lake surrounding the island has affected the water bodies in Valanthakkad. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Kochi/beneath-the-calm-many-a-tale-of-woe/article28265667.ece>. Accessed 25 September 2021.

Perhaps it is time for people to stop dumping of waste materials as it creates an adverse effect on the water bodies. Farming and fishing seemed to have become a distant occupation due to the impact of such irresponsible actions towards nature.

Further, the once lively and green Aathi was reduced to a dull place, “Fish and oysters have become scarce. People compete with each other fiercely to grab whatever there is...In the past, the water here had a sort of radiant clarity. Now it was continually muddy” (134). The novel therefore, depicts the environmental concerns of the writer as she describes the present day issues of Kerala. The image of water plays a significant part in projecting the novel’s plot, that is the degradation of society. To the end of the novel it can further be seen how nature has the power to cleanse and

purify itself conveyed through the rise of flood. Joseph, as a writer, paints the cruelty and destruction that comes along with the phase of development. The novel strongly puts forth the idea that it is only through the day-to-day relationship and activities towards harmony and sustainability, one can give to the well being and empowerment of the whole ecosystem.

‘Othappu’ (colloquial equivalent of ‘Uthappu’ is a word taken from the Malayalam (Catholic) Bible which means ‘a case in point’ or ‘to falter.’ “To cause ‘Othappu’ to others is to cause them to stumble or to go astray.” (Othappu xiii, xx)

Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side (2005) is Sarah’s award-winning trilogy of novels, *Aalahayude Pennmakkal* (1999) and *Maatathi* (2001). The novel unfolds colorful and thoughtful characters like Margalitha- the nun, Rebekka- the Pentecostal preacher who sings, prays, weep and heal others, Naasthikan George- the atheist-evangelist, Yohannan Kasseessa- the Syrian Priest, Karikkan- the Priest, etc., with Margalitha being the most dynamic of all. The novel entangles itself with religion, the class disparity that is inherent in the societal structure, women’s issues and one’s own play of individuality. The story starts with the end of the novel where Margalitha, the protagonist, is thrown in the *irritumuri* (a dark, stuffy, sultry room) by his brothers for believing to have brought shame to the family because of her decision to stop following the path of a nun. Thus, she is thrown into the dungeon to suffer without a care. After much humiliation from her family, we see how she evolves into a strong woman rather than quietly accepting all the rude conduct. This is a clear indication that the protagonist is undoubtedly a strong headed woman and someone who was ahead of her time. This novel perfectly represents the dilemma that people go through between religion and the modern world. It puts forward the very picture that humans no longer think good for others. There is no concern shown for the other person

though he/she might be at her worst stage of life. It does not provide any solution of what needs to be done or which path to choose but it allows the readers to think which makes the novel stand out. The pace of the modern world is rather like someone who is in a rush to go somewhere else. This very nature in a way proves to be a barrier for individuals to exercise his or her thinking skills and blindly accepting or following what has been given or made to do so. However, Sarah Joseph's novel brings in a different light, compelling the thinking ability to be in action after a long hibernation mode. As one continues to turn the pages, the presence of ecological concern can be felt as the author explicitly highlights in various passages.

The novel in a glimpse starts with Margalitha thrown into the dungeon by her family for renouncing the path of a nun that she undertook and switching back to her old life as an ordinary woman. As a child she has been raised in all its luxuries for the wealth that her father held. She was served by others all through her life then, and now she wanted to serve others. This was the very reason why she joined the convent. She shed away the comfort of her home and went on to live a simple life to serve others. Karikkan's story on the other hand was quite different. He was from a socially neglected background and poverty was his companion. He found comfort in the practices of the church. Therefore, as far as renunciation was concerned, he had none for which he should think over choosing the religious path. In fact, he considered that the real challenges will be after joining the journey to be a priest as he will taste the comfort there. Ultimately as the novel advances we see both the characters caught in the fascination towards one another, physically and emotionally which leads to them into an unescapable temptation, hence, committing sexual union which they had repudiated for following the religious path. This very act of the characters points back to the three vows that a Catholic priest and nun had to undertake- celibacy, poverty

and humility. Nonetheless, in this very text the characters are caught between the church, society and one's own individuality. Some characters succeed while others remain caught in the web without a way out. For father Karikkan, Margalitha is the catalyst for breaking out of the religious order. He rationalizes his vulnerability to her charms as altruism, to alleviate her distress. He is an instance of a fallen priest. He is tossed about and divided in his thinking, unlike Margalitha who steps out fully convinced about her decision. He struggled to make his faith as firm as a rock. Father Karikkan manages to rush to Margalitha in the forest house, neglecting the decree appointing him as vicar. Love bloomed between them and they fulfilled their bodily urges. The young cowardly priest, Karikkan, who doubts everything including his own faith, lives with her but abandons her when she turns out to be pregnant.

Joseph's female characters play an important role in shaping the text. She has created incredibly strong women characters whose presence over powers the men in all its essence. It is the perfect example of a contemporary feminist novel that empowers women to be determined and not think less of herself. Even when Karikkan leaves her after getting to know she was pregnant, Margalitha does not break down.

The novel unveils the conflict between spirituality and sexuality. It challenges the institutionalisation and materialism of the church disregarding its spiritual functions. The book presents the socio-psychological aspects faced by the major characters like Margalitha and Karikkan. Toasted between the material world and the obligations associated with the church.

As a writer, Joseph weaves characters who are marginalized but who also keep their identity and do not conform to the set norms of the society. For instance, Rebecca rebels against the conventional religion and finds her own spirituality

defying the religion she is forced to follow, Annamkutty, Yohannan Kasseessa's mother does not stop worshipping the Holy Virgin Mary even after sixty-four years of married life into a Syrian Christian family in a way representing the hypocrisy of the society, Naasthikan (atheist) George, supports inter marriages which leads to his support to Margalitha and Karikkan marriage as they were hunted down both by the church and the society. Augustine Achen known as 'Pattippunyalan' (dog saint) because of his love for all animals and nature, also he was the one who set up the statue of Saint Francis of Assisi and lit the lamp daily, was a rebel, living with the poorest and conducting holy gathering in the midst of nature:

"In Pattipunyalan's forest, there were rare trees, snakes, flittermouse, porcupines, rabbits, and butterflies...on either side of the path that led to the waterfalls, bamboos grew thick and copious. They swung and swayed in harmony with the rumbling of the waterfalls... Other birds were busy eating ripe fruits on the forest trees...The birds perched on the shoulder, head and raised hand of the saint. Rabbits played between his feet" (Joseph 130).

Besides being a carer of the needy people offering access to the spiritual services it is through this character that the concern of ecology is well put forward by Joseph. Pattipunyalan's forest is showered with all the natural abundances as mentioned above. Birds, butterflies, bamboo, green trees, etc., with nature's luxury, a place which flabbergasted Margalitha on her first visit to the forest.

Achen is also the very character who brings a change in Margalitha's views of life and spirituality. The abundance and green picture of the forest is again represented in a different shade when Margalitha goes off to visit and is astonished by the drastic change and questions:

Had she lost her way? As though they had been trapped in a huge forest fire, the skeletons of trees stood black and leafless...No woods, no bamboo groves, no stream or woods on either side. The woods have been consumed by forest fire (215).

This scene of the forest fire is similar to Anita Desai's *Fire in the Mountain*, where the entire forest is flamed into ashes depicting the harmful effect of forest fire which is practiced mostly for Jhum cultivation and also an awareness to the negligence of the people.

Further, Karikkan in his turmoil, with the rain pouring down heavily states, "Water was earth's peace" (13) which can be metaphorically represented of the present day state, where millions suffer because of the scarcity of water, hatred and conflict penetrates into the daily lives of the people hampering peace. In the story, it can be seen how, "water was the biggest problem...they had to go down the mountain and carry water up on their heads. Everyone, men, women, children, carried water: pale, pregnant women and the elderly with wobbly heads" (153). As such water serves as an important body in the book.

Instances from the novel depicts the presence of caste system seen through the character Brother Manikyan, the Dalit disciple of Augustine, who was not given the permission to become a priest as he was a convert from a low caste. This brings out caste system deeply rooted in the Indian psyche which is not ready to consider the Dalit Christians as equal to the other Christians. Mother Superior, another character "preferred the rich and the aristocratic" (61). Karikkan, also from a poverty stricken family, carried an entire responsibility to upgrade their status. His father worked tirelessly even in his old age to see his son placed in a better position, "Their son

becoming the Vicar would earn them a social prestige and honour they had never had before" (159).

Moving further, the issue of women being treated lower to men is projected in different instances, "The Channere sons...believed that women working outside the house lowered the prestige of the family and their wives had learned to share the same disbelief" (53). Margalitha was therefore treated as though she was never part of the family when she left the convent. As she escaped from the house, she had to go days with no food until Rebekka took her in. Needless to say, the growth can be seen in her life with the experiences she goes through.

Margalitha can therefore be considered as an othappu, or an offence to all the patriarchal institutions - family, church, law and even educational pedagogy according to the patriarchal structure. Through the character Margalitha, Joseph in a way also debunks the notion of a woman who is all loving irrespective of whether the child be hers or others. She has taken care of Naanu since he was born though not the biological mother of the child. As a strong woman Margalitha does not break down even after Karikkan leaves him behind after impregnating her.

Sarah Joseph has done a tremendous work in both the novels whether it be empowering or encouraging women through her female characters or presenting her concerns for nature. From representing the transition of Aathi to the strong headed woman Margalitha, Joseph has beautifully captured the problems and created an awareness to the readers to avoid circumstances and bring a change in the mindset of the people.

Chapter IV

Women Chained by Social Conventions

This chapter will explore the struggles that women undergo to make a living. It will also deal with how they are weighed under various responsibilities and have to go through hardships to live a life of their own and how society directs certain norms and conventions to make their living harder. Such issues have been skilfully represented by various writers in their works and one among them is Anita Nair.



A

nita

Nair,

https://www.google.com/search?q=anita+nair&rlz=1C1GCEU_enIN822IN832&hl=en&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjy_sHKubLzAhXqyTgGHS3GDRkQ_AUoAnoECAEQBA&biw=1366&bih=568&dpr=1&safe=active&ssui=on#imgsrc=mMUGJMs5vOwfM. Accessed 24 June 2020.

Anita Nair (1966) born in Kerala, deals mostly with women's issues like gender inequality, victimization of women, gender difference, seeking self, equality, liberty and independence in the male dominated society. As a novelist, she is a well-known figure not only in the area of Indian English Literature but also in World Literature. Nair was working as the Creative Director of an advertising agency in Bangalore, where her writing career started as her first book was written, and a collection of short stories called 'Satyr of the Subway'. This book won her a fellowship from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. Further, as a writer her second book was published by Penguin India and was also the first book by an Indian author to be published by Picador USA. Nair's novels, *The Better Man* (2000) and *Ladies Coupe* (2001) have been translated into 21 languages. The latter novel was a great success among critics and readers in 15 countries outside India from the United States to Turkey, from Poland to Portugal. It was also elected as one of the top five best books in 2002 in India. As a novelist, she is a well-known figure not only in the area of Indian English Literature but also in World Literature.

Ladies Coupe, is a novel that is much appreciated in the realm of Indian Writing in English. A strong novel that attempts to make women free of the sense of responsibilities that has been attached with the term 'gender role' which ultimately leads women to sacrifice everything without considering her opinions or dreams for the comfort and happiness of the other. This is a uniform picture of every household in the Indian context. Women are seen as a sacrificial being as though it is a sin for men to sacrifice his dreams and wishes which would have ultimately paved the way for the woman of the house to acquire education and work in varied fields in place of him. Nevertheless, women considerably have achieved certain rights today in comparison to the past. The Government of India has opened up multiple schemes for

girl child in the field of education like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) initiated on 22nd January 2015 in Panipat, Haryana to fight against gender-based abortions and promote girl child education through out the world, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana; this small deposit scheme for the girl child helps the parents of a girl child to save and set aside money for the child's college and marriage expenses, and many others.

However, the implementation and execution of the Programs or schemes does not provide any positive affirmation with regard to their position in the society.

Nair voices out this particular issue in her mentioned novel, creating chiefly women characters interacting and sharing their experiences with one another, some content with the structure and some facing the dilemma to break down the wall of tradition built by the minds of patriarchy. Varied degree of happiness is what each has achieved and in pursuit of by some women characters. A whole spectrum of experiences and emotions are revealed as the train journey begins. The majority of women characters represented are labelled as 'privileged' but discriminated against and marginalized on the ground of their gender.

The story revolves around the 21st century chief protagonist Akhila and her curious journey from Bangalore to Kanyakumari. As the central character she is most affected by the dilemma of whether to sacrifice her entire life for her family or try to live a life of her own after serving her family for years now. Akhila had to sacrifice her dream for being the eldest in the family irrespective of the gender that the society would have highly considered if not for the word 'sacrifice'. After her father's death she had to confine her dreams to the four walls of the house. For her mother, Akhila became the man of the family. She had to be the one to take care of Narayan, Narsimhan and Padma alongside her mother. Needless to say, she was only nineteen years old when the entire responsibility was put upon her shoulder. Under

compassionate ground Akhila was offered a job at the income-tax department where her father worked earlier. Pushing her desires, fantasies and dreams aside she held on to being a dutiful daughter and a sister until she turned forty-five years of age.

It goes without saying that like any other woman, Akhila also had the right to marriage, to settle with a husband, to have children, to own a house and to live a life of her own, yet she never could live a normal life because of the responsibilities chained to her.

The interview conducted to substantiate the arguments made above presents a rather clear picture of the sacrifices a woman has to make irrespective of gender. The interviewee Ms June (fictional name) narrates the afflictive story of her life. Being born and brought up in a struggling family she had to constantly put in more effort than any one her age. Soon after the death of her mother, the little happiness in her life seemed to have disappeared into the thin air. Not long enough June had to take the responsibility of the house though her father was still beside her, she was told to put a stop to her education. June's dream to be an educated woman and achieve her dreams were shattered. Ultimately a determined woman had to kneel down to the decision of the patriarch. Gave up education to take care of the family as the mother and so that the brothers and sisters could continue their education without any hurdles in between, yet the outcome of the sacrifice was not worth the harvest. Loved the younger ones like a mother since their tender age but what more can be painful to go through hatred and distasteful comments and treatment from the ones for whom she had to give up her dreams. Not a single act of appreciation or acknowledgement for the things the elder sister had done for them.

The similar situation is reflected in Akhila's life. She was never given any form of attention, care and love for the things she has done. Instead Akhila had to be the one to answer to her younger brothers and sister. Quite an ironic situation created by the people who had to offer immense love and care to Akhila raising them like a mother.

In order to reflect the issues that women face under the structure of patriarchy, Nair paints another five women characters of different ages, cultural upbringing, appearances, educational backgrounds and status along with Akhila who in the course of their journey will get to know the experiences of other women as well, in a society dominated by men. The journey serves as a diversion for the characters, principally, Akhila, "the smell of a railway platform at night fills Akhila with a sense of escape" (1) and also takes the form of a story telling technique to represent the myriad experiences of each individual. The urge to allow herself to think beyond her family is perceptible through the constant dream of a train. Nonetheless, it has remained as a dream and for half of her life the only thing she did was, "dream about the rest" (1). Akhila is a realistic character representing each woman of the present time with their own suppressed struggles and dreams. She very much echoes the character Nanda Kaul, a widow settled alone in Carignano, Kasauli from *Fire on the Mountain* by Anita Desai. Desai as a writer, epitomizes much of the women characters trying to break away from the fetters of unending responsibilities and forming an ideal space for self, away from the expected role of a sacrificial being. Nanda Kaul like any other woman will reflect on the amount of the trays of tea she would have to make and carry to her husband's study than to her mother-in-law's bedroom, even to the veranda and... "Too many meals, too many dishes on the table, too much to wash up after" (Desai 32).

As an obedient woman, Nanda Kaul has worked tirelessly for the family that in due course of time was not reciprocated with the same amount of love she has bequeathed upon them. She was exhausted therefore, she found her little share of happiness when she was able to finally move out of the house after her husband's death, "It was the place, and the time of life, that she had wanted and prepared for all her life" (ibid, 3). She was tied to the house before her husband's death but after the death she could feel the sense of liberating herself from the years of responsibilities that she has fulfilled with much submissiveness.

Question of living for self or by self:

Akhilandeswari, like any other 21st century woman, carries the question in her heart as to whether she, as a woman can live her life alone, "Can a woman live by herself" (21). This is a continual question for women in general compared to men. Today the society witnesses working women unlike the primitive days where women were supposed to be happy in the space given by the patriarch of the house or the society at large. The concern for this raised question can be understood in a more visual representation through the realistic proposition of the interview conducted and highlighted briefly on working women who supposedly are coping alone quite well. Most of the women are spinsters or widows with no attachment to the in-laws for varied issues. They seemed happy leading a satisfied life through the interaction. One among them works in a Government office holding a fairly high post. She is a divorcee and a single mother. When enquired about the question of living for self and by self, the reply seemed pretty genuine as she describes herself to be satisfied in life, looking well after herself and the loved ones without depending on any one for financial matters. Perhaps this is the reason that she never thought of another marriage. The other interviewee is without a well settled job and a spinster in her mid

40s. Her narration takes the readers back to the struggle and the social stigma she had to face as she decided to remain a spinster. In spite of all the challenges she did what she desired and proved that women can take care of themselves without the protection of men. In fact with even the little salary that she receives she looks after her nephews' admission and other expenses.

The last interviewee in her late 30s was lost with the death of her husband. Uncertainty and hopelessness loomed across her life with two children patiently waiting for her. A realization that hit her that women need to be equally independent financially. According to the statement, she was continuously looked down and not counted in for multiple gatherings as she was deprived of a male protector now. Nonetheless, society's cold reaction made her stronger to stand and voice for herself. Not soon she starts to earn a little by selling vegetables and this helped her realise her worth and assert her individuality.

Nair has therefore, projected quite well through the character Akhila, who has been projected as a working woman and had to sacrifice for her family at a young age putting a hold on her dreams and desires. Society barely acknowledge the sacrifices made by women while trumpets will be blown in case of men.

Often, a woman is questioned by society when she starts living for herself and this is a concern for women in general. Society seems to have a problem with all the decisions taken by a woman for her life. While man can run free and decide and live his life according to his own free will. Needless to say, Kamala Das therefore, has appropriately compared a man to a river and a woman to an ocean in her poem *An Introduction*. He has the least restrictions giving him enough space and liberty while on the other, she is bound and confined to a limited space not allowing her to grow or progress in other aspects besides the household chores.

Decision Making:

Following the patriarchal structure, the decision making is left exclusively on men. A woman can barely decide for herself, leave aside society in general. No doubt, the living condition of women has improved comparatively. However, the rules and the mind-set towards the gender remains the same. This is an era of modern life with reserved thoughts. Society has hardly any changes to accept. The most basic discrimination starts from the family itself. A vivid picture offered by Mahesh Dattani in his play *Tara*, where Tara the character represents the entire women folk who are curbed. Dattani, skilfully represents how a male child is preferred over a female child. Tara's mother reveals how they decided to save Chandan and not Tara because of the social stigma associated with it. Nonetheless, both survived and her mother's guilty conscience is displayed through the love she tries to bestow upon Tara. A perfect example where women are also chained by the social stigma. Social stigma defined by Merriam Webster is "a set of negative and often unfair beliefs that a society or group of people have about something", something that the society believes in without any proof. This sums up in short the intention of the society in general towards a group of people who are vulnerable in this world. Women need to stop their concern over the social stigma that they worry so much about. Whether one follows the structure or not is least counted. The blame is ultimately bound to fall upon the woman. Women ruin their own life by suppressing their voice and being submissive.

The issue of sexual abuse, domestic violence, child sexual abuse, rape, etc., tops the list of exploitation towards the gender. Since time immemorial women have suffered more, than any section of the society. Varied writers represent the violence that has been committed towards women in their works. Temsula Ao, a much

acclaimed Naga writer painfully portrays the horrified experiences of women through her female characters, Apenyo, the protagonist and her mother Libeni in the story *The Last Song* from the Story Collection titled *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone*. It takes courage to imagine the terrifying event that unfolded with the daughter-mother duo. Being an easy prey to terror and violence, it is apparent how Apenyo and Libeni were targeted to carry out an inhumane act by the band of the Army soldiers. The daughter was raped mercilessly as she continues to sing till her last breath and Libeni jumps off to save her daughter though armless, “rushed forward with an animal-like growl as if to haul the man off her daughter’s body” (Temsula Ao, 28) aware of the consequence that will follow up for her. Ultimately, she meets the similar fate as her daughter. Nevertheless, this short story speaks volumes of the resilience that women uphold within. Regardless of the dismaying incident, the courage that the female characters disclosed is a demonstration of the strength each woman possesses. Thus, making them strong and capable rather than vulnerable.

Women though play the role of a multi-tasker they are not given the required appreciation and acknowledgement. To lead a woman’s life is a task for all. The struggles and hardships they are bound to encounter in every phase of their life is real but with the strength that they over power even the bitterest experience is worth commendable. Various studies show the number of crimes inflicted upon women. Child sexual abuse likewise has never remained indifferent from all sections of the society and is a worldwide concern. The news flashes on the screen each time or is heard off with the wind carrying it to all directions. In most cases, child abuse is carried out by the woman of the house and sexual abuse by the man of the house. No

doubt, male children as well undergo such experience but the rate is much lower compared to a female child.

Further, gender violence is an issue prevalent in the society but people are not likely to accept it and prefer to ignore it as though it is a trivial problem or even as something that does not exist in the society itself. However, people try to portray it, the fact will not change that even today the society struggles with gender preference leading to gender violence. Preferring one gender over the other particularly between men and women is an issue faced by all, though does not mention it openly. The closed mind-set of the people gives birth to such preferences. Another reason could also be for the majority of women being unemployed in the professional space. People are bound to carry a biased attitude towards a working woman and a woman who has dedicated her entire life in serving the house. A woman with no professional work is looked down on in her personal space compared to a working woman. Education plays a vital role in shaping and debunking such an approach towards gender. Instances depict the same in Indian society where women by nature have been placed at a lower place than men. A woman with a professional job is given due respect in the in-laws family and even by the society, nonetheless, it is not the same for the women who are labelled as home makers. The struggles of women is a well-defined representation of this flaw that exists in society. The society applies the double standard policy with regard to this indifferent outlook towards women. A working woman is what they require for marriage, but will not let her work after her marriage. The society is not ready to educate the daughters but none wants an under-educated daughter-in-law. Certainly, there is little transition that can be observed with time. Nevertheless, much needs to be worked at, accepted and achieved for women and any

living creature deprived of basic rights and dominated by another creature considering them superior than the other.

In the novel *Mistress* (2005) Nair presents the universal man-woman relationship in addition to extra-marital affairs which can be diagnosed in most of the relationships. Nevertheless, slightly different from the conventional affairs of men as it talks about the female character in love with a foreigner, ultimately falling into what her heart desired. Nair's concept of a free woman transcends the limits of economic or social freedom, and focuses more on her mental and emotional attitude and also her wellbeing.

The book covers various aspects dealing with infatuation and obsession irrespective of religion, marriage, legitimacy and conventions, as analysed through the characters. Further, through Radha and Chris, the writer also highlights the issue relating to premarital and post-marital sex. The three major female characters in the novel; Saadiya, Angela and Radha belong to different time and space, yet they are connected to one another, as they all have a bond with Koman. Saadiya is none other than Koman's mother, Angela was Koman's ex-girlfriend and also Chris' mother or Radha is Koman's niece and now Shyam's wife. The three characters get affected by the numerous shifts of environment from their natal place to their marital life. In addition, the different cases of interplay between the characters are expressed through navarasas- the nine phases of human emotion.

One of the major characters Saadiya, daughter of Haji Najib Msdoof lived in Arabipatnam and raised from a very orthodox and conservative family. Sethu on the other hand, a Hindu orphan was trained as a health inspector who worked under the supervision of Dr. Samuel. Sethu was made to accompany the doctor wherever he

went on medical rounds irrespective of the place. It was one in one such round that Sethu crosses paths with Saadiya in Arabipatnam and without a second thought falls in love. Needless to say there were religious differences between the two. An issue which has been in existence since time immemorial. With the progress in modernity, even today, it remains one of the most controversial topics. Society rarely accepts the idea of two people getting married with different religions as each has their own differences. Thus, when Saadiya's parents are informed about her love for Sethu, a Hindu boy, she is bound to be expelled from the house. She approaches Sethu and he takes her in with the confidence that his mentor will help him but it does not turn out to be the way he imagined and Dr. Samuel asks them to leave immediately. In due course of time, Saadiya gets pregnant and gives birth to a male child. The religious differences creep in as predicted by Dr. Samuel and their days of arguments and quarrels start with the arrival of the child. Saadiya insisted that "Khitan" be performed on the newly born child while Sethu tried to convince her not to perform such things to a little boy born just days ago but Saadiya was strong headed being brought up from a rigid structure of religion. Eventually, the regular and routines disagreement and arguments led to their unhappy marriage and the suffocation forces Saadiya to commit suicide.

Koman is the son of Saadiya and Sethu. Like every father would, Sethu wanted to give his son a good education but he is an average student and his interest lies in the art of Kathakali. His father supports and also encourages him to learn the art of guises. At last his teacher, Aashan, trains him for many years to make him a good Kathakali dancer and succeeds in making him one.

The other character, like Angela, of German and Spanish origin is also a student learning the art of Kathakali under the same teacher, Aashan. She has been Aashan's student for almost 2 years and was working on her dissertation work.

Soon she enrolls herself in Koman's class as a student and starts to find him attractive as he is usually a playful, mischievous and an affectionate teacher. Angela starts falling for Koman because of his generous and romantic nature. They end up with an affair and start living as husband and wife. Problems however, were bound to take a turn as Angela grew ambitious for recognition and fame through Koman's art of Kathakali while Koman had no dreams to gain fame.

No doubt, the author decided to bring in various shades of characters so that the themes of adultery and lust can be interwoven together in the novel. For a short span of time Angela and Koman move to London with immense love. Nevertheless, their happiness is short-lived. His stay at Angela's house soon starts to trigger his male ego and for survival he starts working in a hotel. Very soon Koman is unable to cope and leaves for India.

Chris arrives in India with a specific purpose to meet Koman and expresses his proposal to stay for a while with him to write a book on Koman's life as a Kathakali artist and the art of Kathakali. Alongside working on his book he also wanted to confirm his paternity. He is entwined between his mission and his obsession for Radha. Shyam from the beginning never gave him a good impression for he felt as though he was welcomed sometimes and most of the times unwelcomed. Chris' mission ends in futility as he is not able to get any answer of his father's identity nor develop a permanent relationship with Radha and part ways with their heart broken.

Shyam as a young boy was in love with Radha. Since his childhood days he would weave foolish dreams in hope to possess her one day at any cost. The fact that

she had a premarital relationship with a married man is barely of any concern to him as he thinks that it was an innocent relationship and would gladly marry her.

Fortunately, Radha's father puts forward the wedding proposal and his family seemed to have no issue except his sister Rani Oppol. She assumes that his brother has been forced into the marriage, "You can get any girl you want. You don't have to be saddled with her just because we owe her father a debt of gratitude" (122). As was anticipated, he marries Radha for he always wanted her. They were married for 8 years without a child and ultimately the marriage turned into an unhappy one. Soon Shyam grows ambitious and starts expecting Radha to behave in a certain way and also to be a dutiful wife.

Arabipatnam, Saadiya's place itself is represented as a place where people seek for an identity of their own. Gender issues have been well projected by Nair as the effort of all men is to restrain the freedom of women at all cost in every aspect of life. Women in Arabipatnam are deprived of the outside world. They are bound at home and the sky is just a small blue patch for them. This is ironic in the sense that the sky symbolizes infinity and freedom but it is not so for women in Arabipatnam. Saadiya was punished by Haji, her father when the news of her being out reached him. Haji punishes his daughter for even thinking about freedom out of their place.

Characters like Zuleika and Ummama instead of supporting Saadiya emphasize on the male ideology trying to prove that men are always right and any desire for freedom should be suppressed. Saadiya's sister Nadira too also falls under the category of women who still are reluctant to step out of their home or land which is supposedly protected.

Comparing Saadiya to the other female characters, she clearly stands as a forerunner of a changing mind set of the closed minded society and also as a representative, a prototype of all who seek liberation. In the course of meeting Sethu, a new Saadiya is discovered as she no longer remains the timid Saadiya.

Nair has created different women characters with varied personalities. Some follow the categorised roles set by the patriarchal society while very few are able to pull themselves out of the limited space and the confinement they are caged in.

Rani Oppol on the other hand is symbolized as a tormentor for Radha. Rani was not happy with Radha's marriage with her brother thus, she keeps nagging her and tries to find fault in everything that she does and that becomes a little too much for Radha to handle her all the time. Rani wanted to prove to Shyam that Radha was not the right wife for him which is the reason she tries her best to degrade Radha in every possible way. Nair through this act of Rani Oppol skilfully makes her point that women do not support or encourage each other, rather turn to hate each other without any sense of love or care for the same gender.

Shyam for a fact also felt insecure for Radha and his business. He was worried if Radha would overpower him and dominate the business as everything that he had belonged to Radha. Thus, we see Shyam's change of attitude and forcing his will onto Radha, a usurper in his thoughts, and saying, "...women like to be made to feel like women, dominated and put in their place..." (164).

Shyam is on his way to nourish and follow the male ideology of being superior to anyone. Marrying Radha was his prized possession and being the girl from a rich family with everything provided by her father, Shyam felt intimidated as he belonged to a lower class comparatively. Therefore, looking at Radha enjoying her life and barely concerned about the tradition and conventions makes him exercise his

authoritative right. Therefore, he starts subjugating her after marriage to win his authority over the home and for his own mind too. Eventually he gets engrossed in his cravings so much that his only focus and concern was to earn as much money as he can.

Hence, Nair creates a series of different characters filled with their own struggles and experiences which makes them all stand apart from each other. There are characters who had to go through mental traumas while some were searching for their own identity. Identity crisis therefore, becomes a major theme in her work. Also the mess that certain characters create ruin their own lives and relationships along with the lives of others. The psychological conflict that certain characters go through are depicted clearly through the struggles and challenges they encountered and experienced in their lives. Religious differences also plays a very important role in the lives of the major characters and the people associated with them.

Chapter V

Comparative Analysis

Stupid Cupid:

Mamang Dai's *Stupid Cupid* unfolds with the character Adna, represented as a symbol of the Modern woman. A woman who defies the following, age-old traditional practice of women being submissive to all the decisions and is in turn is broad-minded and progressive. Contrasting images of multiple women have been carefully chosen and illustrated by the writer. Adna, as the first woman character, is quite established in life after several struggles of her own. She, very much like her aunt, whose story is never spoken of by her own family members who is believed to have tainted the family name, wanted to be with the person she loved, out of her hometown. Adna's aunt is the epitome of not confining to think within the four walls, to go beyond and ensure the happiness for self as well as debunking the pre-structured feminist mind set of the society.

Adna as a character is filled with uncertainty. She has never questioned the man she loved knowing he was already married. His care, attention and love were all she desired that made her happy. Amine (Adna's friend and business partner) had tried to question the future of Adna with her lover, yet it barely had any effect on her as she was deeply in love with him. Adna was a woman for whom companionship did not mean that she should be married to the person, the thought that her man loves, pampers and takes her to places is what makes her content in the current life she is living. Perhaps for some Adna's love for her man might seem proper while for others it might be taken as a bold step trying to break away from the age-old tradition of marriage being a necessity to be with the loved person. However, the question to be

posed here is, why should Adna be with a man with whom they will have no future?

Is she not taking away another woman's husband and ruining their family by

developing an affair? What was the need of the man to ruin the lives of two women?

In most cases this possibly could also be the reason why women are

Mareb is quite the kind of girl, freed from the cocoon of the traditional line of thought. Like her aunt she followed what she wanted to and fulfilled her dream of helping people who, according to her, face the similar concern of being looked at with suspicious and curious eyes of the society. As a lone girl in a wide-ranging City, alien to the people, culture and way of life, it perhaps was not easy for her. She followed her passion, she believed in her heart to walk past the existing restrictions that chains women in the four corners of the house.

Adna's cousin Jia too represents the racial discrimination that the Northeast people faced at large. It goes without saying that the people of Northeast have been the subject of target for multiple reasons like their physical appearance, food, lifestyle, and so on. Jia therefore, becomes the mouthpiece of Dai to highlight such issues experienced by the concerned group of people. Jia and her friend run through a woman in Delhi who passes them a racist remark that makes Jia terribly furious over the woman questioning their nationality and citizenship.

The Northeast people seemed never to be free from the derogatory term of 'chinky' because of the physical appearance being different to that of the Indian Mainstream people. Certainly, such differences are to be abolished for the welfare of all, yet, the process is gradual and their citizenship is challenged and mistaken for a Nepali, Chinese, Japanese, etc. Prejudices are formed based on the look of the people which ultimately result in certain discrimination, harassment and violence.

Recurrently they are thought of as “immoral and sexually promiscuous, a backward subject from the misty jungle, an anti-national rebel, a Chinese national, and a privileged elite benefitting from Government reservations.” (Mcduie-ra, 87). Such is the attitude formed about the people from Northeast.

Amine’s death offers a change to the story as Adna decides to return to her village for not feeling safe in a place unknown to her. The then Adna who loved the anonymity of Delhi longs to be at her home again. While, Mamang Dai projects independent and modern women characters who defies the societal norms set for them and steps out to live a life on their own, on the other side, she also calls attention to the connection of home or the root each individual is bound to carry within themselves.

The Legends of Pensam:

Dai presents a picture of the community life of the Adi tribe in particular. The way these people have lived in harmony with nature for years and preserved the natural resources from being polluted or touched by human hands.

Mamang Dai as a writer reflects the life of a closely knitted community living in the remotest part of the villages. She has always tried to represent the cultures and traditions of her land to the outside world through her writings. Many of her books deal with the history, the different tribes, rituals, and customs of the northeast people, but more insight to the way of life of the state of Arunachal Pradesh. The writer presents the picture of how the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh have always lived in harmony with nature. The tribes preserve traditional customs and spiritual beliefs that make it possible for peaceful coexistence with nature and the natural world. In her works she has written extensively about the culture and history of Arunachal Pradesh.

The women characters in the stories are depicted as strong women both physically and in their determination to carry on their normal routine filled with climbing slopes to collect firewood. Female characters like Mona and Pinyar are headstrong, similar to Akhila and Margalitha. Faced with certain circumstances, they showed great resilience in making a life of their own against all odds. Similarities can be found in Joseph's *Othappu* where the people of Pattipunyalan forest struggles to fetch water going down the mountain on a regular basis. The imagery of water is highlighted equally by Dai, Joseph and Nair. Such importance offered to the image of water speaks volume of the condition or the situation that the contemporary society is going through. Unlike the past where rivers seemed to offer nourishment, clear and drinkable water to the people, the situation has a major transition. Easterine Kire's work *Son of the Thundercloud* (2016) offers a different picture of the river where the river serves as the major component of providing food to the people in the village.

A pictorial image of then and now related to the water bodies in Nagaland has been added for reference. The disturbance in the cycle of nature is clearly projected. The river has been disturbed to such an extent that it is no longer fit for drinking or even to wash clothes. Men have turned the river into a source of nothing.



Fig. 5.1: Chathe River. <https://morungexpress.com/nagaland-chathe-river>. Access 14 July 2022.



Fig. 5.2: Chathe River. <https://morungexpress.com/chathe-river-nagaland>. Access 14 August 2022.

The water that flows in the river now is polluted to such an extent that it is likely to take a long duration to sanctify. How can any living creature live beneath water that has turned everything into a toxic element. The question of hygiene for people also drops in. This has a major impact on the people as rivers are mostly the primary source for freshwater. This issue serves as the final bell for the people to be careful while handling the natural resources and to step forward to implement measures that will be helpful to the people in general.

The arrival of modernity and the shift from a closely knitted community-centred people to that of a fragmented one can be seen with the progress of the stories.

It is altogether interesting to also note that the first story is titled “boy who fell from the sky”, while the last one is titled “on stage”. Thus, there is an obvious transition from what is rooted in myth and folklore to that of a modern concept of performance. Eventually, by the end as well, there are certain talks about filming a documentary on the Adi people. Furthermore, the concept of writing in itself shows the gradual change from being an oral society to one that started producing plays and also went on to stage them.

Gift in Green:

Gift in Green talks about the major disaster that hits Aathi known for its green scenic environment. The first half of the novel presents the scenic view of the village, nevertheless, the second part of the story deals with the drastic change that came upon the land of Aathi, a place that was known for its green surroundings in abundance to sustainable resources reduced to ashes in the ground. A place that was famous for clean water around the surrounding villages turned otherwise later.

The illustration of the book cover speaks volume of the content. The paintings by Shereef K and cover design by Shuka Jain represent the concern of ecology in today’s world. The title of the book also stands appropriate to the content of the book. Not only does the book offer a peep into the problems and struggles of the various characters but also highlights the ecological crisis extensively. From emphasising the importance of preserving the natural resources to projecting the realistic picture of the greedy world, Joseph has woven a tremendous work which will ultimately be followed up as an awareness book for the future.

The book deals with the environmental issues that need genuine care, attention and measures in the current time. No doubt, development or progress of society is a

predestined process as long as life continues on earth. Nonetheless, proper measures are required to be taken to preserve the ecosystem, reconsidering the future generation. Through the narration of the unique practices and eco-friendly culture of Aathi, the novel opens up the possibilities for life practices that are possible on mutual love, care, and respecting Mother Earth. The Story nights in Aathi which brings together the people on one common ground, selling and buying of lands strictly confined to the inmates of the place, prohibiting greedy people to step foot on the land, proper preservation and sustainable use of available natural resources etc., are channels of independence and empowerment for the people to live in harmony. Needless to say, when anyone from the community went out of these rules, the whole village had to pay for the huge loss and catastrophe as witnessed with the progress of each chapter. Also certain characters who went after development and modernity could not find either peace or comfort. Such characters like Gitanjali steps into Aathi seeking a cure for her daughter Kayal's mental turbulence and Shailaja too leaves her bridegroom's village, ChakkamKandam, to remain attached to the purity of Aathi. However, the irony of Shailaja's village, Aathi, getting more polluted compared to that of her husband's village also points to the concern and critical analysis of environmental destruction and its huge and wide-spread negative impact on the whole living and non-living system. Joseph re-emphasizes the need and the requirement of the hour to understand that development does not only imply physical progress, but also in consideration for the well-being and happiness of people, the forebodings concerning the environment and the impact of invasion over nature and women.

Kumaran is a brutal male character in the novel who goes through an extensive transformation from being a village boy to that of a corrupted city bred. His transformation is such that he is occupied with the thoughts to transform his village

Aathi into a “township crackling with industry” (156) like him. With the power of money he grows greedy enough who is left to think on how to multiply his money. into a “township crackling with industry” (156). He abandoned the natural life of Aathi and sought a wealthy life outside.

After thirty-six years, he returns to Aathi as a wealthy man, and is unable to adapt himself to the village environment and seems to have lost touch with all his memories of the village. The villagers including his friends who have seen and been with him earlier could hardly recognize him. As a matter of fact, though he returns to the village as a flourished man, leaving aside the people, the land also could not recognize the face of Kumaran and once his friends could only utter, “I know you not” (24), as he is the only individual responsible for the destruction of Aathi and its prosperity.

Kumaran steps into Aathi with a plan to completely transform Aathi into a paradise of modernity as he believes in. As a wealthy man now, he had quite a lot of men working under him who ultimately helped him to plough the riverbed, to crush the empire of oysters, to trample the growth of mangrove forest and to threaten the birds of Aathi in their own home. Thus, the transition of Kumaran from a village boy to an influenced wealthy man goes in alignment with the transition of Aathi from a green village filled with overflowing resources into a dead one. The activity of following up modernization therefore, entirely disrupted the agrarian life of Aathi and caused violence to the female character Kunjimathu who had been with him showering immense love. She was betrothed to Kumaran but eventually because of his greed he escapes from the village and Kunjimathu’s life to seek materialistic happiness. He does not only seek to run away from his homeland but also symbolizes his escape from the natural life of Aathi in order to make money.

Joseph skillfully raises the environmental issues faced by Kerala in this novel.

According to Suneetha, some of the places in Kerala are fully affected by:

water contamination, lack of proper waste disposal systems, dumping of biomedical waste in waters in rivers and water bodies, the use of endosulfan to ensure profit in farming, the problems of landfilling, destruction of marshes, disposal of plastic and biomedical waste and so on (104).

When Shailaja steps in ChakkamKandam as Chandramhan's bride she could not accept the fate that she has to live her whole life in such a place therefore, declares it as a place unfit to live and begs her husband to drop her back to Aathi. One reason for instance being the toilets where in many of the lodges in the place have no proper septic tank and thereby create a very pathetic situation for the people there to live. Not only that but the excrement from the toilets usually falls into Valiathodu, a large canal and makes its way to ChakkamKandam. This without a doubt makes the living condition unhygienic as it produces a bad smell and results in making the people living nearby to fall sick. The waste from the toilet "stays undegraded and breeds disease causing bacteria and microbes and has already become a health hazard for the people in the city" (93). Such was the scene and the reason behind Shailaja's outburst as a new bride in her husband's place.



Fig. 5.3: The Disconnect: Living without Sanitation.

<https://aperipheraltwist.blogspot.com/2014/07/living-without-sanitation-around.html>.

Accessed 18 August 2021.

The image represents the sad reality of many places where the living conditions of the people are compromised because of negligence as read in Joseph's works.

Additionally, Joseph also portrays another type of issue which is caused through the biomedical waste, the biomedical waste which is dumped into the immediate environment from hospitals. It is further proven that each patient generates around three hundred grams of biomedical waste every day. Shailaja, therefore, who works as a sweeper in a hospital is concerned about the waste that she dumps daily into a large toilet bowl inside the hospital. The waste collected by all sweepers are "blood, leftovers like placenta, severed umbilical cords, sanitary napkins, bloodsoaked rags and cotton packs" (72) and will end up in a waterbody close by the hospital.



Fig. 5.4: Dumping of medical waste from Kerala sparks concern.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2020/mar/14/dumping-of-medical-waste-from-kerala-sparks-concern-2116493.html>. Accessed 8 September 2021.

These activities will have a paramount impact on the living beings causing destruction to nature. Therefore, definite measures should be taken before it gets extremely late to revive nature at its best.

Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side:

Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side is Joseph's award-winning trilogy of novels, *Aalahayude Penmakkal* (1999) and *Maatathi* (2001). *Aalahayude Penmakkal: Daughters of God the Father* is a novel that illustrates the story through an eight year

old child, Annie, from Kokkanchira which is considered a place unfit for human settlement utilized for dumping waste like; carcasses and dead bodies. The set of people who reside in the area are mostly scavengers, and other marginalized groups of the society, sidelined by the higher class of the society. Joseph emphasizes on the importance, inclusion and acknowledgement of these sections of people in the society. Besides, it also talks about the way these people are affected leading to their displacement in the name of development and urbanization. *Maatathi* was a continuation of the novel *Aalahayude Penmakkal*, nevertheless, the novel stands independent from the earlier work as it talks about the individuality and insecurities of a young girl.

The novel unfolds with the colorful and thoughtful characters like Margalitha- the nun, Rebekka- the Pentecostal preacher who sings, prays, weep and heal others, Naasthikan George- the atheist- evangelist, Yohannan Kasseessa- the Syrian Priest, Karikkan- the Priest, etc., with Margalitha being the most dynamic of all. Othappu is basically the story of a nun who decides to step out of her convent life and free herself from the shackles of religious and societal norms because she feels herself not ready to pursue the vocation in all the ardour it demands. Margalitha is also faced with protests from her family and society which treat her as a black sheep.

Women characters like Margalitha and Rebekka stand outside the patriarchal norms of “cultured women” through the assertion of their sexuality and individuality. Like the female characters of Mamang Dai, Adna, Mareb and Jia, who did not let the society break them but rather chose to follow what they desired, showed tremendous transition and courage to step up from the existing structure of domination. Akhila as well from Anita Nair’s *Ladies Coupe*, also brings to light a woman who seemed to have suppressed her happiness for a long period with the societal obligations but at

the end realises the need and the urge to break away from such rules imposed mostly on women. All these women characters are therefore, not confined by rules that govern society or gender relations. They have transcended such cultural definitions and the femininity ideals. However, some critics are of the opinion that Margalitha is still confined within patriarchal ideals of femininity as she does not think twice and submits her body to Karikkan. Nevertheless, the female characters along with Margalitha and Rebekka question the generally accepted premises of insistence on female chastity in Kerala society.

Ladies Coupe:

The central character of the book, Akhila has always desired to explore beyond the four walls of her home which is apparent in her longing to escape as she experiences the scenes at the railway station. How she would have fled if not for her family. Akhila is very similar to Adna in many ways. Adna left her hometown to pursue her dream in Delhi and eventually kicked off an affair with someone outside of her community. The act highlights something that most communities have certain hiccups with especially when it is to deal with a woman. Adna nonetheless, barely bothered herself with that and went on to live her life by opening a hotel to allow lovers and friends to meet without being judged by the society. Akhila, likewise, though chained by the family responsibilities after her father's death and taking the role of a father figure for her brothers and sister along with her mother, was never really appreciated for the love and sacrifices she showered and had to make in serving the family. Although in due course she sets herself apart from all the responsibilities, now that they are all settled with their own family. The negligence on their part creates a strong urge in her to wait no more and get on the train, which is fulfilled by her.

The novel further speaks in volume about environmental issues that need proper care and attention in the current scenario. Development of society is an inevitable process as long as life continues on earth, however, proper steps ought to be taken to preserve the ecosystem keeping in mind the future generation.

Akhila was brought up as an obedient first born daughter and grew up in an orthodox family. As a young girl she was confined and trained within the limits of customs, tradition and beliefs. Her father, following the patriarchal structure, is the head of the family who considers everyone else in the family as secondary to him. Likewise, Akhila's mother too considers herself as inferior to her husband and also waits upon him and serves him food demanded of a typical Indian housewife, "Feast, feast, my husband, my lord and master" (47). Akhila's mother also falls under the category of women who do not have an opinion of her own, "It is best to accept that the wife is inferior to the husband (14). Another similar character is Mareb's mother from *Stupid Cupid*. Like Akhila's mother, Mareb's mother too is an obedient wife to her husband because she was trained to be one.

Akhila's family will have food only after the father has eaten. She was never given the freedom that she ought to receive and in addition the gender is what led to the restriction to live life on her own terms unlike the male counterpart. Caste issue is also highlighted as her family considers themselves superior to other castes. An instance is when Akhila suggests to her mother once to give music lessons to be independent, the mother replies that all kinds of people will enter the house. Unfortunately, the father, head of the family dies in a road accident but Akhila believes it to be otherwise though she keeps the assumption to herself.

After her father's death, Akhila was given a job in the office where her father worked. Very soon even in her young age she started taking care of the family and eventually ended up playing the role of the head of the family only in financial aspects. Even though she has worked for the family by sacrificing all her dreams and desires she is not given the power to make decisions. It is in fact the younger brothers who became the decision makers because they were men and not women. In due course of time when she was already in the age of forty-five, Akhila decided to finally break free of all the responsibilities and live a little for herself. At last she embarks on a journey to Kanyakumari. The escape was courageous on her part as she liberated herself from the conventional and orthodox Tamil Brahmin life that played a major role in confining her freedom and individuality.

In the ladies compartment of the train, she meets five other women; Janaki Prabhakar, Margaret Shanthi, Prabha Devi, fourteen year old Sheela, and Marikolunthu. Each one of them embarks on their own individual journey to find their inner self.

The first character to be introduced is Janaki Prabhakar who was content as a wife until she realized the value of her freedom and independence. Like a typical housewife she was dutiful towards her responsibilities as a wife and a mother but gradually realized over time that she doesn't have an identity of her own. Her individuality is attached to that of a wife, daughter-in-law and a mother. This is the ultimate condition for most of the women to feel lost of their worth and value. Likewise, Janaki, now forty-five years old, has always lived under the protection of her family. Needless to say, she felt exhausted from being a fragile, protected creature and expresses, "I thought if I were to lose it all, I would cope. If I were to become alone, I would manage perfectly. I was quite confident that I think I was tired of being

this fragile creature” (23). The narration makes Akhila realise how she is one of the women who has been kept under the protected realm of her husband. Nonetheless, Janaki also makes herself clear about the change in her thought seeking liberty as she was not content even though she was taken care of. She was constantly in search of her roots.

The next character is Sheela Vasudevan, fourteen years old who is the youngest of the six women in the Ladies coupe and learned from a young age from her grandmother that it was essential for a woman to be content with herself. Following Sheela’s gender and age, who has barely any idea about masculinity and femininity, Hasina (Sheela’s friend) was seduced by Hasina's father, “The touch of his finger tingled on her skin for a long time” (66).

Prabha Devi’s husband Jagdeesh offers comfort and delight to her and the way she has been taken care of and throughout felt that she was the luckiest person on earth. In New York, she felt quite lost in the glamorous world and therefore, decided to dress herself up and attract others. When her husband’s friend Pramod was allured by her beauty, she realizes the distress caused by the glamorous life. She was once a virtuous wife and loving mother. She feels guilty and regrets for not having an identity of her own.

Margaret Shanthi, was a gold medalist in chemistry and barely 22 years old when she first met Ebenezer Paulraj, her husband. Like any other, the affection and love that Margaret had for Paulraj was magnanimous and his, “features were finely chiselled and he was tall and well built, with a dark complexion. I fell in love with him...” (101). Be that as it may, the happy days did not last long after the marriage as Paulraj would most of the time have problems with the way she looks, dresses or

talks. There was barely any love or affection showered from his end as a husband. Margaret felt the the anger reached the peak when she was forced to go through abortion and the cold reaction of Ebe, “For the first time, I felt angry. All the best! What did he mean by that?” (109). It made her rage grow bigger as he treated it as a very casual situation. The issue of abortion is also highlighted skilfully by Nair through this scene. Abortion has become quite rampant among the youth of today. Unsafe abortions lead to morbidity rate also risking the life of many young women. Sexual intercourse has become an easy access to young and the old as a consequence of which there are multiple situations and cases of unwanted pregnancies. A controversial topic which questions the idea based on the moral, legal, medical and religious aspects. Nair has done a tremendous work in framing the issue in such a way as to arouse further discussions or thoughts to the readers.

Marikolunthu, 31 years old, was the last woman left in the coupe. Her life has not been easy as she was physically and mentally abused as a young girl by Murugesan, a relative of her voice and tore at my body” (239). Even after the truth was revealed that she was raped, she had to struggle and was told to marry her rapist on the context of, “...Husband’s protection” (246). Such an incident highlights the status of individuality and independence that remains missing for women. The general view of the society is how it is a ‘requirement’ or ‘necessity’ to have a male figure protecting a woman. Temsula Ao in her short story *The Last Song*, speaks of the hypocrisy of men. While on one hand they are labelled as the protector, on the other he is the one to violate the women to prove their masculinity. Likewise, Teresa Rehman in her work, *The Mothers of Manipur: Twelve Women Who Made History* (2017) highlights a similar issue where the Indian Armies are the legal protectors of

the nation and the people as a whole, but ends up corrupting the body of the daughters and mothers of the nation which should be their duty to protect it all cost.

Marikolunthu, as a matter of fact, was traumatized by the incident that turned her life upside down. She was frightened and wanted to forget all that happened. Needless to say, the pathetic reality of the society is the patriarchal structure which makes it easier to blame women rather than men. Eventually, it was the same process followed for her and instead of punishing the rapist, Marikolunthu was blamed for what happened to her. Nonetheless, she did not give in and retaliated to marry the rapist. The incident ultimately made her stronger and built her confidence. The old Marikolunthu would surrender her wishes and happiness for others but the new Marikolunthu after all odds decides to live her life for herself.

Therefore, through the myriad characters and stories of other women in the *Ladies coupe*, Akhila takes a look into her life. As a character she is able to overcome her fears and understands the meaning of her life. The experiences and the traumatic narration of different women makes her realise her worth and value as a woman. She has been dominated for many years by her mother, brothers and sister without showering any respect, love or appreciation for the things she has done for them. At the end, she does what her heart desires and leaves them aside to pursue her happiness. The Coupe becomes a platform for them to express themselves and support each other. Finally with everyone narrating their experiences there is a bond of sisterhood that is created among the women from different caste, class and age. That being the case, Nair emphasizes on the empowerment of women through the lives of multiple female characters.

Mistress:

In the novel *Mistress*, Nair deals with the changing status of man-woman relationship and also the revival of the art of Kathakali . As a writer she delves into the human psyche through her characters. Her writing skill as a novelist is worth the praise as she is able to evoke incidences from daily life of the people offering a realistic taste to the readers.

The title of the book ‘Mistress’ has a multi-layered history. It can generally refer either to a woman having an illicit sexual relationship or, can also denote it to someone who is in perfect control of her art. The decoding of both the versions i.e., the sexual connotation and the competence skill possibly dates back to the later middle age.

The story begins with the travel writer Christopher Stewart who arrives at a resort in Kerala to meet Koman, a famous Kathakali dancer who lives and plays in a world of masks and repressed emotions when he gets onto the stage.

The novel revolves around the major characters Radha, Shyam and travel writer Chris. With the arrival of Chris, Koman and Radha for a reason find themselves drawn towards him. Shyam, on the other hand, does not really favour Chris but tries his best to keep him happy as he is one of the occupant of his hotel. Without much knowledge of the things sparking up between his wife and Chris. Shyam becomes the helpless observer as they embrace each other with passion and impulsiveness that is beyond their understanding as well. A certain attraction developed between Chris and Radha of which none were aware of. Koman, Radha’s uncle though observes everything between them, does not comment much on their passionate affair as he wants his niece to be happy.

Radha is further compared to the mythological figure Radha leaves her and Radha, the character also feels that Shyam has desolated her. Radha, the strong character and the protagonist of the book is an embodiment of self-assertiveness and determination. Initially, like the other female characters Radha also grew up to be an obedient daughter to her father then to her husband after marriage. Like Janaki from *Ladies Coupe* who has been taken care of by her father before marriage, later by her husband after marriage and by her son after her husband, Radha also goes through the similar process of being looked after by a male figure throughout her life. Thus, it restricted the way to her freedom and individuality. In the midst of certain conflicts in life where she realised the reality of their marriage as performing mere duties and responsibilities with barely any love between them (Radha and Shyam), Chris arrives as a savior for Radha. She has stopped believing in following certain cultural practices that only holds back women rather than men. Shyam following the patriarchal structure has been authoritative over Radha, though the entire property belongs to her, she was not given any financial independence. He constantly wants her to look good when in the company of others. Nonetheless, she finds herself exhausted of Shyam's attitude and forbids the superfluous cultural impositions and at the same time her unhappy state of a wife to Shyam, a businessman, who runs a restaurant called the Nila.

Shyam barely offers her the freedom to express herself and assumes that she is not happy, "What is she unhappy about" (15). He is rarely seen being concerned for his wife and rather treats her as his prized possession along with the resort, "...for Shyam, I am a possession. A much cherished possession... he doesn't want an equal; what he wants is a mistress." (53). Mostly as an obedient wife her thoughts and expressions are often cluttered and she becomes mute and voiceless. Shyam only

objectifies her but does not realise that stays under self assumption that Radha has been provided all that she needs in order to be happy.

Eventually, Radha falls into the temptation she had for Chris and commits adultery with him. The whole action proves Radha to be the woman who revolts and will voice out at the subordination if practiced towards women. Margalitha from *Othappu*, projects a related situation where she is tossed between her spirituality and her affection towards the priest. Ultimately she submits to her temptation with the man she loves.

Shyam, on the other hand is a typical male Chauvinist, trying to be authoritative to Radha by directing her to act in a certain way based on his whims and fancies. She is treated like a mistress by her husband without any kind of love shared in their relationship. Thus, the novel's triumph can be measured based on the way Radha came out as a bold character instead of silently accepting or suppressing her desires for the marriage. Needless to say, the mental constructs and the preconceived negative image of the 'mistress' is deconstructed. Rejection against the norms set for women to regard husband as the master or superior and the rejection of conventions that women ought to suppress their desires speaks volume of the victory as she submits herself to the sexual pleasure from Chris. Hence, Radha prioritized the self rather than the social norms set for both the genders. Nair, therefore, through her character conveys the message that doing something different cannot be viewed as inferior, but rather a courageous act. Characters of Mamang Dai, Mareb and Adna also face the struggle of falling in love with men who were not from the same community and also for Adna, the man that she loved was a married man. Irrespective of all the hurdles, the female characters triumph over the conventional approach to such issues.

All the three writers share the similarity of creating female characters. Some of their female characters are timid and submissive while others are bold. Some are obedient to the existing patriarchal structure while others question such structures. The spectrum of female characters with varied characteristics and qualities are what sets them closer to each other. In Spite of the difference in region or place, their works clearly highlight the universal condition of women across the globe. Likewise, their concern for the adequate use of natural resources should be given due regard. It is through these words they are doing a bit on their end to protect and preserve the ecology while it still can be.

Language since time immemorial has served as the dynamics of the evolving society. From the family to the outer world, as a child to adulthood till death. Language is a powerful tool to shape society and the world into a better phase. Perhaps, the cause of gender differentiation could be for the kind of language used. Many times in day to day life people often make use of certain words to demarcate men and women per se. Whether it be an abusive, slang or derogatory term, the majority of the terms are related to women. This also gives the picture that language holds a patriarchal status. The politics of language will continue until voices are raised for such a root cause. Needless to accept the fact that home environment plays a key role in uprooting such a stereotypical mentality from the minds of the people. It is preferably suitable and possible to make changes starting from home. The universally acknowledged colour for a girl child is pink and blue represents a boy child. With the world progressing rapidly in multiple aspects and areas, revealing the gender of a child has become a trend. On such occasions the colour pink and blue is all the time used to denote gender. A boy child for that matter is trained to think that showing emotions or being sensitive or fragile is a feminine quality that cannot be possessed

by him. He is taught to be strong and never shed tears, for he will be labelled a girl if such action is adopted by him. A barbie is always bought for a girl child while a car or a toy gun for the boy child. These factors that take place at an early age from the home itself shapes the mind of both the gender.

Inter-tribe/caste marriage:

India at large is a diverse nation with multifarious religion, further categorised into different classes and stature. The rich getting along with the rich is the standard practiced by the society and the poor have none but the poor. The negative idea of caste or tribe also finds its place in almost every household and the world in the larger picture. Experienced stories from the past have always remained an interesting aspect for consideration. Extensive manipulation is done to show each section of the society as being better than the other. Society is never open to inter-marriages. Several factors go into account for such marriages to take place successfully. To substantiate this argument, the interview conducted on wide-ranging sections of people from different walks of life exhibit a clear indication of the preference each set of group has in consideration to marriage. The identity of each interviewee kept closed as requested:

1. Ms A: As an educated entrepreneur in her mid-twenties she is doing well in her set goals. However, she reflects a different notion when talking about the idea of marriage. Like most people, she has also confined herself to marrying someone from the same tribe. Therefore, has expressed loss over someone who goes on to marry someone from a different tribe.
2. Mr B: A well accomplished academician and an Assistant Professor, he believes in the flexibility of inter marriage. Not confining himself to the structure followed by most people. He sets himself apart from people who are

adamant in following the notion of marrying from the same community, tribe or caste.

3. Ms C: Though not thoroughly qualified she had a rather neutral opinion with regard to the concept of intermarriage in the society. She believed in the idea of individual choices not chained by the norms of the society for marriage.

Therefore, with diverse people, caste and race also comes in diversified opinions on marriage. Nevertheless, a particular tribe will constantly have issues with the rest of the tribe or community. From a tender age, one is trained on matters of which community he or she belongs to and with which community he can associate.

Irrespective of the fact that all women characters are Indian, the experiences, sacrifices, emotions and stories are diverse in nature. These aspects of Dai, Joseph and Nair sets them apart from one another. No doubt, the issues and their concerns are relatively quite similar yet have a specific importance of their own. The secret lives and experiences of each woman character portrayed by the writers creates a bustling factor in the works.

The characters of Mamang Dai though Indian citizens are discriminated against because of their race and region being from Northeast. The people of Northeast have been the target of stereotypical mindset and this has been the concern of many Northeast writers to break the chain of such issues. One such contemporary writer is none other than Dolly Kikon, a Senior Lecturer in the Anthropology and Development Studies Program at the University of Melbourne, who captured the problems that the Northeast people have to encounter on a daily basis outside of their region in the metro cities. Kikon in her work *Leaving the Land: Indigenous Migration*

and Affective Labour in India (2019), talks about the youth of Northeast India migrating to metro cities like Bengaluru, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Thiruvananthapuram for job opportunities and studies. Works in the hospitality sector, mostly as service personnel in luxury hotels, parlours, shopping malls, restaurants and airlines. Perhaps such a profession also contributes to the stereotypical mindset of the mainstream people to think low of the people from Northeast.

The ecological concern portrayed in the works emphasises on the impact of modernity over the environment. Works like *Gift in Green* and *Legends of Pensam* attempts to draw the attention of the readers by following up with certain consequences of the excessive use of the available natural resources. Sarah Joseph talks of the issue related to environmental pollution, especially the use of the imagery of water as differentiated between the land of Aathi and ChakkamKandam. Religion is also another topic touched by all the three writers in their works. Hence, Mamang Dai, Sarah Joseph and Anita Nair through their works has done tremendous work in portraying the double issue, one that women and the other being the ecological concern.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION

Since time immemorial various factors have been in existence keeping the society engaged in multiple conflicts. Likewise, the underrated issue of women seems to be taking a different turn. The society is barely in support of such issues raised for further consideration. Nevertheless, the progress, particularly in the education sector, has brought tremendous changes in the status of women tied by a patriarchal structure. With women being able to receive the knowledge of letters and succeeding both in private or public sphere, it becomes apparent of the transition that women have gone through for years. Modernity, needless to say, has sprinkled considerable relaxation to women at large. The ecological crisis is another paramount matter to be addressed to.

Following the study, the major concern of ecofeminism as a movement and theory is to deconstruct the existing social structure and encourage it to form a new structure with the foundation that all living things have equal value and worth. Needless to say, ecofeminism is a theory that also sheds light and connects the exploitation and domination of women to the environment. The ecofeminists' believe in the idea of treating all living organisms as parallel to one another.

Ecofeminism does not only mean a movement that has aroused the liberation of women and nature as pointed out by Rosemary Radford Ruether but a liberation from all kinds of domination, subjugation of living creatures and social hierarchy from the society. Nonetheless, ecofeminism is an embracing term that puts effort to address continuing and current issues like gender relations, social and economic system, relation of human beings with Earth, cultural differences and so forth.

The term 'bias' is what encourages domination of one gender over the other, a culture over the other, a class over the other, a caste over the other, the mind over the body, the reason over the emotion, etc. Thus, Mamang Dai, Sarah Joseph and Anita Nair focused on all these aspects of the lives of women, the way each character had a different struggle and problem to deal with in their lives.

Mamang Dai as an indigenous writer presents the close community ways of life, the significance of Nature for the people and how Nature is an inevitable part of the lives of the people in the village. The writer has undoubtedly weaved a commendable work to depict the problems of a village showing her concern over deterioration of a green land to a faded land. As Northeastern regions are known for agriculture as the means of earning livelihood and filled with natural habitat all around, Mamang Dai takes the readers for a tour into the hills, rivers, villages and myriad lives of people forming a village. The readers are transported from the hustle and bustle of the mundane life into an adventurous and simplistic life of the village people who tend to be more close with nature for they find happiness and peace in the midst of nature.

The thesis has dealt thoroughly with the select novels of Mamang Dai, Sarah Joseph and Anita Nair, reducing it to the ecofeminist perspective that the writers have projected through their multiple works. The comparison of the three writers is to depict how their concern for women and nature remains the same though geographically distant from each other. This also calls for an upliftment among women from different walks of life as they share similar views for such issues mentioned above. Women irrespective of the place/region have faced the similar sufferings because of the practice of patriarchal structure in Indian society. Thus, the ultimate objective of this paper is to offer a wider perspective of what a woman is- her

importance and the role she plays in a man's life, the family and the society in general. It further extends to the equal respect that has to go hand in hand to that of a woman. The Western categorisation of man superior to women, culture over nature, reason over emotion, etc., has influenced the mind so much so that people have lost track of basic etiquettes that needs to be maintained among each other irrespective of gender, class, caste, etc., and towards nature, animals and all animate as well as inanimate creatures or objects.

Appreciating and acknowledging a woman for the things she does for her husband, children and the family will not lift her above anyone but will empower and encourage her no matter how exhausted she may have been serving the family. Giving her equal opportunities both in the personal and public sphere will lead to the development of the society and the world in a broader perspective. The change starts from the root i.e, the family itself. The family serves as the microcosm of the outer society. Thus, any change in terms of providing equal education to both the gender, economic stability, job opportunities, etc., can be achieved when the family and the society are ready to unlearn the conventional restrictions put towards women and are prepared to accept and learn the importance of equality and equity without any form of domination or discrimination. Following the liberation of women, nature along with animals and other forms of oppression based on class, caste, culture, social status, etc., should be removed.

The study seeks to create awareness and educate people to step out of their narrow corner and help in endorsing the idea of a society which will be free from any kind of discrimination towards any living creature, class or gender. The motive behind choosing the three writers is to make their works known to the reader community and the issues they tackle through their works in myriad ways.

It has never been easy for a woman to survive in this male preferred world without going through a wave of any form of discrimination solely based on gender. Comparatively women have been doing brilliantly in terms of education and other aspects as well, nevertheless, it is also a universal fact that no matter the amount of qualification she receives at the end of the day she will have to make that cup of tea for her brother, guests and relatives. Her gender reduces the top notch degree that has been acquired into a mere certificate in paper. Practically, she is still the same old girl who has been assigned gender roles by society.

Perhaps it is time for the human kind to understand the differences are bound to exist between a man and a woman but one should not be looked down as inferior to the other. Differences on the basis of sex or gender cannot be the criterion to measure inferiority or superiority of status. A woman is as equal as the man and vice-versa. As Simon De Beauvoir in her work *Second Sex* (1949) states that physiology cannot be the factor to decide the value of a woman and a man. One condition that puts women behind men is the manner in which their mind has been trained to think and adapt to all the changes or everything that happens as her fate or being very normal. She has become comfortable in confining herself to the limited space allotted to her not thinking to explore beyond, getting into the skin of giving birth, being a mother and looking over the house. This makes her stagnant in life by not approaching what she really can do or achieve. It is upon her as an individual to fight for her rights, to be enthusiastic, broad minded, to have the spirit of and the zeal to achieve the set goals for herself, no one can push her beyond her limits but herself. Needless to say, this is one factor that will make her stand at par with her male counterpart.

Social stigma is also a problem that women have to deal with. For instance, Celine from *Ladies Coupe* who was sexually abused and raped by her friend's father had to leave the house and town in shame of being pestered by the society.

Owing to the ecological crisis certain weather changes can be experienced today. Besides this, major cutting down of trees can be witnessed for varied reasons which include, commercial purpose, natural disaster precaution, craft, firewood etc., without a proper solution or alternative to replace the trees that are to be cut down.



Fig.6.1: Urban Stakeholders discuss Dimapur and Kohima's Waste Problem, <https://easternmirrornagaland.com/urban-stakeholders-discuss-dimapur-and-kohimas-waste-problem/>. Accessed 18th July 2021.

Such clogged drainage also hampers the hygienic living conditions of the people causing multiple health issues. A similar foreboding is presented in Joseph's *Gift in Green* where Aathi is reduced to ashes from being a green land.



Fig.6.2: More than 400 trees cut down in Nagaland's commercial hub Dimapur, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/more-than-400-trees-cut-down-in-nagaland-s-commercial-hub-dimapur-101666288547929.html>. Accessed 25th October 2022.

Cutting down trees seems to be the easiest way to solve problems related to the current issue of natural disasters which results because of man's carelessness

towards such cases. If man carries forward the attitude of adopting such a solution without taking proper or alternative measures the impact on ecology will be terrifying.

The measures to tackle such issues will be to come up with plantation drives around the specific spot where trees are to be cut down for development or other purposes. Alternate steps will have to be taken up before utilizing the existing resources to the maximum so that the cycle of nature is balanced. However, to propagate such steps to the people in general will not be an easy task. Therefore, sections of people have to be targeted in order to spread the practice and implementation of women issues and ecological concerns. Hence, it is through these writers that the concern is spread among various sections of the society. The young generation are to be the target of changing the existing mindset after going through works written that are concerned with various issues at large. The reading culture has gained tremendous followers especially with the young generation of today. This makes the works of writers raising issues concerned with the society turn into not just a mere book or text to be read or a story to be a channel of escape but rather serves as awareness novels or texts that offers a lesson along with consequences that will follow up if men remains reckless and negligent towards the primary issues being raised through these works.

An ecofeminist approach will make the society a better place and open the closed mindset of the people to readily accept certain changes with regard to basic rights that are to be provided to women as well. Not only will it focus on women's issues but also on the marginalized sections of the society, prioritizing the issue of ecology. Urbanization has brought major changes in all aspects of societal life. Needless to say, it brings along with it destruction as well as development for all living creatures and it is important to differentiate and take measures based on the

drastic changes that take place along with time. Ecofeminsim as a theory does not seek to prioritize women over men but it simply focuses on the equality of opportunity that has to be equally offered to women along with the other marginalized sections of people. Alongside the ecological concern that the writers have raised in their works arouses an urgency in their tone to mankind to start treating nature in ways that they deserve to be treated. Such works offer a wider platform to focus on the issues that are a major concern and threat to life on earth. Literature thus, serves as an important tool to connect people back to nature and also deconstruct the old followed mindset of women being incapable and sensitive compared to men. A just society will thus prevail if the issues raised are taken into consideration and proper measures adopted to enhance the idea of a green ecology.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCE:

Dai, Mamang. *The Legends of Pensam*. Penguin, 2006. (Abbreviated: TLP).

---. *Stupid Cupid*. Penguin Books, 2009. (Abbreviated: SC).

Joseph, Sara. *Othappu: The Scent of the Other Side*. Translated by Valson Thampu. Oxford UP, 2009.

---. *Gift in Green*. Translated by Valson Thampu. Harper Collins, 2011.

Nair, Anita. *Ladies Coupe*. Penguin Books, 2000.

---. *Mistress*. Penguin, 2005.

SECONDARY SOURCE:

Abraham, Taisha, editor. *Feminist Theory and Modern Drama: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*. Pencraft International, 1998.

Abrams, M.H, and Geoffrey Galt Harpham. *A Handbook of Literary Terms*. Cengage Learning India, 2009.

Bill, Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. Routledge, 2000.

Aston, N.M. *Trends in the Twentieth Century Literary Criticism*. Prestige Books, 1998.

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Viva Books, 2013.

- Bell, Vikki. *Feminist Imagination: Genealogies in Feminist Theory*. Sage Publication. 1999.
- Buell, Lawrence. *The Environment Imagination*. Harvard UP, 1995.
- Castle, Gregory. *The Blackwell Guide to Literary Theory*. Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Chandra, Joseph, and K.S. Antony Samy. *Classical to Contemporary Literary Theory*. Atlantic Publishers, 2012.
- Chaudhuri, Supriya, and Sajni Mukherji, editors. *Literature and Gender*. Orient Longman, 2004.
- Childs, Peter, and Roger Fowler. *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Routledge, 2006.
- Choudhury, Bibhash, editor. *Nagaland University Anthology*. Macmillan, 2010.
- Coupe, Lawrence, editor. *The Green Studies Reader from Romanticism to Ecocriticism*. Routledge, 2000.
- Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford UP, 2000.
- Daimari, E. "Images of Women in Mamang Dai's Fiction." *New Academia*, vol. II, issue. IV, Oct. 2013, pp. 1-6.
- Dandwate, Mona, and Neeta Audichya "Anita Nair's "Ladies Coupe" The Patriarchal Set-Up of the Indian Family Life." *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd)*, Vol 3, Issue 4, June 2019, pp.1322-1324. Web. <https://www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd25081>. Accessed 28th February 2021.

- Das, Ira. "Status of Women: North Eastern Region of India versus India".
International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, Vol 3, Issue 1,
January 2013. <http://www.ijsrp.org/research-paper-1301/ijsrp-p1322.pdf>.
Accessed 12 October 2020.
- Dass, Noble Veena, editor. *Feminism and Literature*. Prestige Books, 1995.
- Desai, Anita. *Fire on the Mountain*. Vintage, 1977.
- Dreese, N. Donelle. *Ecocriticism*. Peter Lang Publishing, 2002.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. 2nd ed., Blackwell, 1996.
- Elwin, Verrier. *A New Deal for Tribal India*. India, 1963.
- Freedman, J. *Feminism*. Viva Books, 2002.
- Freud, Sigmund, and James Strachey. *The Ego and the ID and Other Works: (1923-1925)*. Vintage, 2001.
- , et al. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle; Group Psychology and Other Works*.
Vintage, 2001.
- Fromm, Harold, and Cheryll Glotfelty, editors. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. U of Georgia P, 1996.
- Furst, Lilian, R., and Peter N. Skrine. *Naturalism: The Critical Idiom*. Methuen & Co Ltd, 1971.
- Gaard, Greta, editor. *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1993.
- Jain, Jasbir, and Avadhesh Kumar Singh, editors. *Indian Feminisms*. Nice Printing P, 2001.

- Jung, Carl Gustav, et al. *The structure and dynamics of the psyche*. Routledge, 2014.
- Kheirabadi, Saheleh. "The Women's Liberation by Preserving their Value and Dignity in Modern Society of India in Anita Nair's Novels." *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)* ISSN (Online): 2319-7064. <https://www.ijsr.net/archive/v6i10/16101702>. Accessed 5th September 2020.
- Kikon, Dolly, and Bengt G. Karlsson. *Leaving the Land: Indigenous Migration and Affective Labour in India*. Cambridge UP, 2019.
- Kripalani, Krishna. *Modern Indian Literature: A Panoramic Glimpse*. Nirmala Sadanand Publishers, 1968.
- Mcduie-ra, Duncan. *Northeast Migrants in Delhi: Race, Refuge and Retail*. Amsterdam UP, 2012.
- Merchant, Carolyn. *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World*, 2nd ed., Routledge, 2005.
- Misra, Tilottoma, editor. *The Oxford Anthology of Writings from North-East India: Poetry and Essays*. Oxford UP, 2011.
- Nayar, Pramod K. *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory*. Dorling Kindersley, 2014.
- Nguzhulie, Kevibeinuo. *An Ecofeminist Study of the Select Works of Easterine Kire and Anita Desai*. 2018. Nagaland University, MPhil Dissertation.
- Pal, Bhaswati. "The saga of women's status in ancient Indian civilization". *Miscellanea Geographica*, Vol 23, Issue 3, 31 July 2019. Web. <https://doi.org/10.2478/mgrsd-2019-0012>. Accessed 11 October 2020.

- Pankajakshan, Dhanya and Nandini Nagar. "Female Subjugation in Anita Nair's Ladies Coupe." *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, Vol 9, Issue 5 (2021). Accessed on 24th February 2020.
- Pathak, R.S. *Modern Indian Novel in English*. Mogha Printers, 1999.
- Plumwood, V. *Feminism and the mastery of Nature*. Routledge, 1993.
- Ray. K. Mohit. *Studies in Literary Criticism*. Atlantic Publishers, 2001.
- Rice, Philip, and Patricia Waugh. *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader*. Hodder Arnold, 2001.
- Showalter, Elaine, editor. *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Woman, Literature, and Theory*. Pantheon, 1985.
- Singh, Sushila. *Feminism Theory, Criticism Analysis*. Pencraft International, 1997.
- Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. Routledge, 1999.
- Warhol. Robyn, R., and Diane Price Herndl, editors. *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*. 2nd ed., Rutgers UP, 2006.
- Warren, Karen, editor. *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1997.
- Waugh, Patricia. *Literary Theory and Criticism*. Oxford UP, 2016.
- Worster, Donald. *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination*. Oxford UP, 1993.
- Wortmann, Simon. *The concept of Ecriture Feminine in Helene Cixous's "The Laugh of the Medusa"*. Grin Verlag, 2013.
- Zehol, Lucy, editor. *Women in Naga Society*. Regency Publications, 1998.

WEBLIOGRAPHY

Ao, Tamsula. "Identity and Globalization: A Naga Perspective." *Indian Folklife* 22 (2006): 6-7. Web. 24 May 2012.
<https://indianfolklore.org/journals/index.php/IFL/article/viewFile/308/327>
 Accessed 12 October 2021.

Arambam, Kapil. "Meira Paibi: A Brief Story of the Women Torch Bearers from Manipur". <https://kapilarambam.blogspot.com/2016/02/meira-paibi-brief-story-of-women-torch.html>. Accessed 15 October 2020.

Beyond the Boundaries: A Study of Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupé*, Nida Ambreen. *South Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, vol 2, Issue 1, 2021.

Butler, Judith. "Sex and Gender in Simon De Beauvoir's Second Sex." *Yale French Studies*, pp. 35-49.
https://www.jstor.org/stable/2930225?searchText=the+second+sex+simon+de+beauvoir&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dthe%2Bsecond%2Bsex%2Bsimon%2Bde%2Bbeauvoir%26so%3Drel&ab_segments=0%2FSYC-6451%2Ftest&refreqid=fastly-default%3A9c9a431ad3b29f8b304d125fa3656a47#metadata_info_tab_contents.
 Accessed 2 July 2022.

Cherry, Kendra. "How Does the Secondary Process Help You Delay Desires?" 19 July 2019, www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-secondary-process-2795874.
 Accessed 28 July 2020.

Cherry, Kendra. "The Reality Principle According to Sigmund Freud." 10 Jan. 2020, www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-reality-principle-2795801. Accessed 19 July 2020.

Dai, Mamang. "Negotiating change with memory", Interview with Subhash N. Jeyan. The Hindu Literary Review January 3, 2010. <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-literaryreview/article900329.ece> Accessed 2 September 2021.

Estok, C Simon. "Shakespeare and Ecocriticism: An Analysis of 'Home' and 'Power' in 'King Lear.'" AUMLA 103, May, (15-41).

Express News Service, The New Indian Express, 2nd june 2020, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2020/jun/02/lacking-smartphone-to-attend-online-classes-class-9-girl-sets-herself-ablaze-in-kerala-2151154.html>. Web. Accessed 13th July 2021 .

Hagiwara, Natsuko. *Ecological Feminism: Word Map: Feminism*, edited by Ehara & Y. Kanai. Tokyo: Shin-yo-sha, (292-317).

Hanghal, Ninglun. "Meet the woman who has been leading Mizo women's push for Legal Reforms for 40 years". June 14 2018. <https://www.thebetterindia.com/11629/mizo-women-for-legal-reforms-empowerment-pi-sangkhumi/>. Accessed 19 October 2020.

<https://acspublisher.com/journals/sajssh/archive-issues/2021-feb/beyond-the-boundaries-a-study-of-anita-nairs-ladies-coupe/>. Accessed 25 November 2021.

<https://feminisminindia.com/2020/02/28/k-saraswathi-amma-pioneer-feminist-literaturemalayalam/>. Accessed 8 October 2020.

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. <https://ignca.gov.in/divisionss/janapada-sampada/northeastern-regional-centre/introduction-arunachal-pradesh/>. Accessed 23rd June 2022.

Karmakar, Rahul. “India at 70: In Nagaland’s men-only politics, one woman is shaking up the system”. Updated, August 11, 2017. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-at-70-in-nagaland-s-men-only-politics-one-woman-is-shaking-up-the-system/story-FlcukYjclQkwt0Ddq8A7BO.html>. Accessed 15 October 2020.

Lonjam, Ibotombi. “Nupi Lan – the Women’s War in Manipur, 1939: An Overview.” <http://themanipurpage.tripod.com/history/nupilal.html>. Accessed 14 October 2020.

Lucy Vashum Zehol, *Status of Tribal Women*. <http://dspace.nehu.ac.in/bitstream/1/2733/1/Status.pdf>. Accessed 4 August 2022.

Mcleod, Saul. “Id, Ego and Superego | Simply Psychology.” *Simply Psychology*, 5 Feb. 2017, www.simplypsychology.org/psyche.html. Accessed 19 August 2021.

Merriam Webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com>. Accessed 22 September 2021.

Miles, Kathryn. *Ecofeminism: Sociology and Environment*. 21 Nov. 2017, <https://www.britanica.com/topic/ecofeminism>. Accessed 19 September 2020.

Naorem, Mohen. "Nupi Lan (Women's War of Manipur)." December 24 2008.
Accessed 15 October 2020.

Nuzrat, M. Benazir, and B. S. Mohamed Haneef. *Hegemonic Power, Patriarchal Domination and the Progression of Tribal Womanhood in Stupid Cupid of Mamang Dai*. [http://www.oijrj.org/oijrj/feb2019-special-issue\(01\)/09.pdf](http://www.oijrj.org/oijrj/feb2019-special-issue(01)/09.pdf).
Accessed 2 July 2022, 11:00 AM.

Purdue Writing Lab. "*Psychoanalytic Criticism // Purdue Writing Lab*." *Purdue Writing Lab*,
www.owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_literature/literary_theory_and_schools_of_criticism/psychoanalytic_criticism.html. Accessed 19 July 2020.

Sharika, C. "Valanthakad islanders battle commuting and livelihood issues". July 3 2019. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Kochi/beneath-the-calm-many-a-tale-of-woe/article28265667.ece>. Accessed 22nd October 2021.

Shriya. Six Women's Movements from the North East that you should know of. May 4, 2017. <https://feminisminindia.com/2017/05/04/six-womens-movements-north-east/>. Accessed 18th October 2020.

Sridharana, P., and, Dr. T.Ramakrishnan. "Feminist Perspectives in Anita Nair's Mistress". <https://adalyajournal.com/gallery/165-jan-2722.pdf> Accessed 23 September 2021.

Sudarsan, Surabhi. "Coronavirus India: 17-year-old girl commits suicide due to lack of money to buy a smartphone for online classes". World Asia, 9 June 2022, <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/india/coronavirus-india-17-year-old-girl->

[commits-suicide-due-to-lack-of-money-to-buy-a-smartphone-for-online-classes-1.1591722490820](#) Accessed 16 July 2021.

The New Indian Express._ “Valanthakad listens to its own tale.”_ 13 July 2011 12:43 AM,

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2011/jul/13/valanthakad-listens-to-its-own-tale-270934.html>. Accessed 19th January 2019.

Twine, Richard T. *Ecofeminisms in Process*. 2001. 28th Jan. 2018, www.ecofem.org/journal. Accessed 19 September 2021.

V. Kumar, Vinay. “Irom Sharmila: Manipur’s Iron Lady or Mengoubi (The Fair One)”. March 13, 2020. <https://feminisminindia.com/2020/03/13/irom-sharmila-manipurs-iron-lady-mengoubi/>. Accessed 19 October 2020.

Zahol, Lucy Vashum. Status of Tribal Women, [on line], 2010. <http://dspace.nehu.ac.in/bitstream/1/2733/1/Status.pdf>. Accessed 12 October 2020.