

Voices of the Earth and Women: An Ecofeminist Reading of Select Kokborok Literary Texts Translated into English

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Abstract

From the lens of literature, ecology and gender are important fields of interconnected study because both explore how women and nature gets dominated by systems of domination. The traditional knowledge and culture conveyed in indigenous writings carry deep meanings, which investigates one's understanding of the interconnections between human and environmental worlds. The study aims to look at the topic of ecological consciousness and gender relations in the indigenous Kokborok literary tradition in the context of ecofeminism. Using the theories of Vandana Shiva, Greta Gaard, and other writers, the study explores the integrated perception of women and nature in selected Kokborok literary works that have deep cultural roots. The study examines the degradation of the environment and women's marginalization by analyzing the Kokborok poems translated into English by the leading Kokborok poets, giving special focus to the socio-cultural scenario of Tripura. The study is qualitative in nature and interpretative which integrates the literary criticism with ethnographic understandings to reveal the feminine tribal ecological agencies. It also explores oralities and community narratives to articulate the co-construction of ecological and gendered identities in Kokborok literature. The paper highlights the importance of the role of tribal literature as a space of resistance and reclamation. It shall also focus on how the ecofeminist consciousness can be used as a means of environmental and gender justice. The study is also valuable for the indigenous literature studies and for the further development of the ecofeminist theory as it brings to the fore the voices of the cultural margins of Northeast India, especially the Kokborok speaking communities of Tripura whose voices were hitherto marginalized from the Indian mainstream literature.

Keywords: Ecofeminism, Indigenous, Kokborok, Gender, Ecology

Introduction

The impacts of the ecological crisis and gender inequalities have been a matter of critical concern in recent years highlighting the interconnections between these issues. But in recent years, across various fields of knowledge, scholars have proposed that the exploitation of the natural world and the marginalization of women are interconnected in their roots in colonial modernity, capitalism and patriarchy. However, literature as a cultural and ideological form is an important means of revealing these connections because it provides a voice to the experiences of the marginal and alternative world views. In this important context, ecofeminism has emerged as one significant theoretical field that has examined the relationship between ecology and gender and has drawn attention to the fact that women and nature are both oppressed and also sites of

resistance and renewal (Warren 126).

The Ecofeminist perspective, developed by Françoise d'Eaubonne highlights the interwoven nature of environmental degradation and gender and social marginalization, particularly of women and Indigenous groups. Later ecofeminist scholars built on this notion seeing the dominant Western models of development as passive use of nature and passive women, and thus justifying exploitation under the guise of development (Merchant 2–3). Ecofeminism, on the other hand, offers a moral approach based on care, interdependence and sustainability. In the case of indigenous literatures, this can be especially meaningful as they embody an ecological knowledge that has been passed down through oral tradition, cultural memory, and practice that is intimately tied to land and community.

The indigenous literature is important as a point of reference for ecofeminist ideas since it is a tradition that rejects the dichotomy between human life and nature. These texts often present nature as an animated object, as opposed to an object being controlled. Indigenous literature of the northeast region of India is still not given due attention in the literary mainstream even though it has been concerned with various aspects of ecology, identity and cultural survival. Kokborok literature is a product of the socio-cultural environment of the indigenous people of Tripura in which land, forest, river, and man are interdependent. The ethos of these texts is one in which ecological balance and cultural continuity goes hand in hand.

In Kokborok literary compositions, especially poems, there is a close connection between women and nature, which reflects indigenous knowledge and experience. Women in these communities are often seen as being at the heart of ecological care and cultural transmission, as they are traditionally responsible for agricultural activities, seed preservation, water collection, and oral storytelling. Ecofeminist scholars, like Vandana Shiva, contend that such indigenous ecological knowledge, mostly retained by women, is usurped by the current development models which focus on profit and not sustainability (Shiva 38). This is reflected in the Kokborok literature that portrays environmental degradation and the loss of women's roles, voices and cultural agency.

In addition, the literary/cultural work is seen as a place of resistance wherein the suppressed voice recovers agency and significance as promoted by ecofeminism (as presented by Greta Gaard 5). Poems in Kokborok, when read with an ecofeminist perspective, will show that the destruction of the ecological environment, in the context of tribal socio-cultural life, is largely comparable to gender marginalization in Tripura. Rivers, hills, forests and fields may be personified and 'felt', presenting the feminine 'other' of ecology, in resistance to domination, and in affirmation of continuity, care and life.

Hence this research aims at investigating the representation of ecofeminist consciousness in selected Kokborok literary texts as translated into English, which emphasizes the correlation of women and nature. The study explores how the themes of ecological images, cultural practice and gendered experiences are intertwined in these texts through close textual analysis and interpretative reading. The research is intended to emphasize Kokborok literature as a medium which not only conveys environmental justice but also indigenous epistemologies, by engaging with the ideas of ecofeminism. In this way the study also helps in the cause of ecofeminist literary criticism by highlighting the marginalized indigenous voices of Northeast India and offering a glimpse of ecofeminism beyond the familiar Western and mainstream Indian discourses.

After developing the theoretical concepts of ecofeminism and the importance it has for indigenous literary traditions, this study focuses on the close reading of selected Kokborok literary texts that have been translated into English. The next section starts with a detailed

analysis of selected poems by Kokborok poets, beginning with *Jungle* by Nandakumar Debbarma.

Jungle

You cannot abandon her,
she is embedded in your heart.
Neither consumed by fire,
nor destroyed by water,
waking up in your dreams
she speaks to you.

You too cannot wipe her out,
she is wrapped in your emotions.
When night grows intense shrouding you,
when the road abandons you,
she transforms to a burning torch before you
and shows the way.

She always encircles you
and leading you, holds the flag flying high. (Gupta 31)

In the poem *Jungle* nature is not just a physical space but acts as a place of emotional and spiritual guidance that is intimately tied to human life. The repeated use of the feminine pronoun “she” allows the poet to clearly imbue the jungle with feminine characteristics like nurturing, protective, resilience that are inextricably connected to the human situation. Such a representation is clearly intertwined with the ecofeminist perspective that focuses on the relationships between women and nature and the ways in which nature and women defy attempts to dominate and destroy them.

The basic tenet of ecofeminism is that nature like women can't be dominated by external forces. The opening lines of the poem say, “You cannot abandon her... Neither consumed by fire, nor destroyed by water.” These lines emphasize the jungle's endurance and resilience. An ecofeminist reading of this resilience can be seen as a reflection of the history of women. It particularly speaks about Indigenous women who have survived violence, displacement, and marginalization. The jungle, like a woman is alive and carries memory beyond destruction. The poem also emphasizes the emotional and psychological connection between people and nature. The poet's use of the phrase “wrapped in your emotions” and “embedded in your heart,” implies that nature is not just around an individual, but it is in “you”, the self that needs to internalize the emotion correlating with its surrounding. Ecofeminism challenges the gender binary between culture and nature which is historically dominant and is defined as masculine (cultural) and feminine (nature). Rather this poem is a worldview in which nature is intertwined with human emotion, and the emotional bond with the environment is strength not a weakness, as is the Ecofeminist worldview.

Another crucial ecofeminist aspect of the poem is that the jungle acts as a guide and protector. When night grows dark and the road goes dark, the jungle becomes a burning torch to guide the way, “when night grows intense... when the road abandons you.” This image places nature as a means of saving life, not a danger zone. The concept of ecofeminism sees women and nature as nurturers and protectors of life. The jungle here does a traditionally feminine job, which is to guide, nurture and sustain human life in the absence of social structures.

This ecofeminist sense is enhanced further by the line “[s]he always encircles you”. The jungle is presented as embracing and containing the human being like the care of his or her mother. This goes against narratives that envision forests as wild places which require control and conquest. Rather, the jungle is the place of belonging and safety in the poem. This is the view that is strongly supported by ecofeminism which states that violence is not done by nature but attained and established by fear and misunderstanding.

The final shot of the jungle with the flag high adds a political undertone. The jungle becomes a symbol of a sense of identity, resistance and cultural survival. From an ecofeminist perspective, this implies that nature’s protection is also a way of safeguarding Indigenous identity and dignity. Women, land and culture are linked to spaces of resistance against erasure. The jungle is not just about ecology; it’s about collective memory and ancestral presence. The poem does not depict the jungle as weak or passive. Rather, “she” speaks, leads, protects, and endures. This is an explicit rejection of patriarchy’s nature-centered perception that makes nature feminine and then cruelly exploits it. In this place, feminization is a resource for asserting power instead of bowing to patriarchal structures.

I Shall Go Walking by Nandakumar Debbarma echoes the ecofeminism of *Jungle* where nature is seen as feminine, protective and guiding, but in a more intimate and inward way. The poem *I Shall Go Walking* reflects on this interconnection and demonstrates how nature becomes the place of origin, identity and self-reflection. The poems are woven together to follow a shift from collective ecological protection to personal ecological belonging.

“While going I’ll meet the trees,
stilts touching the earth.
with head resting on the roots
lies my childhood,
sentimental face, fear of being caned,
the school bunking grin,
staring spellbound at Shefali
as the dawn of Ashwina and honeyed dew descend her cheeks,
shall converse a few words with myself.” (Gupta 39)

Walking in this extract is more than just a movement, it is a trip into memory, a trip into selfhood. The speaker says that when he walks, the trees are his “stilts [that] touch the earth. In the eyes of an ecofeminist tree represents continuity, rootedness and life-giving strength. Meeting with trees implies a meeting that is respectful, relational and not dominating. Ecofeminism focuses on those moments when people look at nature and relate to it as if it were a friend and thus fosters the idea of coexisting.

This, “with head resting on the roots lies my childhood” is very important. The roots are a symbol of origin, ancestry and stability. The poet takes the age of the trees to the child level suggesting how people’s identity is formed by the natural environment. Ecofeminism vehemently stands behind this concept, stating that man’s separation from nature is the cause of alienation, and man’s closeness to the land brings him emotional and cultural enrichment. In this place, not abstract time but concrete earth is the repository of childhood memories.

The poem then passes through personal feelings: fear of punishment, mischief of school day, innocent attraction, and youthful longing. These recollections are not in an urban or institutional context. This mixing of emotional life and natural space is a symptom of an ecofeminist worldview which opposes the separation of inner emotional worlds (femininity) and the outer natural world. Rather, there is a harmonious interaction between emotion, memory and nature. The flower “Shefali” is mentioned, in addition to the image of dawn, the month “Ashwina” and

“honeyed dew”, a strong feminine and seasonal rhythm infuses the poem. The seventh month of the Hindu lunar calendar and the Indian national calendar is Ashwina (September–October) which is a time of change, harvest, and renewal. The poet's image of Shefali in this seasonal moment evokes the natural cycles of growth, softness, and continuity, while linking feminine identity to them. The depiction of nature is tender and lyrical, with elements such as dew drops on her face and the juxtaposition of nature and humanity. This kind of imagery is important from an ecofeminist standpoint because it reclaims attributes like tenderness, cyclicity, emotional depth that are often denied or demeaned in patriarchy-based societies as means of life and strength. The fusion of dew and human emotion implies that nature is not separate from human experience, but rather it is an integral part of emotions, memories and intimacy, the concept of which is also held by ecofeminists, who believe that the feminine and the natural world are inseparable.

The poem concludes with the speaker's attempt to “converse a few words with myself” is an introspection in the face of trees and earth, suggesting that the speaker can only gain self-understanding by reconnecting with nature. Healing, both individual and collective, is frequently emphasized in eco feminist theory with the focus on connecting with the ecology. The poem depicts nature attuned to the individual's introspection and encourages the nurturing and supportive role that nature plays.

In Chandrakanta Murasingh's *Pebbles*, there is a more critical and probing voice than in Nandakumar Debbarma's poems about nature as a nurturing guide, a space of memory, and a bearer of cultural continuity.

Pebbles

The tree that still remains in this forest
are we keeping it alive?
The stream is now a maid servant
in your house and in mine.
He who survives on the mountain's peak –
do we also keep him alive?
The sky is eloquent with folklore,
the rice is full of pebbles. (Gupta 51)

The poem begins with an interesting question: “are we keeping it alive / The tree that still remains in this forest?” Human beings are put to test with this question. Ecofeminists view it from this angle because they focus mainly on the suffering of nature, which endures not from the kindness of humans, but despite it. Both the use of “still remains” and the mention of “near-extinction” evoke loss, depletion, and near-exhaustion, reflecting ecofeminist critiques of patriarchal development models which focus on exploitation rather than care.

The image of the stream is an effective ecofeminist one because the poet says, “The stream is now a maid servant / in your house and in mine”. In this instance nature is clearly feminized and made subservient. The metaphorical positioning is severely critiqued by the concept of ecofeminism, given the belief that women, like natural resources, are colonized, controlled and used to satisfy human demands without rights or dignity. The stream that was once free and life-giving is now restricted as women's work in patriarchy, it's essential but undervalued.

But the poem takes this concern to the downtrodden humanity: “He who lives on the summit of the mountain— / do we keep him alive?” This line links ecology with injustice. Ecofeminism focuses on how the environment impacts indigenous people and marginalized communities, and

how this is particularly damaging to them, including women who live close to nature. The poem highlights the interdependent nature of people and nature, demonstrating that their survival is linked to one another.

The sky is unique; full of folk tales, and so is the rice, full of pebbles, the final lines are an ecofeminist result of a deep symbolism. Folklore is a form of cultural memory, oral tradition and indigenous knowledge that is often held by women. The sky still has stories, but the rice, the root of life itself is polluted. This contrast implies that, in memory, things can be put together, but the material world is growing more aggressive and fragile. Ecofeminism interprets it as a warning: When there is an ecological balance that is upset, nourishment becomes empty, and painful.

In *Pebbles*, Chandrakanta Murasingh expresses the critique of ecofeminism, which is a critique of both the political and moral aspects. Nature is not merely a nurturing presence anymore; it's also a victim of humanity's neglect and domination. The poem feminizes the stream and brings attention to the plight of marginalized people, making them aware of the intersectionality of exploitation of women, nature and indigenous lives. In this context, ecofeminism is a call for accountability, for going back to care, respect and ecological justice.

Another poem by Bikashrai Debbarma titled *Bunyan Tree* describes a land of absence, silence and irreparable loss. A change that is important in an ecofeminist reading because it shows the last manifestation of domination which is the elimination of the values of nature and values of nurturing.

Bunyan Tree

Shadow? – no where today,
not even a speck,
not even a single tree anywhere.
On the right and left a few saplings –
broken top,
broken branches and twigs,
scattered helter skelter.
No load of sunshine on their heads. (Gupta 74)

The poem begins with the statement “Shadow? – nowhere today”. The loss is immediately established in the poem in this opening line “Shadow? – nowhere today”. In ecofeminist philosophy, trees, particularly the banyan, are linked to protection, connection, and nurturing. The lack of shadow represents the lack of protection traditionally given by nature and women in community life. Ecofeminist theory suggests that the patriarchal systems that exist not only break down nurturing systems but also focus on control and profit, which leaves communities exposed and vulnerable. The missing shadow, therefore, refers to the loss of ecological and maternal care. The speaker's remark that no tree is there “not even a single tree anywhere” adds to this feeling of lack of life in nature. In previous poems, trees, forests or roots actively guide and/or shelter humans, whereas in this poem the reader is faced with total depletion. Ecofeminism highlights the need for a recognition that the destruction of nature is not simply ongoing, but can be complete, particularly in the indigenous environment, where extractive development can lead to total erasure. The lack of trees is also a metaphor for the muted voice of women and indigenous knowledge systems, which have depended on nature.

The eco-feminist critique is further reinforced by the image of “a few saplings— / broken top, / broken branches and twigs”. Saplings are all about growth and renewal, but here they are at risk before they can grow. This imagery is frequently associated with ecofeminism and the early termination of women's potential and generational links. Women and indigenous peoples are

denied agency and sustainability in exploitative systems, just as young plants are denied growth. These broken and dispersed saplings symbolize an already bruised future.

The last line “No load of sunshine on their heads” is particularly touching. Sunshine, which is typically thought of as nourishment and life, becomes a “load”, meaning imbalance and exposure, not nourishment and life. The criticism of the ecofeminists reads this as a violation of natural harmony where the destruction of trees makes the sun harsh, and life hard to bear. This is the ecofeminists' notion of ecological injustice, and the sacrifice of protective ecosystems disproportionately impacts marginalized lives, especially women and tribal communities.

Bunyan Tree would be best read in conjunction with the other poems in this collection, to form a complete ecofeminist story arc. *Jungle* provides information and support, *Pebbles* asks, “How could humans be responsible?” and *Bunyan Tree* represents the consequences of neglect, a world without shelter, continuity or compassion. The tone of the poem is stark, moving away from remembrance and resistance, to warning and witness.

The ecofeminist story progresses towards a multi-layered and more complex image of nature in the poem *Spring in the Blue Forest* by Sachlang Tripura.

Spring in the Blue Forest

The fine fragrance of spring in the blue forest
and our dear kungkok bird
sings the secrets of its heart from a forest shade.

The jungle keeps a sleepless vigil by our bedside,
bamboo groves and trees jostle with each other,
overhead the thaichual vines form a shrouding canopy.
Here history stands spell bound and silent
and time has come to a stand still.
Wild out-laws frame rules and conduct rituals
at gunpoint.

I fail to understand whose omnipotence
favours the doing of these out laws.
Yet, take a look,
blooming flowers have decked up the trees,
and the blue forest has woken up to the advent of spring. (Gupta 98)

The poem opens with the evoking sense of spring, in the “blue forest”, where scent, birdsong and shade evoke intimacy and belonging. This soft, nature-loving image of nature highlights, from an ecofeminist point of view, relational values, namely caring, proximity, and emotionality. Nature is not far removed or out of the ordinary, but close, familiar and safe. The jungle “keeps a sleepless vigil by our bedside” which means that the motherly presence is present in the jungle and her watchful eye is over human life. Particularly, ecofeminism emphasizes the nurturing functions of nature, in contrast to the traditional roles given to women, roles that are often devalued in patriarchy.

The poem, at the same time, is not an uncritical portrait of the forest. Violence, however, comes into the picture forcefully with the description of “wild out-laws” who establish rules and rituals “at gun point.” This moment provides a break in the flow of harmony in the natural environment and brings an awareness of the power, coercion and domination of it. Ecofeminist theory decries

such power systems, as they are the same ones that allow women and marginalized communities to be exploited, as well as land and forests. Here, the woods is a contested site that is a place where the natural order is disrupted by assertive, virile, modes of control.

The poet's bewilderment "I fail to understand whose omnipotence favors the doing of these out laws" poses a moral and political issue of eco-feminism. It embodies defiance and an intolerance of authority which calls for violence in the name of power, progress or protection. Ecofeminism is critical to such authority in that it emphasizes justice, care, and sustainability over domination. The questionnaire tone in this poem follows this critique, not accepting violence as natural or inevitable.

But, despite the fear and disruption, the poem brings us again to a new image of renewal. The trees are in bloom, and the forest seems to be alive with the spring. It's a closing movement with a very ecofeminist character. It implies that nature, as well as women and native peoples, has a silent and steady strength. Despite it all, life regenerates. Ecofeminism sees this endurance as resistance, survival as resistance: survival is an act of defiance.

Spring in the Blue Forest is an ecofeminism, which is manifested in the presence of the themes of nurture and violence, fear and renewal. Nature is feminine not in weakness, but in its caring, enduring and regenerative strength.

Slowly, the ecofeminist story as described evolves from the outer landscapes of loss and violence to the more intimate, ecological spaces. *The Forest of Dukmali Flowers* by Sefali Debbarma is a poem that takes up this movement in a more emotional and bodily sense – nature is not merely a setting but a feeling, memory and a vulnerability.

The Forest of Dukmali Flowers

The forest of dukmali flowers came in my dream,
when the night was fading away in the milky dawn.
As I went on walking along the serpentine hilly road,
the plaintive fragrance of the flowers hummed incessantly
and the heart's shadow prolonged itself.

Noon creeps into the hill of dukmali flowers,
buzzing bees encircle my hair tied in a bun
and away flies the crow snatching maize from the joom
as the cunning monkey feeds on cucumber and bangi fruit.

Evening lies entranced embracing
the dense forest of dukmali creepers.
The legs have been rendered paralytic.
In a corner of the dark, gloomy, helpless sky,
on the top of the cloud,
who sits spreading love on the tong's lap
as the colourless anaemic leaves drop down one by one? (Gupta 119)

Sefali Debbarma's *The Forest of Dukmali Flowers* is a very intimate, feminine and sensory ecofeminist look. This poem, unlike the earlier poems on protection, devastation and resilience, turns the conversation towards dream, body, emotion and ecological intimacy. It is an ecofeminist reading of nature not just as landscape, but as a living, breathing presence that affects memory, desire and vulnerability.

The poem is written in a dreamlike manner, with the forests coming into being at dawn. The liminal space between night and day, consciousness and memory are created by dream, dawn and forest. Ecofeminism celebrates such liminality, for it defies binary oppositions such as culture and nature and reason and emotion, which are typically masculine. Within this forest, there is no sense of an environment to dominate; this forest comes quietly, through memory and imagination. Dukmali flowers “become plaintive” and “calm” to the listener as the speaker walks along the “serpentine hilly road.” The sense of smell is one of the senses and is strongly associated with memory and emotion. Ecofeminist thinking highlights embodied knowledge or knowing via the senses rather than control and measurement. Its powerfully seductive scent and the “heart’s shadow” hint at the woods invading the speaker's emotional and psychological world wherein the inner and the outer worlds merging.

The body is very clearly in focus in the noon section of the poem. Bees surround the speaker's “my hair tied in a bun” which is a very feminine image. The woman's body is in the ecological system, through the presence of hair, bees and agricultural space (joom cultivation).

Ecofeminism addresses the fact that women's bodies are often more at risk in relation to environmental shifts due to their proximity to land, food and their daily subsistence activities. Here, both human and animal and agricultural life coexists in a non-hierarchical way, as does crowd, monkey, crops and woman.

The mood shifts to the darker and more precarious as night falls. Legs “paralytic” while the forest embraces. This physical paralysis can be interpreted as a symbolic exhaustion, imposed on women and nature during the constant process of extraction and care. Nature still exists, still grips, but the human body battles on. This differential burden is often highlighted by Ecofeminism, as women are nurturing and sustaining and enduring, yet weakened.

The final image is particularly striking. The sky is “dark, gloomy, helpless” and the leaves are colorless and anemic, dropping one after another. It appears to be a picture of ecological exhaustion and emotional weariness. The question “who sits spreading love on the tong's lap?” brings in a discreet moral ambiguity. The tong (traditional resting platform) is a space of collectivity and caring. There is love, but love is weak, it is nearly invisible as the environment fades. Ecofeminism takes this as a sign: When nature goes limp, love, care and community die out as well.

Further, ecofeminist inquire into nature as a living and sustaining presence. *And Dhalai Flows On* by Kamalia Debbarma depicts the river as a vehicle of memory, rhythm and indigenous ecological harmony.

And Dhalai flows on

Across the green expanse of Longtarai-
traversing the long winding path
with music of life in the background,
casting a spell of waves emanating from the depths of being,
you flow on Dhalai.

The primeval history of life in joom
wrapped all around your body
inspires sympathy in the heart
in tune with your symphony.

Kamalia Debbarma's poem *And Dhalai Flows On* is based on the river Dhalai, located in North Tripura which flows across the green landscape of Longtarai hill in the state. The poet depicts the river as not only a body of water but a living entity that is full of music, memory and feeling. The river runs a "long winding path" and is accompanied by the "music of life," which symbolizes continuity, rhythm and endurance. The poet of the poem makes nature into a living, expressive and meaningful rather than silent and passive from the start.

Close to the river, there is a connection with joom life, an indigenous agricultural practice and way of life. In the lines "the primeval history of life in joom wrapped all around your body," the river serves as a vessel for collective memory and cultural survival. It's not just a river flowing through the land, but a river of the people, their labour, and their encounters with nature. The land, water and native inhabitants are inextricably linked, and the poetry evokes emotion. The river Dhalai from an ecofeminist viewpoint is a feminine life-force. The poet does not actually refer to the river as female, but rather, is characterized by qualities generally attributed to the feminine: nurturing, continuity, emotionalism and caring. The river evokes sympathy in the heart, implying that nature brings forth compassion instead of fear. Ecofeminism strongly emphasizes this idea: nature is not to be dominated but nature teaches empathy and living relationally.

The reference to the river being "wrapped all around your body" is particularly important. It depicts nature as nurturing and loving, like a mother. As Ecofeminist theory frequently reminds us, women are often demeaned into bodies to be used, and nature is demeaned to a resource, in the patriarchal systems. This poem, on the other hand, offers the natural body as a means of connection and healing. The river is not separate from human life, it is in harmony with it, it surrounds it and sustains it.

The musical references like "music of life," "symphony," "in tune", add to the ecofeminist interpretation. Music implies harmony, balance, and cooperation, which are all values advocated by ecofeminism, in opposition to violence, control, and exploitation. The ebb and flow of the river become a metaphor for a different kind of life, one that embraces cycles, continuity and interdependency. The river does not rush or conquer; it flows and listens and resonates. No destruction, conflict or domination is described in the poem. Instead, it is a picture of a peaceful and sustained nature, continuing its course through time and space. This is a quiet persistence in line with an ecofeminist notion of resistance through endurance. The river continues to flow, and life continues to go on, just as women and indigenous people do, surviving by resisting.

The poem *Mountain of Memory* by Sabita Debbarma brings the ecofeminist reflections of the previous poems to a stilled pause, as the flow of rivers is replaced by the permanency of remembering.

Mountain of Memory

The river of a maiden's heart grows up in affection
in the lap of dreams,
the jingling anklets remind history.

Chasing the heart
the flowers are shed
and floating in the waters of the river
reach the ocean.

But many golden dreams have vanished
in the whirling eddies of the pool
and have drifted directionless
like a rudderless boat.

All the desires of youth have been smudged.
Now alone stands erect
the mountain of memories.

In his poem, *Mountain of Memory*, Sabita Debbarma uses nature (rivers, flower, ocean and mountain) to depict memory, loss and emotional steadfastness. This poem might seem personal and reflective but it has a profound ecofeminist message when it is so intricately tied from the cycles, rhythms and changes of nature to the life of a female creature. The poem indicates the emotional experience that a woman means none can be detached from the nature where she resides.

The first line of the poem depicts “the river of a maiden’s heart” that is a natural element (the river) and a female one (the heart) coalescing right at the start. The maiden means affection and youth and hope, and the river means growth, continuity and flow. In ecofeminism, women are associated with nature not necessarily as a way of expressing weakness, but rather to point to the common ability of both women and nature to nurture life and memory. The use of the term “in the lap of dreams” implies that the river is nurtured and grows in a secure and confidential environment where both nature and femininity flourish.

The use of the word “jingling anklets”, which remind history, contributes to the cultural and gendered level of the poem. Anklets are worn by women, symbolizing movement, rhythm and tradition. Featuring their voices, their sound becomes a reminder of history, and like landscapes bear the signatures of the past, so do women. Ecofeminism values women as memories and keepers of traditions, particularly in indigenous communities where history is not recorded, but rather lived.

As the poem unfolds, flowers fall away and are washed away down the river to the ocean. Many times, flowers are used as symbols of beauty, youth, and fertility. Their casting reveals the passage of time and the fading of youthful dreams. This transition from river to ocean implies a natural stage of the life, an ecofeminist concept that human feelings have to follow the ups and downs, losses and changes of nature.

But the poem is also about loss and disillusionment. Golden dreams vanish in the “whirling eddies of the pool” and the dreams drift “like a rudderless boat.” It depicts a sense of bewilderment, disorientation, and wear. The disappearance can be recuperated from the ecofeminist perspective because of the social and cultural pressures that are imposed on the woman, causing her personal wishes to be either discouraged or diverted. In the way that rivers are affected by the obstacles around them, women's lives are affected and restricted by outside influences over which they have no control.

All the hopes of the young have been blotted out is laced with meaning. But there is hope in the poem's conclusion. The image of the “mountain of memories” finally, standing erect, brings strength and endurance. Mountains represent stability, permanence and silent strength. This is good according to ecofeminism standards and considered a way to resist. Although dreams disappear and desires are often stifled, memory never falters, never weakens, never breaks. Inflating the concept of ecofeminism, *Mountain of Memory* sees the two entities, a woman's emotional life and nature imagery, linked together closely. Feminine experience is depicted in

the same process of life, death, and persevering, as rivers and mountains, as the poem illustrates. Nature serves as a language with which women express their memories, struggles and resilience. As the poem implies, memory can be like a mountain which is strong, silent and grounded while youth and dreams are eroded away. In natural imagery this poem offers an ecofeminist vision that is grounded in feminine experience, emotional loss, and tenacity and resilience, emphasising the power of memory as a potent and enduring force.

Conclusion:

The overall objectives of this research were to explore select Kokborok literary texts that have been translated into English from the perspective of ecofeminism and to understand how indigenous poetry expresses the interconnectedness of women, nature, memory, as well as culture survival. The study based on close qualitative reading of selected poems of Kokborok poets has shown that ecofeminist consciousness in these poems brings the world of nature as a lived, organic world connected to the indigenous way of life, landscape, and sensibility. In all the examined poems, nature appears as a vividly alive presence that nourishes, recalls history, suffers loss and death, defies human sovereignty, and survives violence and neglect. The feminine experience, emotion, labour and memory recur and are intertwined repeatedly with rivers, forests, mountains, flowers, trees and seasons. This interdependence of womb and land is a fundamental truth of ecofeminism. This work, through the select poems of Kokborok writers has a clear trajectory towards ecofeminism. Initial poems depict nature as a guiding and protective power; they transcend with care, nurture and continuity. Later analysis of the poems uncovers ecological harm, moral complexities, and the loss of culture and reveals the implications of omnivorous systems of power on nature and native lives. The poems relinquish hope despite the violence done on the community. These poems highlight endurance, memory, and quiet resilience that are traditionally feminine strengths, and theirs that are taken up by ecofeminism as strengths.

The poems of the female poets introduce another dimension—embodied and intimate—to ecofeminist engaging with reality. Ecological crises are first experienced within the self and in daily existence. Feminists take on female memory, desire, exhaustion and emotional labour that that gets reflected through the imageries of nature. The female voice is not just treated as a symbolic voice but shows that the ecological disharmony, cultural loss and emotional survival collide. Thus, Kokborok women's poetry can be seen as a contribution to ecofeminist discourse, one that brings into the realm of indigenous female experiences too. Sabita Debbarma's poem shows how a river flows to the stillness of memory- the movement from forest to rivers to stillness and stability of the memory. The mountain is a potent eco-feminist symbol: feminine and ecological resilience without words, rooted and unswaying. This last image summarises the key element of the study that ecofeminism in Kokborok literature is voices out to remembering, continuity and survival.

This study widens the categories of ecofeminism criticism as a vehicle with which the marginalized groups voices for the environmental- and gender-related justice. Finally, the ecofeminist vision as manifested in Kokborok poetry makes the readers to ponder upon their relationship with nature that is beyond domination and control. It makes the reader imagine nature as a care-taker that balances a sustainable coexistence between animate and inanimate objects. These poems help one to remember that ecosystems, cultures and women's voices are linked with their survival, and that listening to indigenous literary expressions is vital to envisioning more just and sustainable future.

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