

Tribhuvan University

Ecofeminist Sensibility in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Markandaya's
Nectar in a Sieve

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and
Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Philosophy in English

By

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled “Ecofeminist Sensibility in Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* and Markandaya’s *Nectar in a Sieve*” is entirely my work prepared to submit to the Central Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in partial fulfillment of requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English. The sources used and referred to in the preparation of this thesis have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that this work has not been previously submitted for any academic award and has not been published elsewhere in any form. Wherever extended sources, ideas, or words have been used, proper citations and references have been provided. I have also been committed to ethical academic practices throughout the research analysis and writing process. By submitting this thesis, I affirm my commitment to upholding the principles of honesty and research integrity in academic research.

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December 31, 2024

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Letter of Recommendation

This thesis entitled “Ecofeminist Sensibility in Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* and Markandaya’s *Nectar in a Sieve*” submitted to the Central Department of English, TU by Mangal Bahadur Thapa has been recommended for the final *viva voce*.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Ecofeminist Sensibility in Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* and Markandaya’s *Nectar in a Sieve*” submitted to the Central Department of English, TU by Mangal Bahadur Thapa has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

The present study examines the connection between women and nature in Chimamanda Ngochi Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus* and Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* from the perspective of ecofeminism. The female characters in these novels demonstrate a deep connection to nature through their actions. They are similar in their attempt to resist patriarchal and capitalist systems that seek to exploit both women and nature. Kambili and Ifeoma from *Purple Hibiscus* resist domination overtly whereas Rukmini from *Nectar in a Sieve* resists it covertly. In addition, Ifeoma's gardening or Kambili's spiritual renewal in nature and Rukmini's devotion to farming demonstrate their connection to nature. Following the qualitative research design, this study brings ideas from the works of Vandana Shiva, Greta Gaard, and Val Plumwood to develop a theoretical framework to analyze the primary texts. The study concludes that women share a connection with mother earth and they also show their resistance in necessity. The majority of male characters are found to be anti-nature. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Eugene, Kambili's father and Ifeoma's brother, is an obstacle to female characters as they try to establish a connection with nature, as his strict adherence to capitalist and religious doctrines limits their freedom to engage with the natural world. However, Kambili's mother kills Eugene and thus the women eventually have their way. In *Nectar in a Sieve*, Rukmini's resistance to construction of the building of tannery, however, fails as she remains unheard. Nevertheless, their opposition to capitalist and patriarchal values and their attachments to the earth demonstrate their ecofeminist sensibility.

Keywords: Ecofeminism, women, resistance, capitalism, patriarchy, nature,

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Chapter I

Ecofeminist Sensibility in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*

Introduction

The present study has explored ecofeminist sensibility and resistance to capitalism in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* applying ecofeminism as a theoretical approach. The identification of nature and women in selected texts is a crucial issue as it is misunderstood by the dominant masculine culture. Ecofeminists agree that nature and women inherently share some similarities. The inherent nature and woman relation-in which women's environmental awareness reflected in the behaviors of female characters in the selected texts- shows women are deeply connected to nature. This connection stands in opposition to capitalist as well as patriarchal modes of culture. For example, Ifeoma and Kambili in *Purple Hibiscus* and Rukmani in *Nectar in a Sieve* love interacting with nature. Ifeoma enjoys gardening, and Kambili is energized when she comes into the contact with nature. Their activities are found in sharp contrast to human-centered activities known as anthropocentric industrial society. Rukmani does not like the construction of tannery and Kambili along with Ifeoma finds Eugene, father of Kambili and brother of Ifeoma hindrance in their collaboration with nature. Moreover, Eugene's role to uplift Christianity is also challenged by Ifeoma and Kambili.

The story of *Purple Hibiscus* is narrated from the perspective of Kambili Achike, a 15-year-old girl, who lives in Nigeria. Her father, Eugene, is a strict or dogmatic man, who compels his family to surrender to Christianity. This experience exposes Kambili and Jaja to a different way of life, where love and freedom are

valued, and they begin to question their father's authority. Iofema's love for nature is praiseworthy. Markendayas' novel begins with the life story of Rukmani. The construction of tannery is problematic in this novel. Rukmani fights against tannery. However, she fails.

The purple hibiscus in Adichie's novel functions as a powerful hybrid flower that emerges as a central metaphor for freedom, growth, and resistance against patriarchal and colonial oppression. The purple hibiscus is a rare, experimental flower cultivated by Aunt Ifeoma, representing a departure from the common red hibiscus. From an ecofeminist perspective, this hybridization challenges the notion of 'natural' or 'traditional' as fixed categories. The purple color itself - a blend of red and blue - suggests the possibility of transcending binary classifications, much like ecofeminism challenges rigid gender-nature dualisms. Aunt Ifeoma's garden, where the purple hibiscus grows, stands in stark contrast to Eugene's rigidly controlled compound. While Eugene's garden features primarily imported flowers arranged in severe order (symbolizing colonial and patriarchal control), Ifeoma's garden embraces indigenous plants growing in natural abundance. The purple hibiscus thus represents a form of resistance that unites environmental and feminine liberation. For Kambili, the protagonist, the purple hibiscus becomes a symbol of her own blossoming. Her journey from silence to voice parallels the growth of this unique flower. The fact that she eventually transplants the flower to her own garden suggests the possibility of transforming oppressive spaces through feminine and environmental wisdom.

The purple color also carries religious significance, being associated with royalty and divinity in Christian tradition. However, by applying this symbolism to an indigenous flower, Adichie suggests a form of religious and cultural hybridity that resists colonial Christianity's attempts to eradicate local traditions and knowledge

systems - particularly those connected to nature and feminine wisdom. From an ecofeminist viewpoint, the hybrid nature of the purple hibiscus demonstrates how resilience often comes through adaptation rather than rigid preservation. This challenges both environmental conservation approaches that ignore human interaction and cultural preservation efforts that resist all change. The novel shows how environmental consciousness, feminist liberation, and cultural authenticity are intertwined through the central symbol of this unique flower.

The title thus encapsulates themes of growth, resistance, and the possibility of creating new ways of being that honor both nature and human dignity. In the anthropocentric view, human actions affecting the natural environment and its nonhuman inhabitants are right or wrong by either of two criteria: they have consequences which are favorable or unfavorable to human well-being, or they are consistent or inconsistent with the system of norms that protect and implement human rights. In both novels, ecological sensibilities are sidelined due to capitalism, patriarchy, and hierarchical structure in a society.

Statement of the Problem

Kambili, her mother 'Mama' from Adichie's novel, and Rukmani from Markandaya's novel share some features. They are also the victims of masculine capitalism. Due to humanity's observation of nature as resource, its value lies mistakenly in its use and relation to human beings. Rukmani's farming becomes less significant when industry replaces muscles with machines, and Kambili and Mama are dominated by masculine practice. Capitalism keeps profit at the center, and exploits nature and women for its own benefit. The search for profit at the cost of nature and establishment of big building disturb harmonious and eco-friendly relation between humans and nature. It harms humanity in general.

Amidst this context, the study will primarily investigate these research questions:

- What is the interplay of nature and female characters like Ifeoma, Kambili and Rukmin in the selected texts above?
- Why is nature considered as woman in androcentric/anthropocentric capitalist society, a resource to be used and misused?
- How is women's resistance to capitalistic mode of life, a powerful source to establish woman-nature inherent relation to minimize the environmental destruction?

Research Objectives

- To find out the interplay of woman-nature inherent relation in the selected texts.
- To examine why nature is understood as woman, a resource in capitalist culture.
- To analyze how woman-nature inherent relation challenges the established anthropocentric renderings of nature and woman which can a measure to minimize the ecological disturbance.

Hypothesis

The study hypothesizes that woman-nature resistance to capitalism helps to bring environmental equilibrium because they are in a better situation to talk about gendered nature and naturalized gender.

Literature Review

Literature review consists of key terms and ideas of ecofeminist movement as well as of the primary texts under study. It is observed in the preliminary study that both novels expose marginalized women characters. The study tries to address the exploitation of both nature and women under capitalist systems in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Nectar in a Sieve*, examining how these novels portray the inherent

connection between women and nature as a site of resistance. The study seeks to establish that the ecofeminist resistance of women to capitalist exploitation, as portrayed in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Nectar in a Sieve*, highlights alternative models of environmental and gendered balance.

Ecological strand of literary criticism considers nature as organic placing humans, nature, animals in equal position and respects the interconnectedness. Ecofeminism shows interconnection between nature and woman. The idea of interconnectedness is bio-centric and it places man, woman, animals and nature on horizontal plane whereas the anthropocentric world view ascribes human at the vertically higher position and gives higher value to the man.

The reviews on the primary texts under study have helped me to figure out the research gap. These reviews are drawn from scholarly article and books. For example, while talking about Nigerian context and characters of *The Purple Hibiscus*, Sincy Davis argues:

The novel is set in the South eastern Nigerian town of Enugu, Nsukka and Abba which are predominantly populated by the Igbos. Enugu, a sprawling metropolis represents western civilization as it is the site of industrialization and development in comparison to the rural and dusty university town of Nsukka. Abba is the ancestral town of the Achikes which they visit every year during Christmas. (206)

The novel is set in the context where the globalization, industrialization and Western influence are at peak. The eco-conscious part is missing in most of the dominating characters in the novel.

Susan Z. Andrade talks about both of Adichie's novels, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Purple Hibiscus*, in these words: "Despite its greater critical acclaim and embrace

of the topos of the nation, I find *Half of a Yellow Sun* less compelling than *Purple Hibiscus*. Perhaps, it is because it is in her first novel that I see Adichie's literary heritage reaching further across divides; perhaps it is simply because in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, a novel inherent about division and structured to represent multiplicity" (94). The multiple themes in the line of postcolonial literature are exposed. Andrade asserts, "One is less free to explore the nuances of various differences: psychology vs. politics, domestic vs. public spheres, family vs. nation. In contrast, *Purple Hibiscus* calls upon a novel that is neither Igbo nor even Nigerian for its point of departure" (94). Different strands of life activities are exposed in the novel.

Cynthia R. Wallace shares her ideas on cultural discrimination and domination. Wallace in this regards, argues, "Few Western academics participates a missionary project of colonialist feminism. In feminist and postcolonial critiques, secularized relationship between the academy and faith contemporary perspective of suspicion of religion among many scholars" (466). The missionary project of Christianity is problematic to females and other as suggested by scholars. Wallace has shown how religion is misguided: "African women who maintain Christian belief as needing the Good News of a secularized culture freed from the constraints" (467). This quote mentions that feminism rejects domination. Wallace argues:

Purple Hibiscus is structured by Christianity: the first three sections bear the subtitles "Palm Sunday," "Before Palm Sunday," and "After Palm Sunday," indicating the organizing power of the religion over the temporality of the narrative. The very first sentences of the text likewise highlight the importance of Roman Catholic observance in Kambilis family, and foreshadow the associations of her father's power, the church's authority, and violence. (469)

In the passage above, Wallace claims that the novel has thematic structures like "Palm Sunday," "Before Palm Sunday," and "After Palm Sunday." This has a thematic connection of religious influence. The novel *Purple Hibiscus* shows influence of Christianity. The quote also talks about the structure of the book, the first three sections bear the subtitles "Palm Sunday," "Before Palm Sunday," and "After Palm Sunday," indicating the organizing power of other religion like Christianity: "These competing readings have a great deal to do with readers' cultural locations and the interpret text like *Purple Hibiscus* from its particular postcolonial location" (466). The novel raises the postcolonial issues. Wallace further argues:

In the first chapter Kambili describes her bedroom and their whole compound as bordered by flowers, trees, and insects as well as the interaction of these with human beings: I sat at my bed room window after I changed; the cashew tree was so close I could reach out and pluck a leaf if it were not for silver-colored crisscross of mosquito netting. The bell-shaped yellow fruits hung lazily, drawing buzzing bees that bumped against my window's netting. (8)

Kambili is more inclined to enjoy in nature but her father obstructs her. In the same way, Rukmani is also nature lover. Without the support of nature, it is impossible for human beings to stay in the world where they are comparatively new members. To get benefits from nature without disastrous exploitation is not found. The study assumes that the Ecocritical stance redirects the attention on the renewal of human-nature link and interaction necessary for a healthy existence on Earth. Humans have not promoted or protected the good of nonhuman living things. The difference between the life-centered system of environmental ethic and the human-centered system of environmental ethic is in life centered system is to be minimized. In this regards the study makes an attempt how to develop ecological sensibilities.

The novel is also studied from the perspective Igbo culture. In this regards, Lily G. N. Mabura asserts, “Purple Hibiscus is set in the South Eastern Nigerian towns of Enugu, Nsukka, and Abba, which are predominantly Igbo in ethnicity. The main protagonist, Kambili Achike, almost sixteen, narrates her family's life and history in modern day Nigeria” (206). She brings the reader into her family's palatial homes in not only the coal mining town of Enugu, where her father Eugene Achike runs various businesses, but also in Abba, her paternal ancestral home that the family visits every Christmas. The background of the novel indicates that the Christianity has been influential as described in the novel. On the contrary, the majority of Nigerian villagers were not following this, they were among the native followers of Igbo culture.

The narrator further talks about the converging and contradicting ideas uniquely among the readers with reference to cultural aspects. In this regard, Lily G. N. Mabura further states, “The setting, Eugene's house, is a crucial Gothic element, and I wish to spend some time locating it within the Gothic tradition. in a standard Gothic metonymy of gloom and horror” (208). The house could never be home due to the western influence. The family has been termed as barbaric, uncivilized and moreover mysterious.

The family members suffer a lot due to the bad practice. They are under the dark shade of oppression of the father figure and they are entrapped under violent circumstances and situation. The structural and cultural patriarchal domination in the name of religion follows, the regular violent actions in a serious way, with unexpected outcome prevails in the society. The narrator hereby reveals the noticed and unnoticed violence/trap that the oppressed have to encounter the entire day with harsh reality.

Similarly, Mabura *Purple Hibiscus* shows catholic influence for further suppression of native characters. Mabura writes, “Despite Eugene's eventual demise, we cannot help but marvel at the Catholic fort he has erected against his Igbo cultural past. The novel's very structure is reflective of this. That form complements function towards this goal is discernable in Adichie's decision to divide the novel into the following four sections” (210). The story is about how the deep-rooted belief encompassing Catholicism and its extreme norms and values are still in existence despite of the ultimate death of Eugene. Despite of the murder of Papa Eugene, Mama has been left in deep imprisonment of sorrow. The humble duty of Papa Eugene in promoting Catholicism has still left bigger residue despite of his demise. Heather Hewett, in this context, argues, “Through Kambili, the author introduces her readers to a family blessed with material wealth but cursed by violence. As the story unfolds, the daily events of their troubled lives - their mother's multiple miscarriages, Jaja's deformed little finger - remain unspoken secrets” (81). These ideas of influences are shared between Kambili and her brother through stolen glances. The strange obsession of Eugene is questionable. Heather Hewett exposes a series of violent forms of supervision which is unfolded the types of violent actions that prolong among the family members and native people. They are disregarding the norms and morals of Catholicism.

While reading the novel, Cheryl Stobie discusses the novel from post-colonial lines insight. Stobie explains that this novel is “. . . set in the postcolonial with some conflation of events from the 1980s, rooted in a gendered colonial past, the effects of which present. In general, the male colonial subject is prone development of his bodily schema, arise out ediction, inflicted on him by the colonizer” (426). The novel

is set in post-colonial context. The colonizers have come in the mask of native people to dominate native people.

Meanwhile, Raj Kishore Singh also shows the influence of Patriarchy in the novel *Purple Hibiscus*. Singh asserts, “Patriarchy is a pervasive force in the novel, depicting the dominance of male authority and the subjugation of women. Kambili and her mother, Beatrice, endure physical and emotional abuse at the hands of Kambili's father, Eugene” (121). The patriarchy is dominating force in the story. He further argues, “The presence of patriarchy limits the agency and self-expression of women, creating a climate of fear, submission, and oppression. By exploring this force, the novel invites readers to critically examine gender roles, power dynamics, and the consequences of rigid patriarchal systems” (121). He argues that there is exercise of power in terms of gender roles, profit dynamics, and the consequences of rigid patriarchal systems. Human duties to respect the integrity of natural ecosystems, to preserve endangered species, and to avoid environmental pollution stem from the fact that these are ways in which one can help make it possible for wild species populations to achieve and maintain a healthy existence in a natural state.

On a different note, Cynthia R. Wallace’s reading of the novel show how few characters in Nigeria have supported the Western tradition forgetting their own roots. In “Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and the Paradoxes of Postcolonial Redemption”, Wallace talks about religious controversy, religious domination, and violence. Wallace further posits that idea that neo-colonialism is a problematic issue. He writes, “Such neo-colonialist feminism understands African women who maintain Christian belief as needing the Good News of a secularized culture freed from the constraints” (467). The conflict between inner force and outer force represented by African roots and Christianity has resulted in expansion of neo-colonialism.

In this way, all these scholars discussed above have discussed several issues, including nature-women relation in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. However, they have not carried out a comparative study between this novel and Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* in relation to ecofeminist sensibility. Therefore, the present study is quite significant in bringing together the ecofeminist sensibilities from Africa and South Asia.

Similarly, the next novel *Nectar in a Sieve* is also critically examined. Aungkanang Pailanon, in "Feminist Perspectives in Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* and K. Surangkanang's *Ying Khon Chua*," highlights the feminist reading of the novel. She argues,

"In her first novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*, she has proved that Indian rural women are strong and independent. This novel reflects the awakened feminine sensibility in contemporary India. She proves that the plight of the woman in rural India has a meaningful role in Indian society. At the same time, she has portrayed strong women characters who faced challenges of life" (324).

Rukmani has proved that Indian rural women are strong and independent. She proves that the plight and sadness of the woman in rural India has a meaningful role in Indian society. Rukmani is portrayed strong women characters who faced challenges of life.

Pailanon further focuses on moral and spiritual side of Rukmani. She asserts, "Moreover, feminine perspective has appeared as the tragic lives of the women in most of her novels as her women characters are more important than male one. She portrays emotional, moral, and spiritual problems of the traditional Thai women. She also depicts the psychological sufferings of Thai women as oppressed by traditional and cultural norms of patriarchal society" (325). Rukmani is portrayed as emotional, moral, and spiritual one who can tackle problems. She again insists:

The significance of Nectar in a Sieve lays in the spiritual stamina of Rukmani, rural Indian woman who is against all traditional culture, draconian land lord and the soulless industry. She faced lots of obstacles and problems throughout her life because the condition of her family and her own children. Kamala Markandaya explores the emotional reactions and spiritual response of women and their predicament with sympathetic understanding. Her women characters are in search for real meaning of life. Rukmani is a woman of great fortitude, who is stronger than other characters. Her life is full of hopes and frustrations, pleasures and pains, rise and fall. (326)

Rukmani is a woman of great strengths, she is stronger than other characters. Her life is full of hopes and frustrations, pleasures and pains, rise and fall, ups and downs. She struggles to continue her life even in the most horrible situation. Pailanon further remarks, "Nectar in a Sieve describes the narrator Rukmani on the protagonist's stage of self-discovery along with a twelve years old young girl, a married woman, and then a mother. Relating to her identity, there are different relationships as a child bride, a young woman wife, and mother, connecting to her body and spirituality" (327). The feminist reading of Pailanon is seen as the protagonist's stage of self-discovery is discovered along with a twelve years old young girl, a married woman, and then a mother. Relating to her selfhood, there are different relationships as a child bride, a young woman wife, and mother, friend, and villager connecting to her body and spirituality

S. Shanmugam, in "A Study of Social Realism in Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*," discusses realist features in the novel. Shanmugam claims, "A fine feminine sensibility pervades her world of fiction. This fatalism and spirit of calm acceptance are seen clearly in *Nectar in a Sieve* in the lives of the central character.

Nathan and Rukmani silently suffer what life inflicts upon them. They do not grumble or complain, but accept silently” (57). Rukmani’s life with feminine sensibility is an exposition of social realism.

The poverty is a main issue in the text. Shanmugam thinks that this is a part of reality: “The theme of *Nectar in a Sieve* is poverty, starvation and degradation caused by it. Here it is mainly studied in a rural setting, though the theme of urban poverty, exodus and footlessness is also dealt with. The plot of *Nectar in a Sieve* is easily devisable into two parts-The first part dealing with the life of Rukmani and Nathan in the village, and the second with the life in the city” (58). Shanmugam asserts that the mentioning of village and city but finally returning to village is a part of realism. Shanmugam further explains, “In the first part of the novel is narrated the story of Rukmani’s marriage with Nathan and their best efforts to survive not only the vagaries of nature but also the disturbances wrought by the tannery recently set up near their village. In the second part, it is presented the plight of the couple trying to get accommodation in the city” (58). The plight shown in the name of survival the realist hint in the novel.

Eman Fathi Yahya talks about feminist issues in the novel presenting Rukmani a strong character who can live with a piece of land despite the hardships. Yahya claims, “Markandaya treats women’s issues and problems in her novels in a very deep way. A woman quest for identity and redefining herself finds reflection and constituted an important motif of the female characters” (292). Women’s issues and problems are inherent as presented in the novel. They come out of them raising their voices. Thus, for Yahya, a woman’s quest for identity and redefining herself finds her voice in her actions. Yahya further writes, “In her novels, female characters are the chief protagonists searching for meaning and value of life. Also She presents an

existential struggle of a woman in some of her novels who refuses to submit her individual self and emerges undergoing much pain and suffering” (292).

Markandaya’s novels deal with existential struggles for the identity. Feminist voice is found in the *Nectar in a Sieve*.

Yahya finds the raising voice in the character of Rukmani. Her life is confined in household activity and motherhood themes. Yahya explains, “Rukmani gives birth to a girl firstly naming her Iravadi. Then she does not have any children for seven years. Nathan desires a son to carry on his name. So she senses his pain and disappointment. Going to her family’s house, and meeting Dr. Kenny who understands her troubles” (294). Her joy of motherhood begins with the birth of her first daughter Ira, and she worries much when she could not give birth next seven years. As a part of struggles, she meets Dr. Kenny for treatment. Her life is full of pain and sufferings. Her entrance to her husband’s house is quite different to her stay in her father’s house. She has to live with limitations, Nathan is a poor farmer. So, she has to struggle more to lead her life along with the family. The limitation in her new house is reflected in the novel in this way, “Rukmani accepts her husband with no land and not like her father, she believes that one day they might have, True, my husband did not own the land he tilled, as my father had done; yet the possibility was there that he might one day do so” (7). She mentions that her husband does not have the land on his own. However, she struggles to continue her family.

Similarly, Aruna Shukla and Anoop Kumar Tiwari have read the novel from structuralism point of view basically applying the theme of narratology. They have highlighted the structure of novel and narrative of Rukmani. They explain, “Kamala Markandaya’s *Nectar in a Sieve* is analyzed through the framework of narratology with the special reference to Genette’s concept of narrative time in the present study.

The technique of time manipulation, blending of present and past, twisting the order of events, and frequency of narrative offers a perplexing intricacies to the novel” (261). The novel *Nectar in a Sieve* is analyzed through the structural view or narratology with the special reference to Genette’s concept of narrative time and place. The technique of time control, mixing of present and past, twisting the order of events and frequency of narrative, offers perplexing intricacies to the novel which are related to the characters’ complexities.

Shukla and Tiwari also bring the narrator’s reminiscence to the fore while discussing divergence in plot. They state, “Rukmani’s narration allows the reader to peep into her thoughts as she reminisces her husband who is no more with her and she feels tranquility when she recalls that her husband was with her. Through the passage it is apparent that Markandaya uses the technique of *in medias res* to start her novel which is ‘shift in order’ of the story” (259). The starting of the novel in the *medias res* shows the shift in order of the story. This is structural aspect of the novel which is closely connected to the theme of the time and place. They mention “This study focuses on one of the major aspect of narratology, i.e., the narrative time. One of the most indispensable formative elements in a narrative is time, and it has been researched and discussed throughout the history of narrative analysis” (258). The study of time and place show how the narration is designed.

In this way, all these scholars discussed above have discussed several issues, including nature-women relation in Markandaya’s *Nectar in a Sieve*. However, they have not carried out a comparative study between this novel and Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* in relation to ecofeminist sensibility. Therefore, the present study is quite significant in bringing together the ecofeminist sensibilities from Africa and South Asia.

Methodology

The research has used qualitative research approach for the textual analysis of selected primary texts. The research design within methodology of my research consists of reasons for the selection of primary texts, types of data, methods of data collection, and tools for interpreting data. The primary texts are Adichi's *Purple Hibiscus* and Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* which are studied using ecofeminism as a theory. Thus, it has used close textual analysis of *Purple Hibiscus* and *Nectar in a Sieve* to examine ecofeminist themes, focusing on key scenes where the female characters interact with nature. Ecofeminist theories by Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies, Val Plumwood and Greta Gaard provide the theoretical framework for analyzing the depiction of women and nature in patriarchal capitalist settings.

The ecofeminist Greta Gaard asserts that transformation in capitalist mode is necessary for social and planetary health. She argues that "a systemic transformation is needed if we are to achieve genuine social justice and ecological health" (33). For social health and ecological sustainability, it is necessary to change the current practice of dominating nature and women.

Val Plumwood finds problems with anthropocentrism: "An anthropocentric viewpoint treats nature as radically other" (107) as it limits nature and women into the category of objects. This is also shared by other scholars. Emmanuel Nweke Okafor gives importance to ecology in relation to mother features in Nigerian context. Okafor states, "Thus, in recent times, there has been a clarion call for the conservation of nature. Within the African perspective, this concern goes beyond the mere care for the environment; it involves a return to the traditional African sense of value and respect for the order of created things, especially the Mother Earth" (146). The image of Mother Nature is dominant in African surrounding. He further states, "In such a deep

rooted tradition, the sacredness of the earth (land, trees and other natural endowments) forms a great part of the African traditional religion, thereby showing the sources of the rich African cultural and spiritual heritage” (146). Nigerian ancient tradition celebrates the sacredness of the earth. The Nigerian context shares some similar things to Indian context where Markandaya’s novel is set. Both cultures suffer patriarchy in terms of gender and nature.

The valorization of nature in term of holy power shows how Igbo people have emotional strength. He states, “However, the Igbo holistic understanding of the inter-relationship that exists in the eco-system negates the nature-culture, rural-urban polarization” (147). The nature-culture dualism is not a part of Igbo ancient identity. “The Igbo are united by ethnicity, culture and the geographic features of their location. Their location has a rainforest climate. The ecosystem is rich in rain forest reserves, rivers, etc., and this defines the livelihood of the local people as farmers, traders, food processors and local manufacturers of items linked to subsistence economies. There is a rich biodiversity of various species of plants and organism in the ecosystem” (155). The rich bio-diversity is an example of celebration of Mother Nature. However, this aspect of nature is misjudged by the masculine culture which is a serious issue for ecofeminists. The nature is violated the way a woman is in patriarchal culture.

Talking about violence over nature and women, Maria Miles and Vandana Shiva in their collaborative work *Ecofeminism* posit:

Wherever women acted against ecological destruction or /and the threat of atomic annihilation, they immediately became aware of the connection between patriarchal violence against women, other people, and nature, and that: In defying this patriarchy we are loyal to future generations and to life

and this planet itself. We have a deep and particular understanding of this both through our natures and our experience as women. (14)

The quote argues that women are aware of the twin oppression of women and nature. Women act against ecological destruction and they are immediately become aware of the connection between patriarchal violence against women, other people, and nature. They are loyal to future generations and to life and this planet itself. According to quote, they have a deep and particular understanding of this both through their natures and experience as women.

In the introduction of the collaborative work *Ecofeminism*, Maria Miles and Vandana Shiva talk about the connection between nature and woman, “We therefore saw a connection between violence against woman and children and violence against nature” (xxii). The point here is that whether it is domestic or global like in wars women and nature are affected. The violence against nature and women results in environmental degradation.

Women and nature suffer at home and in the community. Nature is ravaged to meet human needs. This has led to the disappearance of feminine side of nature. Vandana Shiva in “Musculization of the Motherland” writes, “The feminine attribute, as a symbol of the land and its people has slowly disappeared” (108). She worries that woman is connected with land with their creative and productive potential. Shiva in “Women's Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity Conservation” further asserts, “Woman, being different, is treated as unequal and inferior. Nature's diversity is seen as not intrinsically valuable in itself, its value is conferred only through economic exploitation for commercial gain” (164). It means humans have used nature to their advantage and it brings economic exploitation. She claims, "The marginalization of women and the destruction of biodiversity go hand in hand" (164). She argues that the

marginalization of women and the destruction of biodiversity go hand in hand by the same force of patriarchal ideology.

The domination of women and nature go together as men dominate them for their purpose. Shiva in "Decolonizing the North" further argues: "As a source of life, nature was venerated as sacred and human evolution was measured in terms of the human capacity to interact in harmony with her rhythms and patterns, intellectually and emotionally. In the final analysis, the ecological crisis is rooted in the mistaken belief that human beings are not part of the democracy of nature's life that they stand apart from and above nature" (265). Shiva points out that the ecological crisis is rooted in human activities of looting the natural life of nature or the democracy of nature life. Humans put themselves at the top and nature at the bottom. They behave as if they are not a part of nature. Thus, they continuously exploit nature and women without thinking about possible disasters.

Shiva's ideas are important to because she connects women with nature. For her, there is inherent connection between nature and women. She worries about soil fertility which has been weak due to modern impact.

The loss of soil fertility, according to Vandana Shiva, lies in development process. Her idea of double domination of nature and women is continued in developmental activities guided by anthropocentric culture. In "Impoverishment of the Environment", she writes, "In fact, however water, soil fertility, and genetic wealth are considerably diminished as a result of the development process. The scarcity of these natural resources, which form the basis of nature's economy and especially women's survival economy, is impoverishing women, and all marginalized peoples to an unprecedented extent" (73). Due to the developmental activities, soil fertility is diminished and bio-diversity is affected.

Greta Gaard, in "Living Interconnections with Animals and Nature," brings ecology and feminism together as they are often the sites of domination by patriarchy. Combining the insights of ecology with a female, Greta Gaard sheds light on the connection between gender and oppression: "The ideology which authorizes oppressions such as based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppressions of women"(1). According to her, men enjoy separate-self whereas women enjoy an interconnected sense of self with nature, "These conceptions of self are also the foundation for two different ethical systems: the separate self often operates on the basis of an ethic of rights or justice, while the interconnected self makes moral decisions on the basis of an ethic of responsibilities"(2). By separating self which Gaard assigns to men is the individual one guided by personal gain whereas the interconnected self is the one that sees intrinsic values to everything. Gaard's focus on ecofeminism is that "we cannot end the exploitation of nature without ending human oppressions" (18). The point that Gaard is making is that human exploitation of nature and woman go together as they both are treated as instruments to fulfill human demands. The women-nature connection was a relevant issue for many ecofeminists.

Gaard again highlights the aim of ecofeminism, "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" (1). She means to say that without ending one form of domination practiced upon women, one cannot end the oppression on nature. Such a collaborative relationship between nature and women led the ecofeminists to view the environment is a feminist issue. Feminist issues are to be addressed with environmental issues, "Ecofeminists have described a number of connections between the oppression 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” (4). The connections are ecologically understood as these links are environmental concerns as well.

The association stands against anthropocentric relation that promotes hierarchy or dualisms. This contributes to the problem to expand, "What appears to be the mainstream in green philosophy holds that anthropocentrism is the root of our social and environmental problems. Ecofeminism, in contrast, views anthropocentrism as a symptom of a much deeper problem: androcentrism” (6). The politics of either anthropocentrism or androcentrism enhance the dualism rather than diversity. The goal of ecofeminism is to support diversity, "goal is diversity rather than dualism" (7). When diversity is maintained in nature, the culture of giving equal values to different entities is practiced.

The nature and women are linked through river. It is justifiable to bring issue of river image as suggested by Lina Gupta to show the connection between women and nature in the Indian context. She also shows her aggression to patriarchy which has caused harm to nature particularly talking about pollution in Ganga. She argues, “For my part, I love her dearly. Indeed, with each passing day I love her even more. But I see her through eyes that have been influenced by ecofeminism. I see the pollution of our Ganga, and of all rivers, as the result of a mind-set, and attitude, which ecofeminists call patriarchy” (101). She accuses patriarchy and industrialization in polluting rivers. She shows importance of nature which helps her feel energized. The nature for her is replica of Goddesses. She states:

She is the energy the life that permeates all of nature. By naming her I identify her divine essence in all things. She reminds me of a never-ending cycle of life

that neither harbors any grudges against her polluters nor discharges her anger in her surroundings. She is the beacon of life that shows me the path I have forgotten and shines on the one I have chosen. She is the mother. She is a goddess. She is a woman. She is a journey as simple as a river, as complex as life itself. (102)

Gupta finds her life in relation to nature. Nature has immortal quality. Her love to people is unconditional. She is the hope of life that indicates the path of harmony that people have forgotten. She is the mother and she is a goddess. She is a woman, and shares feminine quality of rearing children. She further posits, “Mother gets into dirt and filth to play with the child, also to get him or her out of the dirt and filth. I think Ganga is exemplifying the true nature of a mother, true nature of a nurturer. Being a divine mother, she is even going one step further. She came all the way down to take you up. It is time for us to meet her halfway” (103). The mother is nature and nature is mother. She takes care of children and both of them have nurturing quality. She compares nature with a flowing nature which connects each thing, “As the river flows through the various parts of a land making the land a harmonious whole of interconnections and interdependence, she is energy, the essence that radiates through life forms, mobile and immobile, humans and nature, and reflects the basic kinship among all things” (104). Beauty of nature is seen as its essence radiates through life forms, mobile and immobile, humans and nature. It shows the basic kinship among all things.

Ecofeminists highlights on how earth is taken in lower status. They mention that the earth has been considered as dumping site. The earth is symbolically viewed as the proper place for the dumping of waste. The dumping sites are represented as death forces for humanity. There is the implication that the earth is caring. She cares

of the pollution and purify it for humans as it flows into the earth's waters.

Ecofeminism views the exploitation of nature as connected to the domination of women. Ecofeminism regards exploitation of nature as connected to the oppression of women. Ecofeminist consciousness to raise awareness is significant. Clearly ecofeminist consciousness makes a claim of a different model of the relationship between humanity and nature/women than the domination model of patriarchal consciousness. Ecofeminism advocates a relationship between humanity and nature. The domination model of patriarchal consciousness is disregarded by ecofeminism. The mutuality that ecofeminists talk about is based on awareness and a commitment to mutually support one another not on a mere concept of political term 'equality'.

Similar to Plumwood, and Gaard, L. Teal Willoughby, in "Ecofeminist Consciousness and the Transforming Power of Symbols," asserts, "Ecofeminists recognize that the patriarchal way of viewing women and nature, even with its long history, is only one way to construct this reality and the relationship between them" (136). The patriarchal understanding of nature and woman is problematic. She calls for ecofeminism awareness, "Now ecofeminists are constructing their own viewpoint out of their own values and understanding of ecology and feminist theory. This alternative perspective, called ecofeminist consciousness, will be the conscious standpoint for evaluating actions toward the earth both literal and symbolic" (136). The perspective of ecofeminist consciousness, is a conscious standpoint which evaluates actions toward the earth and woman.

Val plumwood, in *Environmental Culture*, shows about the dualism that dominates women and men through the five linking principles. Her concern is how binary thinking like reason-emotion, man-woman is constructed and gendered to dominate the others. She discloses the five linking principles that subordinates,

marginalizes, and excludes women and nature: back grounding, instrumentalization, homogenization, radical exclusion, incorporation. She asserts, “Men are stereotyped as active, intellectual, inexpressive, strong, dominant, and so on, while women are represented as passive, intuitive, emotional weak and submissive” (103). She explains how men are stereotyped as agent, active, intellectual, inexpressive, strong, dominant, and so on and women are represented as passive, intuitive, emotional weak and submissive. Women and nature are radically excluded.

Plumwood argues that woman and nature are viewed as resources. She argues, “The woman is set apart as having a different, lower order of being” (102). In the same way, nature is understood as dead object waiting for life to be given by humans.

The dominant culture homogenizes women and nature. The homogenization of nature and women is a constructed by male culture. She asserts, “The essential female nature is uniform and unalterable” (102). This position of non-changeability is a strategy of dominant culture to exploit women and nature. It is called homogenization, “Homogenization leads to a serious underestimation of the complexity of nature” (107). Sameness perceived in nature and women is problematic as it is done to dominate both rather than to liberate both, “Nature is represented as inessential and massively denied as the unconsidered back ground to technological society” (108). Nature and women are defined in terms of their relation to men, “In anthropocentric culture, the women is defined in relation to man” (104). As they are used as means or resources, they are judged as something lacking.

These five linking principles along with the ideas of Gaard, and Plumwood are applicable in this research.

Significance of the Study

First and foremost, the research aims at bringing changes in the way people behave to nature and women. It is expected that the society learns why people are facing the ecological problems and takes some actions to prevent such ecological disasters. Moreover, this study will be helpful to understand the nature-women connection in the African as well as South Asian contexts.

Plan of Thesis

The present study has been divided into the following chapters:

Chapter I. Ecofeminist Sensibility in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*

Chapter II. Women-Nature Connection in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Nectar in a Sieve*

Chapter III. Women's Resistance to Patriarchy and Capitalism in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Nectar in a Sieve*

Works Cited

Chapter II

Women-Nature Connection in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Nectar in a Sieve*

This part of the research examines nature-woman's relation in the novels *Nectar in a Sieve* and *Purple Hibiscus* applying the ecofeminist perspective. It includes the issues of women, mother earth, nature, and feminine principles. Here, the researcher argues that women –nature intersection is based on inherent principles due to the nurturing qualities. To justify the argument, the researcher has used ecofeminist critical ideas developed by Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies, Val Plumwood, Keren Warren, Greta Gaard as theoretical parameters to analyze the texts under scrutiny.

The female characters presented in both novels resist patriarchy. The Kambili's mother's action of poisoning her husband to death, Ifoma understanding colonization as a capitalist venture and Jaja's support to women are key issues in *Purple Hibiscus*. In the same way, Rukmani's resistance to tannery and her connection to nature like farming, forgiving nature, fertility, attachment to land are key issues in *Nectar in a Sieve*.

The novel *Purple Hibiscus* begins with Papa Eugene's misbehaviors to his family members. The issue of church and his arrogance in 'flunging' his heavy missal is his anger towards his family as they were not sincerely following what he suggested them about Christianity. However, family members were more concerned with Igbo traditions. The narrator mentions, "Things started to fall apart at home when my brother, Jaja, did not go to communion and Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the étagère. We had just returned from church. Mama placed the fresh palm fronds, which were wet with holy water, on the dining table and then went upstairs to change" (Adichie3). The Christian background of the home shows influence upon Igbo characters. Thus, the narrator, the daughter of the family,

Kambili does not feel comfortable even in the home, “The silence was broken only by the whirl of the ceiling fan as it sliced through the still air. Although our spacious dining room gave way to an even wider living room, I felt suffocated” (7). She feels suffocated as if she is in alien place.

The final act of resistance is seen when Mama kills her husband Eugene by poisoning. This act of defiance to capitalist patriarchy and colonial mentality is rebellious nature of Mother Earth or Gaia. She could no longer bear the injustice if the limitation is crossed. The narrator ponders:

‘They did an autopsy,’ she said. ‘They have found the poison in your father’s body’” She sounded as though the poison in Papa’s body was something we all had known about, something we had put in there to be found, the way it was done in the books I read where white people hid Easter eggs for their children to find. “Poison?” I said. Mama tightened her wrapper, then went to the windows; she pushed the drapes aside, checking that the louvers were shut to keep the rain from splashing into the house. Her movements were calm and slow. (290)

The quote says that Mama poisons Papa because he was a problem to their freedom. She was calm in doing so. A woman killing her husband is beyond imagination but this is a real thing in the novel. Achidi here wants to foreground the message that revolution at certain level is necessary if the limitation has gone crossing the boundary. The narrator thinks about atmosphere, “The roads to the prison are familiar. I know the houses and shops, I know the faces of the women who sell oranges and bananas just before you turn into the pothole-filled road that leads to the prison yard” (296). She is not sure what happens further. At last, the characters are happy, “Above, clouds like dyed cotton wool hang low, so low I feel I can reach out and squeeze the

moisture from them. The new rains will come down soon” (307). The novel ends with hopeful note.

In the next novel *Nectar in a Sieve*, Rukmani is presented as an epitome of motherhood environmentalism because she is a keen observer of nature and doer of motherhood. She goes on believing on ecological feminism that it represents power—constructive as well as destructive. She goes on narrating, “Nature is like a wild animal that you have trained to work for you. So long as you are vigilant and walk warily with thought and care, so long will it give you its aid, but look away for an instant, be heedless or forgetful, and it has you by the throat” (Markandaya39). Nature is soft and hard which she understands as natural thing that nature undergoes. An ecofeminist reading involves assigning positive value to nature and oppressed class. Woman is connected with nature in varieties of ways.

Rukmani respects soil as energy flowing element. She understands land as her house. In this regards, she narrates, “I wanted to cry. This mud, nothing but mud and thatch was my home. My knees gave first the cramped one, then the other, and I sank down” (4). She wants soil as her most important thing. She respects the land as goddess as Vandana Shiva often talks about. Thus, she is happy to be with her poor husband due to her association to land that makes her feel connected and strong. She shares, “A woman they say always remembers her wedding night. Well, maybe they do; but for me there are other nights I prefer to remember, sweeter, fuller, when I went to my husband matured in mind as well as body not as a pained and awkward child as I did on that first night” (4). She remembers her time with her husband as happy days due to the farming.

Rukmani is happy in the farming. She narrates, “I planted beans and sweet potatoes, brinjals and chilies, and they all grew well under my hand, so that we ate

even better than we had done before” (15). Her daily life is full of agricultural chores. She never gets bored working in land. He lives in the mud hut. Rukmani reflects, “This mud hut, nothing but mud and thatch, was my home” (8). The mud hut gives her satisfaction. She expresses her extreme form of happiness to see nature, animals, fields, crops, and farming on the way:

We rested a half-hour before resuming our journey. The animals, refreshed, began stepping jauntily again, tossing their heads and jangling the bells that hung from their red-painted horns. The air was full of the sound of bells, and of birds, sparrows and bulbuls mainly, and sometimes the cry of an eagle, but when we passed a grove, green and leafy, I could hear mynahs and parrots. It was very warm, and, unused to so long a jolting, I fell asleep. (7-8)

Rukmani’s narration of her daily touch with nature and agricultural activities show her ecofeminist sensibility. She shows her satisfaction to see flora, fauna, fields, and farming in her home. The animals, refreshed air were full of the sound of bells. The birds, sparrows and bulbuls mainly, and sometimes the cry of an eagle were very good.

She continued living in nature. She reflects, “I woke; I looked. A mud hut, thatched, small, set near a paddy field, with two or three similar huts nearby. Across the doorway a garland of mango leaves, symbol of happiness and good fortune, dry now and rattling in the breeze” (8). Mango leaves, paddy field, and her small hut were sources of her happiness. She was bound by this duty. The duty to plant vegetables and implant a baby in her womb are similar as they together, “Sowing time was at hand and there was plenty to be done in the fields: dams of clay to be built to ensure proper irrigation of the paddy terraces; the previous year’s stubble to be lifted; rushes

and weeds to be destroyed; then the transplanting” (17). She knows how to cultivate crops and bear children. So, she represents motherhood environmentalism. She writes:

I had planted, in the flat patch of ground behind the hut, a few pumpkin seeds. The soil here was rich, never having yielded before and loose so that it did not require much digging. The seeds sprouted quickly, sending up delicate green shoots that I kept carefully watered, going several times to the well nearby for the purpose. Soon they were not delicate but sprawling vigorously over the earth, and pumpkins began to form. (14)

The quote shows her ecofeminist sprits as she planted a few seeds in the flat patch of ground behind the hut. It was possible as the soil was rich. The seeds were planted quickly, sending up delicate green shoots which she kept carefully watered. She kept on going several times to the well nearby for the irrigation. In the book, *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, and Nature*, Greta Gaard asserts, "Ecofeminists have described a number of connections between the oppression of women and of nature that is significant to understanding why the environment is a feminist issue" (4). This applies to the character Rukmani as she takes the nurturing quality to both nature and children.

Her happiness does not long last as she could bear second child for a long time after the first child was born. Her struggle for children is seen when her daughter Ira suffer barrenness. She, as a nurturing mother, says to Ira, “I will ask Kenny to help you” (Markandaya71). She also believes in medical treatment so she promises to take Ira to the doctor Kenny. She is unhappy when Ira’s family returns her back. Ira’s family returns the daughter. Ira’s mother-in-law comes to Rukmani and says, “I intend no discourtesy, but this is no ordinary visit. You gave me your daughter in marriage. I have brought her back to you. She is a barren woman” (68). Thus, she has to do

something for Ira. She takes care of children the way nature as organism cares the inhabitants. In this regards, Carolyn Merchant talks about the image of Earth as a living being or organism with nurturing qualities. Merchant states, "The image of the earth as a living organism and nurturing mother had served as a cultural constraint restricting the actions of human beings" (3). She compares earth as living mother who gives the needy things to mankind.

Rukmani is a character with passion and dedication. Demonstrating both hope and compassion, Rukmani goes on struggling even after losing her husband comes to villages where Ira prepares a meal for Puli, the adopted son of Rukmani. This shows motherhood love and compassion of Ira and Rukmani. After a long period of drought, it rains fall heavily. During monsoon rains, Nathan continues to work and his fever goes up. One evening, Rukmani finds him collapsed in the mud in the street. She is still brave to live for the sake of children. Her resistance to Tannery is a form of resistance and embodiment of ecofeminist sensibility. In the next novel, Papa physically beats Mama, who excuses and endures his abuse. Mama discovers she is pregnant again after several miscarriages. Resistance is seen when Kevin drives Kambili and Jaja to meet Aunt Ifeoma in Nsukka. They also visit Papa who dies suddenly. The autopsy exposes that he has been poisoned. Mama shares that Kambili and Jaja that she has fed poison to the Papa Jaja takes the responsibility for the crime. Mama talks with lawyers and bribes to ease Jaja's time in jail. This is a strong point of resistance.

Rukmani's act shares what Gaard highlights about the aim of ecofeminism that 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. It is because she knows tannery is reflection of anthropocentrism. She

means to say that without ending one form of domination practiced upon women, one cannot end the oppression on nature. Such a collaborative relationship between nature and women led the ecofeminists to view the environment as a feminist issue. Feminist issues are to be addressed with environmental issues, "Ecofeminists have described a number of connections between the oppression 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" (4). The connections are ecologically understood as these links are environmental concerns as well.

The association between nature and women stands against anthropocentric relation that promotes hierarchy or dualisms. This helps to know that anthropocentrism is the root of the social and environmental problems. Ecofeminism takes anthropocentrism as a symptom of a much deeper problem similar to androcentrism. The politics of either anthropocentrism or androcentrism is bad as it enhances the dualism rather than diversity.

Rukmani vehemently speaks against the construction of tannery due to her eco-conscious awareness. In the text, She writes, "The tannery stood, its bricks and cement had held it together despite the raging winds; but the workers' huts, of more flimsy construction, had been demolished" (Markandaya 57). The workers' huts and land were demolished to make the tannery. This disturbs the ecological balance. The construction of tannery is possible as the nature is back-grounded due to the capitalist mode of living. In this regard, *Environmental Culture* Val Plumwood discloses how binary thinking like reason-emotion, mind-matter, and human-nature, is constructed and gendered to dominate both nature and women. She explains five inter-linking principles that subordinate, suppress, marginalize, dominate, and excludes women and

nature along with marginalized others. They are backgrounding, homogenization, radical exclusion, and incorporation, "Men are stereotyped as active, intellectual, inexpressive, strong, dominant, and so on, while women are represented as passive, intuitive, emotionally weak and submissive" (103). According to men are represented as active, intellectual, rational, strong, strong, and dominant. On the other hand, women are represented as motionless, passive, intuitive, emotionally weak and submissive lacking vigour to do anything.

Her skills and ideas farming develop and she is successful to make her family happy as well. She respects her farming duty to plant vegetables. Side by side, she also implants a baby in her womb goes together. She narrates, "So wing time was at hand and there was plenty to be done in the fields: dams of clay to be built to ensure proper irrigation of the paddy terraces; the previous year's stubble to be lifted; rushes and weeds to be destroyed; then the transplanting" (Markandaya 19). Thus, she is a motherly figure who can endure pain and suffering for the betterment of family. Her farming skills, ideas, and knowledge of cultivating crops, seeds are respectful jobs she enjoys.

Farming for her is not a simply a job she carries, it is a connection to soil. On the one hand, she was able to sustain her family, and on the other she was able to find a link with land. However, her agony dramatically increases when the proposal of construction of tannery is put forward. To foreground the idea of tannery is to put nature at the background. Timothy W. Luke in *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy and Culture* talks how nature has been sidelined saying it is almost ended, "Because Nature has ended, material signs of its now-dead substance need to be conserved as pristine preserved parts, like pressed leaves in a book, dried animal pelts in a drawer, or a loved one's mortal remains in a tomb" (68). The quote makes it

clear that the nature is often taken as a dead object having no agency, and its ability to give human a life is rejected. The construction of tannery is a result of capitalist economy. Capitalists are unaware of environmental pollution, anthropogenic actions, degradation, and loss of biodiversity. Luke in this regards further asserts, “As powerful anthropogenic actions have recon toured, the earth to suit the basic material needs of corporate modes of production, these artificial contours now define new ecologies for all life forms caught within their economy and environment.” (68). The quote means to say that the economy practiced in the name of profit has changed the course of the earth and its elements to suit the needs of corporate business plans and strategies and corporate mode of production as well and lavish life style.

Rukmani faces a series of constant challenges. When her daughter Ira is said to be rejected by her son in laws family, she is in panics. She has to tackle the challenge, she Ira remains infertile. She could not conceive baby for a long time after her marriage. She is doubly heart-broken when the son-in- law returns her daughter back to her. He says that she is useless as she could not bear babies. As a mother, this is panic to her and she vows to do something. When Ira comes back to her as barren women, she consults with a doctor. This symbolizes a resistance to useless tradition. She narrates, “Mylord, mybenefactor---many a time I have longed to see you” (Markandaya44). She calls him a benefactor, and a man with modern possibilities. It shows how she is concerned with reproductive activities even by following the modern measures. Ira’s infertility impairs her mentenlly. Ira’s mother-in-law comes to Rukmani and says, “I intend no discourtesy, but this is no ordinary visit. You gave me your daughter in marriage. I have brought her back to you. She is a barren woman” (68). This is a sever attack on women hood and is a symbol of patriarchy. In the eye of patriarchy, she is a barren woman but for Rukmani, she is a fertile woman.

The resistance to tannery is final act of rebellion imbedded in her characteristics. The construction of tannery at the cost of spoiling and spending nature, is capitalist anthropocentric job. She resists it. She exposes it as anti-nature unfolding its cruel form spreading drought, famine and Ira's infertility go together. She also makes a link between infertility and nature degradation. Rukmani observes of tannery, "The tannery stood, its bricks and cement had held it together despite the raging winds; but the workers' huts, of more flimsy construction, had been demolished" (59). The image of tannery as strong force replaced the nature; the land and farming. She pours her anger to capitalists. She asserts, "They had invaded our village with clatter and din, had taken from us the maiden where our children played, and had made the bazaar prices too high for us" (38). The people, representation of capitalism, and porfit involved in the activities of building the tannery have attacked her surrounding, her village with clatter, modern technology, and din; they have replaced and changed the lawn where children used to play with. This has been changed into buying and selling store.

Rukmani questions the construction of tannery. She was in opposition in the construction of tannery which is similar to what ecofeminists critique of the western ideas of development and courage. Nature and women/children were stereotyped, back-grounded, and othered as suggested by Val Plumwood. In addition, Rukmani's vehement protest of tannery is the idea of ecofeminism. Building at annery is a symbol of capitalization, industrialization, and modernization. Though her sons along with the villagers went to work in the tannery, it ultimately harms her village and family. The agrarian and pure life of village was destroyed due to the construction of tannery. It was built in huge land with big size and it stood in the area of big playground. As the agrarian life was destroyed, it left a direct impact on village.

Rukmani's family was dislocated and displaced. Nathan was sad due to his sons' decision of working in the tannery, but could not do anything. Drought, starvation and flooding destroyed the village leaving nothing to eat for the poor people like Rukmani and other poor people.

This is anthropocentric act as it has kept few capitalists at the center. The construction of tannery is the ecological denial resulting from human/nature dualism is problematic. Here Plumwood shares that ecological denial, "... establishes a discontinuity based on denying both the human-like aspects and nature-like aspects of human, as the denial of the sphere nature within the human matches the devaluation and denial of the nature without" (108). The quote clarifies that human nature relation is in the shadow, it is long gone due to the ecological denial. In this regards, Luke further argues, "Natural resources exist, but Nature does not" (69). Generally, natural resources exist because there is nature standing for a long time. However, humanity based on anthropocentrism, corporate mode of production, and capitalism does not see nature's existence.

The narrator takes the construction of tannery as unethical. The tannery was big and spruce, and the villagers falsely believe that it changes their economic condition to positive direction: "A large building, spruce and white; not only money has built it but men's hopes and pity, as I know who have seen it grow brick by brick and year by year" (Markandaya 5). The cemented and concrete building with bricks, stones, rods was strong enough to bear the heavy raging blowing of wind. And the wind starts moving like a collected force and ravages the huts. But the wind destroyed villager's hut and remaining crops, "Nature is like a wild animal that you have trained to work for you" (54). Now nature has shown its cruel form because when its natural blow is disturbed, it flows fiercely. With this situation, the narrator observes, "The cornfield

was lost. Our paddy field lay beneath a placid lake on which the children were already sailing bits of wood” (56). The heavy wind destroyed the crops. The narrator continues to observe, “Many of our neighbors fared much worse than we had. Several were homeless, and of a group of men who sheltered under a tree when the storm began six had been killed by lightning” (56). The house roofs were taken off, they were destroyed. People were seen sheltering under trees. The pollution increased and causes people to suffer too much, “It is true, one gets used to anything. I had got used to the noise and the smell of the tannery” (85). Rukmani is now feels to have been weak, demolished, and impaired. It is result of nature’s degradation. When nature is destroyed, humans cannot be healthy. She realized she is slowly victimized; she cannot act except doing or bearing whatever troubles and pains come to her.

Even the villagers are used by capitalists. Along with the domination of nature and villagers by the global capitalist corporate forces, she feels dislocated, othered, back-grounded, marginalized and dominated because she is directly related to nature. This is what is understood as the naturalization of female and feminization of nature. This is seen in her character. She is getting frustrated with the noise coming from tannery, she reflects that mother nature is misbehaved. Rukmani remembers, “That year the rains failed. A week went by, two. We stared at the cruel sky, calm, blue, indifferent to our need. We threw ourselves on the earth and we prayed. I took a pumpkin and a few grains of rice to my Goddess, and I wept at her feet. I thought she looked at me with compassion and I went away comforted, but no rain came” (98). As a motherly figure, she asks for forgiveness to mother earth. She offered pumpkins and a few grains of rice to the Goddess for forgiveness and to show the kind nature. she wanted mother nature to save the community. The nurturing

feeling that comes to Rukmani proves that she is a character with nurturing, love and motherly features.

The tannery made in the village in the name of development indicates modern industry and Westernization. Belonging to the rural and pastoral life, Rukmani doesn't like tannery at the cost of agricultural life, and she also did not like the idea of making money by hook and crook. For her, it is a monster which was eating up the souls of villagers. Rukmani's voice against the construction of tannery is not heard as she is radically thought to be inferior. In this regard, Plumwood states that woman and nature are perceived as radically other: "The woman is set apart as having a different, lower order of being lesser or lacking in reason" (102). Her voice is unheard and she is viewed as person with lesser value. Rukmani could not stop the formation of tannery though she objects this concept. She narrates the effects of construction, "In the village the storm had left disaster and desolation worse than on our own doorstep. Uprooted trees sprawled their branches in ghastly fashion over streets and houses, flattening them and the bodies of men and women indiscriminately" (Markandaya41). The trees are destroyed, and tannery stood in the land: "Sticks and stones lay scattered wildly in angry confusion. The tannery stood, its bricks and cement had held it together despite the raging winds; but the workers' huts, of more flimsy construction, had been demolished" (41). It clearly asserts that though it brings damage in the name of progress. This is based on oppressive conceptual frameworks. In this regard, Warren ponders, "An oppressive conceptual framework is one that explains, justifies, and maintains relationships of domination and subordination" (291). The dominant strategy by capitalism clarifies the purpose behind the domination. As a result, the tannery is built without any delay:

It was a great sprawling growth, this tannery. It grew and flourished and spread. Not a month went by but somebody's land was swallowed up, another building appeared. Night and day the tanning went on. A never-ending line of carts brought the raw material in --thousands of skins, goat, calf, lizard and snake skins – and took them away again tanned, dyed and finished. It seemed impossible that markets could be found for such quantities -- or that so many animals existed -- but so it was, incredibly (Markandaya47).

The tannery is built destroying the ecology of the region. It was made with a speedy growth. It grew and flourished and spread. In the town a water reservoir was built for the tannery workers and their families. Rukmani narrates, “I journeyed every morning, and, when I said how many we were. Then some of the women in their greed began to claim to have more children. Until at last it was decreed that each person must come in his own right only, not for others, even children and old men, and this put an end to the cheating and quarrelling; but it was hard for many who had not their full strength” (51). The construction creates confusion in the village. Many villagers are happy to see the current advantages but Rukmani is aware of the fact that it disturbs the ecology.

On the other hand, *Purple Hibiscus* is written by the Nigerian writer Chimamanda Adichie and it is set in Enugu, a city in post-colonial Nigeria. Kambili Achike, a fifteen-year-old girl is the narrator of the novel. The purpose of this research is to explore ecofeminist issues in the novel using the ecofeminist perspectives. In order to reach out the research objectives, the study examines and analyzes the inter-connections between women and nature. Similarly it highlights one how the unjustified patriarchal domination and Christianity affects women, nature and indigenous people.

The main character and narrator of the novel— Kambili, figures out nature as a symbol of aspirations, hope, freedom, and courage. Sometimes, nature is also presented as something indicating loss and tragedy. For her, trees are protective lines. It not only gives oxygen but also protects humans, “Marguerite Cartwright Avenue was bordered by tall gmelina trees. I imagined the trees bending during a rainy-season thunderstorm, reaching across to touch each other and turning the avenue into a dark tunnel” (Adichie 112). The trees are sources of life. They can also come in violent forms but it is natural. The violent form is visible in Eugene’s activities who abuse his family without any reason. The narrator mentions, “The causes of silence and voicelessness are multiple, their meanings not only complex but also constantly changing” (37). The women are voiceless in the novel. The examples of multiple miscarriages, the pouring of boiling water in the feet of daughter- Kambili, are all the hints justifying that the voicelessness among family members who remain unspoken. They don’t speak like nature is silent. However, the way nature revolt is found the character of Ifeoma.

Gardening and showing respects to nature are two important issues in this novel from the perspectives of ecofeminism. In this context, Kambili’s mother—Ma and her aunty – Ifeoma are ecofeminists. They plant herbs, trees in the land skillfully. So the next issue raised in the novel is the planting and nurturing plants and flowers. The description of aunty Ifeoma is parallel to nature. Kambili narrates, “Aunty Ifeoma came the next day, in the evening, when the orange trees started to cast long, wavy shadows across the water fountain in the front yard. Her laughter floated upstairs into the living room, where I sat reading. I had not heard it in two years, but I would know that cackling, hearty sound anywhere” (71). Nature is present as character when she talks about Ifeoma. Therefore, she is connected to nature.

Father Eugene and Aunty Ifeoma represent two different ideologies. Eugene is devout Christian and Ifeoma is purely a Nigerian who holds nationalist belief. Her act of gardening is knowledgeable and skillful. Gupta talks about *prakirti* as feminine. She states, “The Sanskrit word *prakirti* usually is translated as “nature.” In its limited sense, *prakirti* has often been taken as the feminine, the object, nature, matter, and the unconscious. This has been distinguished from Purusa, which has been understood as the masculine, the subject, the structure, the mind, and the consciousness” (107). The idea of masculine (*purusa*) stands in sharp contrast with feminine (*prakirti*). She highlights:

The literal meaning of the word *prakirti* is “nature.” Nature as it is ordinarily understood is spontaneous, unstructured, and the embodiment of various resources. This aspect of the word, taken out of context, has been emphasized by a patriarchal mind-set, and subsequently this misinterpreted word very well could have provided the ground for the patriarchal justification for the domination of women and nature. One’s life depends on the gift of nature, yet nature’s precariousness and unpredictability make her unreliable. Being unconscious, *Prakirti* is in need of the presence of Purusa, the spirit. (107)

The simple implication of the word *prakirti* is “nature.” She is with feminine character. She is spontaneous, unstructured, and the embodiment of various resources and identities. This has been misinterpreted by a patriarchal mind-set. The patriarchal justification for the domination of women and nature is opposed by ecofeminism.

The woman-nature connection is highlighted by several ecofeminists. One of them is Karren Warren. She writes about inter-connection between nature and woman, she further critiques the value dualism that separates nature from culture and woman from man. She writes:

I use the term, ecofeminism is the name of a variety of positions that are committed minimally to a few key claims: There are important connections (e.g., historical, empirical, symbolic, conceptual, theoretical) between the domination of women and the domination of nature (“women-nature connections”) and understanding the nature of these connections is necessary to any adequate feminism, environmentalism, or feminist or environmental philosophy. (122)

Warren highlights the various aspects of ecofeminism under feminism, environmentalism, or feminist or environmental philosophy. The connection is understood in terms of historical, empirical, symbolic, conceptual, theoretical underpinnings. The connections for her are necessary: “Ecofeminist philosophers are especially interested in conceptual issues regarding women-nature connections. One way to reveal the role key concepts have played in justifying the interconnected dominations of women and nonhuman nature is to understand the nature of oppressive and patriarchal conceptual frameworks” (122). The ecofeminists are related to the conceptual issues regarding women-nature connections. The act of justifying the interconnected dominations of women and nonhuman nature is to understand the nature of oppressive and patriarchal conceptual frameworks which she highlights.

Warren shows problems in value dualism. The value dualism is a process of giving higher value to one category of a pair and lower value to other category of pair. She asserts, “Value dualisms, which organize reality into oppositional (rather than complementary) and exclusive (rather than inclusive) pairs, and which place higher value, status, or prestige on one member of the pair (dualisms that give higher value to “reason,” “mind,” “masculine,” and “culture” in alleged contrast and opposition to

that identified as “Emotion,” “body,” “feminine,” and “nature,” respectively” (123).

She finds problems in giving different values to the things:

As an Up-Down system of power-over relationships patriarchy grows out of and reflects a faulty patriarchal belief system or conceptual framework, (a). As we have seen, this is a conceptual framework characterized by value-hierarchical thinking, value dualisms, power-over conceptions, and relationships of power, conceptions of privilege that assign higher status to traits associated with Ups, and logic of domination. (126)

The conceptual framework is based on faulty belief of patriarchal conceptual systems. It is guided by value hierarchical systems. The conceptions of privilege that assign higher status to traits associated with Ups, and logic of domination and masculine quality is problematic for Warren. She further talks about unequal distributions in this way: “Patriarchy is a social system of unequal distributions of power, benefits, and burdens. It can only be understood in a historical, socioeconomic, political, and cultural context. Furthermore, within patriarchy, there may be no truly healthy individual, family, community; it may be that a truly healthy family in patriarchal society is an oxymoron” (129). The unequal distributions of power, benefits, and burdens provide advantages to masculine. It can only be conceptualized in a historical, socioeconomic, political, and cultural context within which patriarchy plays vital role.

Adichie’s attempt is to reject religious dogma. Even this theme is structurally supported. Wallace further writes mentions about the influence of Christianity in the characters. The parts of the novels subtitled with religious connotation shows how religious influence was at work. He writes, “The very first sentences of the text likewise highlight the importance of Roman Catholic observance in Kambilis family,

and foreshadow the associations of her father's power, the church's authority, and violence" (Adichie 469). Kambili's father has an association to church. He has misused his powers.

Adichie shows how Christianity influenced Eugene, Kambili's father who was blind after imported religion. Francis Oseghale talks about this issue, "Purple Hibiscus vividly mirrors the religious hypocrisy and pretence among the Christians in Nigeria society. This is clearly exemplified in the character of Eugene Achike who is taken as a devote and practicing Christian who adheres strictly to all the Catholic dogma" (92). Eugene does not only practice Christian religion, he also strongly compels other to follow it.

Thus, Eugene donates generously to the church for the sake others. He is a firm Christian by heart. The problem lies when Eugene who crosses national boundary psychologically, due to his avowed Christian faith, lets his father Nnukwu die simply because he does not follow Eugene's ideas. He does not care for him at his old age and he does not allow his father to come to his house. Oseghale mentions, "Eugene Achike, the devoted Christian is wicked, harsh, rash and devoid of human feeling. He subjects his wife and children to both mental agony and moral anguish. He beats his wife and children always" (93). Eugene does not have feelings for those who do not follow the Christianity. He is a trauma for others, "He subjects them to perpetual bondage and psychological trauma. He is a bully, animalistic, savage and a terror to members of his family, melting out punishment and beating them over every little provocation" (93). Eugene is problematic for others. Oseghale shares the idea that that Eugene Achike is devoid of human feeling.

Eugene beats, harasses his friends his family for the sake of Christianity. He goes on expressing his anger of his father which Aunty Ifeoma. She is Eugene's sister

and she does not like this idea. The narrator reflects, “Our [Eugene’s] father is dying do you hear me? Dying. He is an old man and how much longer does he have, God? Yet, Eugene will not let him into his house, will not even greet him Ojoka. Eugene has to stop doing God’s work. . .” (95). Aunt Ifeoma hates her brother blind infatuation to his conversion into Christianity.

In this way, Adichie makes a critique of the evil practice of Nigerians who neglect their parents especially at old age. His so-called superiority is perceived in his painful treatment of his wife, Kambili narrates that he unbuckled his belt slowly, it landed on Jaja first, across his shoulders. Then Mama raised her hand as it landed on her upper arm. She put the dowl down just as the belt landed on my back. She mentions that how cruel he was to them.

Kambili’s mother is also an excellent gardener who enjoys caring for the plants and flowers in her garden and taking care of her children. Moreover, both women are depicted as nature lovers in the novel. They harvest and produce agricultural stuffs. Ma’s unconditional love is seen in her attempt to love her children despite the fact that she was forced to conceive the baby due to her husband’s arrogant ideas. The belly is getting larger. The narrator explains:

But nothing changed at home. Jaja and I still followed our schedules, still asked each other questions whose answers we already knew. The only change was Mama’s belly: it started to bulge, softly and subtly. At first it looked like a deflated football, but by Pentecost Sunday, it had elevated her red and gold-embroidered church wrapper just enough to hint that it was not just the layer of cloth underneath or the knotted end of the wrapper. (28)

The passage is ironic as well. It is because the narrator says that nothing changes in her home despite getting freedom except mother’s belly. She says that it started to

bulge, softly and subtly. It shows power of women similar to nature. She is symbol of forgiveness: “For Mama’s Forgiveness” (35). She is a mother who has the capacity to forgive. She takes care of daily need of children: “Mama took Jaja and me to the market to get new sandals and bags. We didn’t need them; our bags and brown leather sandals were still new, only a term old. But it was the only ritual that was ours alone, going to the market before the start of each new term” (43). She takes care of children needs unlike their father who abuses them if they don’t follow Christianity. The father Eugene is Christian. She informs, “Papa is hosting a church council meeting today”(59). She shows the superiority of Christianity as perceived by her father.

This is a reason why Papa hates his father. It is because he does not follow the conversion policy. The narrator reflects, “Papa-Nnukwu had told the umunna how Papa had offered to build him a house, buy him a car, and hire him a driver, as long as he converted and threw away the chi in the thatch shrine in his yard. Papa-Nnukwu laughed and said he simply wanted to see his grandchildren when he could” (61). Eugene hates his father simply because he was not converted into Christianity. The causes for the decline in national ethos and environmental degradation as shown in the novel *Purple Hibiscus* lies in the patriarchal system and Christianity. This has led to an unjustified domination of nature and women.

Aunty Ifeoma is often seen plucking browned leaves in the garden. Kambili and Jaja walked to the garden and she narrates, “Not the garden now, Mom. That’s a hibiscus, isn’t it, Aunty? Jaja asked, staring at a plant close to the barbed wire fencing. “I didn’t know there were purple hibiscuses” (142). Ifeoma is proud of having garden. She says, “I had to fence my garden because the neighborhood children came in and plucked many of the more unusual flowers” (140). She loves gardening. The narrator

further mentions, “Aunty Ifeoma asked me to join them in the garden, to carefully pick out leaves that had started to wilt on the croton plants. “Aren’t they pretty?” Aunty Ifeoma asked. “Look at that, green and pink and yellow on the leaves. Like God playing with paint brushes” (142). It shows devotion of Ifeoma about nature.

Ifeoma show her tribute to gardening when she describe it to Jaja and Kambili. She mentions, “But Aunty Ifeoma spent a little longer showing Jaja her flowers before we piled into the station wagon and she drove off. The street she turned into was steep and she switched the ignition off and let the car roll, loose bolts rattling” (141). The flowers make the land beautiful. Kambili shows how her aunt was busy in taking care of garden, Kambili argues: “Aunty Ifeoma asked me to join them in the garden, to carefully pick out leaves that had started to wilt on the croton plants. “Aren’t they pretty?” Aunty Ifeoma asked. Look at that, green and pink and yellow on the leaves. Like God playing with paint brushes. Aunt Ifeoma continued watering the row of tiny bananacolor flowers that clustered in bunches” (145). She loves her gardening job. She is a character with eco-conscious personality. She shows respects to nature. In Nigeria just like in India, women are considered as the primary users of natural resources for feeding children and cattles stock. They respect land, forest, and water. They are the sources of life which they have understood well. They are responsible for gathering food, water, fuel, and fodder. Thus, Kambili’s mother and Aunty Ifeoma’s activities expose that the women rely on nature. The dependence women have on natural resources is a worldwide phenomenon. However, this belief system does not work in the place where capitalist mode of living is dominant. Women unlike men, based on their responsibilities, create specific relations with nature and surroundings.

Kambili, her mother and Ifeoma harvest and cultivate fruits and vegetables to fulfil their basic needs. They also enjoy gardening. They consume and sell to buy other things selling them at the market. She mentions, “Nwunye, things are tough, but we are not dying yet. I tell you all these things because it is you. With someone else, I would rub Vaseline on my hungry face until it shone” (78). The courage to face the hunger is the strength that women have. Kambili brings references of nature while explaining grandfather’s death, mentions, “The trees in the front yard bent down, and the flowers were ruffled because the harmattan wind tore across the front yard. Thus, in this case, the harmattan wind is represented as a symbol of destructiveness, instability, and loss of life”(257). Nature can forecast the future. Here, nature is used as a symbol of warning. Something bad is on the way to her family so she uses the destructive aspect of nature. The narrator reflects:

Everything came tumbling down after Palm Sunday. Howling winds came with an angry rain, uprooting frangipani trees in the front yard. They lay on the lawn, their pink and white flowers grazing the grass, their roots waving lumpy soil in the air. The satellite dish on top of the garage came crashing down, and lounged on the driveway like a visiting alien spaceship. The door of my wardrobe dislodged completely. (257)

The howling winds indicate the forthcoming tragedy in the family. Howling winds came with an angry rain, damaging frangipani trees in the front part. The individualist aspect of Eugene is narrated by Kambili in this way: “He unbuckled his belt slowly. It was a heavy belt made of layers of brown leather with a sedate leather-covered buckle. It landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder. Then Mama raised her hands as it landed on her upper arm, which was covered by the puffy sequined sleeve of her church blouse. I put the bowl down just as the belt landed on my back” (102). Eugene

beats his family members. He hits Jaja on his shoulder. He also beats Kambili. The reason for this is that they do not follow what he told regarding Western Christianity.

On a different note, the connection between woman and nature is highlighted by Vandana Shiva. She argues that women are an integral part of nature, both in their imagination and in their daily activities: “Nature is symbolized as the embodiment of the feminine principle on one level, and she is nurtured by the feminine on another level in order to produce life and offer sustenance” (37). The connections between women and nature is her central argument. Similarly, Greta Gaard (1993) also argues that ecofeminism’s basic premise is to liberate both nature and female:

Ideology that 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. Therefore, according to many ecofeminists, ‘no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful until an equal effort is made to liberate nature. As a result, ecofeminists urge the elimination of all forms of oppression. (2)

The same ideology that suppresses women and minority people is the same perspective that degrades nature. Woman, nature and animals are dominated by the patriarchal belief system.

Nature comes as a source of healing and comfort for humanity. Women understand this thing. In the novel, nature is described as an emotional relief. It is also a source of freedom. Kambili after being distressed after her father’s beating, sat by bedroom window. She saw the cashew tree was so close and she could reach out and pluck a leaf and felt comfort. She narrates, “The bell-shaped yellow fruits hung lazily, drawing buzzing bees that bumped against my window netting” (Adichie 9). This shows the hidden power of nature to heal human emotional distress. She finds

freedom exists in nature, rather than in the house dominated by her father. The natural environment is sign of freedom and peace.

It is true that the humanity depends on nature. However, the novel basically emphasizes women's reliance and dependence on nature. The jobs like gardening, planting trees, cultivating crops, and harvesting them are done by mother or women to support the family. Nature provides a livelihood to them and their way of living is dependent on what they do in relation to nature irrespective of their economic growth. The women in the novel practice ecological activities which ultimately support them. Thus, one can argue that men are not accepting that they are dependent on nature, and it is their means of living is mechanical and modern. They follow the Western tradition irrespective of their culture, tradition, and religion, as well as they also suffers an alienation from nature. For example, Eugene is a devout Christian. Being a Christian means he is at the top of hierarchy, he is being rational, civilized, and smart. He imposes domination on his family, to think and act the way he does and the nature for him is an object. So, if his family goes beyond what he thinks and it deviates from his rule. Eugene brutally abuses the family members and beats them with physical and psychological harm. He even disregards his daughter's and wife's femininity, their role in family and devotion.

Eugene goes on showing his false wisdom due to his patriarchy and undervaluation of the life force of nature. He also motivates others to abandon their traditional and indigenous beliefs and custom for accepting Christianity. Regarding this, Cheryl Stobieclaims, "Kambili's father Eugene is the emblematic colonized masculine subject. Having been educated at a Catholic mission school in in England, he is a mimic man who speaks English, who is holier in religious observances and constantly emphasizes sins and hellfire in his speech" (424). He has a mission to

support Christianity. Stobie further asserts, “Eugene's authority can be perceived self-made man, but more particular viewed through the optic of the Big Brother” (425). He is like a big brother in the family.

Nsukka, where the family Eugene live, is full of natural varieties. It is surrounded by a variety of trees with high medicinal value. This heals the mental healing of Jaja and Kambili after reaching Nsukka where the narrator mentions: “Gmelina and dogonyaro trees stood firmly on either side. The sharp, astringent scent of the dogonyaro leaves filled the car, and Amaka breathed deeply and said they cured malaria. We were in a residential area, driving past bungalows in wide compounds with rose bushes and faded lawns and fruit trees” (Adichie130). The place is ecologically sound and healthy. However, Eugene does not know the value of it. Jaja and Kambili are healed when they reach there. Karen J. Warren posits that, “What makes ecofeminism distinct is its insistence that nonhuman nature and naturism (i.e., the unjustified domination of nature) are feminist issues” (9). She means to say that women and nature are deeply connected. She further writes:

Ecofeminist philosophy extends familiar feminist critiques of social ‘isms’ of domination (e.g., sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, anti-Semitism) to nature (i.e., naturism). According to ecofeminists, nature is a feminist issue. In fact, an understanding of the overlapping and intersecting nature of isms of domination is so important to feminism, science, and local community life that I have found it helpful to visualize ecofeminist philosophy as the intersection of three spheres in the drawing on the facing page. (9)

Warren shares that ecofeminism makes a critique of sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, anti-Semitism. She also claims that nature is a feminist issue. It is also intersectional in nature. Warren further writes, “According to this way of

visualizing ecofeminist philosophy, it arises out of and builds on the mutually supportive insights of feminism, of science, development and technology, and of local perspectives” (9). Ecofeminism is in favor of mutuality and harmony.

To sum up the textual analysis, the present study has explored the connection between women and nature in Chimamanda Ngochi Adichie’s novel *Purple Hibiscus* and Kamala Markandaya’s *Nectar in a Sieve* by using the insights primarily from the works of Vandana Shiva, Greta Gaard, and Val Plumwood. As demonstrated by the discussion above, the female characters in these novels demonstrate a deep connection to nature through their actions. They are similar in their attempt to resist patriarchal and capitalist systems that seek to exploit both women and nature. Kambili and Ifeoma from *Purple Hibiscus* resist domination overtly whereas Rukmini from *Nectar in a Sieve* resists it covertly. In addition, Ifeoma’s gardening or Kambili’s spiritual renewal in nature and Rukmini’s devotion to farming demonstrate their connection to nature. The study concludes that women share a connection with mother earth and they also show their resistance in necessity. The majority of male characters are found against anti-nature. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Eugene, Kambili’s father and Ifeoma’s brother, is an obstacle to female characters as they try to establish a connection with nature, as his strict adherence to capitalist and religious doctrines limits their freedom to engage with the natural world. However, Kambili’s mother kills Eugene and thus the women eventually have their way. In *Nectar in a Sieve*, Rukmini’s resistance to construction of the building of tannery, however, fails as she remains unheard. Nevertheless, the women’s opposition to capitalist and patriarchal values and their attachments to the earth demonstrate their ecofeminist sensibility.

Chapter III

Women's Resistance to Patriarchy and Capitalism in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Nectar in a Sieve*

The present research has examined the connection between nature and women in Chimamanda Ngochi Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus* and Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* from the perspective of ecofeminism. The major argument is that the female characters from the selected novels have ecofeminist sensibility as they resist patriarchy as well as capitalism. Moreover, the study also claims that the domination of nature by culture and subjugation of women by the dominant ideology are interlinked because the male centric philosophies based on Western patriarchal model of hierarchy commodify women as represented in the selected primary texts. In order to develop a theoretical framework to analyze the selected primary texts, the study derives the insights from the from the ecofeminist works of Vandana Shiva, Greta Gaard, and Val Plumwood. works of Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies, Greta Gaard, and Val Plumwood.

The major premise of ecofeminism is to develop an egalitarian society where no hierarchy exists. Ecofeminists warn that if the anthropocentric practice continues, it results into irreversible environmental degradation as shown in the selected novels. Moreover, ecofeminism links nature's exploitation and gender domination and asserts that the origin of this exploitation and domination is patriarchy. Ecofeminism's basic premise is that the ideology that 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. Therefore, according to many ecofeminists, no attempt to liberate women or any other oppressed group will be successful until an

equal effort is made to liberate nature. As a result, ecofeminists urge the elimination of all forms of oppression.

Ecofeminism is the study of women and nature from environmental perspectives. It is a movement oriented towards maintaining ecological and social justice. Ecofeminism rejects egocentrism, anthropocentrism, and euro-centrism that work through the hierarchical frameworks. It examines the connections between women and nature as well as how unjustified patriarchal domination and Christianity impact these groups as well as indigenous people.

The study concludes that women in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Nectar in a Sieve* demonstrate a profound connection to nature through their actions and resistance to the patriarchal and capitalist systems that seek to exploit both women and the environment. This connection is more than symbolic; it manifests in tangible acts of defiance against societal norms, as seen through Ifeoma's gardening or Kambili's spiritual renewal in nature. Rukmani is a main character she has married to Nathan at the age of twelve. Nathan treats her with kindness and respect as she learns the chores her new life requires. Within a year they have a beautiful daughter, Ira, and good rice harvests. When a tannery is built nearby, unpleasant changes come to village life. Rukmani's two oldest sons eventually go to work there.

The study has answered the three research questions. Regarding the interplay of nature and female characters like Ifeoma, Kambili and Rukmin in the selected texts above, the study finds that women and nature share motherly qualities. The second question is related to the perception of nature as resource which is a result of androcentric/anthropocentric capitalist culture and society perceiving nature and women as resources to be used and misused. The study further finds that women's resistance to capitalistic mode of life, a powerful source to establish woman-nature

inherent relation to minimize the environmental destruction is their innate power which they use in necessity. Thus, the study found that why nature understood as woman, a resource in capitalist culture, and how woman-nature inherent relation challenges the established anthropocentric renderings of nature and woman which can a measure to minimize the ecological disturbance.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, Kambili and Ifeoma view Eugene, Kambili's father and Ifeoma's brother, as an obstacle to their connection with nature, as his strict adherence to capitalist and religious doctrines limits their freedom to engage with the natural world. In *Nectar in a sieve*, Rukmani's connection to nature is snatched due to the building of tannery where her sons also work. However, Rukmani could not resist the way Ifeoma and Beatrice did because Rukmani was weaker in comparison to these two females. Both Ifeoma's love of gardening and Kambili's spiritual awakening in nature reflect their opposition to capitalist and patriarchal values, as their connection to the earth offers them a form of resistance.

Demonstrating both hope and compassion, Rukmani after losing her husband comes to villages where Ira prepares a meal for Puli, the adopted son of Rukmani. This shows motherhood love and compassion of Ira and Rukmani. After a long period of drought, it rains fall heavily. During monsoon rains, Nathan continues to work and his fever goes up. One evening, Rukmani finds him collapsed in the mud in the street. She is still brave to live for the sake of children. Her resistance to Tannery is a form of resistance and embodiment of ecofeminist sensibility. In the next novel, Papa physically beats Mama, who excuses and endures his abuse. Mama discovers she is pregnant again after several miscarriages. Resistance is seen when Kevin drives Kambili and Jaja to meet Aunt Ifeoma in Nsukka. They also visit Papa who dies suddenly. The autopsy exposes that he has been poisoned. Mama shares that Kambili

and Jaja that she has fed poison to the Papa Jajatakes the responsibility for the crime. Mama talks with lawyers and bribes to ease Jaja's time in jail. This is a strong point of resistance.

In this way, human and nature, as demonstrated by the textual analysis, are parts of the same universe. Woman shares similar traits to nature. Due to humanity's observation of nature as resource, its value lies mistakenly in its use and relation to human beings. Capitalism keeps profit at the center, and exploits nature and women for its own benefit. The search for profit at the cost of nature and establishment of big building disturb harmonious and eco-friendly relation between humans and nature. It harms humanity in general. Additionally, this study concludes that the two selected texts collectively assert that humanity with masculine capitalist mind-sets is responsible for ruination of this planet and deterioration of women and other marginalized others. In other words, anthropocentric activity guided by consumerist culture is the reason for the environmental apocalypse and subordination of otherized humans.

In conclusion, both novels demonstrate the ecofeminist sensibility by assigning ecofeminine roles to female characters. The study addresses the exploitation of both nature and women under patriarchal capitalist systems in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Nectar in a Sieve*, demonstrating how these novels portray the inherent connection between women and nature as a site of resistance. The study establishes that the ecofeminist resistance of women to capitalist exploitation, as portrayed in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Nectar in a Sieve*, highlights alternative models of environmental and gendered balance. Not only does this study bring the ecofeminist sensibilities from Africa and South Asia together but it also opens a door to further

researches by shedding light on an alternative way of understanding nature as *prakriti*, and a connection between colonialism, patriarchy and capitalism, among others.

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