



INTERCONNECTED OPPRESSION: A STUDY OF ECOFEMINISM IN BINA SHAH'S "THE MONSOON WAR"

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Abstract

This research critically examines Pakistani writer Bina Shah's novel *The Monsoon War* (2023) through the lens of ecofeminism, focusing on the intersection of patriarchy, capitalism, science and technology. The study explores how capitalist and patriarchal structures employ harmful techniques that not only exploits nature but also subjugates women, reinforcing a cycle of oppression. Additionally, the paper explores the role of science and technology as a tool of domination, revealing its impacts on both the environment and female life in the novel. By analyzing Shah's dystopian narrative, the study highlights the interconnected struggles of women and nature in male dominated society, emphasizing the impacts of male dominated society where technology is used to control women and degrade nature. The elements of ecofeminism in the novel are studied using the framework presented by Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies. Through the eco-feminist perspective, this study delves deeper to highlight the effects of lab-crafted vegetables, wars, nuclear weapons, radiations, reproductive and advance technologies that are used by patriarchal system to exploit women and nature.

Keywords: *Domination, Ecofeminism, Nature, Oppression, Patriarchy, Science, Women*

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1. Introduction

In the name of urbanization and development the capitalist system has exploited the nature and women equally in various ways. The issues of environmental hazards and the violation of female rights are founded because the capitalist systems in pursuit of profit have disregarded the intrinsic value of the natural resources and female role. This exploitation comes down to the factor that patriarchal structures view both the environment and women as resources to be controlled and to be used for profit. As according to Barbier "The natural environment is viewed as a form of capital asset, or natural capital. It also includes ecosystem that provide important goods and services to the economy"(Barbier, 2019). It is highlighted that nature is ignored for short-term gains and hence the environment is treated as infinitely available resource, while the technology related to ecological stability and sustainability are less focused on the conservation of nature and as a result issues like climate change and loss of biodiversity emerges. This neglect is evident in various sectors, such as agriculture and industry, where instant productivity is prioritized over sustainable practices.

Furthermore, the capitalist system has created such economic structures that it creates multifaceted issues of gender oppression while women are often more confined to household responsibilities and are denied equal access to jobs and employments. This is because capitalist system and patriarchal society often focuses on making profit and ignores women rights. As according to Goldberg "The division of labor force is of further importance to capitalism because it allows certain groups, namely minorities and women, to be superexploited, used as a marginal work force in order to smooth over cycles in the economy"(Goldberg, 1970).

The same idea can be highlighted in *The Monsoon War* (2023), a novel by a Pakistani writer Bina Shah, which is a sequel to her famous novel *Before She Sleeps*. Both of the novels are set in imaginary futuristic worlds based on dystopian themes in which women are under oppression of strict regimes used for controlling women's body and reproductive freedom but in *The Monsoon War* women initiate a resistance against such harsh regimes and as a result a war happens in the ending chapters of the novel. The war begins when the monsoon season commences making it the monsoon war, which hints at the turbulent and unpredictable nature of the revolution these women are spearheading.

In addition to that, the destruction of environment in the novel is shown through the idea that a very devastating war named as 'final war' has happened which has destroyed both Pakistan and India. After that, a deadly virus has killed many women and now for an order to maintain female population the 'Green City', a fictional city in the novel influenced from South West Asian societies, creates a regime for women to marry multiple husbands and raise a large family. The novel follows the story of three women; Alia, a wife in polygamous marriage; Katy, a freedom fighter and Fatima Kara, a commanding figure in

female resistance called as 'Hamiyat' which means "The Protector". Shah (2024) explores the diverse forms of rebellion against patriarchal domination from covert resistance to overt warfare. The book draws inspiration from historical and contemporary female soliders in regions such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Oman and Syria, emphasizing the global struggle against gendered oppression.

Eco-feminism is both political activism and intellectual critique that combines feminism and environmentalism or ecology. It is argued by ecofeminism that the domination over women and the degradation of the environment are consequences of patriarchy and capitalism.

Man/women, culture/nature, mind/body and reason/emotion exist as hierarchal dualism... with man, culture, mind and reason having higher value than women, nature, body and emotion. This concept dualism leads to the practical outcome of the valued half of the dualism having "power over" the devalued half and thus creates domination of women and nature (McHugh, 2012).

Now for an order to understand ecofeminism, one must understand feminism because ecofeminism has itself emerged from feminism as a branch. Feminism holds the view that women are treated in an unfairly manner in modern societies, which include female struggle for improving education, professional life and interpersonal opportunities. The feminist movements have fought for women's rights, including women's right to vote, right to access to work in public office, earn equally, own a land, get education, having equal rights in marriage and social integration: to safeguard women against sexual assault, domestic violence and harassment. Because as Fiss states "Feminism is the collection of beliefs and ideas that belongs to the broad social and political movement to provide women with increased equality.feminism takes form and purpose to the women's movement and, in turn, is shaped by it" (Fiss, 1994).

However, the movement of ecofeminism truly initiated with Mary Wollstonecraft because of her book A Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792). She is considered as the earliest thinker of feminist philosophy but the word "feminisme" (feminism) is considered to have been coined in 1837 by a French philosopher and Utopian socialist Charles Fourier. The word "feministe"(feminist), was first used by Alexander Dumas in 1872 in his essay where the word referred to men who supported women rights.

Similarly environmentalism or ecology was emerging as a response to harmful impacts of humans on nature and environment, while its roots can be traced back to indigenous ancient cultures but it became a proper movement in the 19th and 20th centuries. Ernst Haeckel in 1866 introduced the term 'Ecology', which focuses on the interconnection between organisms and their environment and it also focuses on the implication of human actions on ecological systems. It is argued that romantic poets and writers 18th and 19th century, Such as William Wordsworth also celebrated nature and

lamented its destruction due to industrialization. Rapid industrialization and urbanization were brought by Industrial Revolution which caused issues like deforestation, pollution, and habitat destruction. Thinkers like Henry David Thoreau began to criticize industrialization and emphasize the value of nature. According to Barrett, The Meiji Restoration in Japan and the Industrial Revolution in the United Kingdom are examples of rapid societal change. The shift however was a departure from the fairly close (if not necessarily conciliatory) relationship between man and the environment in rural societies in relation to the one that is marked by distance and separation in industrial cities and new factories. Furthermore, the issue of pollution, which have always been linked to urbanity, became intensified and more widespread (Barrett, 1999).

Subsequently, the 1960s and 1970s marked a great shift in environmental activism; which saw the uprising of grassroots movements for advocating ecological awareness. New landmark environmental laws were passed due to the influence of the movement, for instance

U.S National Environmental Policy Act (NEPRA) and the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The concern about the condition of the environment gained increasing interest and popularity, initially in west and then worldwide. "Throughout the final third of the twentieth century", "the environment" hit the front pages. As the likelihood of an imminent-or-eventual apocalypse by unplanned environmental catastrophe grew to appear more probable than apocalypse by planned nuclear machismo"(Buell, 1995). This study will explore the idea related to eco-feminism, that how a society governed by men causes exploitation of both women and the environment, and how nature is harmed by male dominated society which also negatively affects women. Likewise, the study will also explore the reductionist role played by science and technology, and how science and technology is used by patriarchal structures as a tool to create further domination of the environment and women. The interconnected oppression of women and nature will be further explored to understand the idea that, when the environment is degraded it negatively affects the life and health of females. Furthermore, the use of surveillance to control women and the use of weather controlling technologies will also be highlighted in the study to understand the effects of male controlled technology on women and nature.

Likewise, it is also believed that the term 'Ecofeminism' take inspiration from the feminist and environmentalist movements of 1960's cum 1970's and channels it to create a change or use it as a mean and method to study the non-human and human members that fall under the authority of capitalist patriarchy. Thus ecofeminism movement emerged in the 1970s, when the concerns of ecology and feminism began to overlap or in other words, when environmentalism was on the rise the feminist movement got inspired from the idea that just like women the nature has also been misused by patriarchal system. Thus creating

a comprehensive framework that critiques the interconnected injustices that affect both women and environment, it started gaining prominence during the period of environmental awareness and feminist activism, with key figures like Vandana Shiva and Carolyn Merchant. As according to King, "The emancipation of women is to be found neither in serving all connections that ground us in nature nor in believing ourselves to be more natural than men"(King, 1989).

The eco-feminist movement is a modern movement that came out of series of workshops and conferences held by professional women in the United States during the late 1970s and early 1980s. In which the various ways were discussed through which ecology and feminism might be combined together to promote respect for both nature and women. Vandana Shiva describes that one of the profound aim of ecofeminism is to redefine how society looks at both nature and women their productivity; it also addresses the contradiction between production and reproduction. Ynestra King an eco-feminist pioneer with the help of whom ecofeminism gained immense popularity and strength, identified "ecofeminism as a 'third direction', neither reinforcing it and nor serving the connection between women and nature". Accordingly Ynestraa King remarks "Freedom lies in becoming natural beings in the deepest sense, rather than beings against nature."(King, 1989).

Furthermore, it can often be noticed that nature and women were often showed as irrational, chaotic and needful of control, while on the other hand men were mostly showed as ordered, rational and thus capable of controlling the use and guiding the development of females and the environment. As a result this arrangement creates a hierarchical structure that grants men power to control and exploit of women and nature. "In patriarchal thinking women are supposed to be closer to nature than men. It gives women a particular stake in ending the domination of nature(King, 1989). It is also indicated that women being more close to nature than men makes women more nurturing and caring toward nature, while some also highlights that the women biology is the reason that women as a whole are closer to nature. In 1980s the emerging eco-focused feminism was mainly about rehabilitation of nature-centered traditions, wise spirituality, honoring and caring of earth. Thus the ecofeminism became a dual signifier with the passage of time both used as a generic-term for spiritually centered school of environmental thoughts and feminist environmentalisms. As according to Horkheimer et.al, (2002) "Women became the embodiment of biological function, the picture of nature.for centuries men fantasized about obtaining complete control over nature, of transforming cosmos into one great hunting ground".

1.1. Research Objectives

1. To examine the harmful techniques used by capitalist and patriarchal systems that harms nature and women in the novel Bina Shah's *The Monsoon War*.

2. To explore the role of science and technology in the subjugation of women and environment in Bina Shah's novel *The Monsoon War*.

1.2. Research Questions

1. What patriarchal and capitalist system has harmed nature and women in Bina Shah's novel *The Monsoon War*?

2. How science and technology has subjugated women and environment in Bina Shah's novel *The Monsoon War*?

1.3. Significance of the Study

Ecofeminism has attracted extensive interest from literary critics and scholars, as it provides a nuanced perspective on the interconnected oppression of females and the degradation of biodiversity in male-dominated societies. This research underscores how patriarchal system exploits both women and nature, under the guise of development and advancement. By analyzing the socio-political and environmental conditions depicted in the literary work *The Monsoon War*, the study highlights the issues related to war, development, invention, and societal status. Furthermore, it contributes to academic discourse by enriching the understanding of ecofeminism, making it a valuable resource for interdisciplinary studies.

2. Literature Review

The concept of feminism appeared in 1872 in Netherland, in 1890s in Great Britain, and in 1910 in the United States but it has changed significantly with the passage of time from a movement focused on equal rights for women to a more nuanced approach that encompass changing societal contexts, diverse experience and the recognition of various forms of oppression faced by women. Over the years numerous feminist movements and ideologies have been developed, the first-wave of feminism known as liberal feminism from 19th to early 20th century, it the women's right to vote. It contrasted with proletarian women's labor-based movements that with the passage of time developed into socialist and Marxist feminism. The Second-wave initiated in 1960s, it campaigned for social equality for women, also known as women's liberation movement and from the radical wing of second-wave of feminism arose Radical feminism, which aims to eliminate patriarchy by radically reordering the society. The third-wave around 1992 was focused on diversity and individuality. The existence of fourth-wave of feminism is argued that it started around 2012, which has used social media platforms to counter harassment, sexual violence and rape culture it is best known as the 'Me Too Movement'. As according to O'Neil et.al, "The 'Me Too Movement' has brought renewed attention to the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace and other public places, by calming that sexual harassment at the work place

is a form of gender-based violence that is an organizational, criminal, and ethical issue"(2018).

Besides that, it was recognized by both Osborne and Worster that nature was now the worst victim of our actions. Fairfield Osborne, in his book *Plundered Planet* (1948), described that toward the end of World War II, he had come to understand that human beings were involved in another war, the one which was against nature. After the World War II, issues of nuclear testing, chemical pollution, and urban carelessness gained widespread attention in public platforms. In addition to that when in 1962 Rachel Carson in her book *Silent Spring* highlighted the harmful impacts of pesticides like DDT, it further catalyzed the modern environmental movement but the study of ecology and literature from an interdisciplinary point of view first started with Joseph Meeker's idea called "literary Ecology".

Accordingly, a significant amount of studies has been done on ecofeminism perspective through different lenses. Research paper (Parveen et.al, 2024) is exploration of nature and women relation while it also argues that most natural catastrophes affect women more than men. Furthermore it is concluded that the liberation of women and the liberation of the environment is intimately interlinked. According to Parveen et.al (2024) "Women are subjugated by men in society...this subjugation leads to harsher effects of calamities on them"(P 103).

(Koyluoglu, 2022) highlights the depiction of women and nature in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. As well as he defines important terms such as Speculative Fiction, Feminist Speculative Fiction, Dystopia, Eco-dystopia and other such terms which relates to ecofeminism.

According to Koyluoglu, As a speculative fiction, *The Handmaid Tale* offer an opportunity to experience the anticipated consequences of environmental destruction that might raise eco-fascism, which offers the oppression of certain groups in society and reinforces gender discrimination as a solution for environmental problems (Koyluoglu, 2022).

On the other hand, (Cooke, 2018) is analysis of Atwood's *The Handmaid Tale* a feminist dystopia, which criticize the patriarchal traditions that limit women freedom. The paper also highlights that genre of feminist dystopian fiction, has grown with the passage of time because it acts as a response of women's anger, and it also often aims to criticize patriarchal society attempt to control female reproductive rights, and sometimes unintentionally reinforces a kind of biological essentialism that links women to nature. According to Cooke (2018) "The patriarchal traditions often work together to simultaneously isolate and reduce women's self-worth, often creating a form of internalized oppression which upholds patriarchal standards"(P 26). In addition to that the paper also examines Naomi Alderman's novel *The Power*, a feminist dystopia in which

women grasps the ability deliver an electric shock and to strike back. The novel at first shows the terror and anger women are facing, but then women gets power the story shifts. Then the novel shows that women start abusing the power they have been given making the link between power and corruption.

(Khalaf et.al, 2020) is a study of Sophie Mackintosh's *The Water Cure* which argues that the novel explores themes of eco-feminist concerns about the exploitation of the natural environment. More over the novel delves into themes of larger societal structures that seeks control and domination of both female body and natural environment. The efforts of females to subvert and resist the controlling forces that seek to dictate their life and their relationship to their land are profoundly eco-feminist in nature.

In Pakistani fiction the ecofeminism has a crucial role to reveal the deterioration of ecology in the name of development and urbanization. Because (Mir et.al, 2021) is an Ecofeminist analysis of *Noor* by Sorraya Khan which concludes that "Ecofeminism as an idea reflects the link between oppression of women and land caused by urbanization, militarization and development"(Mir et.al, 2021). In addition, it is implied that healing can only be done by starting the process of initiating change in the patriarchal system of oppression and the manmade war to the novel is also discussed because they also contribute to degradation of women as well as nature.

(Dahiyo, 2023) is feminist critical analysis of some short stories like *Daughters of AAI* by FahmidaRiaz, *The Optimist* by Bina Shah, and *The Elopment*, *The Discovery* and *Perchanvah* by QaisraShahraz. The social, economic, psychological, cultural, and physical violation of women in society is viewed in the paper in the framework of ecofeminism that signifies Pakistani writers and particularly feminine writers emphasize female right and the conservation of nature. As per Dahiyo (2023) "In patriarchal societies, the normalization of the concept of physical violence perpetrated by men against women and its practice, enabled by social institutions results in the continuity of gender-based physical violence" (P 126).

(Nassem et.al, 2023) Nassem explores the theme self-objectification and identity of female in Bina Shah feminist dystopian work *Before She Sleeps*. The issues of polygamy and polyandry are explored through the lens of female violation by male dominated society. The paper also highlights that the women are used as fertile lands rather than human, their lives in society are hard and they are oppressed. It also underlines the negative use of women as mean of reproduction only, to repopulate the society. According to Nassem et.al (2023) "Women are also a part of the society, and they are equally significant for societal betterment, so they mustn't be overshadowed" (P 849).

(Naz, 2024) is an exploration of eco-feminist perspectives of the patriarchal patterns in Bina Shah's *Before She Sleeps*. The environmental degradation in the modern scenario and its impacts on the female characters of the novel is also highlighted by the

study. The use of women by the state as birth machines that has no influence over their decision to have children. Furthermore it also highlights the negative impact of technologies on nature because often science and technologies tries to take everything in control, which disturbs the normal cycles of nature and can result in negative consequences. But none of the researcher has looked at the degradation of nature and oppression of women in *The Monsoon War* by Bina Shah. So the space left by them will be filled by this paper, where the exploitation of women and nature will be analyzed with Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies ecofeminism framework.

3. Research Methodology

Research methodology is a structured process aimed at discovering, interpreting, and modifying knowledge about various phenomena. This study is a descriptive one that focuses on the connection and relationship between the environmental system's dual oppression and women in the context of the theories of the well-known eco-feminist Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies in Bina Shah's 2023 novel *The Monsoon War*. The research applies theoretical analysis of Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies's *Ecofeminism* (2014) to assess the ecofeminism in the selected novel. The qualitative technique is used to directly connect to the chosen novel while verifying the research's main argument. The concept has been substantiated further by employing secondary sources for information collection, including websites, books and journals.

3.1. Data Collection

Primary and secondary data has been collected for the research by the researcher in the data collection.

3.2. Primary Data

The directly collected data is the primary data. The researcher began gathering data for this study by reading the novel, *The Monsoon War*. As well as the book, *Ecofeminism* also serves as a primary source for data collection.

3.3. Secondary Data

The secondary source for data collection includes other books, research papers, thesis, journal and Websites which are related to the topic.

4. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of ecofeminism by Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies focuses on many aspects of violence, inequalities, injustice and exploitation that women and nature face due to capitalist patriarchy. Shiva and Mies criticize the capitalist model of economic growth in their book, *Ecofeminism* by highlighting how capitalist system commodifies both nature and women's labor. Furthermore it is also argued that the contributions of women are excluded from formal economical assessments, which deepens inequalities and environmental destruction.

"By limiting itself to the market economy values, the production boundary ignores the economic value in both the key economies, which are required for human and ecological survival: nature's economy and the sustenance economy." (Shiva, 2014, P.13).

As well as Shiva and Mies in *Ecofeminism* (2014) highlights the modern reductionist science, rooted in mechanistic metaphors, is described as a patriarchal system that sanctions the domination of women and degradation of the environment by disregarding their creative and regenerative capacities. Reductionist science prioritizes studying individual components of a system rather than the system as a whole. It assumes that the behavior and properties of the whole system can be explained entirely by understanding the parts and their interaction. As according to Shiva and Mies (2014) "Reductionism thus reduces complex ecosystems to a single component...it allows for the manipulation of the ecosystem in a way that maximizes the single-function, single-component exploitation" (Shiva, 2014, P.60).

Furthermore, the women's indigenous and tradition knowledge system in biodiversity conservation and sustainable farming are central to ecological resilience. However, these contributions are undervalued by capitalist systems. "In most cultures, women have been the custodians of biodiversity. They create, replicate, ingest, and preserve biodiversity in agriculture" (Shiva, 2014, P.233). In addition to this it is argued in the book that global economic policies displace women from their traditional roles, eroding self-reliance and increasing dependence on exploitative systems. "Economic reforms based on the concept of unlimited growth, create a convergence of economic and political power, a deepening of inequalities, and a growing separation of the political class from the will of the people" (Shiva, 2014, P. 14).

In conclusion a subsistence perspective is advised which advocates a shift from profit-driven growth to practices sustaining life and biodiversity. It stresses the importance of decentralization, self-reliance, and participatory democracy which supports equality rather than diversity. As according to Shiva and Mies (2014) "A subsistence perspective...fosters common responsibility for these gifts of nature and demands their preservation and regeneration" (Shiva, 2014, P. 416 to 417).

5. Discussion and Analysis

5.1. Harmful Effects of Capitalist Patriarchy over women

In the prologue of the novel, *The Monsoon War* (2023) the author Bina Shah portrays a scene where a black veil hangs on a lamp post, which is the indication of the start of women rebellion against the system, because of the reason that government has created strict rules for women to marry multiple husbands and having multiple children. This is due to the decreased of the female population in the area in comparison to male population. Now to control the male's need and to increase the population of females in the region, women are forced for multiple marriages at a time and to give birth to female

children. For these purposes, women are sent to centers called 'Markaz', where they are trained for multiple marriages.

In Part 1, (The Wife) the story of a wife named 'Alia' is narrated. She is a housewife and middle age women and she is married to three husbands. The story of Alia shows the harmful effects of domination of patriarchy over women. She was first married to an old of man of 58 years. The story of Alia also shows that the family system also devalues females position as housewives, that even though the patriarchal family system which entirely depends and thrives due to the central role of women still devalues the burdensome and vital role women play in running the family. This creates further exploitation and neglect of women's role. As according to Mies and Shiva(2014) "Housewifization is a phenomenon whereby women become socially constituted housewives, dependent on their own subsistence on the husband's earnings, regardless of whether they are de facto housewives or otherwise.this results in categorizing the majority of women's subsistence work as non-work and therefore open to unlimited exploitation"(P 144).

Furthermore, at another instance when Alia is unable to say her own name to the women of 'Panah'. The author comments on the situation that this is because the women of the mountain are badly treated by their own village system and women are even not allowed to say their own name. This indicates the patriarchal dominance over women in a male governed society. The author comments on the situation in the novel as "The words she hasn't spoken in years or decades. Her name, it's the tradition of mountain not to use women's name, to replace them with familial ties: Wife of, Mother of, Daughter of."(Shah, 2023, Ch2)

As well as, the women of Panah, Diya, Grace, Rupa and Mariya also serves as an example of harmful effects of Capitalist Patriarchy. As the harsh regimes and forceful marriages has forced these women to hide in an underground area called 'Panah' which means refuge. As Diya explains to Alia that "In 'Green City' they lived in an underground shelter, made of reinforced concrete and radiation proof materials...Safe from the eyes of men above ground"(Shah, 2023, Ch3). As well as for their survival they give company to rich people in the 'Green City' and in return these rich people give them protection. But when their leader dies they are forced to leave their underground sanctuary. Now they had to run from the agency, so they took the car of a man sent by agency after them. When they reaches near mountain their car crashes and they now hides in a cave. So the women of 'Panah' also serve as a sign of women oppression directed by the ruling class of men in Capitalist Patriarchal system. According to Vandana Shiva (1993), "The undervaluation of women's work and work undertaken in South's subsistence economies is natural result of a production horizon drawn by Capitalist Patriarchy"(p. 13).

Additionally, the story of a villager a women Nayab also clearly shows the effects of patriarchal domination over lives of female. Nayab was a woman who lived on 'Sun

Mountain' she had a very beautiful daughter and when collectors found out about her, he sent her to 'Green City' where she was married multiple time. Due to the loss and sorrow of her daughter Nayab also committed suicide. This story became widely known in mountain villages and after this the mountain people started hiding their daughters by presenting them as boys. This story also serves as a cautionary tale for the villagers of the 'Sun Mountain' as Wadid says to Alia that "Ever since Nayab, any girl born in the village is announced as a boy, and the Husbands go along with it. They don't want more Nayab's"(Shah, 2023, Ch2). According to Shiva and Mies (1993) "The economic system with Capitalist Patriarchy's influence based on commodification of all things including women"(P 15).

Lastly, the women's resistance group called 'Hamiyat', also shows the harmful effects and violations done by Capitalist Patriarchal system. It shows the violations that women have faced for years due to male dominant society and the strict regulations of 'Green City'. The Hamiyat was formed for the purpose to terminate rapist around the areas of mountain villages during the time of 'Final War' but their purpose shifted throughout the years to end the oppressive regime of 'Green City'. Most of the women that joined the Hamiyat were either girls that ran away from forceful marriages or multiple marriages. The character commander Fatima Kara describes the aim and objective of women resistance group as "We are solider. Our fight is long and hard; our aim is to end this regime of enslavement and torture"(Shah, 2023, Ch6).

5.2. Harmful effects of Capitalist Patriarchy on Nature

The male dominated capitalist system of 'Green City' also controls nature and its resources by forcing the people to grow only specific crops. This highlights the systematic oppression caused by prioritizing economic gain over diversity and sustainability, resulting in a cycle of destruction and harm to communities. Its example can be observed in the villages of mountains as these mountain farmers are forced to grow saffron instead of other crops that they might use as food. The Farming Agency has provided them with free crops of so that villagers can grown large amount of saffron because the Green City needs to use saffron for medicine and other diseases.

Therefore, this shows the manipulation carried by the government and authorities of the city that wants to use nature and its resources for their own purpose and profit only. As the author narrates about the village and farmers of Sun Mountain that "Fifty years earlier, the village people grew roses in the area for perfumes and attar and pastries and soaps...Saffron wasn't native to the mountain, but the Farm Assistant Program brought them free corms and thought the villagers how to plant and harvest them" (Shah, 2023, Ch1). Vandana Shiva(1993) critiques of the industrial agriculture's impact on nature, ecosystem and particularly soil fertility and biodiversity suggesting that industrially produced seeds and fertilizers, rather than enriching nature, have instead led to soil

depletion and transformation of fertile land into a nonrenewable resource. Further, the corporate controlled agriculture prioritizes short-term ecological sustainability. By replacing traditional seeds with patented, genetically modified varieties and relying on synthetic fertilizers, industrial farming which reduces biodiversity exhausts soil nutrients, and increase dependency on external inputs (P 34).

Furthermore the Capitalist Patriarchal society or male dominated society of Green City exploits nature further by making alterations to food and vegetables. Now the only food available for the people the mountain villages are what they cultivate in little land of their own or the rations sent by government. These rations are mostly leftovers that come from warehouses of war or abandoned space missions, that some these meals taste awful and some taste rotten. But the people of village cannot refuse the rations distributed by the agency because if they did they will be punished. As the author explores the story of Alia she remarks about the people of mountain "The government dropped extra rations by drone...but who wanted to eat more of their rotten space food and solidier meals? Each bite tasted like surrender to the ways of the city, instead of the life of the mountains"(Shah, 2023, Ch1). This shows the manipulation of natural resources by male dominant society which focuses only on profit and ignores what is right and what is not for nature. According to Vandana Shiva, (1993) agricultural development programs often leads to creation of hunger because small peasants are displaced and the shift from subsistence-based faming to export-oriented cultures displaces small farmers, reduces local food, security and damages ecosystem (P 81).

As well as, the 'Final war' in the novel also serves as a theme of harm and oppression that male dominated society has inflicted on nature. As it can be said that war is a man-made disaster that harms nature and disrupts the natural and normal cycle of life. These wars are mainly caused by male dominated Patriarchal society that asserts to increase their area of control and domination over everything. While the social and economic consequences of war and oppressive regimes on society are devastating. It also affects and damages the environment in various ways. Such as destroying ecosystems due to heavy bombing, pollution and deforestation, the contamination of water chemical materials, the displacement of wildlife on war torn areas and disruption in agriculture cycles that leads to food insecurity and famines.

Additionally, Shah also describes how mountain people suffer from lack of food but she also highlights some issues that the environment has faced due to wars in the novel. Such as how the season of the country have changed and sometimes brings destruction instead to prosperity. As Shah depicts the inner thought of Alia" Last year a monsoon caused a landslide that blocked one of the long tunnels under the Three Brides, a trio peaks...Two months they (Agency) left us to rot"(Shah, 2023, Ch1). On the other hand the extinction and disturbance of wild life is shown in the novel through the idea that the

people of mountain has not seen leopard for years. As the 'Panah' women describes to Alia how they escaped from the agency, the how they crashed, when a leopard crossed the steep mountain road in front of them. To which Alia replies doubtfully "A leopard? It's been years since one has been seen on Sun Mountain"(Shah, 2023, Ch3).

According to Lawrence et.al, "The direct conflict, military weapons and military trainings has overwhelming effects on the structure and functions of the environment"(Lawrence et.al, 2015). Shah depicted the various circumstances in which the supremacy of patriarchy which aims to achieve the objectives of industrial capitalism is quite clear. When nature is suppressed and harmed humans eventually faces its consequence; in the novel the virus acts a price for the exploitation of nature. While the wars initiated by male dominant society inhibit nature, and in turn, other humans especially women are forced to bear it's cost in the form of strict regimes and a virus infection that only targets the female population of the region.

5.3. The Role of Science and Technology in Subjugation of Women

Technology and science even though created for the purpose to serve humans it plays a reductionist role, and when it is controlled by Capitalist Patriarchal system it can be harmful to humans especially women. As according to Shiva and Mies (2014) "Patriarchal institutions and attitudes of male dominance have opened up the new technology of sex-preselection through amniocentesis and ultra-sound scanning, combined with population control policies". Thus new reproduction technologies that affect the natural birth cycle of babies or the reproduction qualities and scientists that try to fully control the reproduction process of women inflict damage and harm on women. These methods are followed to control the increasing female population but in the novel the stakes are different. The system wants to increase the female population because the ratio of female population compared to male population in the region is significantly low.

So for its solution the government of the Green City creates regimes that will help increase the female population of the region but instead these regimes create issues for females because women are given treatments and pills to increase their number of pregnancies but it causes other issues among females. In the prologue of the novel Shah mentions that "Women are sent for extensive treatment and rehabilitation to a pristine white building, next to Girls' Markaz, Pumped full of drugs, and sent back within months to continue their mission of pregnancy"(Shah, 2023). This shows the violations women face due male dominated society which uses science and technology for their purpose to increase control and dominance over women.

So, according to Shiva and Mies that another form of violence against women is the invention of new reproductive and genetic technologies, Such as the first successful test-tube baby formation, from which it was clear that "women lost their age-old monopoly on birth". In the novel when Alia inquires from the women of 'Panah' that why are you

hiding to which Rupa responds that "From the Bureau, The Agency, making us do what they wanted. They believed it was wrong, Fairuza and Najwa. They did not wish to be slaves to four or five Husbands, to have to use drugs that caused them to have a dozen kids, or more, like animals"(Shah. According to Maria Mies, (1993) women wombs are used as inert containers while she further argues that this passivity and ignorance is "constructed" mean it is not natural but is rather constructed by socially imposed conditions which are either governed directly and indirectly by male dominated society (P 32). The patriarchal system only values the female ability to produce offspring, while their need and health is ignored treating women either as animal or non-human.

Additionally it is also highlighted in the novel how women are merely used only as a means to increase the population of the region. Certain system perspective on pregnancy reduces women to passive roles viewing them only as carriers of future life rather than autonomous individuals with rights and agency. This could also be reflected in laws, societal expectations, or restrictions created by Patriarchal society that prioritize the fetus over the pregnant person's well-being or decisions. According to Laura (1990) "If fetuses are part of women's body, they are not separate entities, and women should therefore have a final say about what happens to them". The same can be highlighted in the novel as women are only valued for their ability to reproduce new offspring rather than human being that has its own will and choice. According to Shiva and Mies (1993) "Pregnant women are viewed not so much as source of human regeneration, as the 'raw material' from which the 'product' the baby is extracted"(P 32).

Furthermore the nuclear bombs and weapons used in war have created high-level radiations that affect women's womb and their ability to reproduce, and as a result not only women are harmed but the babies are born with abnormalities and disabilities. The author description of 'Katy Azadeh' life shows these effects "The parents of Katy had been born on the mountain, but their mothers, their DNA damaged by the radiation of the bombs, were never able to have more than one child each. Both of these children, Katy's parents, had inherited both their mothers' ill health" (Shah, 2023, Ch7). The exposure to nuclear radiations also negatively affects the health of pregnant women and their unborn babies. The mother health deteriorates due to radiation exposure, which leads to compensatory failure and failure of adaptation in their bodies. These nuclear radiations then also causes a complex set of dysfunctions in various organs and systems of both mothers and children. In mothers though the reproduction system often remains functional, but pregnancy-related dysfunctions result in diseases and abnormalities in newborns that persist even decades later.

Relatively, according to Kulakov et.al, (1993) "The general worsening of the mothers' health and among children is the same in all the inhabited regions of Russia, i.e., Belorussia and the Ukraine.this effect was due to radiation, which initiated a complicated

pattern of bodily dysfunction"(Kulakov et.al, 1993). When 'Zayn Battuta' a scientist in 'Zarzura' tells Katy about how he himself witnessed the destruction caused by nuclear weapon he says" My older brother couldn't walk, talk, feed himself. Some babies were born without limbs, if they were born at all"(Shah, 2023, Ch10).

Lastly the agency and 'Green City' uses surveillance through various means, such as by installing cameras and heat sensors that monitor every moment of its citizens. During the story of Alia the author tells that how the agency keeps an eye upon people "The agency installed low-cost cameras and heat sensors in all the houses of the village." The surveillance is institutionalized and weaponized by the state to control its citizens. In Patriarchal society, this control disproportionately targets women by regulating their bodies, roles and behaviors. Women are reduced to categories like "wives" and valued primarily for their reproductive abilities. This mirrors real-world Patriarchal systems that monitor and police women's autonomy, often under the guise of moral, cultural, or legal justifications.

So, through continuous observation of societal pressure, women internalize the gaze of surveillance, leading to self-discipline. They conform to gender expectations out of fear of punishment, thus reinforcing patriarchal norms. The omnipresent "gaze" ensures that women are never truly free, as any deviation from the norm is met with consequences. On another instance when Katy travels through 'Zarzura' in a futuristic driverless car 'Adeefa' tells her "The car isn't just listening it's watching" (Shah, 2023, Ch8). This reflects real-world examples of patriarchal surveillance, such as dress codes, social shaming, digital monitoring, and legal restrictions on women's right. While women in the novel resist surveillance and reclaim their agency, which align with feminist struggles against patriarchal control in the real world. According to Hamid (2023) "A coercive state operates power by imposing surveillance, discipline, and a normalization process upon its people, especially women, to acquire general power. The population resists the dynamics of the dominant power".

5.4. The Role of Science and Technology in Domination of Nature

The technology and science sometimes play a negative role towards nature, as in the 21st century; there has been rise in harmful consequences brought by technology and science. One of the main issue it cause is climate change which then generates long-term unintended consequences, such as diseases, natural disasters and other harmful impacts. These climate changes are often initiated deliberately and sometime unknowingly by human. On a greater scale government uses science and technology based device that helps the state to run but it can also create issues that might not be noticeable for short term but creates long term problems. Such as the use of cars that are essential for development and provide various advantages on daily basis but the gases that emits form these cars can be harmful for the environment. Such issues can be also highlighted in the novel as the 'Green

City' and 'Eastern Semitia' which uses technologies and wind towers to control the air of the city and its behavior. When the character of Katy visits 'Zarzura City' the author describes various structures of the city saying "The giant wind tower, the landmark of downtown Zarzura, makes a noise like the continuous rushing of ocean waves as it vacuums the hot breeze from the streets and directs it up and out into the sky" (Shah, 2023, Ch7).

Although these wind towers helps to carry the flow of air and regulators helps to control the temperature in the city it also causes disturbance in the patterns of the winds. As a result when these wind towers send the hot air up and brings the cool air down it affects the climate of the region and hence wind cyclone are commonly found in the region. As the author describes the scene when Katy travel in a futuristic car in the city of 'Zarzura' the author says" two large sand twisters are dancing together in the dry, hot breez. Katy has spotted a few dust devils before, but never any of them as massive as this...But the Final War changed the climate, turning all kinds of weather phenomena into extremes"(Shah, 2023, Ch7). According to Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies (1993) "The science and technology, the paradigm of unlimited growth of goods and services of capital have led to an increase in the environmental deterioration and consequently the quality of life is affected"(P 68).

Furthermore, the technology used during war such as nuclear weapons and nuclear bombs have everlasting impacts on nature, as according to Shah(2023) war is the worst thing human has ever invented, it's impacts can also alter the climate and weather of the region. Such as by affecting the duration and arrival of a season as Bina Shah mentions in the novel "The Rivers dried up and plunged the villages into grim drought. The 'Khareef', the monsoon did not arrive properly for years, thought to be one of the late aftereffects of the Final War"(Shah, 2023, Ch1). It is mentioned in the novel that nuclear weapons have been used in the 'Final War', so its use can potentially create environmental effects, such as radioactive fallout, ozone layer depletion, and climate changes. Nuclear Winters can also be caused by nuclear explosions because when wind sends soot into the atmosphere, it blocks sunlight which causes decrease in temperature cooling the plane and disrupting ecosystems. According to Shiva and Mies(1993) "both the usage and production of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, atomic energy and other products generates waste and harm which is subsequently caused to nature" (P 70). As well as increase UV radiation due to depletion of Ozone from nuclear blast could disrupt food chains and increase cancer risks. Many species would face extinction due to habitat destruction, radiation exposure and climate shifts. As the author describes that Alia could hardly envision "farmland turned into waste, animals, dropping dead in fields, people dying of severe burns from a weapon that has fallen thousands of miles away from them. And yet it had happened, and ruined the world they'd all known" (Shah, 2023, Ch3). According to Shiva and Mies(1993)

"Destruction of nature, the new weapons, genetic engineering, new agriculture and other new innovations are all 'brainchildren' of this so-called value-free, reductionist science"(P 15).

6. Conclusion

In this study Bina Shah's novel *The Monsoon War* (2023) has been critically explored through the concept of ecofeminism presented by Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies. As a speculative fiction, *The Monsoon War* offers an understanding of futuristic society that is dominated by men and women are extremely oppressed under the guise of societal benefit. Further the study reveals how patriarchal structure uses science and technology negatively that not only dominates women but also degrades the environment. Although it can be argued that Shah has depicted an extreme and exaggerated image of male controlled futuristic society, Shah's depiction also underscores the way in which patriarchal structures legitimize the oppression and objectification of women, particularly through the use of technology and science.

The study reveals that patriarchal government prioritizes the needs of men and their own need of increasing the population of the region without giving attention to the health and well-being of women. Further, women bear the effects of wars, natural disasters, authoritarian regimes which emphasize their vulnerability in male dominated structures. The patriarchal society focuses on the needs of men in the chase of which the needs of women are ignored; men need for women is prioritized over women right of choice. Women are married to multiple husbands, from whom they face domestic violence. As result of this a female resistance group called 'Hamiyat' (The protector) has emerged, the resistance of women against a society that exploits women and nature is itself profoundly eco-feminist in nature. The novel showcases the power of women to challenge and dismantle a system or agency that seeks to constrain them. The works Bina Shah contributes to the growing body of contemporary dystopian that explores the themes of intersection of female and environment.

Furthermore, the environment that is significantly affected by the use of nuclear weapons has direct consequences on women, particularly through the spread of virus in the area that selectively targets women, and leads to decline in the female population. The nuclear fallout and radiation that has spread through the area also creates issues related to women, such as affecting their natural cycle of fertility and their fetuses which further creates degradation of women, thus highlighting the intricate relationship between patriarchal dominance, the oppression of women, and environmental degradation. The use of drugs to manipulate and accelerate female reproduction further illustrates the dangers of patriarchal science, where technological advancements serve as a tool of control rather than liberation.

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