

**'TALK OF SUNLIGHT': EXPLORING ECOFEMINISM THROUGH METAPHORS IN SELECTED  
POEMS OF DAUD KAMAL**

**Javaria Sohail**

MS (English), City University of Science & IT, Pakistan

**Dr. Humaira Riaz**

Assistant Professor, Department of English  
City University of Science & IT, Pakistan

**Dr. Tariq Khan (Corresponding Author)**

Assistant Professor, Department of English  
University of Malakand, Pakistan

**Abstract**

*The present study highlights the status of women and nature in Pakistani culture by exploring ecofeminism through metaphors in the selected poems of Daud Kamal. The study uses Karen Warren's theory of ecofeminism asserting that women and the environment are inextricably associated. The plundering of one catastrophically affects the other and both continue to suffer. The qualitative method of study explores and evaluates the social standing of women and nature through ecofeminist lens with a particular focus on Pakistani patriarchal and culture stricken society leading to gender inequality. The study makes use of textual analysis to analyze the selected poems and is significant as it focuses on women and the environment as being marginalized. Females and ecology's oppression at the hands of patriarchy is the root cause of several issues that push them into an abyss of forgetfulness thus leading to oppression of women in the name of culture, religion, social face-saving, sexuality and gender while the environment is degraded by exploiting natural resources for temporary gains. The metaphors used in the selected poems depict the subjugation of women and nature and analyze it in connection with ecofeminism. It concludes to illuminate that the relationship between ecofeminism and Pakistani women is very strong as it defines cultural norms where both are degraded and devalued due to their social status. Future studies can be conducted in terms of comparative analysis of Indian and Pakistani cultures with relation to ecofeminism.*

**Keywords:** Ecofeminism, Pakistani culture, Pakistani Literature, Women status, Ecological degradation

**INTRODUCTION**

Women and culture have remained the centre of attention in research. Ecofeminism, a School of thought within feminism focuses on women and the environment as being marginalized. The male-centred Pakistani society is the root cause of several issues that pushes nature and women into an abyss of forgetfulness. The present study highlights the status of women and nature in Pakistani culture by exploring ecofeminism through metaphors in the selected poems of Daud Kamal.

In 1974, the French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne coined this word. Ecofeminism takes into account the primary feminist principles of uniformity and equality concerning genders. The philosophy has its particular emphasis on the treatment given to women and nature by male-centred society. Ecofeminists investigate the outcomes of gender categorization to determine the practices through which unjust control over nature and women takes place. Ecofeminism encounters the current male-centred society and supports the inextricable link between nature and women as they cannot be separated (Smith, 1997, p. 21).

Daud Kamal's poetry is full of treachery, women's representation, nature's degradation at the hands of patriarchy, etc. The present study's focus on women and nature's association and their social positioning in the Pakistani society view ecofeminism as one of the schools of thought that takes into consideration a society where women and nature are dominated by men due to their weakness and defenselessness (Drucker, 2018).

The images 'the rape of the Earth' or 'Mother Nature' reflect a view of nature as female. This connection is damaging to nature and women both as they are considered to serve patriarchal desires while nature is viewed as accessible and to be exploited as per men's desire (Drucker, 2018). It is asserted that language 'feminizes nature and naturalizes women'. It explains that the marginalization and control over nature, animals, and women is cultural. The progression concerning 'theory and praxis in feminism and environmental philosophy' and 'sexist-naturist language' solely basis on patriarchal authoritative power structures that manipulate the language.

Warren's (2000) perspective of ecofeminism is that the ecological problems pertain to women or feminine problems. The women and environment both suffer one way or the other. They are inextricably associated and the deterioration of one badly affects the other (Warren, 2000). The researchers explore ecofeminism through the use of metaphors in Daud Kamal's poems to highlight women and ecology's positioning in Pakistani society.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Adams (2007, p. 2) explored that the philosophy had its particular emphasis on the treatment given to women and nature by male-centred society. The practitioners of this philosophy suggested that the world needed to realize the earth's value as sacred and human dependency on the natural world. As a theory, Ecofeminism encountered the present male-centred society and supported the inextricable link between nature and women as they could not be separated (Adams, 2007, p. 2).

Nazir (2013, p. 56) noted that women were marginalized and humiliated in the patriarchal system. The same was the case with the environment that was devalued due to male dominance and occupation of land. (Nazir, 2013, p. 56). This refers to cultural restraints that the Pakistani society imposes on women and nature. The land's occupation is deemed as family' pride and honour.

Warren differentiated ecofeminism as one of the toughest missions that intended to break up the very chain of women oppression. She believed that this oppression was due to colonial and chauvinistic pressures which showed up masculinity (Cuomo, 2002, p. 8).

Metz (2008) described that male prejudice was increasing and this in return allowed men to deem women to be dominated and controlled. Men's ownership of women and nature forced them to stick to such norms where they were considered as passive and silent spectators. Their unresponsiveness to such an unjust act did not do any good to them (Metz, 2008).

The ecological movement did take into account the sexual violence that largely affected women's performance in the form of 'sexist behaviour' that varies from 'sexist language' to 'sexist jokes'. This happened due to viewing women as mere objects or overlooking their efforts. A huge number of sexual harassment cases were reported in Pakistan but most of them were withdrawn due to social stigmatization (Adams, 2007, p. 6).

The Muslim scholars deemed it inappropriate that despite women, given economical dependency upon men, should never think to work outside the home. But Islam had never limited opportunities for women and men both. Islam bestowed them with the right to get an education, choose life partners,

and take their life decisions but our society's culture stricken system restricted them from doing so (Sattar, Crook, Callum & Kazi, 1988, pp.415-416).

One serious issue related to women in Pakistani culture was 'honour killing'. Kaur (2013, p. 387) described 'honour killing' as a planned act to kill someone. The killing was conceived to have punished the accused of illicit sexual affiliation). The unlawful practice was carried out in Pakistani culture which endangered many lives.

The ecofeminists explored 'ideology' as one of the very significant aspects prevalent in Pakistani culture. Ecofeminists claimed that the harmony and balance among women, nature, and men would prevail if a well-thought ideology is included as a reformed set of beliefs (Kirk, 1997).

Agarwal (1992, p. 125) found traces of women's oppression in history and society. She propounded that women who particularly belonged to rural areas would be more vulnerable thus subject to violence than women from urban areas. They were trapped easily owing to being unaware, 'uneducated', and belonging to under-developed areas. She highlighted another aspect according to which it is no exception that women had more resilience to restructure a new society as they had already undergone a tough phase where they tolerated ecological challenges. The rise in the degradation of ecological resources would have enormous consequences (Agarwal, 1992, p. 125).

Nazir (2013) explored that housewives' performing their jobs in the fields or within the house is depicted as disrespect but it was also noteworthy that performing or fulfilling one's job was never a sign of disrespect. The problem that rested in the patriarchal system did not value ecology and the 'earth's larger contribution. In return, we got vegetables, grains, crops, and oxygen. Women's subordination and subjugation at the hands of men centred society took place where they faced various kinds of violence (Nazir, 2013).

Pakistani women's attachment to their environment and their environmental concerns were almost ignored. Shazia Rahman traced how Pakistani women explored alternative, environmental modes of belonging, examined the vitality of place-based identities within Pakistani culture, and thereby contributed to evolving understandings of Pakistani women concerning both their environment and to various discourses of nation and patriarchy (Rehman, 2019, p. 245).

Shinwari (2014) viewed Daud's poetry as rich with images as well as 'modern sensibilities'. Prof. Khattak extended his view by calling Prof Kamal an introvert who would always reflect his mental agony and sorrowfulness through his meaningful poetry. He was admired for his remarkable contribution to 'English poetry and universal thought'. His vision was evident from his refined verses. The present study also takes into consideration the finest poems of Daud Kamal and explore the multiple ecofeminist issues that cause women and nature to suffer in Pakistani culture.

The various researches looked at ecofeminism as 'oppressive, capitalistic', gendered, division based on class, ethnicities, religion, and nature's exploitation within feminist discourse. The previous researches held men accountable for their unjust actions depriving women and nature of their due status. Women and nature struggled to raise their standards to date.

### 3. RESEARCH QUESTION

1. How do the hierarchical structures allow men to exploit women and nature as portrayed in selected Pakistani Literature?

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

The present research study is qualitative. The researchers study in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. The qualitative research is to understand the social reality of individuals, groups, and cultures as nearly as possible as its participants feel it or live it.

The researchers conduct this study by exploring ecofeminism through metaphors in Daud Kamal's selected poems. The researchers make use of textual analysis which unravels the hierarchal power structures that sanction power to men allowing them to exploit women and ecology. This also highlights other related elements as part of ecofeminism. The present study uses textual analysis as a method to explore ecofeminism in selected poems. The textual analysis is a kind of qualitative analysis. Its centre of attention is to explore the ideological and cultural suppositions within a text.

#### 5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study has used Karen J. Warren's theory of ecofeminism as its theoretical framework and it is moulded into a conceptual framework.

Warren's theory of ecofeminism argues that anything can be considered as 'Feminism' if it gives rise to women's relegation and suppression. Warren (2000, pp. 1-13), refers to a few metaphors such as 'a fruit bowl, a Venn diagram', as well as 'a web', to explain her perception of ecofeminism. Her conception of this theory discusses pluralist and multiculturalist notions but it still prefers its significant principles. She further calls ecofeminism a coverlet that has many patches. This refers to specific backgrounds that are social, ancient, and acquisitive. Warren puts forward her conception of ecofeminism in terms of a functional belief which will bring about ethical and social transformation. She places her focus on one of the foremost viewpoints and states that destruction that our society has to encounter is due to our self-made construction of ethical concepts. It is because of this that our environment and society are deteriorating. Warren differentiates ecofeminism as one of the substantial missions that intends to break up the very chain of women oppression. She believes that this oppression is due to colonial and chauvinistic pressures which shows up masculinity. Warren pounded that women and nature are not two traditional concepts that cannot be altered but these perceptions have been socially formed owing to men-centred culture. She argues that the realization of domination of nature will develop an understanding of the suppression of women. On the contrary, having an understanding of nature exploitation will also lead to the comprehension of how gender subjugation takes place. This very notion turns feminists into ecologists and ecologists into feminists. Warren strongly maintains that ecofeminism is not restricted to degradation of nature, animals, and environment but it does take into account gender, racial intolerance, class system, ableism or body shaming, discrimination based on age, and colonialism' which are solely feminist issues (Warren, 2000, pp. 1-13).

Warren's ecofeminism mirrors the comprehensive associations between feminism and ecology in culture, religion, literature as well as iconography. It also discusses the connections between the subjugation of women and nature. These associations portray nature and women as mere entities and possessions. On the other hand, men are deemed as the caretakers of women and nature. It has a predominant connection with all the endeavouring efforts that have been put to attain justice and environmental prosperity (Warren, 2000, p. 170).

#### 6. ANALYSIS

Daud Kamal's (1935-1987) poems reflect a 'sense of loss' as well as 'spiritual displacement' by focusing 'violence' and 'cultural erasure'. Daud has used a huge number of metaphors that portray a

betrayal by people and society. His poetry is like a 'primordial scripture of a people betrayed by kings and most treacherously by each other'. His poems reflect cultural paradigms through which he brings to light the domination of women and nature by men-centred society. His poems are suggestive of human experiences that branch out of their social encounters with their fellowmen. He portrays culture-nature dualism as men are considered superior.

The present study explores ecofeminism by taking into account these different forms of violence against women which allows men to subjugate them in the Pakistani culture and they continue to suffer.

## **6.1 DAUD KAMAL'S SELECTED POEMS**

### **Poem 1**

#### **6.1.1 'The Circus Will Go on Forever'**

The poem uses a variety of metaphors. The poem speaks considerably of the women and nature relationship and the atrocities they suffer from in the face of violence, degradation, and exploitation.

The metaphor 'circus' (line 1) in the title suggests that this current situation which has affected females and ecology will continue. The second and third metaphor in (line 2) 'one generation' and 'caged tigers' depict a real portrayal of ecofeminism under domination and male supremacy. The metaphor 'caged tiger' refers to nature's tied hands while the metaphor 'one generation' refers to the life-nourishing characteristics of women and nature which is completely devalued. The (line 5) 'And each one will wield a different whip' implies that patriarchy will continue to use its clever strategies to harm both nature and women. The metaphor in this line is 'whip' which suggests the uniqueness of male regimes.

In (line 6) 'Waves of laughter' implies that women and ecology's deep-rooted connection will be made fun of as their true spirit will remain untouched. The metaphors in (line 7) 'pebble bright' and 'faces of children' refer to females' strong bond with nature. The images 'the rape of the Earth' or 'Mother Nature' reflect a view of nature as female. This connection is damaging to nature and women both as they are considered to serve patriarchal desires while Nature is viewed as accessible and to be exploited as per men desire (Warren, 2000, p.55).

The metaphor in (line 10) 'ageing clowns' suggests that the deep relationship of nature and women which feminizes nature while naturalizes women presents both as not more than clowns whose job is to entertain male dominant society. The metaphor in (line 11) refers to the devastations women and ecology encounter but due to their helplessness, their actions provide ineffective solutions to the issues they face. Women as a weaker part of society are subject to sexual, physical, and domestic violence.

The metaphors 'alien mountains, sculptors of air', and, 'abominable snowman' (lines 12, 13 & 15) view the inextricable link that women and nature share. It is this relationship that unites them against patriarchy. The (line 16) 'Where will I lodge my protest?' sheds light on the mental agony Kamal shares in connection with ecofeminism. The following metaphors 'words lie scattered, empty cartridge-shells' and 'lost battle-ground' sketch the uselessness and ineffectiveness of Pakistani society that sanctions power to men allowing them to exploit women and nature. The reference to 'cartridge shells' and 'lost battleground' explores ecofeminists' struggle will not bear fruit just like the empty 'cartridge shells' that are found on the 'lost battle-ground'.

The ecofeminist lens of the poem suggests that ecofeminists are putting in selfless efforts so that women and ecology are valued and granted their due worth in Pakistani society. This also calls for a

restructuring of Pakistani culture and society which is in harmony with men-made norms. A society that allows both men and women to serve the Pakistani society so that this subjugation and domination can be eradicated.

## Poem 2

### 6.1.2 'The Rebel'

The poem makes use of metaphors to explain ecofeminism in relevance to Pakistani society and highlights one of the major issues such as 'honour killing'. This can be viewed in terms of the hollowness of our male-centred society that prioritizes the male ego and kill people in the name of family honour for face-saving and following socially constructed norms. The title 'The Rebel' suggests a very strong meaning and portrays a rebel who has revolted against the traditional and culture-bound society. She ultimately faces death but her bravery is admired.

The title 'The Rebel' suggests a very strong meaning and portrays a rebel who has revolted against the traditional and culture-bound society. She ultimately faces death but her bravery is admired. The poem addresses 'honour-killing' in Pakistani culture. The poem opens up with metaphors (lines 3 and 5) 'orchard wall, dawn'. The rebellious person who can be viewed as a woman challenging the hierarchal power structures that sanction power to men authorizing them to degrade women and ecology. She is held captive. She is tied to an 'orchard tree'. This promotes the idea that women are inseparable and while facing her death the woman is brought closer to nature in the form of a tree which stands tall and provides her comfort. But that comfort does not long last as she is shot dead at the time of sun rising. The metaphor 'dawn' represents the deep association of women and ecology.

The metaphors (lines 6 and 8) 'Pandemonium of crows' and 'empty horizon'. The first metaphor refers to nature's cries over the death of a 'Rebel'. Nature cries as it shares a deep relationship with women. This can also be viewed in connection with people who may have gathered near and they start shouting and creating noise to see her dead. They suffer from indescribable pain and agony. The next metaphor 'empty horizon' refers to the hollowness of society and a men-centred system that deems it of no value to raise voice against her brutal killing. This can also be well-comprehended as a sky that has become hollow and feels a sense of emptiness.

The metaphors (lines 9 and 10) 'hundreds of miles' and 'mother'. The first metaphor speaks of distance in miles. The 'Rebel' who was shot dead by some unknown people, is many miles away from her mother. This becomes even more painful as the 'Rebel' is without any moral support and dies at the hands of a cruel and unjust system. The second metaphor 'mother' depicts a motherly figure who is unaware of the whole incident.

The metaphors (lines 11 and 12) 'kneels in prayers' and 'ignorance' illustrates that the 'Rebel's' mother has been praying for her safe arrival. She is thousands of miles away. The mother was quite at a large distance so she did not know her daughter who revolted against the male-dominated system has been shot dead. She is in complete darkness due to being miles away from her daughter who has laid her life in the line of duty. She stood against the patriarchal system.

The metaphors (lines 14 and 15) 'wheat' and 'blind earth' promote the idea that despite 'Rebel's' killing, the world has closed her eyes towards this barbaric incident. Society is not ready to accept this revolt and thus it has silenced her forever. This is well-conceived in connection with Pakistani society where women are portrayed as submissive and weak creatures who cannot dare to speak against the existing system.

The Pakistani culture restricts women to take part in any such activity which will encourage healthy participation. Such a society only produces frustrated men and women who become psychic and

suffer emotionally and mentally. The ultimate solution to this prevalent issue is to acknowledge women and nature's relationship and consider them as an equal part of society.

### Poem 3

#### 6.1.3 'Spring'

The poem makes use of metaphors to explain ecofeminism in relevance to Pakistani society. This portrays the subjugation of women and nature at the hands of Pakistani culture-bound society that allows men to degrade and dishonour women. The poem brings to light the atrocities in the form of violence, unjust treatment, and subjugation by a male-centred society.

The metaphors used in the poem are 'stream, emerald silk, bridge, roughly hewn, tree-trunk, cascades, precipices, wild rose, edge' in lines (1-3, 5, 6) & (8, 9, 10, & 12). The poem opens up with the metaphor 'stream' which is a natural object. The metaphor in line (2) 'emerald silk' defines the beauty of nature and it is compared with silk which is soft and admired for its beauty. Kamal appears to use his imaginative powers where he mentions that the 'stream' is beautiful and flowing but there is a 'bridge' over it.

The metaphor 'bridge' is patriarchy while the 'stream' refers to nature and women which is under the domination of men. This also reflects the pressure women face while being part of such dominated societies. Nature and women are capable enough to show their capabilities but they are suppressed and silenced so that they choose to remain silent and suffer.

The next metaphors in line (5, 6) are 'roughly hewn' and 'tree trunk'. Here these two words refer to the mistreatment of women and ecology through long-standing and conventional customs. The metaphor 'tree-trunk' refers to the nurturing power of nature and women. They nurture and produce human lives. The natural environment goes through male domination, rough treatment but it never stops nurturing and 'still produces new shoots of green and recuperates itself to the very best of its ability' (Sturgeon, 2016, p. 272).

The metaphors in line (8, 9, 10, & 12) explore the multi-faceted nature of ecofeminism that does not only offer women and ecology relationship but it also demands that the environmental 'ethics' must be adopted. The act of 'animals' killing and hunting' is something that one's conscience won't authorize them to do it. But today's profit-oriented society focuses more on pursuing their businesses, for which 'animals are hunted and killed' by men. Male dominant society depends upon animals in terms of 'food, fur, and leather' for their survival (Glazebrook, 2002).

### Poem 4

#### 6.1.4. 'Clear Water'

The poem highlights the realization of women and ecology's relationship and its significance through the men-centred lens of Pakistani society. The title 'Clear Water' signifies the purity of nature and women's sacred association. Their relationship is as clear as crystal. The title can be viewed in connection with ecofeminism as it refers to the sacredness of this relationship.

The metaphors 'proud sharp stones' (line 4) refer to the characteristics of this ecofeminist relationship offers. They are proud of this motherly association. They share each other's pain and are the primary sufferers of patriarchy. The reference to 'stone' also highlights the ability to view this relationship strong with each passing day. The metaphor 'proud' is a human quality that is assigned to the 'stone'. This refers to nature and women's inextricable link.

The metaphor (line 5) 'over which you flow' can be well conceived in connection with ecofeminism. This talks about the smooth running of life but the 'sharp stones' may affect it. This can be taken in relevance to challenges and hurdles as imposed by men on women. The male-female encounter often proves to be fatal.

The metaphor 'new silence' (line 6) speaks of the silence of nature and women even after years of oppression and suffering. Their submission to men as the controllers of Pakistani culture is beyond comprehension. Why did they opt to remain silent and suffer? Did their conscience not pinch them over their decision to remain silent?

The metaphors 'perception' and 'clarity' (lines 8 and 9) highlight the silence of women and nature over their domination by men. The poem explains that the perception of one's life decision is of utmost importance as it requires clarity. This 'clarity' in 'perception' will allow women and nature to foresee things and plan their strategy accordingly. The clear perception is one of the blessings of God so women must make use of it.

The metaphor 'sensual eye' and 'brittle rocks' (line 10 and line 13) refer to women and nature's social standing within Pakistani culture as conceived by men. It is not more than a sexual object that serves mankind. But the poem offers a contrastive metaphor that is 'brittle rocks' this refers to muscularity which appears to be strong and authoritative but in reality, it can easily be defeated. The poem seems to inculcate positivity into women and nature so that they keep their spirits high. It is viewed in connection with ecofeminism that is prevalent in Pakistani society and affects women at large (Taylor, 1997, p. 65).

The metaphors 'enameled river' and 'speech' (lines 15-16) refers to patriarchy's sugar-coated 'speech' that is done to deceive and charm women so that they can fall prey to their lust. It is a tool to lure women into treachery which is carefully played upon women to win over their trust. Women often become victim to masculine regime's tricks and regret over giving in their trust.

The metaphors 'life, largely washed' trees, shadows, muscles, wind' (lines 17-21) reflect a life that is metaphorically conceived. The 'life is washed' is a metaphor for the sufferings and problems women have encountered to survive in the Pakistani society which largely allows men to subjugate women. The metaphor 'trees drink their own shadow' teaches women self-reliance. This will hold them till their last breath. The art of self-reliance is unique as it allows women to realize their actual worth.

## 7. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present research paper reveal that the social and ecological standing of women in Pakistani society is blemished. They are bound to follow the norms and traditions which are culturally defined. The portrayal of women and nature's subjugation defines a status quo within this culture where society is given precedence over religion. The connection between women and nature from an eco-feministic lens brings to light the maltreatment of ecology and women at the hands of male-centred Pakistani society.

The findings also highlight that the nature subjugation takes place in the form of occupation of lands, rivers, and air which does not only harm nature but it affects the women in particular and society in general. The use of chemicals and, nuclear bombs tests are carried out on the same soil which is called 'Mother Nature' thus subject to be damaged and ruined. The ever increasing deforestation, water, air, and soil pollution requires a solution. These issues cause an increase in the earth's temperature which in return enormously impacted glaciers. The cosmetic industry including other

industries conduct experiments on different animals which is a horrendous act but such practices keep going due to women's conformist attitude to patriarchy.

## 8. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

The present research has aimed to explore ecofeminism through metaphors in the selected poems of Daud Kamal. The conclusion of the current study brings to light the violence and subordination that women faced in Pakistani culture. The violence varies from racial, gender, 'ableism, ageism', and sexual harassment that women face due to deeming men a complete fit to society while considering women a mere misfit.

Nature is equally exploited for temporary gains and short term benefits causing greater damages to the natural environment and human beings. Thus this is concluded that this subordination joins women and nature joins them in an inseparable association as they are the primary sufferers of patriarchal norms. The study is conducted by making use of a qualitative method which was completed through textual analysis. The researchers have analyzed the text in connection with ecofeminism and focused on Pakistani culture that sanctions power to men allowing them to exploit women and nature.

Future research can be conducted concerning the comparative study of Indian and Pakistani culture within the lens of ecofeminism. It can also be conducted by taking into account the multifaceted factors prevalent in different cultures that bring to light the women and nature subjugation at the hands of the male-dominant regime.

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