

Ecofeminism Ecofeminism Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism is a convergence of environmental, feminist and women's spirituality movements. It is a term used by some to describe the diverse range of women's efforts to save the earth and the recent development of feminism resulting from the new view of women and nature.

Ecofeminism recognises the value of the feminine principle that is caring, nurturing and sustaining, and brings this to ecology, while feminism has brought a political understanding to ecology in describing patriarchy's domination of the earth.

The term was first used in 1974 by French writer Françoise d'Eaubonne to describe women's potential to effect environmental change and spans a broad range of women's concerns focusing on activism and demonstration. The underlying awareness linking the many diverse strands of activity is a growing sense of interrelatedness: that a healthy life is dependent upon a healthy environment, that humans exist in a symbiotic relationship with the earth, and that to disregard this is destructive to us and the planet.

Women taking the lead in such a global movement is a natural expression of the intrinsic relationship between women and the environment -- a relationship which has been revalued over the last decade through the work of feminist poets, thinkers and histori-



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ans, and documented by scientists, anthropologists and environmentalists. That such a movement is growing at this time is a result not only of such practical and intellectual revaluation of women and nature, but also of a growing awareness of the feminine principle within society.

The various ecological feminist perspectives, rather than being shades of green or varying expressions of feminism, are a diverse range of practical ecofeminist activity around the world. Women concerned about environmental damage are voicing their concerns on issues ranging from dumping toxic waste into landfill

sites and waterways to overpackaging and from uranium mining to nuclear testing. In the last few years, as more women have recognised life threatening consequences of environmental negligence and have acted to promote lasting change, these voices have increased in number. The world is now witnessing a crescendo of women's protest.

Ecofeminist theory and action are developing in the South as rapidly as in the North. In particular, the work of Vandana Shiva, an Indian nuclear physicist, has transformed the view of women, environment and development in defining the links between ecological crises, colonialism and the oppression of women. Shiva argues that ecological destruction is often identified

with the development process, which is legitimized by the patriarchal view of nature, and she believes that the efforts of women struggling for the survival of their environment in India expresses a growing belief in a holistic, inclusive approach to life, which will be achieved through the intellectual recovery of the feminine principle.

Source:

Women's Environmental Network, May 1991, Aberdeen Studios/22 Highbury Grove, London N5 2EA.

Tel. (071) 354 8823

Fax (071) 354 0464.