



Grassroots Feminist Movements and the Fight against Global Dispossession

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received	09 Jul, 2023
Revised	28 Sep, 2023
Accepted	24 Nov, 2023
Available Online	30 Dec, 2023

ARTICLE ID

CLIO0102005

KEYWORDS

Grassroots feminism, neoliberal globalization, ecofeminism, indigenous rights, gender justice, transnational solidarity, feminist economics..

ABSTRACT

This study explores the multifaceted resistance of women's movements against global inequality, neoliberal exploitation, and environmental degradation. Focusing on grassroots mobilizations in the Global South, it examines how women collectively challenge structural injustices embedded in global capitalism. Through case studies from Asia, Africa, and Latin America—including the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), La Via Campesina, and various indigenous land rights campaigns—the paper illustrates how women assert economic autonomy, demand environmental justice, and reimagine sustainable development. It situates these struggles within broader feminist critiques of neoliberal globalization, highlighting how women resist dispossession, patriarchy, and corporate impunity in export-oriented industries and resource-extractive economies. The analysis incorporates ecofeminist, political economy, and intersectional feminist perspectives to contextualize women's agency in anti-mining movements, climate justice activism, and transnational solidarity networks. Special emphasis is placed on feminist alternatives to market models, such as care economies and collective cooperatives, as transformative visions of economic justice. The article also discusses global feminist campaigns like #MeToo and the World Social Forum, emphasizing South-South feminist collaborations as powerful forces for systemic change. The paper affirms that women's resistance is not only oppositional but constructive, offering pathways to ecological integrity, democratic participation, and gender-equitable futures across local and global contexts.



INTRODUCTION

Grassroots mobilizations in the Global South represent a dynamic and sustained response to the challenges posed by global economic restructuring and neoliberal policies. These movements reflect the agency of marginalized women who seek to reclaim control over their livelihoods amidst precarious labour markets, declining state support, and deepening socio-economic inequalities. Among the most instructive examples of such mobilizations are those led by the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India and the growing movements of women farmers across Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) was started in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, in 1972 by Ela Bhatt. It is a great example of grassroots resistance that combines trade unionism with cooperative methods of economic empowerment. SEWA was created to help self-employed women who were not covered by trade unions or conventional employment rights. Women who worked in a variety of fields, such as street selling, home-based production, agricultural employment, and rag-picking, faced structural challenges to economic stability, such as not being recognised by the law, having poor and inconsistent salaries, and not having any social protection. SEWA fought back against this marginalisation by bringing together women workers who had all been taken advantage of and were afraid for their safety (Custers, 2009). It coupled calls for fair pay and rights at work with the SEWA Bank's ability to provide financial services, which has helped thousands of women get loans on terms they can afford. The SEWA Bank, for instance, has given women loans so they can buy tools, which has helped them work more efficiently and make more money (Bussmann, 2009). A lady who sold things on the street in Ahmedabad and used to rely on moneylenders who took advantage of her was able to grow her business and make her income more stable using loans like these.

SEWA has been actively working for legislative changes and policy changes that safeguard self-employed women in order to give them more economic power. SEWA's campaign to have home-based workers and street sellers recognised in national law was very important. In India, SEWA was a big part in getting the Street sellers (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 passed. SEWA's integrated strategy, which includes organising, capacity development, financial assistance, and advocacy, shows how grassroots mobilisation can help people get their livelihood rights in bad economic situations. Women farmers have also come together to fight for their rights, which shows how these issues are connected: land rights, access to resources, and food security. Women make up a large part of the agricultural labour in many developing nations. Even when they help, they often suffer institutionalised prejudice when it comes to getting loans, technology, land ownership, and extension services. Customary laws and patriarchal land tenure regimes often deny women official land rights, relegating them to precarious tenancy or informal work arrangements. Women farmers have spearheaded movements to fight these unfair practices and claim their rights to productive resources (Bussmann, 2009). La Via Campesina is a worldwide peasant movement that started in 1993. It is a good example. Women in La Via Campesina have been leading the way in movements for land reform, food sovereignty, and the acknowledgement of peasant farming. For example, the organization's Women's Articulation platform brings together women from member organisations throughout the world to talk about issues that affect women in agriculture. Women members have been very helpful in promoting agroecological techniques that put sustainability and local food systems first. This goes against the dominance of industrial and export-oriented agriculture. In Brazil, the Movimento das Mulheres Camponesas (MMC), which is part of La Via Campesina, has gotten rural women to fight for their land rights, against domestic abuse, and for agroecological agricultural practices. They have protested in public and taken over government buildings, which has challenged both gender and agricultural hierarchies (Custers, 2009).

Women farmers in Africa have also banded together to protect their way of life. The Uganda National Farmers Federation (UNFFE) and women's organisations within it have fought for fair access to land and farming supplies in Uganda. Women in these categories say that making tenure security and access to financing better is necessary to boost productivity and make sure that families have enough food. Their action has changed the way people talk about policy, leading to changes in land policy that are meant to protect women's rights. The mobilisation of women farmers has become more important because of trade liberalisation and global supply networks. Women farmers who don't have the

wherewithal to compete in global marketplaces have frequently been left out as agriculture has moved towards exports. For example, the growth of the cut flower business in Kenya has created jobs for women, but these occupations are frequently low-paying, have unstable contracts, and bad working conditions. Trade unions and women's organisations have worked together to seek better labour rights and social safeguards for women who work in this field.

Even with these efforts, many problems still exist. Grassroots initiatives organised by women sometimes run into problems including lack of resources, opposition from males, and apathy or antagonism from the government. Also, neoliberal policies that put market-led development first frequently leave small-scale and subsistence producers, especially women, out in the cold. Still, grassroots movements for livelihood rights continue to be an important part of the fight against global disparities. These groups promote collective solidarity, develop alternative economic models grounded on cooperation and mutual assistance, and aim to transform policy agendas at both national and international levels.

Indigenous Women and Land Rights Campaigns

The issue of land rights has historically been a major element in discussions around indigenous identity, survival, and resistance, especially in the Global South. For indigenous women, the problem becomes even more important since it involves the convergence of gender, ethnicity, and social marginalisation. Their battles for land rights are not simply fights against being kicked off their property and pushed to the outside of society, but also attempts to protect their culture, independence, and the environment. Colonial and post-colonial regimes have historically dislocated indigenous groups from their native lands, therefore altering traditional methods of sustenance and administration. These displacements have often been rationalised via legal frameworks or development initiatives that do not acknowledge indigenous perspectives of land as holy and communal. Within these overarching patterns of exclusion, women encounter unique vulnerabilities. Their responsibilities as keepers of knowledge about farming, biodiversity, and medicine are very important for the survival of their communities. Nonetheless, patriarchal traditions both inside and outside indigenous communities often restrict their involvement in decision-making related to land usage and inheritance (Custers, 2009).

Concrete instances show how strong indigenous women's resistance is in different parts of the world. The Mapuche women of Chile have been in the vanguard of demonstrations against extractive companies sponsored by the government throughout Latin America. These industries put their rivers and forests at risk. Mapuche women have made their complaints known and sought acknowledgement of their ancestral claims via road blockades, legal actions, and partnerships with worldwide indigenous rights groups. In the Philippines, indigenous Lumad women have also come together to fight against militarisation and mining on their territory. Their activism generally includes calls for peace, education, and the preservation of culture, showing that they have a broad view of land rights battles.

In the Andean highlands of Peru and Bolivia, Quechua and Aymara women's groups have fought against the government's and businesses' efforts to take over community lands and privatise water supplies. These women have used ancient knowledge systems and spiritual frameworks to organise marches, take part in transnational forums, and build networks of solidarity that make their voices heard on worldwide platforms. Indigenous women in Sub-Saharan Africa have also worked on comparable efforts outside of Latin America. For example, the Maasai women of Kenya have fought against losing their land because of tourist and conservation programs. They have worked together to engage with government authorities and foreign NGOs to get access to grazing pastures and protect their pastoralist traditions. In India, Adivasi women, especially those from groups that live in forests, have also spearheaded efforts against deforestation and the displacement of people caused by mining activities. Their involvement in grassroots demonstrations and court challenges under laws like the Forest Rights Act illustrates how important it is to have leaders that include women in environmental and land issues. Indigenous women have used international legal systems to back up their claims on a global scale. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) have established normative frameworks for challenging governmental policies that sustain land abuses.

Conferences like the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) are now crucial places for indigenous women to share their stories and change the way things are done throughout the world (Custers, 2009).

Still, indigenous women have a lot of trouble keeping their campaigns going. State persecution, corporate pressure, and patriarchal hostility among their communities often impede their efforts. Women activists have often been subjected to violence, stigmatisation, and exclusion from official discussions. Even with these problems, their ongoing efforts show a strong dedication to protecting both gender equality and the rights of indigenous people. Indigenous women's land rights activities represent more than just resistance to economic exploitation. They represent ideas of justice that are based on giving and taking with nature, keeping culture alive, and making the community healthy. Through these efforts, indigenous women not only challenge global inequality but also promote alternative frameworks of development and rights recognition that extend beyond their particular contexts.

Women's Roles in Anti-displacement and Anti-mining Movements

Anti-displacement and anti-mining movements in the Global South have become vital arenas for women's collective opposition to the extractivist principles of global capitalism. These conflicts illustrate the gendered ramifications of neoliberal development models, which commodify land, forests, and natural resources for the advantage of multinational businesses and local elites. For women in afflicted communities, these resource grabs not only put their material livelihoods at risk, but they also change the social and cultural fabric of their existence. Women are the main gatherers of forest products, water, and fuel, and they also take care of families and communities. When dispossession happens, they suffer an unfair amount of the load. In reaction, they have become key players in fighting against being moved and protecting their lands from harmful mining and infrastructure developments.

Women have come together throughout Asia, Latin America, and Africa to fight against mining projects funded by corporations and governments that harm ecosystems, violate traditional land rights, and contaminate water supplies that are important for everyday living. The involvement of Adivasi and peasant women in movements against mining in mineral-rich regions like Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand exemplifies the gendered dimensions of anti-displacement efforts in India. The Dongria Kondh, a tribal group in Odisha, spearheaded the Niyamgiri movement, which is a very good example. When Vedanta Resources, a British mining company, tried to extract bauxite from the holy Niyamgiri highlands, Dongria Kondh women stood up for their land. They said that mining would ruin the economy that depended on the forest, damage sacred sites, and permanently harm water supplies. Women and men both marched, filed lawsuits, and built human barriers to keep corporate officials and machines from getting into the region. Their opposition, backed by national and international networks of support, finally forced the Indian government to turn down Vedanta's offer in 2013. This win showed how important grassroots movements led by women are for fighting against dispossession by corporations.

In Latin America, women's involvement in anti-mining movements has also been essential. Peru has several instances of rural and Indigenous women coming together to fight against big mining operations. Women farmers, called *rondas campesinas* in the area, were in the vanguard of the fight against the Conga gold and copper project in Cajamarca. They said that mining would take up and pollute the area's water sources, which were very important for farming and everyday life. Women were very important in keeping the protest camps going, organising marches, and standing up to official persecution. They portrayed their advocacy as a way to protect life, water, and future generations. In Guatemala, Indigenous Maya women have also banded together against Canadian-owned gold mines that have caused environmental damage, water shortages, and forced evictions. Women in the San Marcos department have taken part in the *Consulta Popular*, or community referenda, to democratically say no to mining concessions.

African settings also demonstrate robust women-led opposition to relocation caused by mining activities. Women from communities impacted by mining in South Africa have come together to fight against both foreign and native mining enterprises. The Women Affected by Mining United in Action

(WAMUA) is a group of women activists that operate at the grassroots level. They want to bring attention to violence against women, land loss, and societal breakdown that are all related to mining activities. Women from villages close to platinum and coal mines have expressed worries about being forced to leave their homes, not getting enough money for their troubles, and the health problems caused by pollution. They are active in more than just protests; they also file lawsuits, hold public hearings, and push for changes in policy. Anti-mining campaigns have gotten a lot of attention, but women have also been prominent in anti-displacement movements connected to big infrastructure projects. Women in India have fought against being moved because of dam building. The Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) is a campaign against the building of the Sardar Sarovar Dam. Women like Medha Patkar and many other local women have played important roles in public mobilisations. Women from villages that were flooded said that losing their land would not only make them less secure financially, but it would also break up social networks that are necessary for life and health. They used protracted sit-ins, hunger strikes, and working with international human rights groups to get others to pay notice to their situation.

One thing that all of these groups have in common is that they all agree that women's interests in land and natural resources go beyond just money. Women articulate their resistance by drawing from cultural, spiritual, and ecological connections to the land. In several Indigenous and agrarian societies, land is seen as a living thing, intricately connected to women's responsibilities as guardians of biodiversity and food security. Displacement is therefore seen not just as physical displacement but also as the obliteration of cultural identities and ecological knowledge. Women activists confront many problems, even if they are very important. In many communities, patriarchal norms push their views to the side while decisions are being made. To stifle opposition, state officials and businesses have used aggressive methods, such as harassing and criminalising women leaders (Oostendorp, 2009). Still, women have kept organising, making connections across regions and countries that make their efforts stronger. The International Women and Mining Network (RIMM) and the Women and Mining Working Group are two examples of platforms where women activists from different parts of the world can discuss tactics, stories, and push for mining legislation that take gender into account (Custers, 2009).

FEMINIST RESPONSES TO NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZATION

The advent and consolidation of neoliberal globalization have profoundly reshaped economic, political, and social landscapes across the world. Feminist scholars and activists have critically interrogated this dominant paradigm, emphasizing its entrenchment of gender inequalities and the reinforcement of patriarchal structures through market-oriented policies. Neoliberalism, with its emphasis on deregulation, privatization, and the reduction of state welfare provisions, has imposed severe burdens on women, especially those situated within the Global South and among marginalized communities in the North (Bhagwati, 2004).

The erosion of welfare states and the commodification of essential services such as healthcare, education, and housing have disproportionately affected women. Often positioned as primary caregivers within familial and community networks, women have been compelled to absorb the social costs of austerity measures and state withdrawal. Feminist political economists such as Diane Elson have drawn attention to this phenomenon through concepts like "the reduction of public provision and the intensification of women's unpaid labour." Empirical studies reveal that in nations subjected to structural adjustment programs during the 1980s and 1990s, women were often forced into informal and precarious employment sectors to compensate for declining household incomes.

The expansion of global supply chains has also deepened exploitative labour conditions for women. Export Processing Zones (EPZs) and Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in countries such as Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Mexico have become emblematic of this trend. These zones, often operating beyond the purview of national labour protections, predominantly employ young women in industries such as garment manufacturing and electronics assembly. The preference for female labour is frequently premised on gendered stereotypes that associate women with docility, nimbleness, and a willingness to accept lower wages. Feminist scholars like Naila Kabeer have critiqued such narratives, arguing that

they mask systemic forms of gendered exploitation while celebrating female labour force participation as a metric of empowerment.

The workplace, neoliberal globalization has perpetuated patriarchal power in more insidious ways. The cultural valorisation of individualism and consumerism has contributed to the commodification of women's bodies and identities. Media and advertising industries, driven by transnational corporations, propagate narrow and often Western-centric ideals of femininity, which marginalize diverse expressions of womanhood and reproduce racialized, class-based, and sexual hierarchies. Feminist cultural theorists such as bell hooks and Chandra Talpade Mohanty have interrogated these dynamics, asserting that neoliberal ideologies homogenize women's experiences and erase the particularities of those living under conditions of poverty, racial subjugation, and colonial legacies (Bussmann, 2009).

Grassroots feminist movements have responded to these global processes through multifaceted strategies. Transnational feminist networks such as DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) have articulated critiques of global economic governance structures, including the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Bank. DAWN and similar organizations argue that these institutions prioritize capital accumulation and corporate interests over human rights and gender justice. They emphasize the necessity of integrating feminist perspectives into debates on macroeconomic policy, debt relief, and development aid (Bhagwati, 2004).

Moreover, localized feminist responses demonstrate resistance to neoliberal patriarchy in contexts where intersectional oppressions intersect. In India, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has organized women in informal economies, advocating for labour rights, social security, and cooperative enterprise models that challenge market fundamentalism. SEWA's initiatives demonstrate how collective action can provide economic security while fostering solidarity and autonomy among marginalized women. Similarly, feminist movements in Latin America, such as those opposing free trade agreements and extractives industries, have foregrounded the inseparability of economic justice from environmental sustainability and indigenous rights (Bussmann, 2009).

Contemporary feminist critiques increasingly emphasize the limitations of frameworks that isolate gender from broader political economy analyses. There is a growing insistence on examining the mutually constitutive relationship between global capitalism and patriarchy. Feminists argue that neoliberal globalization has adapted and entrenched patriarchal norms rather than dismantling them, thereby exacerbating social inequalities across lines of gender, race, and class.

Feminist Economists' Alternatives to Market Models

Feminist economists have critically interrogated the foundational assumptions of neoliberal globalization and advanced substantive alternatives to market-driven models of economic development. Neoliberal paradigms prioritize market efficiency, privatization, deregulation, and the minimization of state intervention, framing economic success primarily through the lenses of productivity and GDP growth. However, such approaches often fail to account for the social and reproductive dimensions of economic life, which are deeply gendered. Feminist scholars and activists have therefore articulated alternative frameworks grounded in equity, social justice, and sustainability, placing care work and social reproduction at the core of economic analysis (Bhagwati, 2004).

A fundamental departure of feminist economic critiques from orthodox models lies in the recognition of unpaid and underpaid labour, especially in domestic and care sectors. Conventional economic indicators such as GDP exclude a vast array of activities that sustain human life, including child-rearing, eldercare, and household management. Feminist economists such as Nancy Folbre have emphasized that these activities, though economically invisible, are essential for the reproduction of the labour force and, by extension, for the functioning of capitalist economies. Folbre's concept of the "care economy" demonstrates how market mechanisms undervalue labour associated with caregiving, thereby perpetuating gender inequalities. Her work calls for policy interventions that redistribute and recognize care work through mechanisms such as state subsidies, social wages, and expanded public services (Custers, 2009).

Diane Elson has further contributed to feminist critiques of market orthodoxy through her formulation of the concept of “socially responsible macroeconomics.” Elson contends that fiscal and monetary policies should not be designed solely to achieve price stability and investor confidence but should instead be oriented toward promoting gender equality, employment generation, and the equitable provision of public goods. For example, austerity measures often implemented in the Global South as part of structural adjustment programs have disproportionately affected women by reducing access to public healthcare, education, and welfare services. Elson’s proposals advocate for gender-responsive budgeting, which ensures that public expenditures address the specific needs of women and marginalized communities.

Moreover, feminist alternatives stress the importance of collective and cooperative economic arrangements over individualistic and profit-driven models. Initiatives led by women’s cooperatives and solidarity economies in various parts of the world exemplify this ethos. The Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) in India offers a pertinent illustration. SEWA combines labour union functions with cooperative enterprises, empowering informal women workers through collective bargaining, microfinance, and access to social security. This approach not only challenges neoliberal narratives that emphasize deregulated labour markets but also presents a vision of economic organization rooted in mutual aid and community solidarity.

Feminist scholars have also engaged with global trade and investment regimes, critiquing their role in entrenching gender disparities. Free trade agreements, liberalized capital flows, and intellectual property rights frameworks often curtail national policy space and erode labour protections. Scholars such as Gita Sen and Silvia Federici have argued that these processes disproportionately affect women, particularly in the Global South, who are often employed in precarious, low-wage export-oriented industries. Sen, for instance, proposes a development paradigm grounded in human rights and democratic participation rather than in the imperatives of global capital. Such a paradigm would prioritize universal access to essential services, progressive taxation, and regulation of capital to prevent a race to the bottom in labour standards.

Alternative indicators of development have also been proposed to transcend market-centric metrics. The United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Inequality Index (GII) are steps toward integrating gender dimensions into measurements of national progress. However, feminist scholars advocate for more transformative indices that incorporate unpaid work, care responsibilities, and subjective well-being. Marilyn Waring’s work, *If Women Counted*, was among the earliest to argue for a fundamental rethinking of what counts as economic activity and whose labour is considered valuable. Her insights continue to inform contemporary debates on the limitations of gross national product (GNP) and GDP as measures of societal well-being (Oostendorp, 2009).

Furthermore, feminist economists critique the commodification of essential services under neoliberal regimes. The privatization of healthcare, education, and water has shifted costs onto households, intensifying the burden on women. Advocates for feminist alternatives propose universal, publicly funded provision of these services as necessary for advancing gender equity. For instance, universal child care programs in countries such as Sweden and Norway have significantly enhanced women’s labour market participation while reducing gendered divisions of unpaid work (Oostendorp, 2009).

Feminist alternatives place sustainability and ecological integrity at the heart of economic thinking. The integration of eco-feminist perspectives reflects a growing recognition that capitalist growth imperatives are incompatible with environmental limits. Vandana Shiva, a prominent eco-feminist, has linked women’s struggles for subsistence and biodiversity to broader critiques of industrial agriculture and corporate-driven globalization. She argues that women’s traditional knowledge and practices offer models for ecological stewardship that contrast sharply with extractive economic models.

Campaigns for Corporate Accountability and Fair Labour

The expansion of neoliberal globalization has facilitated the rise of transnational corporations (TNCs) whose supply chains span continents and penetrate the most remote regions of the Global South. Feminist movements and labour rights advocates have extensively critiqued these corporate practices, drawing attention to exploitative labour conditions and demanding accountability from global capital. Women, often situated at the most vulnerable points of global production networks, have emerged as central actors in campaigns seeking to reform corporate behaviour and establish more equitable labour standards.

The feminization of labour in export-oriented industries constitutes a defining feature of global capitalism. In numerous developing countries, women workers populate sectors such as garment manufacturing, electronics assembly, and agricultural processing. Their labour, often characterized by low wages, lack of job security, and hazardous working environments, sustains the competitiveness of transnational corporations seeking to minimize production costs. Feminist scholars, including Rhacel Salazar Parreñas and Naila Kabeer, have critiqued the manner in which corporations exploit gendered assumptions regarding docility, flexibility, and acceptance of precarious conditions in order to justify the widespread employment of women in these sectors.

Concrete instances of corporate malpractice have galvanized global feminist solidarity. The 2013 Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh serves as a tragic yet instructive example. The collapse of a building housing garment factories resulted in the death of over 1,100 workers, the vast majority of whom were women. Investigations revealed systemic negligence, including unsafe working conditions and corporate indifference to local building regulations. In response, feminist activists, trade unions, and human rights organizations launched international campaigns demanding that brands sourcing from Bangladesh take responsibility for labour conditions in their supply chains. Initiatives such as the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety emerged as a result of these pressures, compelling global apparel brands to commit to legally binding agreements aimed at improving factory safety standards (Custers, 2009).

Beyond the garment industry, women's labour struggles have gained visibility in electronics manufacturing. In countries such as China, Vietnam, and Malaysia, women constitute a significant proportion of the workforce producing consumer electronics for multinational corporations. Reports from rights groups have documented excessive working hours, exposure to toxic chemicals, and suppression of unionization efforts in these factories. Feminist and labour rights coalitions have collaborated to draw international attention to these abuses. Organizations such as the GoodElectronics Network and the International Labor Rights Forum have coordinated transnational advocacy campaigns, urging brands like Apple and Samsung to enforce ethical labour practices within their supply chains (Bussmann, 2009).

Agricultural sectors have also witnessed feminist-led campaigns for corporate accountability. Female plantation workers in countries such as Kenya, Ecuador, and the Philippines have reported wage discrimination, sexual harassment, and exposure to harmful pesticides. In response, movements such as the Women's Committee of the Banana Link network have mobilized to promote gender-sensitive labour standards and secure commitments from retailers and distributors in consumer countries. Their advocacy has contributed to the incorporation of gender considerations into certification schemes such as Fairtrade, which now include provisions to protect women workers from discrimination and violence (Bhagwati, 2004).

Efforts to secure corporate accountability extend beyond individual campaigns and reflect broader feminist critiques of global trade and investment regimes. Feminist organizations have actively engaged in international forums to contest trade agreements and investment treaties that privilege corporate rights over labour protections. Networks such as the Feminists for a Binding Treaty coalition advocate for a UN treaty on business and human rights that would impose binding obligations on transnational corporations, thus closing legal gaps that enable corporate impunity.

While considerable progress has been made through these initiatives, numerous challenges remain. Global production networks are complex and opaque, making it difficult to trace corporate accountability through multiple layers of subcontracting and outsourcing. Anti-union practices and state

repression continue to undermine women workers' capacity to organize and advocate for their rights. In many cases, corporations engage in sophisticated public relations campaigns that mask exploitative practices behind narratives of corporate social responsibility.

Nevertheless, feminist campaigns for corporate accountability and fair labour persist in advancing transformative demands. These struggles articulate visions of global economic justice that centre the experiences and aspirations of women workers. Through strategic alliances across borders, the incorporation of gender-sensitive approaches in labour standards, and sustained pressure on corporations and international institutions, feminist movements continue to challenge the hegemony of neoliberal globalization and assert the necessity of placing human rights, dignity, and equality at the core of global production systems.

ECOFEMINISM AND RESISTANCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL EXPLOITATION

Ecofeminism has emerged as a critical intellectual and activist response to the intersection of environmental degradation and patriarchal structures of oppression. This perspective draws from feminist analyses of gendered power relations and ecological critiques of capitalist industrialization, asserting that the domination of women and the exploitation of nature are intrinsically connected. Both women and the environment, according to ecofeminist scholars, have historically been positioned as passive resources to be controlled, appropriated, and consumed to fuel patriarchal and capitalist imperatives.

The philosophical foundations of ecofeminism were articulated prominently in the works of theorists such as Françoise d'Eaubonne, who coined the term *ecofeminism* in the 1970s. She argued that patriarchal domination extended to both women and the environment, necessitating a dual liberation movement. Subsequent scholars, including Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies, expanded on these ideas, articulating how colonialism, globalization, and industrialization have exacerbated ecological destruction and gender inequalities. Shiva, in particular, has critiqued the commodification of natural resources and knowledge systems under global capitalism (Bhagwati, 2004). Her analysis of biopiracy and corporate-driven agriculture demonstrates how indigenous women's traditional knowledge and biodiversity stewardship have been systematically undermined for the profit of multinational corporations.

Ecofeminist practice has not been limited to theoretical discourse but is deeply rooted in grassroots activism. In India, the Chipko Movement of the 1970s stands as a seminal example. Predominantly led by rural women, the movement involved villagers physically embracing trees to prevent them from being felled by commercial loggers. These women, who depended on forests for fuel, fodder, and water, resisted state and corporate encroachment that threatened their subsistence and community life. Their actions exemplified ecofeminist principles by directly linking environmental preservation with the defence of women's livelihoods and autonomy.

Similarly, the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, founded by Wangari Maathai in 1977, embodies ecofeminist activism through its commitment to reforestation, women's empowerment, and sustainable development. Maathai mobilized thousands of women to plant trees in degraded landscapes, thereby combating deforestation, restoring ecological balance, and fostering economic independence. Her leadership demonstrated the potential of women-led environmental movements to address ecological crises while simultaneously challenging patriarchal social structures.

Ecofeminist critiques also extend to the domain of industrial agriculture and genetic engineering. Corporate-driven agricultural models that prioritize monocultures and high-input farming methods have been contested on the grounds that they marginalize women farmers, erode biodiversity, and degrade soil fertility. Vandana Shiva's advocacy against genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and patented seeds has showed the adverse impacts on small-scale women farmers in the Global South. These farmers, who have traditionally preserved diverse seed varieties, face growing barriers to accessing seeds and maintaining agroecological knowledge systems as global agribusiness consolidates control over inputs (Bhagwati, 2004).

At the core of ecofeminist theory lies an epistemological challenge to dualistic thinking that separates humans from nature and positions rationality, technology, and control as superior to intuition, care, and coexistence. Ecofeminists argue that this dualism sustains patriarchal and capitalist structures that privilege domination over reciprocity. In place of exploitative paradigms, ecofeminism proposes relational worldviews grounded in interconnectedness and mutual dependence. This ethical orientation affirms the value of non-human life forms and advocates for symbiotic relationships with ecosystems. Critiques of ecofeminism, however, have emerged, particularly from postcolonial and intersectional feminist scholars. Some have raised concerns regarding essentialist tendencies in early ecofeminist writings, which risked romanticizing women's relationship with nature and overlooking the diverse experiences shaped by race, class, and colonial histories. Contemporary ecofeminist scholarship has responded to such critiques by adopting more nuanced approaches that emphasize the socio-economic and geopolitical dimensions of environmental struggles. Scholars such as Bina Agarwal have argued for a "feminist environmentalism" that situates women's environmental knowledge and activism within specific historical and material contexts. Agarwal's work in South Asia has shown how women's collective action in managing community forests not only secures ecological sustainability but also strengthens their bargaining power and social status.

Ecofeminism today continues to inform a range of global and local movements against environmental injustices. Anti-extractive industry protests, campaigns against large-scale dams, and mobilizations against climate change increasingly adopt ecofeminist perspectives that link ecological degradation with systems of oppression. Indigenous women, in particular, have emerged as leaders in these struggles. In Latin America, for instance, women from indigenous communities have resisted mining projects that threaten their ancestral lands and ecosystems. Their mobilizations reflect ecofeminist commitments to protecting both cultural and biological diversity against neoliberal developmental agendas.

Movements Against Resource Extraction and Pollution

The intersection between environmental degradation and gender injustice has emerged as a significant domain of contemporary feminist analysis and activism. Ecofeminism, a theoretical and activist framework developed in response to this nexus, draws attention to the interwoven oppressions of patriarchy and ecological destruction. Feminist scholars and activists maintain that the exploitation of nature parallels and is often sustained by the subjugation of women, particularly those belonging to marginalized communities. Movements opposing resource extraction and pollution thus embody ecofeminist resistance, wherein women play an essential role in contesting both environmental exploitation and patriarchal domination.

Resource extraction industries — such as mining, logging, oil drilling, and large-scale agribusiness — have devastated ecosystems while imposing severe socio-economic and health costs upon local populations. Women in affected communities often bear disproportionate burdens arising from these activities. Their traditional responsibilities related to food production, water collection, and healthcare expose them directly to the adverse consequences of pollution, land dispossession, and biodiversity loss. The contamination of water sources due to toxic runoffs from mining operations, the depletion of forests through commercial logging, and the poisoning of soil and air caused by industrial emissions jeopardize the survival strategies that sustain family and community life (Custers, 2009).

Numerous grassroots movements, often led by women, have arisen in response to these destructive processes. In India, the Chipko movement serves as an early and globally influential example of women's resistance to deforestation. During the 1970s, village women in Uttarakhand physically embraced trees to prevent them from being felled by logging contractors. Their non-violent direct action reflected a profound understanding of the forests' role in sustaining local livelihoods, regulating water cycles, and preventing soil erosion. Although framed in the language of environmental conservation, their actions simultaneously challenged the patriarchal dismissal of women's ecological knowledge and authority (Oostendorp, 2009).

In Latin America, women have organized against the encroachment of extractive industries on indigenous and rural lands. The women of Cajamarca in Peru, for example, have resisted the expansion

of the Yanacocha gold mine, which has contaminated local water supplies and threatened agricultural livelihoods. Through protests, legal challenges, and alliances with transnational environmental networks, these women have asserted their right to clean water and the protection of sacred landscapes. Their activism exposes the profound contradictions inherent in development models that prioritize mineral wealth over ecological integrity and community well-being.

African contexts also demonstrate the leadership of women in resisting pollution and resource plunder. In Nigeria's Niger Delta, women from communities such as Ogoniland have mobilized against the environmental devastation wrought by oil extraction. The degradation of farmlands and fisheries, coupled with frequent oil spills and gas flaring, has eroded local economies and public health. Women have staged peaceful occupations of oil facilities, engaged in legal action, and documented environmental crimes to demand accountability from multinational corporations and state agencies. Their efforts draw upon ecofeminist principles that reject the commodification of nature and affirm collective rights to a healthy environment (Custers, 2009).

In Southeast Asia, women have fought against the harmful effects of large-scale hydropower projects in similar ways. Building dams along the Mekong River in Cambodia and Laos has forced people to leave their homes and hurt fisheries that are important for food security. Women, who are in charge of feeding their families and running small farms, have spoken out against this via local and regional advocacy groups. Their criticisms elucidate the societal repercussions of development frameworks propelled by energy export priorities, compromising ecological and cultural sustainability. Ecofeminist opposition to resource exploitation and pollution transcends national boundaries. International efforts like the Women and Mining Network and the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) have made it easier for people from different countries to share methods and support each other. These networks link local fights against capitalist and patriarchal exploitation to bigger ones, pushing for long-term solutions based on gender equality and concern for the environment. Even though these groups are quite active, women activists often have to deal with big problems. State persecution, corporate aggression, and patriarchal opposition within their communities provide significant obstacles. In policy procedures that are mostly run by male professionals and technocrats, women's contributions to environmental advocacy are frequently ignored. Ecofeminist groups respond by focussing on participatory and inclusive methods that put local knowledge at the heart, encourage communities to take charge of their natural resources, and push for conservation measures that take gender into account.

Women in charge of climate justice campaigns

The participation of women in climate justice movements provides a significant perspective for comprehending the relationships among gender, environment, and social equity. Based on ecofeminist ideas that look at how women and nature are both oppressed in patriarchal and capitalist cultures, women's leadership in environmental activism has become an important part of worldwide efforts to fight ecological damage and injustice. Ecofeminists like Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies have posited that the exploitation of women and environment arises from analogous systemic inequities inherent in colonial, capitalist, and patriarchal regimes. Their contributions elucidate the assertion that environmental degradation disproportionately impacts women, especially those in the Global South, whose livelihoods are closely tied to natural resources (Oostendorp, 2009).

Women have led resistance movements and efforts to stop environmental degradation and make sure that climate justice is served in many places throughout the world. The Chipko Movement in India in the 1970s is a well-known example of this. Rural women played a big role in stopping commercial logging in forests. These women claimed their power as both protectors of local ecosystems and defenders of community rights by hugging the trees and refusing to give in to corporate and government pressures. This campaign not only safeguarded important forest resources, but it also showed that women were directly involved in fighting against behaviours that hurt the environment and put their lives at risk. Women have also been in charge of worldwide climate justice movements that fight against the unfair effects of climate change on poor communities. Greta Thunberg's activism, which started in the Global North and spread throughout the globe, inspires young people, especially young women, to

become involved. This makes climate justice efforts more global. Nonetheless, grassroots campaigns led by indigenous women, such as those opposing oil pipelines in North America — notably the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline — demonstrate the substantial role of women at the nexus of environmental activism and the protection of indigenous rights. LaDonna Brave Bull Allard and other leaders organised opposition not just to protect the environment, but also to protect cultural legacy and community sovereignty. Women leaders in climate justice groups know a lot about what they are talking about since they have lived through environmental catastrophes. In many places, women are in charge of getting food, water, and energy for their families (Oostendorp, 2009). This makes them more susceptible to environmental damage. Droughts, cutting down trees, and dirty water supplies all have a direct impact on them and their families' everyday existence. For instance, women in sub-Saharan Africa have to travel longer distances to get water because of changes in the environment, which is hard on both their bodies and their schedules. These experiences often lead to action, as women fight for policies that put sustainable development and fair access to resources first. The stories about climate policy have slowly changed since women have been included in global meetings like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Women and Gender Constituency, which was set up as part of the UNFCCC, is a formal way for women's views to be heard in climate talks. Women delegates and activists stress how important it is to include gender issues in plans to adapt to and reduce climate change. This goes against technocratic and market-driven solutions that frequently neglect the concerns of marginalised groups (Bussmann, 2009). Academics have come to see that women who lead climate justice initiatives are both fighting against and offering new ideas for how to grow. Through working together, women fight for social fairness, ecological stewardship, and open government. The idea of "climate feminism," which combines feminist criticism with climate advocacy, has come forth to better understand their contributions as a whole. This theory contests the gendered consequences of environmental degradation and the discriminatory characteristics of policy-making arenas historically led by males (Bhagwati, 2004).

GLOBAL FEMINIST NETWORKS AND TRANSNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

The rise of transnational solidarity and worldwide feminist networks represents a substantial reaction to the disparities created by neoliberal globalisation. These forms are not only intellectual or ideological; they are profoundly entrenched in actual, communal conflicts across several geographies. They are important places for expressing other ideas about development, democracy, and gender justice, and they provide an alternative to the mainstream ideas of market fundamentalism and corporate-driven globalisation. The World Social Forum (WSF), which started in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001, is one of the most important places where these kinds of solidarities have formed (Bhagwati, 2004). The WSF was created as a direct response to the World Economic Forum in Davos. It became a place for different civil society groups, such as feminist groups, indigenous movements, trade unions, and environmental coalitions, to come together and talk about the human and environmental costs of global capitalism. Feminist involvement in the WSF has been strong and varied, with women from all social, cultural, and economic backgrounds taking part. These interactions have aimed to guarantee that criticisms of global inequality and neoliberalism are cognisant of the gendered aspects of exploitation and oppression (Bussmann, 2009).

The WSF's motto, "Another World is Possible," has struck a chord with feminist groups that have long fought against the patriarchal foundations of the world's economic systems. Women's organisations have constantly interfered in talks about debt, trade liberalisation, labour flexibility, and environmental degradation, insisting that feminist viewpoints shape global justice initiatives. At many meetings and discussions, feminist activists have spoken about how changes in the global economy affect women more than men by making jobs less secure, widening the pay gap, putting more care responsibilities on women, and cutting public services. It has been especially important that there be grassroots women's groups from the Global South. These voices have questioned the power of Northern feminist discourses and brought up concerns like rural hardship, reproductive rights, militarisation, and the commercialisation of water and other natural resources.

Concrete instances illustrate the incorporation of feminist goals within anti-globalization movements. At the 2002 World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, women's organisations set up panels to talk about the feminisation of poverty, violence against women in militarised and occupied areas, and other ways to get food that aren't run by corporations. La Via Campesina, an international movement of small and medium-sized farmers, strongly supported food sovereignty as a feminist issue (Custers, 2009). They stressed the important role that rural women play in sustainable agriculture and communal food systems. Feminist interventions within the WSF have critically analysed the gendered dynamics of employment in the context of global capitalism. In later discussions, people from worldwide garment worker unions and domestic worker groups spoke about pay theft, hazardous working conditions, and being left out of labour rights frameworks. These talks have led to the creation of coalitions across borders, which has strengthened calls for recognition of care work, a decent wage, and social security for informal sector workers, most of whom are women.

The WSF has served as a platform for feminist criticism and the conceptualisation of alternatives. Feminist researchers and activists have promoted discussions on solidarity economies, focussing on communal ownership, cooperative work forms, and redistribution as strategies for attaining gender-equitable development. The World March of Women, a worldwide feminist movement that has been involved in WSF proceedings, is an example of how feminist and anti-globalization movements may work together. This movement has linked efforts against violence against women, unsafe jobs, and environmental damage, showing that social, economic, and environmental justice are all intertwined. Even with these successes, there are still problems in transnational forums like the WSF. Discussions have arisen over the exclusion of feminist viewpoints within overarching anti-globalization discourses. Some feminist researchers have noted the enduring nature of androcentric leadership and the inclination to see gender as a subordinate issue. Additionally, rifts between Northern and Southern feminisms have emerged, as activists from the Global South advocate for enhanced acknowledgement of intersectional experiences influenced by colonialism, racism, caste, and migration. However, these disagreements have made feminist movements stronger and have led to the creation of separate feminist spaces within bigger global platforms (Oostendorp, 2009).

Campaigns Against Violence and Discrimination (e.g. #MeToo)

The development of globalisation has cultivated new domains of feminist activity that transcend national borders and unite women across many settings of injustice. In this new world, global feminist networks have been very important in fighting against violence and prejudice against women that is built into the system. These networks, made up of activists, researchers, survivors, and advocates, fight against gender-based oppression on a worldwide scale while also dealing with the specifics of each local situation. Campaigns against violence and discrimination, particularly movements like #MeToo, demonstrate how international solidarity can create collective agency and elevate marginalised voices across boundaries.

Gender-based violence continues to be a deeply rooted issue across the world. Whether it takes the form of sexual harassment at work, intimate partner violence at home, or systematic abuses in institutions, such violence shows and strengthens patriarchal control. Feminist academics, like Catharine MacKinnon and bell hooks, have examined sexual assault not just as isolated acts of injury but as systems that sustain gender inequalities and social dominance over women's bodies. The worldwide nature of this problem calls for remedies that go beyond the limits of individual countries or cultures (Custers, 2009).

The rise of the #MeToo movement in 2017 was a big step forward for global feminist activism. The trend began in the United States with the stories of women in the entertainment business, but it quickly spread to many other cultures. Women from a range of social, ethnic, and professional backgrounds took advantage of the chance to talk about their experiences of harassment, abuse, and compulsion. The campaign's viral nature helped raise awareness throughout the world about how common sexual assault is, breaking the silence that had long shielded the people who did it and pushed survivors to the edge (Oostendorp, 2009).

The #MeToo movement has been adapted in numerous cultures and countries, which shows how complicated and creative transnational feminist organising can be. In India, the movement manifested via prominent allegations against individuals in journalism, academics, and politics. Indian feminists contextualised these disclosures within extensive criticisms of entrenched patriarchal norms and institutional impunity. The campaign led to fresh discussions on laws against workplace harassment, which led to calls for tougher enforcement of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. In China, campaigners worked around stringent political situations to promote their own versions of #MeToo. Women used social media to report sexual misbehaviour at universities, NGOs, and media organisations, even while the government was censoring them and punishing them. The Chinese government cracked down on activists, but their bravery made people talk about gender-based violence in a culture where such talks are typically shut down. The larger campaign against femicide and gender violence in Latin America took in and reinterpreted #MeToo stories. Campaigns like "Ni Una Menos" in Argentina and Mexico connected sexual harassment to the rise in femicide by putting personal experiences in the context of broader criticisms of sexism, impunity, and government negligence. Latin American feminists combined their cries for justice for women who had been killed or went missing with their appeals for changes in culture and institutions. African feminist networks also took part in campaigns against violence that crossed borders, but they always put the focus on their local battles. In South Africa, movements like #AmINext started after the horrible killings of women and girls. These movements led to nationwide rallies calling for the government to take strong action. These campaigns linked local instances of gendered violence to global discussions, emphasising the need of unified resistance amid intensifying crises. The rise of worldwide feminist movements has created more opportunities for survivors to tell their stories and has challenged cultures of violence that are seen as normal. However, there are still many problems and conflicts. Critics have highlighted the propensity of prevailing narratives, especially from the Global North, to marginalise the voices of women of colour, indigenous women, migrant workers, and those from the Global South (Bhagwati, 2004). Academics like Chandra Talpade Mohanty have warned against making broad generalisations that ignore the variety of women's experiences and strengthen colonial power structures in feminist discussions. In response, global feminist networks have become more dedicated to intersectionality and inclusiveness in their methods and conversations. The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) and the International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP AP) are two groups that work hard to get feminists from different parts of the world and socioeconomic classes to talk to one other. These platforms make it easier for people to share methods, learn from one other, and support campaigns that fight all kinds of violence, such as sexual assault, economic marginalisation, racial discrimination, and LGBTQ+ persecution (Bussmann, 2009).

Feminist Collaborations in the South

The rise and strengthening of feminist alliances across countries in the South is a big step forward for global feminist movement (Oostendorp, 2009). In reaction to the shortcomings of prevailing Northern feminist frameworks, which frequently inadequately address the intricate realities encountered by women in the Global South, female activists and scholars from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean have established networks that embody collective experiences of colonisation, racial discrimination, economic exploitation, and patriarchal oppression. These partnerships go beyond national borders and create a kind of solidarity based on respect for one other's cultures and the understanding that our battles are connected. Colonialism has had a lasting effect on the social and economic circumstances in the Global South. In these areas, feminist movements are generally driven by the necessity to fight against neocolonial policies, neoliberal economic restructuring, and social and political marginalisation. Feminist partnerships in the South aim to tackle these problems together. DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era), which was started in 1984, is an example of this kind of network. DAWN was formed by feminists from Asia, Africa, and Latin America who saw that global economic policies made by international financial organisations hurt women in underdeveloped nations more than men. This network has been very important in bringing up problems of reproductive rights, structural

adjustment programs, and gender justice on the world stage. It makes sure that feminist viewpoints from the South are heard in global discussions (Custers, 2009).

In the same way, feminist networks in Latin America have built solidarity with their African and Asian counterparts via regional conferences and alliances across continents. The Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Encuentros, which started in 1981, are a place for women from different backgrounds to talk to each other, exchange ideas, and work together (Bussmann, 2009). These Encuentros are unique because they focus on themes like indigenous rights, land ownership, and cultural autonomy, as well as their dedication to fighting racism and capitalism. The insights produced in these environments connect with feminist organisations in other Southern settings encountering similar circumstances, hence promoting the establishment of cross-regional solidarities (Bhagwati, 2004). Another well-known example of South-South feminist cooperation is the World March of Women, which started in 2000. The movement is strong because it includes grassroots women's organisations from the Global South that are working to end poverty, violence, and free trade deals. Women from Brazil, India, Mozambique, the Philippines, and other countries have actively influenced the movement's agenda, making sure that issues like informal work, food sovereignty, and environmental justice are at the heart of global feminist discussions. Their leadership exemplifies the increasing acknowledgement that local struggles have global significance when expressed via transnational feminist perspectives.

CONCLUSION

In Africa, feminist collaborations such as those forged during the African Feminist Forums (held since 2006) provide additional evidence of South-South feminist solidarity. These gatherings create intellectual and activist spaces where African women address patriarchal traditions, state violence, and the residual effects of structural adjustment programs. Connections established in these forums have strengthened alliances with feminist movements across Asia and Latin America, particularly around issues such as reproductive justice and economic sovereignty. Theoretical interventions from feminist scholars in the South have further enriched these collaborations. Chandra Talpade Mohanty's critique of Western feminist scholarship, which tends to universalize women's experiences, and Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí's challenge to gender constructs rooted in Eurocentric epistemologies, exemplify intellectual engagements that transcend geographical divisions. These critical perspectives shape transnational dialogues and foster mutual learning processes that resist the homogenization of feminist narratives. South-South feminist collaborations not only facilitate knowledge exchange and political solidarity but also provide pragmatic support to women resisting oppressive structures in their local contexts. Through joint campaigns, resource-sharing, and coordinated actions, these networks offer models of collective resilience. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, feminist groups from the Global South coordinated efforts to address the surge in domestic violence, food insecurity, and economic precarity. Their transnational coordination reflected deep-rooted ties built over decades of shared struggle.

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