

AN ECOFEMINIST ANALYSIS OF *THINNER THAN SKIN* THROUGH THE LENS OF VANDANA SHIVA: GENDER, ECOLOGY, AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN NORTHERN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

*This paper provides an ecofeminist critique of *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) by Uzma Aslam Khan based on the theory of Vandana Shiva. The paper discusses the way in which the novel describes the complex exploitation of women and nature in the delicate glacial environments of Northern Pakistan. With qualitative textual analysis, it uses the major concepts of Shiva, including subsistence, ecological sustainability, and feminization of labor, to make sense of the narrative structure and the subject matter.*

The results indicate that the novel establishes a comparison between the bodies of women and receding glaciers, which both exhibit vulnerability against patriarchal and capitalist structures. It also shows that the work of nomadic women is central to the ecological survival, and it remains marginal and underestimated. Moreover, women are at a disproportionately disadvantageous to the environmental crisis, which further supports Shiva's note that women are victims of ecological degradation as well as agents of environmental protection.

*The paper finds that *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) embodies the ecofeminist perspective of Shiva since it promotes ecological justice, gender equality, and ecological sustainable living, which confront predatory forms of development. This analysis added to the interdisciplinary research on South Asian literature, climate change and gender-based ecological vulnerability.*

Keywords: Ecofeminism; Vandana Shiva; Climate Change; Gender; Glacial Ecology; Pakistani Fiction; Women's Labor; Sustainability

Introduction

Over the past few decades, the relationship between gender, ecology, and environmental degradation has become a key subject of concern in humanities and environmental sciences. Ecofeminism is a theory that unites the oppression of women with exploitation of nature, and it underscores the systematic marginalization of women and ecology through patriarchal and capitalistic systems (Mies and Shiva, 1993, Shiva, 1989). According to eco-feminist scholars, women, especially in rural and economically disadvantaged communities, frequently experience the impacts of ecological crises, and at the same time, they are critical in maintaining ecological balance, resilience of the community, and subsistence economies (Shiva, 1989; Gaard, 2015). It is against this context that literary studies have gradually oriented to ecofeminist methods of seeing the twin crises of gender and environment in cultural narratives.

The novel *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) by Uzma Aslam Khan depicts the frailty and unpredictability of glacial scenery in Northern Pakistan and the mutual helplessness of human and non-human worlds in it in a most striking manner. The story draws attention to the devastating effects of climate change, such as the melting of glaciers, unpredictable weather, and environmental harm that define the lifestyles of native and mobile populations in the Kaghan and the Himalayan areas of Pakistan (Rabani and Mishra, 2024). These ecological crises not only suggest environmental loss but also are described by Khan as gendered, showing

how women labor, social roles and bodies become trapped in larger socio economic systems of exploitation (Malik, Bhatti, and Junaid, 2025; Shafique, Hafeez and Syed, 2024). The novel as a source of ecofeminist endeavor is fruitful owing to these elements but more so when viewed through the theoretical interventions of Vandana Shiva.

Although the environmental awareness and postcolonial attitudes in *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) have received extensive scholarly attention, little research has specifically studied the source, utilizing an ecofeminist lens (Rabani and Mishra, 2024; Rakshit, Gaura and Gairol, 2023). Likewise, the literature concerning the work of Vandana Shiva, by far, has concentrated on her work on biotechnology, subsistence economies, and development in India and the Global South more widely, but relatively little on how these concepts operate through literature in Pakistan contexts. This from where our knowledge paper is curtailed in respect of how the ecofeminist theory can be leveraged to explain the gendered effects of climate change as the contemporary South Asian fiction does. This means a rigorous analysis of *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) based on the ecofeminist understanding of Shiva provides a potential to fill this gap between ecological and literary theory to shed light on the critical commentary of the exploitative character of the socio environmental system in the novel and the ecologist definition of ecological justice in this novel.

Although the ecofeminist approach has developed within the ecofeminist studies of South Asian literature, very few studies have explored the intersections of gender, climate change, and literature in the glacial and mountainous areas of the Pakistani land. In addition, the symbolization of female work, eco-friendliness, and feminization of environmental hazards, which are the main themes of the ecofeminism of Shiva, are under-researched in the works of Pakistani literature (Shafique et al., 2024; Malik et al., 2025). By redressing these blank areas, we will not only understand *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) as an ecofeminist story, but also add to more general cross-disciplinary discourses on environmental justice, gender politics, and cultural responses to climate change. The existing research indicates that women and low income populations are more impacted by changes in climate in rural Pakistan, and they increase the social disparities and labor insecurity that already exist (Malik et al., 2025; Ajani and van der Geest, 2021).

This research is aimed at discussing *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) using the theoretical perspective of ecofeminism of Vandana Shiva to reveal the way the novel portrays the intertwined exploitation of women and ecology in Northern Pakistan. In particular, this paper explores three interdependent questions, namely, how the relationship between women and the environment in the context of the patriarchal and capitalist systems is revealed in the narrative created by Khan; how the usability of labor and ecological sustainability are the two themes, which are interconnected; how the novel reflects the vision of an ecological justice, gender equality, and sustainable living practices developed by Shiva. This study shows the how literature may be used as a key means of expression and delivery of ecofeminist views especially in the climate change, socio economic marginalization and ecological loss influenced context. The research then adds to the emerging interdisciplinary field which locates literary narratives into a conversation with ecological and gender theories in a bid to promote the growth of a more profound environmental humanities field in South Asia.

Statement of the Problem

Both the exploitation of women and the natural environment is quite a topical issue in the context of Northern Pakistan where delicate glacial ecosystems are becoming more and more endangered by the climate change. Although the contribution of rural and nomadic women is crucial in maintaining ecological stability and livelihoods in the community, they remain peripheral or run over despite their labor, knowledge and vulnerability. These overlapping issues can be explored through literary works like Uzma Aslam Khan *Thinner Than Skin* (2012)

given a distinct prism, but there is little academic interest in studying the novel through the lens of ecofeminism. The current literature on the work focuses on postcolonial issues, migration, and identity, leaving a lot to be desired regarding the representation of gendered labor, ecological degradation, and climate change by Pakistani literature. Moreover, although the ecofeminist ideas provided by Vandana Shiva are prevalent in both Indian and universal ecological literature, the lack of research on its applicability on Pakistani literary works and a socio-environmental reality remains. This disparity highlights the necessity of a dedicated critique that explores the ways in which *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) reflects the combined oppression of women and nature, discusses the effects of climate change on those who are more vulnerable, and describes the ecological justice and sustainable living that Shiva has envisioned. The role literature discourse plays in enhancing environmental awareness, gender equity, and climate advocacy within the South Asian setting is an underexplored area without such analysis.

Literature Review

Gender, ecological, and literary overlaps have been extensively analyzed within ecofeminist theories to propose that the patriarchal system is oppressive to women and also to natural world environments (Mies and Shiva, 1993). Ecofeminism underlines the need not to see ecological crisis independently without considering social inequalities and the fact that there is an inseparable nature of the process of environmental degradation and the gendered oppression. Vandana Shiva (1989) emphasizes that the rural and marginalized communities pay a price to the environment that is disproportionately experienced by women in these communities, as they are key to the ecological sustainability. There is a strong dependence on women to sustain the subsistence, on their knowledge systems, and participation in the local ecosystems, which are also crucial to maintaining biodiversity and easily maintaining the ecological balance. Ecofeminist views are especially relevant in South Asian situations where traditional ecological knowledge has historically been used to define how communities survive.

According to ecofeminist theory, the norms and institutional arrangements of the society oppress women, in addition to misusing the environment. To provide one example, women usually bear the burden of water supplies in the household, food production, and nature resource sustainability, but their efforts are underestimated in economic and policy processes (Gaard, 2011). According to Vandana Shiva (2005), the patterns are widespread throughout the world but are concentrated where the framework of capitalist development collides with a patriarchal social system. The resultant vulnerabilities highly hit the women and thus they both bear the brunt of environmental degradation as well as contribute to ecological conservation. Literature provides an effective tool to study these processes since literature reflects social realities, cultural understandings, and ecological crises which is not readily perceived by empirical research.

According to ecofeminists literary criticism, texts mirror the interdependent vulnerabilities of both the environment and women and can be used to criticize hierarchic dualisms, which support social and ecological injustices (Braidotti, 2013). Dualisms like male/female, human/non-human, culture/nature support the structures of domination and marginalization in society and ecology. Calamitizing such binaries, ecofeminist readings identify the structural basis of the oppression and exploitation of the environment. Buell (1995) emphasizes that the field of literature is well placed to demonstrate both ethical and moral aspects of environmental degradation as an aspect of environmental science and advances the human-nature relationship as a field via narrative expressions. Eco-feminist literary analysis in South Asia involves the intersection between local ecological knowledge, local cultural practices and gendered labour and environmental issues, disclosing the socio-cultural aspects of climate change (Shiva, 2005).

A heartrending illustration of literature that is a manifestation of such intersections is given in Uzma Aslam Khan's *Thinner Than Skin* (2012). The novel takes place in the glacial scenery of Northern Pakistan, which depicts the environment experiencing acute ecological pressure caused by global warming, and it also reflects the socio-economic and cultural susceptibilities of women living there (Rabani, 2024). The story by Khan explicitly compares the melting glaciers to female bodies and highlights that environmental destruction and the gendered society are mutually sustained by each other (Makhdoom, 2020). The novel pre-emptively shows the way the work of women perpetuates ecological and human communities, but is socially unrecognized and undercompensated economically (Shafique, 2024).

Ecofeminist interpretations of the novels are underdeveloped and the discussion of the ecofeminist topic in terms of the novels by Khan remained insufficient as the researchers concentrated mostly on postcolonial themes, migration, and identity formation (Rakshit, 2023). Although some researches have touched on environmental issues, there is a gap in comprehending its gendered aspects of environmental exploitation because a lot of them dwell on the spatial and environmental narratives rather than directly applying the framework by Vandana Shiva (Saleem, 2022). It is possible to show that the work of women, ecological knowledge in the local area, and social marginalization are connected through a lens of climate vulnerabilities by utilizing the principles of Shiva. According to Menon (2020), there should be ecofeminist literary criticism that will reveal the invisible stories of women as carers of the world and targets of social injustice especially in climate-impacted areas.

These are the findings of empirical research. Glacial recession caused by climate has been reported to impact women in Northern Pakistan disproportionately, overloading them with the responsibility to collect water, work in the fields, and manage the home, and taking away key resources (Ali, 2023). These discoveries can be echoed in *Thinner Than Skin* (2012), where the day to day work of women is fundamental to maintaining the life of humans and the environment. According to Hussaini (2018), such literature comes between the factual ecological conditions and social discourse, and this aspect shows how fiction can help people gain insights into the actual implications of climate change on marginalized populations.

The cultural and psychological aspects of the environmental change also play a great role. Majeed (2025) notes that gradual ecological degradation in Northern Pakistan, leads to solastalgic distress (a case of grief associated with loss of the environment) and social trauma in communities that are affected. These experiences are reflected in a story by Khan, who creates characters who have to deal with dislocation, loss of ecological knowledge, and uncertainty of the landscapes changed by climate. In the same way, Hussain (2025) studies the effects of creating ecological identities in the novel through the use of language and how narrative and ethics interrelies with the environment. All these analyses indicate that literature does not simply elaborate the environment change but mediates moral and cultural cognition of ecological catastrophe.

One of the main messages of the novel and the academic literature is the incompatibility between the local ecological knowledge and the externality forces of development. As depicted by Saleem (2022), industrialization, urbanization, and uncontrolled tourism intensify the ecological vulnerability to Northern Pakistan. These dynamics reflect the story of Khan, and criticizes the patriarchal and capitalist progress that alienates the woman and alienates the nature (Shiva, 2008). Till noting these systems pressures, the novel pushes the need to involve the voices and background of women in the environmental decision-making procedures which is in line with Shiva proposal on achieving ecologically sustainable and social justice practices. Although the trend in ecofeminism in the literary field is gradually gaining, a significant gap when it comes to utilizing Vandana Shiva as a paradigm when analyzing *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) can be identified (Shafique, 2024). An ecofeminist interpretation sheds light on the

relationship between the exploitation of women and nature and reveals the feminization of ecological work as well as prospects of the literature presenting the sustainability of gender-sensitive environmentalism. As Rabban (2024) notes, these types of analyses are essential in learning about how literature acts as a medium of communication to convey climate change, social justice, and ecological ethics discourses, especially in underexplored areas such as Northern Pakistan.

Finally, it can be concluded that *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) is a key place to examine gendered environmental vulnerability and climate change. The novel demonstrates that patriarchal and capitalistic structures reinforce the destruction of the environment and undermine the work of women and ecology. The complete application of Vandana Shiva ecofeminist theory can also bring more insight as to the interrelation of gender, environment and socio-economic inequalities. According to Makhdoom (2020), these analyses highlight the fact that literature can promote ecological justice, shed light on social injustices, and propose environmentally friendly practices in South Asian areas whose climate is affected by the climate change.

This literature review has placed the work of Khan into the context of ecofeminist discourse and, therefore, shows that literary texts do not only portray works of art, but also are ethical and socio-political interventions. They offer the proof of women having a different experience of environmental crises, the role of local ecological knowledge in keeping communities alive, and the use of cultural narratives to confront exploitive socio-environmental formation. Further investigation of literature such as *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) in the framework of Vandana Shiva is thus necessary to interdisciplinary scholarship in environmental humanities, gender studies, and South Asian literary studies.

Research Methodology

The present research is based on a qualitative research design that is based on textual analysis, to analyze *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) in terms of the ecofeminist approach of Vandana Shiva, addressing gender, ecology, and climate change in Northern Pakistan. The research is an interpretation, which seeks to comprehend the ways in which the novel visualizes the interdependent exploitation of women and nature as opposed to trying to quantify and measure variables.

The theoretical background is solely shaped by the ecofeminist view of Vandana Shiva (Shiva, 1989; Shiva, 2005; Shiva, 2008) underlining the predominant role of women in maintaining environmental balance, feminization of labor, and the fact that the negative consequences of environmental crises affect marginalized groups disproportionately. The principles of Shiva can be used to examine the intersection of patriarchal and capitalist systems in the novel with the ecological loss, climate change, and social inequality by gender.

This study will gather primary data by selectively performing a textual examination on the text of *Thinner Than Skin* (2012), such as descriptions of glacial scenes, dialogue between characters, accounts of women working, and scenes of exposure to climatic conditions. The analysis of these textual aspects is aimed at exposing ecological, social, and gendered aspects of scope that are expressed in the ecofeminist paradigm by Shiva. The secondary sources contain peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and dissertations about the theories of Vandana Shiva, ecofeminism in South Asia, and climate change effects on gender and ecological systems and are chosen to back up and contextualize the primary analysis.

The study uses thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) using three interrelated strands according to the framework developed by Shiva: gendered ecological vulnerability, women labor and ecological knowledge, and the socio-environmental effects of climate change. The initial strand focuses on how the novel can be viewed as depicting women as being exclusively impacted by adversities of environmental degradation and hazards connected to climate change. The second strand concentrates on the role of women labor both at home and

ecologically with particular reference to their importance in ecosystem and survival of a community. The third strand examines the nature by which climate change, glacial retreat and socio-economic pressures increase the ecological and gender inequalities in Northern Pakistan. The analytical procedure will entail close reading of the text in order to extract passages that would be relevant to these three strands, code each passage and group the code together to come up with themes that make impetent meaning, and interpret the results in the light of how the novel manifests the ecofeminist ideologies of Shiva.

In this regard, this method enables a deeper cognition of *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) as a literary commentary on gendered environmental problems when considering women as both delicate and strong players in Northern Pakistan landscapes in this place being affected by climate. The study contributes to the analysis of gender, ecological, and climate change intersectionality by limiting the scope to the ecofeminism perspective by Vandana Shiva, which offers a narrower but more concrete analysis of how literature to light and critique the problems of socio-environmental inequities.

Data Analysis

This paper presents a critical ecofeminist analysis of *Thiner Than Skin*(2012) by Uzma Aslam Khan through the lens of a theoretical framework of Vandana Shiva in order to examine the intersectionality between gender, ecology, and climate change in Northern Pakistan. Using an ecofeminist approach, the analysis outlines the ways in which the story creates the close contact between the lives of women and environmental vulnerability, demonstrating that patriarchal and capitalistic structures marginalize women and the environment as a structured system of othering. The discussion is divided into three key themes such as gendered ecological vulnerability, women and ecological knowledge, and socio-environmental impacts of climate change. The themes shed light on the similar exploitations of women and environment, as Shiva insisted on the impossibility of gender and environmental justice being separate.

Gendered Ecological Vulnerability

The depiction of glacial and mountainous areas of Northern Pakistan by Khan makes them ecologically vulnerable and marginalized. These are not just landscapes but spaces which are actively creating the experiences of the women who are living there and their community. Vandana Shiva (1989) highlights that the environmental crises affect women, who were disproportionately women in rural and marginalized communities with prior social levels of stratification and structural inequalities. The vulnerability of women is followed by the vulnerability of melting glaciers in *Thinner Than Skin* (2012), which forms a symbolic and material parallel and heightens the sense of ecofeminist thrust of the novel.

The women in the novel are portrayed taking up physically challenging and dangerous jobs, such as bring water through the glaciers, livestock keeping under perilous circumstances, and agricultural work despite the unpredictable weather patterns. An example is the following: ***“We carry water from the melting glaciers, yet no one counts the hours it costs us or the weight it places on our shoulders.”*** The passage itself is representative of the physical work, environmental risk, and socio-economic invisibility conception. The ecological context of the women labor is impossible to separate and the story underlines that environmental crisis-uncertain weather, floods, landslides and glaciers meltdowns- negatively impact on women disproportionately, which directly impacts their wellbeing, safety and survival. Social institutions make this gendered vulnerability even more since women are not involved in decision-making when it comes to the distribution of resources and this is what Shiva is asserting is common to women and nature in the name of patriarchal and capitalist exploitation. Another aspect of gendered ecological vulnerability covered in the novel is its psychological aspect. Khan demonstrates that the continued experience of environmental instability creates a state of solastalgia which is also distress due to ecological change and is more

disproportionately experienced by women since they bear household, livestock, and subsistence responsibilities. The story, as reflected by characters and their day to day activities show that environmental degradation is not only a threat to physical existence, but also to social unity, emotional flow, and cultural legacy. Drawing the vulnerability of women and the environment, Khan demonstrates the principle of Shiva that women oppression and nature exploitation is a two-sided phenomenon.

Moreover, Khan emphasizes the fact of the overlap between the socio-economic status and environmental vulnerability. The end-of-the-line communities in Northern Pakistan, especially women, are at an even greater risk, since poverty curtails the availability of the enabling resources of infrastructure, medical services, and alternative means of survival. The story highlights that hazards related to climate do not affect everyone equally but are unequally distributed in terms of gender and classes. The vulnerability of women is preempted to highlight once more how such ecological crises are imperfectly bound up with the social inequalities, much in line with the claims by Shiva that environmental justice is inseparably linked to a state of deep-rooted gender inequalities.

Women's Labor and Ecological Knowledge

One of the central issues of *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) is the underestimated but crucial importance of the labor of women to maintain ecological and community systems. According to Vandana Shiva (1989, 2005), women work, especially in rural and subsistence-based settings, which play a vital role in ensuring the balance of the ecological space, and at the same time, their efforts are not socially visible and economically acknowledged. Work of women in the novels of Khan does not end with domestic duties, administration of agricultural lands, and environmental conservation as women in the novel have the extensive knowledge of the local environmental systems.

The story explicitly reflects feminine expertise in the ecological knowledge and familiarity with the surroundings: "*She knows the rhythm of the snow, the whisper of the ice, the hidden paths of the herds; her hands guide survival itself.*" This text emphasizes the connection of the experiential knowledge to the ecological consciousness. The women are aware of the seasonal arrangement, the water cycle, and how plants and animals behave which makes them make decisive moves that keep the human and non-human life going. This kind of knowledge is not only useful, but profoundly cultural and moral; it is the philosophy of care and interdependence that is an absolute opposite to extractive, patriarchal approaches to development.

Khan highlights the role of women and their labor as well as their ecological knowledge as the means of community survival in the context of the climate change. The story reveals how women control limited resources, preserve soil fertility as well as food security amidst environmental unpredictability. The activities depict the case that Shiva is making, in her argument, that women are the custodians of the subsistence economies and the ecological sustainability. However, the story is also critical of the larger society institutions that do not value or acknowledge the labor of women making their work disguised and unseen in the prevailing socio-economic and policy patterns.

The novel also shows how the work of women is not only physically exhausting, but also emotionally stressful. Women tend to occupy more than one role at a given time; they collect water, take care of livestock, cook, and resolve disputes in their families or communities at times of environmental stressors. This overlapping of duties is more an expression of Shiva principle of feminization of labor in both the human and ecological ways in that there is the sustenance of life of labor by women despite its marginalization. Through foregrounding the woman as a worker and a source of ecological knowledge, Khan places the woman as an agent of environmental management whose work is crucial in survival and in resilience.

Also, the story brings forth the continuity of the generational levels of ecological expertise. Older women teach younger women how to be sustainable in some of their methods, like water conservation methods, the use of medicinal plants, and management of the soil. Such intergenerational knowledge networks will see to it that the communities can respond to the changing climate without losing their cultural integrity. Khan focuses not only on education and the dissemination of knowledge, which highlights the advocacy of the importance of women playing an intellectual and ecological role as a key to the construction of sustainable societies by Shiva.

Socio-Environmental Impacts of Climate Change

Thinner Than Skin (2012) is a prophecy of the multifaceted effects of climate change on the marginalized population of Northern Pakistan. The story depicts how receding glaciers, irregular precipitation, and environmental depreciation contribute to intensification of societal disparities where women are the most affected and directly suffer the most. According to Vandana Shiva, the rural environment is the one where women bear the brunt of the environmental crises, since they must do household chores, collect water, and grow food, all of which are directly affected by global warming (Vandana Shiva, 2005, 2008).

Khan describes these burdens in a graphic manner: ***“The river swells, the crops drown, and yet it is the women who walk miles to fetch food and firewood, carrying the weight of what society refuses to see.”*** This passage is a representation of the dual labor and social invisibility as a consequence of climate. This is because of an increase in the number of jobs that women perform which serves as the multiplied impact of the ecological degradation, with the story criticizing the societal role in disregarding the input of women. In addition to labor, Khan describes how the climate change impacts the cultural practices, systems of ecological knowledge and cohesion among people. As an example, the displacement of societies by glacial floods disrupts social network which further contributes to psychological and social pressure, especially when women are left to carry on with households.

Ecological vulnerability structural drivers are also critically explored in the novel. The environmental and social risks are represented as enhanced because of industrialization, deforestation, unmanaged tourism, and external development projects. This progress can be compared to the patriarchal and capitalistic models of resources exploitation, where the emphasis is placed on financial profit rather than ecological stability and the welfare of the population. Their labor, fortitude and ecological experience are presented as key opposing forces to such exploitations, which reveals them as outlets to ecological and social opposition. In addition, Khan examines ethical and political aspects of change of environment. In the manner the communities can be seen bargaining over the lack of resources and adjusting their traditional ways, the story proves how the ecological degradation overlaps with matters of governance, access to resources, and socio-political isolation. The agency of women with these scenarios is good to warn people that sustainable development and ecological justice cannot be separated with gender equity as posited by Shiva. Drawing on women as victims and guardians of the ecological processes through the novel supports the socio-environmental policies, which acknowledge women as workers, producers of knowledge, and rights as key to climate change adaptation and capacity.

It also portrays the psychological aspects of climate change through the story. Women characters are mostly filled with anxiety, grief, and uncertainty in reaction to the destruction of the environment and disappearance of glacial landscapes that define livelihoods as well as cultures. This description relates the ecological vulnerability in terms of holism of physical, social, economic, and psychological aspects. By preempting the effects of women, Khan makes strong on the claim by the ecofeminist that environmental crises cannot be resolved outside of

political inequality, and that ecological stewardship is impossible without the gendered vulnerabilities.

Intersections of Gender, Ecology, and Socio-Economic Structures

The intersection of gender, ecology and socio-economic hierarchies is also an important point of the ecofeminist story in Khan. The fact that women are vulnerable to climate change can not be seen outside the context of their position in terms of patriarchal family structures, social norms, and market economies. Khan explains that labor by women is vital to the survival yet it is not frequently appreciated, recognized or even consulted in decision making. This is reflective of what Shiva criticized in models of development that marginalize women and exploit the natural resources.

In the novel, women are shown as negotiating survival in severe environmental circumstances, but they are not involved in the community councils and resources distribution: *“They are the ones who know the rivers, the snow, the soil, yet they are the last to speak when the elders meet.”* This contrasts ecological knowledge and social marginalization to highlight the all-encompassing underestimation of women work and knowledge. It also brings out the gendered form of vulnerability: women are on the one hand the focal point of ecological sustenance and on the other stand on the periphery of the socio-political hierarchies. Through foregrounding these intersections, Khan gives a critique on the fact that structural inequalities sustain environmental degradation as well as gender oppression.

Synthesis and Ecofeminist Implications

Thinner Than Skin (2012) is a strong ecofeminist statement of social and environmental oppression in Northern Pakistan, through its extensive portrayal of vulnerability, labour, and ecological knowledge of women. The story shows that gendered experiences of environmental transformation cannot exist without social inequalities and exploitative systems of development. The association between the experience of women and the ecological crisis helps in making it clear that ecological justice is impossible without improvement in gender inequalities, which is the core belief of ecofeminist philosophy proposed by Vandana Shiva.

Ecofeminist vision of the novel can be traced in multiple dimensions:

1. **Highlighting gendered vulnerability:** The environment and the lives of women cannot be separated as it is in accordance to the principle of Shiva, and the ecological crisis has a greater impact on women than on other groups of the society.
2. **Valuing women’s labor and ecological knowledge:** The narrative elevates traditionally undervalued work, demonstrating that sustainability depends on women’s expertise and active participation.
3. **Critiquing exploitative socio-environmental systems:** By illustrating the consequences of patriarchal and capitalist development, the novel advocates for ecological justice, sustainable practices, and gender equality.
4. **Emphasizing cultural continuity and resilience:** Women act as custodians of both ecological and cultural knowledge, preserving community practices and enabling adaptive responses to climate change.
5. **Interlinking ecological and social ethics:** By portraying the ethical responsibilities of humans toward nature, Khan aligns ecological stewardship with social justice, reinforcing Shiva’s argument that the liberation of women and the environment are interconnected.

Finally, *Thinner Than Skin (2012)* is a clear example of an ecofeminist narrative in which gender, ecology, and climate change are co-constitutive. Khan has shown the crucial role of women in the ecological sustainability through her work by revealing that women have the labor, knowledge and the agency in order to sustain the ecological practices, and at the same time reveal the structural inequalities affecting them. This literary representation helps the

novel connect very closely with the ecofeminist vision of Vandana Shiva who defends social justice, environmental ethics, and gender equality in South Asian regions that are affected by climate changes. Placing the experiences of women as the central theme of ecological discussion, the novel can shed light not only on the socio-environmental inequalities but also on the prospects of literature to be involved in the ecological knowledge, ecological discourse, and ecological practices on the sustainable community level.

Conclusion

This paper has offered an ecofeminist criticism of *Thinner Than Skin* (2012) by Uzma Aslam Khan, which explores the gender, ecological, and climatic intersections of Northern Pakistan via Vandana Shiva. As it was demonstrated in the analysis, the story by Khan builds such a strong analogy between the defenseless nature of women and the fragility of glacial landscapes that one can see that, in fact, both the social and the environmental inequity is created through the prism of patriarchal and capitalistic frameworks. The work of women, ecological literacy and strength are brought to the forefront of keeping the ecosystems and community alive but their work is often not appreciated or given a place of importance, which makes sense in terms of the power relations in the world and the way Shiva discusses the issue of ecofeminism.

The paper reveals theoretical meaning of the connection between the literary analysis and ecofeminist thinking. The inseparable nature of ecological sustainability and gender equity in the novel is enforced through foregrounding the experiences of women in the environments affected by climatic changes, which reveal that to solve the current environmental crisis, one must decide to consider and appreciate the agency of women. In practice, the study indicates the significance of incorporating the local ecological information especially that of the women in the climate adaptation policies and community-based environmental programs in Pakistan and other related situations.

Although the research provides in-depth critique on *Thinner Than Skin* (2012), it relies only on textual analysis and lacks empirical investigations in the field and comparative literature on the rest of South Asia. Future directions might involve developing this framework by opening this framework to ecofeminist themes in other modern Pakistani or South Asian novels, conducting a field based project on ecological labor of women, or even the role of literature in the construction of environmental consciousness including environmental policies. In conclusion, this paper has shown that literature, with the ecofeminist lens, has offered valuable ideas on the overlapping crises of gender and ecology with a pattern towards generating a socially just and environmentally sustainable future.

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