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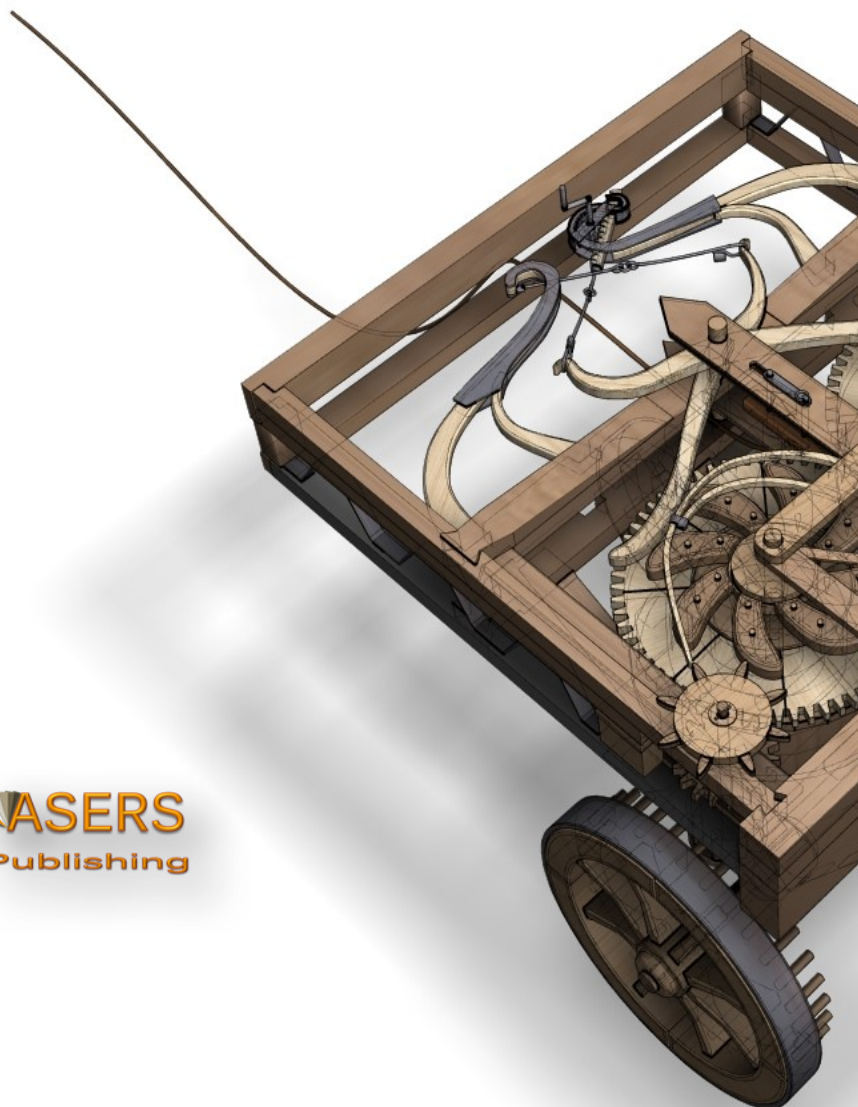
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Ecofeminism as a Movement: Choosing between Economics and Nature Protection

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Abstract: *This research aims to discuss the direction of the ecofeminist movement in Indonesia after the New Order. The world ecofeminist movement is often criticized because it is considered to obscure the essential spirit of feminism in its efforts to protect nature. However, in Indonesia, it is widely praised for its success in protecting wildlife from potential damage. This research uses ecofeminism theory and resource mobilization theory to examine the side of women's struggle to preserve nature. In order to identify research gaps and uncharted region for further investigation, this study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). There are three stages involved in SLR: planning, conducting, and reporting. The results of this research are that there is strengthening within the organization of the ecofeminist movement when natural disasters and other potential natural damage occur, thus giving rise to collective awareness about the importance of women participating in protecting nature. This research concludes that the ecofeminist movement opens up new political opportunities for women to be empowered and prosperous and protect wildlife.*

Keywords: ecofeminisme; nature protection; social movement; welfare.

JEL Classification: Q56; Q57; O15; P16; J16; R11.

Introduction

The ecofeminist movement has undergone a lot of criticism because it obscures the essential spirit of feminism (McKenna 1998; Buckingham 2004; G. Gaard 2010). However, is this true? This article attempts to provide a big picture of women and the nature protection movement, which, although full of debate, has been carried out in several different locations and has succeeded in reducing the high number of natural disasters that occur. The women in the ecofeminism movement in this article are not trapped in a patriarchal space that emphasizes the maternal vision when dealing with nature and associates women's concern for nature with the 'nature' of a mother who nurtures, cares for and cares for nature like caring for a family. Still, this ecofeminism movement emerged because of women's political awareness to maintain and protect nature for the welfare and sustainability of nature (Swain and Swain 2004).

With the ultimate goal of constructing new gender relations between humans and nature as well as between women and men, ecofeminism can be defined as a link between feminism and the radical ecological movement (Giele and Threlfall 1997). When ecofeminism is combined with a social movement, it can effect social change (Nash 1992; Warren 2002) and empower women to defend their own identities, families, and lives. However, one thing is for sure: ecofeminism can provide women both material and non-material political chances. Increasing income, welfare, and employment opportunities is the ecofeminist movement's ultimate material goal in order to secure future generations (McMahon 1997; Barry 1998; Hajad 2020). Women's strong

desire to preserve the environment and leave a protected environment for their children and grandkids can lead to non-material political prospects.

The ecofeminism movement is a women's movement needed to save the earth (Clarke 2001). The fundamental work of this movement, according to Clarke (2003) inspired by Aldo Leopold's essay 'Land Ethics' (1949) about the environment and gave birth to the modern nature conservation movement and illustrates how this issue can be seen through the framework of women's concern for nature. Ecofeminism emphasises the call to end oppression and free nature from exploitation. Ecofeminism is a theory that emerged in 1974 and made women the main actors in protecting nature and protesting against environmental destruction. In fact, a lot of perspectives perceive women and environment as closely related due to their reproductive roles, biological status, and experiences with prejudice (Salleh and O'Connor 1991; Oksala 2018). Consequently, the goal of ecofeminism, both conceptually and practically, is to do away with the patriarchal method of problem-solving and potential environmental deterioration (Salleh 1996).

This movement experienced pros and cons in its emergence. Pro groups see eco-feminism as a breakthrough because it can accommodate all groups, especially women, in protecting nature. It has been proven that the eco-feminism movement has been successful in many places, such as the Love Canal Movement in the United States, the Chipko Movement in India, the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, and Women and Trees Bangladesh. These four movements prove that the women's movement to protect the environment is present and trying to change the situation. Meanwhile, opposing groups see that the idea of the ecofeminist movement is contradictory to the position of men who dominate nature, thus creating an ecological crisis in most parts of the world (G. Gaard 2010).

These two significant arguments about the ecofeminist movement make the study of ecofeminism with a social movement framework even more attractive (Eschle 2018). Ecofeminism, a women's movement to overcome ecological problems, can be an effort to find non-violent solutions through political work (Iversen, T., Rosenbluth, F. M., and Rosenbluth 2010). Several previous studies emphasize ecofeminism on women's collective concern, which originates from internal awareness about the importance of maintaining a balance between humans and nature. Many academics say ecofeminism is a social movement (Steuter 1992). However, Howell (1988) sees that it is too early to see ecofeminism as a movement and sees ecofeminism as still limited to philosophy of thought. However, this article sees that ecofeminism still has the opportunity to be seen as a women's movement to fight for economic and natural conditions.

Even though it is considered a new view, ecofeminism has been around for a long time in Indonesian society because it is a discourse related to the relationship between women and nature which seeks to create and preserve nature and the environment based on femininity or women (Singh 2023). Examples of the practice of ecofeminist discourse in Indonesian society can be seen from the women's movement that occurred in Central Java called 'Kartini Kendeng' in the form of conflict and the 'Female Ranger Damaran Baru' in the form of a protected forest protection movement. This research examines the women's movement through the lens of ecofeminism in fighting deforestation and wildlife poaching in Central Java Province and Aceh Province.

1. Literature Review

The critical ecofeminism movement was created by Plumwood and expanded by Gaard (2017), which was formed because of the connection between the feminist and environmental movements. The critical ecofeminism movement aims to theorize and realize the formation of relationships between humans and non-humans based on care while simultaneously trying to question every potential cause of marginalization and injustice (Li and Li 2023). Furthermore, Gaard (2017) developed the definition and goals of the ecofeminist movement to be broader, which is not only related to the conceptual basis in the form of symptoms and structures of oppression but also related to how domination is regulated so that there is no domination of humans over nature, domination of men over women, and culture over nature so that structures of oppression can be overcome (Gaard, 2011).

Ecofeminism provides a theoretical path to understanding the phenomenon of oppression by emphasizing a materialist approach. Agrawal (2001) said that the source of domination in pressure practice is economic gain and political power (Agarwal, 2001). This materialistic structure of oppression is widely understood to be the basis of the ecofeminist movement. Here, we see a research gap that the author wants to convey to readers: An ecofeminist movement is not based on material things but on women's concern for environmental conditions. Women and nature have a dynamic intra- and inter-species relationship that exceeds the criticism of previous research, which sees women as green motherhood who are accepted for caring about nature.

Therefore, this research considers it essential for the ecofeminist movement to be seen through an actor approach. In this approach, the ecofeminist movement emerged because of differences in costs and benefits

obtained by actors, especially costs and benefits directly related to environmental change (Wong *et al.* 2023). Thus, some parties benefit and suffer losses in utilizing the environment and nature, although the basis is not always material. Often, this unequal distribution of costs and benefits ultimately leads to the creation of socio-economic inequality, which also has political implications in the form of changes in power in the relationship between one actor and another (Bachev 2023).

The actor approach assumes that there are always actors who have power over nature, resulting in unequal and fair economic and social distribution, giving rise to many new marginal groups. Political ecologists have long observed that there is always an impact of environmental change on humans due to the unequal distribution of benefits, leaving marginalized groups of women at an even more significant disadvantage. Research by Jonathan (2021), Nyandiko (2020), Bernard (1985), Hess (2022), (2018), and Shower (1989) with an African community background states that the causes of environmental damage, such as erosion and soil damage, always place local farmers as actors who cause natural damage must therefore be responsible for land damage. The colonial government used this claim to justify taxes or fines as "land conservation" for farmers.

Similar conditions also occur today, even though the colonialists no longer colonized Indonesia. However, Indonesia's nature is still controlled by companies that control the land, and local community groups are powerless because of their limited knowledge. Knowledge about humans and the environment has been produced, intervened in, and bound by government power relations and then lent to companies. So it is not surprising that women as a group of subordinate and marginalized communities always lose in the battle for knowledge reproduction and environmental intervention when dealing with developed countries, and at one point strengthen economic and social injustice towards subordinate communities (Bryan, 2016). The reproduction of knowledge in transformative ecofeminism studied by Shiva (2014) illustrates how to minimize unequal power relations by recognizing and explicitly recognizing the interconnections between all environmental systems and emphasizing the diversity of women's experiences to reject domination (Garcia *et al.* 2022).

Similar conditions also occur today, even though colonialists no longer colonize Indonesia. Still, Indonesia's nature is controlled by companies that have control over the land, and local community groups are helpless because of their limited knowledge. Learning has been produced, intervened in, and bound by government power relations and then lent to companies. So, it is not surprising that women, as a subordinate and marginalized group of people, always lose in the battle of knowledge reproduction and environmental intervention when dealing with developed countries, and at one point, strengthen economic and social injustice against subordinate people (Bryan 2016).

Transformative ecofeminism offers a holistic, pluralistic and inclusive perspective, enabling men and women to build equal relationships, prevent violence, oppose war and protect the natural environment in which they live. Ecofeminism, like multicultural and global feminism, is a flow of feminism that sees various forms of oppression against humans and intimidation carried out by humans against non-humans, such as nature. Because women are always associated with nature, environmental discussions become important in feminist discourse. However, at this level, ecofeminists do not want to return women to natural arguments but instead see it as a feminist consciousness, namely seeing the existence of oppressive relations in environmental discourse (Purdy and Warren 1999).

Shiva in Gaard (1996) explains that people from third-world countries (in this case, women) are actively involved in movements to save the environment and do not receive many positive things. On the contrary, currently, local communities, poor groups, and women who are victims of environmental damage must bear a more significant burden of suffering and are the groups who are blamed (blamed the victims). This study found that several ecofeminist movements carried out by women's groups in Indonesia still have yet to receive positive appreciation from the state and society, no matter how great women's struggle to protect nature. However, even without appreciation, great women such as women in Central Java and Aceh as nature protection actors still carry out their duties in protecting the environment in their places.

2. Research Methodology

In order to identify research gaps and uncharted region for further investigation, this study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and extra information gleaned during interviews. According to Kitchenham (2009), there are three stages involved in SLR: planning, conducting, and reporting. First step is planning. Before beginning the actual research process, the researcher plans by identifying the necessary steps for performing a literature study and fixing them. In other words, the researcher first ascertains the basic substance of a scientific article before reading it, and then goes on to formulate the research question that serves as the foundation for a literature review. Second step is conducting. Looking for literature materials is the conducting stage's task.

comprises the following steps: locating research, picking primary research, gaining access to high-quality literature, extracting data, monitoring it continuously, and synthesizing it. The "searching" media used in this study came from a number of indexers, including Wiley, Science Direct and Scopus.

Third step is reporting. The next step in the reporting process is creating well-organized literary materials. After being sorted through hundreds of articles, they are reduced to tens, then dozens, which are prepared for reading and analysis. Currently, the researcher searches databases using online indexers to gather hundreds of data points. The papers should then be sorted by abstract, title, and keyword review until only dozens of them remain for a thorough study.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Research Results

Ecofeminist Movement in Indonesia

Ecofeminism as a movement and idea is still relatively new in Indonesia, so few examples show a women's movement in saving nature. As a result, the women's movement in Indonesia often needs a stronger foundation in society, so it quickly experiences fragmentation into two groups in the field. The first group is subject to state co-optation through efforts to weaken women's ability to represent the entire scope of women's interests (Blackburn 2004). The second group, in the form of environmental and agrarian movement groups, are not united in the struggle, so cross-group partnerships in building environmental movements have not been consistently carried out, even though environmental issues are increasingly being advocated (Peluso, Afiff, and Rachman 2008). These two examples show that the ecological movement carried out by women is not yet excellent in the agenda contestation at the national level and could threaten the nature conservation agenda in the future (Coric 2014; Liu, Anser, and Zaman 2021).

Central Java Ecofeminism

One example of the women's movement in fighting for the sustainability of nature and the environment is women in Kendeng, Central Java. The Kendeng area is famous for its natural wealth of limestone, the primary raw material for cement products, stretching across the North Kendeng Mountains. However, this natural wealth later became a source of conflict when cement companies wanted to explore the area. The women in this area reject the exploitation plans carried out by PT. Semen Gresik established pasta factories in 2005 in four sub-districts, including Sukolilo, Kayen, Gabus, and Margorejo, divided into fourteen villages with a total land area of 1,350 hectares (Hadi *et al.* 2020).

The emergence of a cement factory in the Kendeng mountains cannot be separated from the Central Java Provincial government's interest in getting trillions of rupiah in investment into Central Java. This investment will stimulate the economy because it can absorb thousands of workers and encourage regional economic growth (Asrawijaya and Hudayana 2021). Several female farmers in Kendeng who are nicknamed "Kartini Kendeng" consistently voice their rejection of the existence of PT. Semen Indonesia because its mining activities are considered to hurt the surrounding environment (Sturgeon 1999; Weiss and Moskop 2020). The impact can be massive, ranging from agricultural land and air pollution to water sources. Kartini Kendeng has voiced this rejection since 2014 when PT. Semen Indonesia still plans to build a factory in Rembang. Figure 1. Kartini Kendeng Central Java can be seen below.

Figure 1. Women 'Kartini' Kendeng Central Java



Source: (BBC News Indonesia 2017)

The ecofeminist movement 'Kartini' Kendeng in Central Java is a result of their conviction that the construction of a cement factory will disturb the groundwater basin, so interfering with their farming activities (Hari 2023). In addition, the operation of a cement mill will reduce the amount of area available for habitation by the locals and result in major social issues down the road. The Central Java Provincial administration wants to promote regional economic growth by building a cement factory, hence this goes against their goals. In response, Kartini women in this movement fought back by adopting the same philosophies as their colleagues, and they were aided by the media and civil society organizations (Susilo and Kodir 2019). They even used cement to cast their feet for a number of theatrical performances in front of Jakarta's Merdeka Palace. It will connect their lives together as a semiotic emblem of resistance against the cement mill. Women take tremendous measures to safeguard themselves and their family, and they place a high value on nature, particularly the groundwater basin area. The Kendeng women's group practices environmental protection based on beliefs and practices in an attempt to live (Cochrane 2007).

The emergence of factories that have the potential to destroy nature has given rise to an ecofeminist movement from women (Mellor 1992; McKenna 1998; Greta Gaard 1996; Salleh 2003; Lahar 1991), which shows three essential things, namely: (1) the issue of women and the environment can be a justification for the women's movement against large corporations, (2) urgent situations often give birth to women as leaders. Who can disrupt, raise awareness and mobilize other women to unite, and (3) show women's unique resistance to the cement industry and attract public attention. The emergence of the Kendeng women's movement, based on ecofeminist thinking, cannot be separated from women's anxiety about ecologically destructive practices which lead to gender injustice and can deconstruct the ecological degradation carried out and dominated by men towards nature through actions that are classified as extreme, such as immersing their feet. Cement symbolizes women's resistance to the construction of a cement factory.

Aceh Ecofeminism

One of the ecofeminist movements in Aceh is the Women's Ranger Movement in Damaran Baru, Bener Meriah Regency. This female ranger is tasked with guarding forest areas at an altitude of 1.000-2.500 meters above sea level and managing 251 hectares of protected forest area after obtaining a management permit from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK). The female ranger is also tasked with guarding the Wih Gile River watershed, the source of springs for several villages. The Women's Ranger Movement led by SM was driven by flash floods that often hit the villages yearly. One of the major disasters occurred in 2015, namely a flood and landslide that washed away 11 houses, gardens and residents' land. Apart from protecting the forest, the Female Ranger also conducts nursery and planting activities for several types of trees that can withstand landslides and inventory fauna and flora in protected forest areas. Figure 2. Female Ranger Damaran Baru Aceh can be seen below.

Figure 2. Female Ranger Damaran Baru Aceh



Source: (BBC News Indonesia 2020)

This women's movement, called the Female Ranger, started in 2017. In Damaran Baru, there has been a large-scale movement of people who care about the environment, and they voluntarily formed a group of forest guards totalling 40 people called rangers, 23 of whom are middle-aged women with alternating climbing schedule. They climbed mountains, spent the night in the forest, and determined forest areas that needed to be

protected by patrolling for five nights before finally descending the hill and being replaced by another team of forest guards. It is not uncommon for them to encounter lying loggers who steal forest trees or lying hunters who capture animals that live in the protected forest areas they cover, such as gibbons, clouded leopards and sun bears. The stability of the coffee business in Bener Meriah and Central Aceh Regencies due to the increase in the price of Gayo coffee also has an impact on the forest monitoring process because they have to deal with relatives or relatives who want to open coffee plantations in protected forest areas even though there are forest protection regulations (Najmuddin *et al.* 2022).

The ecofeminist movement in Aceh does not aim to fight corporations but to fight people's habit of destroying forests. Therefore, the Female Rangers try to protect, preserve and monitor the natural sustainability of the village by deploying a group of forest guards called rangers to prevent forest encroachment and wood theft and directing the forest for plantation areas is one of the activities carried out. Apart from that, they also carry out reforestation by planting new trees in forest areas. This original initiative of the Damaran Baru community received full support from the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Burni Telong, the Forest, Nature and Environment NGO (HAKA) Aceh, and the Ministry of the Environment. In interview with the village head of Damaran Baru, IR:

"The formation of female rangers in the Central Aceh region was due to mothers' awareness of the importance of protecting nature. Female rangers have been around since 2015, the aim is to prevent forest encroachment on the mountains," (IR, Interviewed 20th August 2023).

The impact of the 2015 flash flood made women aware of creating a Damaran Baru forest protection task force immediately. Before their arrival, forest encroachment in the forest area, which the Gile River crosses, was very high and dangerous for their location. The movement they carried out at first was patrolling without any special knowledge about preventing forest encroachment. However, these female Rangers have been accompanied and coached by the Aceh Forest, Nature and Environment Foundation (HAKA) until they are adept at exploring and recording flora and fauna and monitoring and preventing forest encroachment.

The head of the Female Rangers, SM, said that patrolling was a form of their responsibility to protect biodiversity sources by reforesting damaged forests along river flows. Female rangers, as part of the ecofeminist movement, aim to protect forests, springs and other sources of life directly and sustainably. In an interview with SM: "Up until now, it has appeared like the job of men to safeguard trees. However, it is what we, the Damaran Baru Aceh Female Rangers, do. Despite the fact that in order to access deeper areas of the forest, we still use male patrol squads." (SM, August 15th, 2023 Interview). They must traverse steep, harsh, and rocky terrain as part of their forest protection duties, which include forest patrols in the Gunung Leuser National Park Ecosystem Area. They acknowledge, nevertheless, that they are earnest in their desire to spare their community from tragedy so that their children and grandkids won't have to go through similar experiences as they had, such as landslides and flash floods.

3.2 Discussions

Resource Mobilization and the Opening of Political Opportunities

The resource mobilisation carried out in the ecofeminist movement can be seen through the resource mobilisation theory. A movement needs resources to gain political opportunities; even McCarthy-Zald (1977) actors in the movement greatly determine the potential and patterns of mobilisation shown in the form of strategies (Goldstone 1980) played by the women's movement in protecting nature even though sometimes it has to conflict with the government, as happened in Kendeng, Central Java (Giugni 2009) so that to be successful, political alliances with civil society and the mass media are needed (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993). If the resources of the ecofeminist movement are mobilised, they will be very effective in developing political opportunities for its members. Resources in the ecofeminist movement can be material and non-material resources. Material resources include money, labour, technology, means of communication, mass media, and organisations. Meanwhile, non-material resources in the ecofeminist movement include legitimacy, loyalty, social relationships, networks, personal connections, public attention, authority, moral commitment, and solidarity (Fuchs, 2006).

The resource mobilisation carried out by Kartini Kendeng Central Java and Female Ranger Damaran Baru Aceh stems from their character of being close to and dependent on nature. It has implications for the results of social movements that can be seen in many mass media. They implement at least five main principles during resource mobilisation actions (Jenkins 1983): (1) The actions of members of the ecofeminist movement are rational. (2) Movements arise because there is an imbalance of power against the state, corporations or

fellow civil society, which sometimes takes the form of a conflict of interest. (3) Power imbalances ultimately lead to resource and organisational mobilisation. (4) A formally structured ecofeminist movement such as the Aceh Women's Ranger is more effective in mobilising resources and achieving change goals than the informal movement carried out by Kartini Kendeng, Central Java. (5) However, the success or failure of the ecofeminist movement is greatly influenced by the movement's strategy and the surrounding political climate (Foster 2021).

Resource mobilization within the ecofeminist movement is essential in ideas about women because it can open up many political opportunities. Giele and Threlfall (1997) proposed the need for politicization in the ecofeminist movement so that women's moral interests do not experience privatization, localization and narrowness so that it can positively impact politics. Apart from that, the involvement of women in the ecofeminist movement, as stated by Estévez-Saá (2018) can connect the domestic space with the public space through feminist politics. The women's ecofeminist movement in various regions in Indonesia, apart from containing the ideas of female caring and motherhood, which are very typical of feminist theory, also needs to be connected to the theory of justice so that the changes desired by ecofeminism can occur through political actions at the grassroots level. Lahar (1991) strengthens this argument by emphasizing the connectedness and responsibility aspects of women as movement actors to create an informative and generative ecofeminist movement.

Ecofeminism also contributes a framework regarding the interplay between social and environmental problems through the political empowerment of women carried out by various communities. Ecofeminism has so far been interpreted narrowly as a subordination of women in the form of resistance to oppression, domination, hegemony, injustice and violence against women. It can be interpreted more broadly as a relationship between men and women that is characterized by injustice and oppression, with the victims mostly being women. Thus, feminism seeks to identify the causes of injustice, try to overcome them and focus on the subordination of the natural environment (ecosystem) to human interests. Ecofeminism that occurs in Indonesia aims to look at social, cultural and structural problems in the form of extreme domination in relations between groups and the relationship between humans and their natural environment, which results in much suffering for humans.

Conclusions and Further Research

This research concludes that the ecofeminist movement opens up new political opportunities for women to be empowered and prosperous and protect nature. Through the ecofeminist movement in Indonesia, women can consolidate and mobilize the resources of other women, thereby raising collective awareness about the importance of women participating in protecting nature. In the end, the ecofeminist movement opened up wider political opportunities for women to be empowered and prosperous and protect wildlife. If an ecofeminist movement is able to successfully mobilize resources, it can attain political success in accomplishing its material and non-material aims, as well as achieving justice for both humans and environment such as the ecofeminist movements occurring in Aceh and Central Java.

Credit Authorship Contribution Statement

Vellayati Hajad: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Data curation, Validation, Writing – review and editing.

Ikhsan Ikhsan: Conceptualization, Methodology, Project administration, Writing – review and editing

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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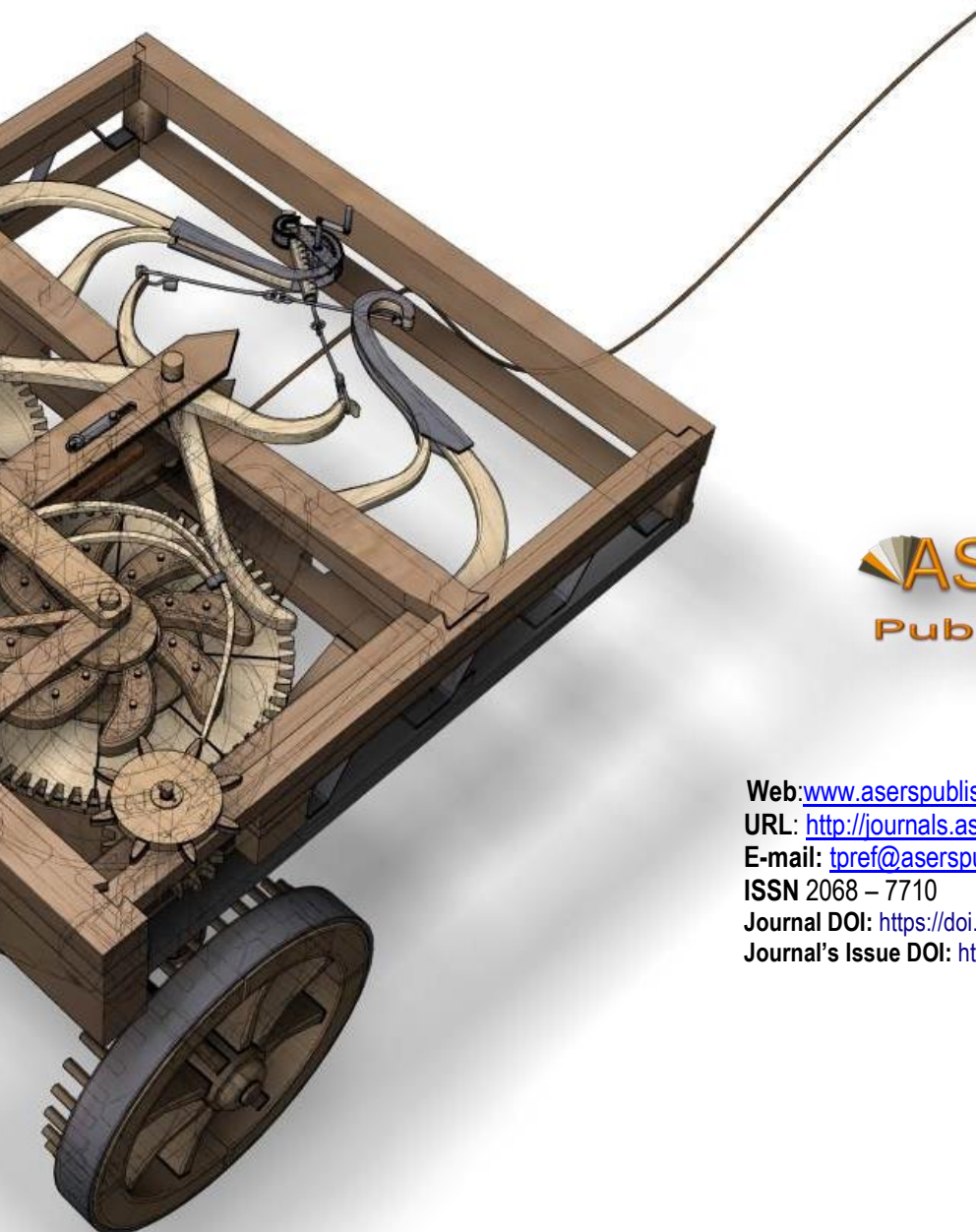
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