

Women and Nature: Exploring the Experiences of Female Environmental Activists through Ecofeminist Theory

Perempuan, dan Alam: Mengkaji Pengalaman Aktivis Lingkungan Perempuan dari Perspektif Teori Ekofeminisme

Maimunah*, Zaina Safarina, Risma Putri, Zakiah Khairunnisa, Hanida, & Khalisah Ariyani

Psychology, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, 70714, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Patriarchal societies often associate women with nature through perceived shared characteristics and place both in subordinate social positions. This dynamic has contributed to the development of ecofeminism, a framework that connects gender equality with ecological justice. The present study explores the experiences of female environmental activists from an ecofeminist perspective. The study employed a qualitative phenomenological design. Two female activists from an environmental organization participated in the study. Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants who were actively engaged in environmental conservation. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and were analyzed thematically through three stages of coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The findings show that participants' personal backgrounds, motivations, and interactions within their communities shaped their views on women's roles in environmental movements. The findings also show that women contributed substantially to environmental conservation through everyday practices and community-based initiatives. These results highlight the importance of strengthening women's participation in environmental movements. The study provides implications for environmental organizations and policymakers to integrate gender perspectives into environmental conservation programs.

Keywords: ecofeminism; gender equality; environmental activists

*Correspondence:

Maimunah
2210914220016@mhs.ulm.ac.id

Registered: 5 December 2024

Revised: 03 March 2026

Accepted: 20 April 2026

Published: 07 October 2026

Available Online: 07 October 2026

Citation:

Maimunah, Safarina, Z., Putri, R., Khairunnisa, Z., Hanida, Ariyani, K., Raiyati, S., Fauzia, R. & Istiqomah, E. (2026). Women and nature: exploring the experiences of female environmental activists through ecofeminist theory. *Jurnal Ecopsy*, 13(2), 70-82.
<http://doi.org/10.20527/ecopsy.2026.10.001>

INTRODUCTION

Environmental degradation is closely linked to social inequality in the distribution of natural resources and participation in environmental decision-making. In many regions, women have limited access to resources, technology, and opportunities to engage in environmental governance (Agarwal, 2010). Gender relations embedded in social structures shape how communities distribute roles and decision-making authority in natural resource management. In rural Indonesia, social norms continue to influence women's participation in agricultural decision-making and often position men as primary decision-makers while women remain closely associated with domestic and supportive agricultural roles

(Qanti et al., 2022).

Cultural representations often construct a symbolic association between women and nature. Many societies portray women as embodying qualities that are also attributed to nature. For example, the earth is often described as *Terra Mater* or "Mother Earth," which symbolizes nurturance, protection, and care. This representation frames the earth as a life-sustaining figure and associates these qualities with women (Maulana and Supriatna, 2019).

Research in gender studies shows that social constructions of masculinity and femininity often rely on a dualistic framework that separates culture from nature. This framework produces a hierarchical order in which masculinity occupies a dominant position and femininity a subordinate one across social

domains (Qanti *et al.*, 2022). This hierarchy shapes gender relations and influences how societies perceive and manage the environment.

Power relations in natural resource management also shape the distribution of environmental benefits and burdens. Unequal access to land, technology, and decision-making processes places women in a more vulnerable position in the context of environmental degradation (Agarwal, 2010). These patterns indicate that environmental problems are inseparable from the social structures that organize gender relations.

Extractive development can produce environmental degradation while also disrupting the livelihoods and social conditions of local communities. In Indonesia, women affected by mining have demonstrated awareness of how dispossession and resource exploitation shape their everyday lives and have developed various forms of resistance to these pressures (Glynn & Maimunah, 2023). Criticism of this paradigm has encouraged the emergence of alternative perspectives in environmental studies.

Ecofeminism is one such perspective. It examines the relationship between the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature. Françoise d'Eaubonne introduced the term in 1974 to describe this connection. Ecofeminism argues that the same structures of domination underlie both gender injustice and environmental degradation (Gaard, 2011). Over time, this perspective has developed into an analytical framework that integrates gender justice with ecological sustainability.

In its theoretical development, ecofeminism positions women lived experiences as an important source of ecological knowledge. Women's involvement in managing food, water, and local resources often generates community-based ecological practices that support environmental conservation (Poto & Porrone, 2021). This perspective, therefore, identifies women not only as a group affected by environmental degradation but also as active agents in environmental conservation movements.

Research on women's participation in environmental movements has expanded in international studies. Previous studies have shown that women contribute actively to conservation initiatives, environmental education, and community organizing for

sustainability (MacGregor, 2021). However, research that specifically examines how women activists interpret the relationship between gender and the environment remains limited in the Indonesian context.

South Kalimantan provides an important context for this issue, as the region faces substantial ecological pressure from land-use change, mining expansion, and ecosystem degradation. Previous studies have documented major shifts in forest cover and the expansion of extractive industries in the region (Gaveau *et al.*, 2016). These environmental pressures have also led to the formation of community organizations focused on conservation.

Despite the importance of women's perspectives in environmental activism, few studies have examined how female environmental activists understand the relationship between gender justice and environmental conservation through an ecofeminist framework. This gap highlights the need for research on women's experiences in community-based environmental activism (MacGregor, 2021).

This study, therefore, explored the experiences of female environmental activists to understand the relationship between women and nature from an ecofeminist perspective. The analysis focused on their experiences, motivations, and social interactions in order to explain how these factors shape their participation in environmental conservation movements.

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What experiences do female environmental activists encounter in environmental conservation activities?
2. How do female activists interpret the relationship between women and nature from an ecofeminist perspective?
3. How do these experiences shape their views on women's roles in environmental conservation?

This study aimed to contribute to ecofeminist studies by analyzing the experiences of female environmental activists in the local context of Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to examine how female environmental activists

interpret the relationships among women, nature, and sustainability from an ecofeminist perspective. A phenomenological approach was appropriate because it enabled an in-depth exploration of participants' subjective experiences and the meanings they assigned to their social actions and environmental practices (Wita & Mursal, 2022). Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants who were actively involved in environmental conservation and whose experiences were relevant to the study objectives. This approach allowed the study to capture the experiences, perspectives, and contributions of female activists in environmental conservation and ecological sustainability.

Participants

The participants were women affiliated with environmental organizations. Two individuals from different organizations participated in the study. The first participant, identified by the initials D.A.G., was a 20-year-old member of Pemuda Peduli Lingkungan Asri dan Bersih (Pepelingasih) in Banjarbaru. The second participant, identified as A.L., was a 19-year-old member of Green Generation Banjarbaru.

Measurement Tool

This study used semi-structured interviews to collect data. Semi-structured interviewing is a qualitative technique in which the interviewer prepares a set of guiding questions while maintaining flexibility in the sequence and development of the conversation (Nietzel, Bernstein, & Milich, 1998, as cited in Fadhallah, 2021). This format enabled the researcher to explore participants' perspectives in depth while allowing new themes to emerge during the interview process. The interview guide covered six main topics: motivation, women's roles, the relationship between women and nature, challenges, personal experiences, and ecofeminism, as well as participants' broader perceptions of the environment. These topics were informed by ecofeminist theory, which emphasizes the interconnections among women's experiences, gender relations, and

human–nature relationships in sustainability practices (Gaard, 2011; Warren, 2000).

Research Procedure

The study was conducted in four stages. The first stage involved a literature review on ecofeminism. The second stage focused on recruiting participants who met the study criteria: women active in environmental organizations or environmental activism. The third stage involved data collection through interviews. The final stage consisted of data analysis and the formulation of conclusions.

Data Analysis

The study used thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and report themes and patterns in the data (Sitasari, 2022). After the interviews were transcribed, the researcher coded the data by reviewing the transcripts and assigning labels to meaningful words, phrases, and sentences (Sitasari, 2022). The coding process was conducted with NVivo software and proceeded through three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

RESULTS

The coding process generated eight major themes derived from the interview guide and participants' statements. The findings are presented according to these themes.

Theme 1: Ecofeminism

This theme addresses women's efforts to claim equal rights in development planning and implementation, particularly in relation to gender and environmental issues. It also examines how participants understood the relationship between women and nature. According to Informant 1, both women and nature are often objectified and exploited. She explained her understanding of ecofeminism as follows:

“From what I understand and what I’ve read, ecofeminism is a philosophy that connects how women are oppressed with how nature is exploited. Nature is often

treated as an object. People see it as something to use up, like cutting down trees, and women are treated similarly. Both women and nature are exploited and objectified by certain groups. Sometimes, women may not even realize they are being objectified. Some women enjoy being looked at or validated, so they may accept being seen as objects by men. It is similar to nature—a beautiful mountain or landscape is treated as something to look at. At the same time, people do not always want to protect nature. They see it as something to use, but then they do not even bother to throw trash away properly or stop tossing cigarette butts on the ground. I think it is the same with women. That is how I understand ecofeminism.” (D.A.G.)

Informant 1 also stated that women are often blamed, including in environmental contexts. In her view, women are frequently held responsible for environmental degradation.

“Usually, villagers, especially women, depend heavily on the environment. They often carry a double burden when environmental damage occurs. Most of them work as farmers and are often blamed for problems such as dry rice fields. When I visit the village, I talk to the women and ask, ‘Ma’am, how are things in the fields?’ One replied, ‘Well, Miss, during the dry season we’re at a loss for what to do. Our husbands aren’t reliable; they just go fishing all the time.’ That was one of several heads of households I spoke with. They also said, ‘We’re at a loss regarding the state of the environment.’ So, these women are blamed more and expected to take on greater responsibility.” (D.A.G.)
“Being a woman is really tough, isn’t it? It feels like we’re always the ones to blame, even for environmental issues.” (D.A.G.)

Theme 2: Humans and Nature

This theme highlights the interdependence between humans and nature. Both informants described this relationship as reciprocal. Informant 2 explained that she had learned not only to use nature but also to protect

and preserve it because humans and nature depend on each other.

“How do we understand and interact well with nature? There, we learned not just to use it, but also to protect it, take care of it, and pass it on, since we are all connected and rely on each other.” (A.L.)

“How exactly can nature help us? The fact that we can live comfortably in nature is the benefit we gain. So, it is not about validation from people or getting lots of sponsors. It is about how nature makes life more comfortable for us.” (A.L.)

Both informants noted similarities between issues affecting women and issues affecting nature. Informant 1 argued that women and nature are both objectified, subordinated, and exploited. She also emphasized that rural women depend heavily on the environment.

“Women are connected to nature. They are treated as objects, as subordinates, as something to be exploited. It is just so sad.” (D.A.G.)

“Usually, people in rural communities, especially women, are very dependent on their environment.” (D.A.G.)

Informant 2 stressed that unsustainable exploitation of natural resources produces harmful consequences. She therefore argued that nature should be used responsibly and preserved.

“If nature is only exploited without being properly preserved, I do not think it will have a positive impact on us either. But if it is treated well, used in moderation, and preserved, it will definitely reach its full potential. That is how I see it.” (A.L.)

Theme 3: Motivation for Engagement in Environmental Activism

This theme explores the experiences that initially motivated participants to engage in environmental conservation. From an ecofeminist perspective, women’s participation in environmental movements often develops through personal experience, social relationships, and awareness of environmental problems.

Informant 1 attributed her involvement to her family background. She explained that her parents’ concern for environmental issues

influenced her decision to join an organization and contribute to conservation efforts.

"I think my family background is the main reason. My parents have always cared about environmental issues, and they told me they were passionate about the environment when they were young. I also decided on my own to get involved as part of the younger generation. As a young person, I want to make a difference in society and for the environment. For me, joining an organization is a small but important first step in helping to protect the environment." (D.A.G.)

Informant 2 initially joined an environmental organization to expand her social network, rather than out of concern for environmental issues. Over time, Informant 2 recognized the importance of protecting the environment, emphasizing its preservation, enhancement, and fertility rather than its exploitation.

"At first, I just wanted to make friends and was not really thinking about the environment. Building those relationships was great, and as I got more involved, I started to see that the environment really matters. Since we all live here, we need to protect it, not just use it up. We should try to make it better, keep it fertile, and make sure it stays usable, such as by recycling and reusing things again and again." (A.L.)

Theme 4: Values Held by Female Environmental Activists

This theme concerns the values that female environmental activists consider important in their advocacy. Informant 1 emphasized the importance of speaking out against injustice and acting collectively.

"Most importantly, I want to say this again: never be afraid to speak up about anything, especially as a woman. Do not be afraid and do not stay silent. If you see something wrong, speak up if you can."

(D.A.G.)

"Do not be afraid, especially if you see something wrong in the community. Really, do not be scared. We are all in this together, so let's help each other. Remember that organization I mentioned earlier? That group is actually a bridge for us to make a difference in our community. When we team up with people who share our goals, we can speak out together instead of standing alone. If you are by yourself, people might not listen or might just ignore you. That is why there are groups and organizations, especially for things like the environment." (D.A.G.)

Informant 2 highlighted self-awareness as the foundation of environmental action. In her view, environmental responsibility must begin at the individual level.

"In my opinion, awareness has to start with ourselves. If not us, then who else? If everyone thought this way, we would create a comfortable environment, and that would bring even more benefits to us. We do not have to make a huge effort. For example, if we take good care of the environment, it will give us good things in return. That is just how nature works. If we harm it, it will eventually harm us too. The impact will come back to us. We need to let go of the 'me-first' mindset and the idea that 'it is all about me' in a negative sense, like putting ourselves first all the time. For example, if I litter, I might think it is no big deal because other people litter too." (A.L.)

Theme 5: Experiences of Female Environmental Activists

This theme covers the activities, events, and initiatives undertaken by the participants. Both informants described a wide range of experiences during their involvement in environmental organizations.

Informant 2 reported participating in outreach programs, radio broadcasts, visits to nature reserves and schools, and environmental campaigns. She identified a jamboree in Bandung as her most memorable experience.

"There are so many. I have had many experiences. I used to be part of Green Generation. We would go out and meet lots of people. Some womans turned us away, and some people did not speak Indonesian. Many did not care. People stared at us because we were collecting trash. They thought we were trash pickers. I have also been a guest speaker on Banjar Radio and at a children's forum. Back then, I led outreach sessions at least once a month. We also had 'ant operations,' which meant picking up trash, and we did that a lot. We did outreach on Instagram, visited safaris and schools, and played games with local residents. One of my best experiences was

going to the jamboree in Bandung." (A.L.)

She also stressed that environmental activism required practical action, not only information sharing.

"At the jamboree in Bandung, we did not just plant trees and pick up trash. We also did outreach by going into the community to teach people, not just by talking, but by organizing games. Once participants understood the material, we gave them useful items, like goodie bags with tote bags. Tote bags help reduce plastic waste, so we encourage people to use them instead of plastic. Sometimes we also hand out eco-enzymes, which are liquids made from organic materials that help the environment. That is another way to use them, and at every jamboree, we focus on environmental issues. Last time, we talked about food waste—how to prevent it, avoid producing it, and manage it properly. The year before, we focused on going paperless and using less paper." (A.L.)

Informant 1 also described extensive experience in environmental activism through her involvement in three environmental organizations. Her activities included distributing tree seedlings, organizing cleanup campaigns, conducting environmental education, participating in village service

programs, and fundraising.

"The people from Green Generation handed out tree seedlings at Murjani Field. Our goal was to give away all 100 seedlings. Pepelingasih brought even more, so many that we lost count. We also joined a recent trash cleanup with the Environmental Agency at Pal 17, picking up litter around the hot peatlands, where pollution and tractor-trailers are common. Environmental education is what we do most often. We run outreach

activities like giving out reusable water bottles, encouraging healthy habits, and sharing tips for eco-friendly living. When we work with Mapala, we usually help out in villages. We have done community service in South Hulu Sungai, Central Hulu Sungai, and remote villages near the mountains, like Juhu Village and Pa'au Village. These places are in South Kalimantan, close to the Meratus Mountains. Juhu Village is near Mount Halau-Halau, where Mapala is active. Pepelingasih often joins fieldwork and fundraising, especially during floods, and we help with those efforts too. We also organize trash cleanups, release eco-enzymes into the river, and monitor waste banks." (D.A.G.)

She then described a school outreach session as her most memorable experience because she felt welcomed and appreciated.

"That was probably the most memorable moment. It happened during our educational and outreach session at SD 1 Guntung Payung in Banjarbaru. What made it stand out was how warmly they welcomed us as soon as we arrived. We taught them to bring their own water bottles, use tote bags, and avoid plastic waste. I asked, 'Do you still use plastic in the cafeteria?' They answered, 'No,' because they are an Adiwiyata school. Their excitement made me happy and made me think, 'Wow, this school is really special.' I just want to come back there again." (D.A.G.)

She also described initiating a waste bank in a village to support women's economic activities.

"I actually tried to start a waste bank in the village so the women could earn some extra income. I asked, 'What if I propose to the Environmental Agency that we set up a waste bank here?' 'That is fine,' they said. 'It is better than us always working in the fields, and our husbands do not seem to want to take responsibility either'." (D.A.G.)

Theme 6: The Role of Women

This theme highlights women's contributions to environmental protection and preservation. Both informants emphasized that women played an important role in these efforts.

Informant 1 described women as educators, agents of empowerment, and catalysts for change.

"Women take on many roles, but gender discrimination often holds them back. For instance, women can work as educators, and children often prefer female teachers. They can also help design new policies in organizations, such as programs for mothers. In my view, women should lead the way. If women do not step up, who will? Women can also speak out about these issues and become a voice for concerns. It is not just about kitchen duties." (D.A.G.)

"I believe women can help empower each other. Together, we can work to remove the stigma of patriarchy and fight gender discrimination. Women have long been connected to pharmacy, and we can lead the way in developing medicines, especially those based on traditional herbal remedies that use natural plants. In my view, this is a special role that women can take on." (D.A.G.)

Informant 2 also emphasized women's roles and described them as active, diligent, and creative in environmental work.

"Their role is quite significant, isn't it? Women are more diligent when it comes

to getting out into the field, but men also take part. It really depends on each person's own sensitivity to the environment." (A.L.)

"There are many women who are active in environmental activism. I find that women are often creative and tend to be the ones who make eco-enzymes and recycle items. In my experience, women are usually more active and diligent. I also think their ideas become even more creative when they are under pressure." (A.L.)

Theme 7: Gender Inequality in the Relationship Between Women and Nature

This theme explores participants' experiences of gender inequality and how it shapes women's position in social life and environmental relations. From an ecofeminist perspective, social structures that privilege men often subordinate women and affect the human relationship with nature. These patterns appear in rigid gender divisions that associate women with domestic work and household responsibility.

Informant 1 stated that women perform many important roles but continue to face constraints because of gender discrimination.

"Women actually play many roles, but they are usually held back by gender discrimination." (D.A.G.)

"For example, when the water goes out, people often blame women. They say things like, 'Oh no, the water is out—how are you going to wash the dishes, cook, and do all that stuff?' Or they ask, 'What about all this household trash? Where are you going to throw it?' These issues are often linked to women. There is a connection to nature here, but it is used as a way to objectify, subordinate, and exploit women. It is really a shame. Why are women treated so dismissively?" (D.A.G.)

Theme 8: Challenges Faced by Female Environmental Activists

This theme examines the barriers that

female environmental activists encounter in their work. Both informants described different challenges during their involvement in environmental organizations.

Informant 1 reported experiences of being belittled by men, rejected by other community members, and subjected to negative comments while working in physically demanding conditions. She emphasized the need for emotional resilience in a patriarchal social context.

"It is really about being mentally strong enough to deal with what people say, especially in a society that still follows a patriarchal system. You have to be tougher, since Gen Z often does not want to protest in the streets. They ask, 'Why bother protesting in the heat for the environment? What is the point?' That is why you need to build mental resilience, because people's comments can bring you down. If the biggest challenge is staying strong even when people talk badly about us, then we need to make lots of friends." (D.A.G.)

"Yesterday, there were some older men at the fundraiser. Because of the disaster damage, one of them, a meatball seller, said, 'Why go through all that trouble of taking to the streets to protest? Women should just stay home cooking and washing dishes.' Hearing that really bothered me. I wanted to say something back, but I just thought, 'Oh well.' So, I replied, 'Yes, sir, I'm currently involved in campus activities.' It was an unpleasant experience because society's stigma still often sees women as the weaker sex, looks down on them, and treats them as objects. There are many situations like this." (D.A.G.)

"I do not want to mention the neighborhood, but it is also in Banjarbaru. A neighborhood leader once said to me, 'What are you doing, kid? You are still so young. Acting all high and mighty, pretending to care.' Honestly, I am just doing this because it is for our own good too. Usually, people think that because they are older, they know more. Maybe they do not like hearing our educational messages all the time. Our goal is not to lecture them, but to work together, like

saying, 'Let's protect the environment' or 'Let's start a recycling bank.' Who is it for? It is for the women around the neighborhood too. That was actually one of the biggest challenges. I almost wanted to cry." (D.A.G.)

Informant 2 identified public indifference and criticism as major obstacles. She explained that low environmental awareness and a tendency to prioritize personal benefit often undermined conservation programs.

"They do not care. This sort of thing happens all the time. The previous generation was not aware of our wetlands, especially those near the rivers." (A.L.)

"What is the big deal? It is such a hassle,' some people might say. They think the trash will just decompose or whatever, but it actually takes a long time." (A.L.)

"People like that feel comfortable littering because they say there are always sanitation workers around. That comes from a lack of awareness. Another reason is that they see trash but are too embarrassed to pick it up. In my opinion, it is hard to get people like that to change. We often try to raise awareness, but we are often turned down. 'No, no,' they say. But if we offer them a reward, then they are willing to do it." (A.L.)

"We need funding. As a non-governmental organization, we do not have many sources of support. We have to be creative in finding sponsors. If we were part of the government, dealing with the bureaucracy would be a headache. They only care about profit, profit, profit." (A.L.)

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the experiences of female environmental activists are closely linked to environmental conservation practices and to broader relations among women, nature, and social structures. From an ecofeminist perspective, the exploitation of nature often coincides with the subordination of women because both operate within similar systems of domination (Gaard, 2011). The cases of D.A.G. and A.L. show that women's participation in environmental movements emerges from

ecological awareness and from the social contexts that shape their daily lives.

D.A.G.'s statement highlights the connection between women and nature by showing that both are often subjected to exploitation. She explained that women are frequently assigned responsibility for domestic environmental tasks, including water management, household cleaning, and waste management. These patterns suggest that daily life places women in positions directly related to environmental management. This interpretation aligns with Permatasari and Siswadi (2022), who argue that environmental degradation affects women disproportionately because their daily activities depend closely on natural resources.

D.A.G.'s participation in environmental organizations also reflects the role of personal experience in shaping ecological awareness. Her family background exposed her to strong environmental values, which later influenced her activism. From an ecofeminist perspective, women lived experiences play an important role in forming ecological consciousness and encouraging participation in environmental movements (Agarwal, 2010). Ecological awareness, therefore, develops not only through formal knowledge but also through social experience.

D.A.G.'s activism further demonstrates the link between environmental conservation and community empowerment. Her effort to establish a village waste bank aimed to reduce waste while creating economic opportunities for local women. This initiative suggests that women-led environmental action often extends beyond ecological goals to include empowerment and collective solidarity. Ecofeminist studies frequently interpret women's involvement in local resource management as a sustainability practice that seeks balance between human communities and the natural environment (Gaard, 2011).

D.A.G.'s experience also shows that female environmental activists continue to face substantial social barriers rooted in prevailing gender norms. She reported that society often associates women exclusively with the domestic sphere, making their participation in

public advocacy seem unusual or inappropriate. This pattern indicates that patriarchal assumptions continue to shape public perceptions of women's roles. This finding is consistent with Pinem's, cited in Permatasari and Siswadi (2022), which describes the resilience of Malay women who advocated for environmental protection during the forest fires in Riau.

This pattern also corresponds with Astuti's, cited in Permatasari and Siswadi (2022), of women in Irian Jaya who resisted logging by encircling and embracing trees in protest against environmental exploitation. That case shows that women often take active roles in environmental resistance despite substantial social constraints. From an ecofeminist perspective, this activism reflects women's close engagement with nature and their recognition of the need to sustain it (Gaard, 2011).

AL's experience illustrates a different pathway into environmental activism. Her participation developed through social learning rather than through prior environmental commitment. She initially joined environmental organization to expand her social network. Through involvement in outreach activities and plastic reduction campaigns, she gradually developed a stronger understanding of environmental sustainability. This case suggests that ecological awareness can emerge through interaction, participation, and exposure to environmentally engaged communities (Agarwal, 2010).

Recent studies in Indonesia have reported similar patterns. Permatasari and Setiawan (2024) found that women's environmental activism in the Wadon Wadas movement was related not only to environmental protection but also to resistance against gender inequality. Similarly, Istiqlali (2022) showed that women played an active role in defending their living environment through collective action and resistance to environmental domination. Laoera (2023) also found that female environmental activists used social media to educate the public and expand environmental campaigns. These findings support the present study by showing that women's environmental activism involves

not only conservation activities, but also social advocacy, community engagement, and collective action.

A.L.'s organizational activities also show that women can function as agents of change in environmental conservation. Her work in community education, campaigns, and outreach demonstrates that women are not only affected by environmental degradation but also contribute directly to conservation efforts. This interpretation is consistent with previous research showing that women often play active roles in community-based sustainability practices (Agarwal, 2010).

A.L. also encountered major obstacles in implementing environmental initiatives, particularly in communities that responded weakly to environmental concerns. She described low public awareness and a tendency to ignore the long-term consequences of environmental degradation. These conditions suggest that environmental movements depend not only on individual or organizational effort but also on the broader social and cultural values that shape community responses (Sigiro, 2020).

D.A.G.'s experiences during village activities further indicates that women are often more directly affected by environmental degradation, especially in agricultural settings. She observed that during drought, when rice fields became unproductive, women were often more active than men in seeking practical solutions. This finding suggests that women frequently stand at the frontline of everyday environmental problem-solving. It also supports Sigiro's (2020) observation that women often occupy marginalized positions while facing the direct consequences of social and environmental disruption.

Taken together, the experiences of D.A.G. and A.L. show that women's participation in environmental movements is shaped by personal history, ecological awareness, and gendered social dynamics. From an ecofeminist perspective, these cases demonstrate that women contribute substantially to environmental conservation through public education, community empowerment, and community-based sustainability practices (Gaard, 2011).

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, the relatively small number of informants restricts the ability to provide a comprehensive understanding of

female environmental activists' experiences across diverse organizational contexts. Second, the primary focus on individual experiences limits the analysis of broader structural dynamics within the environmental movement. Third, as the research was conducted within specific organizations, the findings may not be generalizable to female environmental activists in other regions.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings show that women occupy a significant and strategic position in environmental movements. The informants' experiences reveal how society perceives women who engage in environmental activism. Within an ecofeminist framework, women appear both as a group highly vulnerable to environmental degradation and as agents of change who connect social roles with environmental protection. The activists' narratives demonstrate the close relationship between women and nature within patriarchal structures. These narratives also show that women often face gender-based stigma while continuing to act with resilience and commitment in environmental advocacy.

The findings also highlight women's contributions through emotional engagement, practical sensitivity to environmental problems, and sustained community action. One informant emphasized that women often respond to environmental issues with strong emotional awareness and social concern. Despite challenges such as public indifference and resistance, both informants remained involved in educational and community-based initiatives. Their experiences suggest that consistent, small-scale action can provide an important foundation for broader, more sustainable change.

This study further underscores the central role of women in environmental movements through local initiatives and community-based approaches. The experiences of the two informants show that women bring local knowledge, courage, and creativity to environmental conservation efforts. These findings confirm the relevance of ecofeminism as a framework for understanding environmental challenges and for recognizing women's leadership in advancing sustainability and ecological justice.

The study also offers practical implications.

Government institutions can use these findings to design environmental policies that address gender dynamics more directly. Because women often experience the effects of environmental degradation more immediately, policy frameworks should recognize their needs and contributions in environmental conservation. Sustainable change also requires greater public awareness of the relationship between the exploitation of women and the exploitation of nature, especially in educational settings. Future qualitative research should involve a larger and more diverse group of participants in order to extend and strengthen the current findings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The The authors would like to thank the participants and environmental organizations that supported the data collection process.

AI USAGE STATEMENT

ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used during manuscript preparation to assist with language refinement and word choice. All AI-assisted outputs were critically reviewed and edited by the authors. All references, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions were verified by the authors, who take full responsibility for the final content of the manuscript.

AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

Maimunah, Zaina Safarina, Risma Putri, Zakiah Khairunnisa, Hanida, and Khalisah Ariyani contributed to the conceptualization of the study, data collection, and data analysis. Maimunah and Zaina Safarina contributed to the conceptualization and data analysis and was responsible for reviewing and revising the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

FUNDING STATEMENT

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

REFERENCES

- Agarwal, B. (2010). *Gender and green governance: The political economy of women's presence within and beyond community forestry*. Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199569687.001.0001>.
- Fadhallah, R. A. (2021). Wawancara. Unj Press.
- Gaard, G. (2011). Ecofeminism revisited: Rejecting essentialism and re-placing species in a material feminist environmentalism. *Feminist Formations*, 23(2), 26–53.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/ff.2011.0017>.
- Gaveau, D. L., Sheil, D., Husnayaen, Salim, M. A., Arjasakusuma, S., Ancrenaz, M., ... & Meijaard, E. (2016). Rapid conversions and avoided deforestation: examining four decades of industrial plantation expansion in Borneo. *Scientific reports*, 6(1), 32017.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/srep32017>.
- Glynn, T., & Maimunah, S. (2023). Unearthing conscious intent in women's everyday resistance to mining in Indonesia. *Ethnography*, 24(1), 23–43.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/14661381211039372>
- Istiqlali, A. (2022). Peran perempuan dalam merebut ruang hidup: Studi ekofeminisme tentang perlawanan perempuan di Banjar Selasih, Bali. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Indonesia (JISI)*, 3(2), 70–82.
<https://doi.org/10.15408/jisi.v3i2.29674>.
- Laoera, B. D. (2023). Female activists in environmental movements on Instagram: An ecofeminism perspective in the Indonesian context. *Media Culture Social Communication*, 19, 49p62.
<https://doi.org/10.31648/mkks.8477>

- MacGregor, S. (2021). Making matter great again? Ecofeminism, new materialism and the everyday turn in environmental politics. *Environmental Politics*, 30(1-2), 41-60.
- Maulana, R., & Supriatna, S. (2019). Ekofeminisme: Perempuan, alam, perlawanan atas kuasa patriarki dan pembangunan punia (wangari maathai dan green belt movement 1990-2004). *Factum*, 8(2), 261-276. <https://doi.org/10.17509/factum.v8i2.22156>.
- Permatasari, A., & Setiawan, R. E. B. (2024). The governmental and environmental policies: Ecofeminism resistance in the Wadon Wadas civil society movement. *Politicon: Jurnal Ilmu Politik*, 6(2), 301-328. <https://doi.org/10.15575/politicon.v6i2.37274>
- Permatasari, R. Y. A., & Siswadi, G. A. (2022). Ekofeminisme di Indonesia: sebuah kajian reflektif atas peran perempuan terhadap lingkungan. *Purwadita: Jurnal Agama dan Budaya*, 6(1), 59-70. <https://doi.org/10.55115/purwadita.v6i1.1687>.
- Poto, M. P., & Porrone, A. (2021). A co-created methodological approach to address the relational dimension of environmental challenges: When critical legal analysis meets illustrated storytelling. *Sustainability*, 13(23), 13212. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132313212>.
- Qanti, S. R., Peralta, A., & Zeng, D. (2022). Social norms and perceptions drive women's participation in agricultural decisions in West Java, Indonesia. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 39, 645-662. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-021-10277-z>.
- Sigiro, A. N. (2020). Women and covid-19 pandemic. *Jurnal Perempuan*, 25(4), iii-iv. <https://doi.org/10.34309/jp.v25i4>.
- Sitasari, N. W. (2022). Mengenal analisa konten dan analisa tematik dalam penelitian kualitatif. In *Forum Ilmiah*. 19(1):77-84. <https://doi.org/10.34309/jp.v25i4.524>.
- Warren, K. (2000). *Ecofeminist philosophy: A western perspective on what it is and why it matters*. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC.
- Wita, G., & Mursal, I. F. (2022). Fenomenologi dalam kajian sosial sebuah studi tentang konstruksi makna. *Titian: Jurnal Ilmu Humaniora*, 6(2), 325-338. <https://doi.org/10.22437/titian.v6i2.21211>.