



Grassroots green feminism: Comparative narratives of marginalised women's environmental movements across the world

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Abstract

Grassroots environmental movements led by marginalised women have played a transformative role in shaping ecological resistance across the world. This study undertakes a comparative analysis of four such movements: the Chipko Movement in India, the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, the TIPNIS Indigenous Women's Mobilisation in Bolivia, and the Didipio Anti-Mining Movement in the Philippines. Using intersectional and ecofeminist perspectives, the research examines the leadership strategies, mobilisation patterns, and collective actions undertaken by women situated at the intersections of gender, class, caste, ethnicity, indigeneity, and rural marginalisation.

The analysis highlights how women's everyday interactions with forests, land, and natural resources have historically positioned them as frontline defenders against extractive development, deforestation, and environmental degradation. Across regions, women's activism emerges not only as a defence of ecological landscapes but also as a pursuit of autonomy, cultural continuity, and socio-economic justice. The study further evaluates the varied impacts of these movements—ranging from community empowerment and reforestation initiatives to temporary policy victories and shifts in environmental governance. Despite differing political contexts, the movements share common challenges, including state repression, resource scarcity, gendered exclusions, and structural inequalities.

By comparing these four movements, the research identifies cross-cultural patterns of resistance and the unique ways in which marginalised women frame environmental justice through lived experiences. The findings underscore the significance of "grassroots green feminism" as a conceptual lens for understanding how women's collective environmental action shapes both ecological protection and social transformation. This comparative inquiry contributes to broader discussions on inclusive environmental policymaking and the critical role of women's leadership in global ecological movements.

Keywords: Grassroots green feminism, intersectionality, women's environmental movements, environmental justice

Introduction

Grassroots environmental activism, especially led by marginalised women, has emerged as a powerful site of resistance against extractive development, ecological degradation, and sociopolitical inequalities. This research, under the theme of "Grassroots Green Feminism," seeks to understand how intersecting identities — such as gender, indigeneity, class, and rurality — shape the leadership and strategies of women in environmental movements, and how these movements, in turn, influence policies and social change.

At the core of this inquiry is the concept of ecofeminism, which articulates a deep connection between the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature. Ecofeminist theory states that patriarchal and capitalist structures underpin both gender injustice and environmental degradation, framing these dual struggles as fundamentally linked. By centering women's lived experiences, ecofeminism offers a lens through which to study how grassroots activism can resist intertwined forms of domination.

One of the most celebrated cases of ecofeminist mobilization is the Chipko Movement in India. Originating in the 1970s in the Himalayan region, rural women led non-violent tree-hugging protests to prevent commercial logging and secure forest rights for their communities (Britannica, n.d.). These women's actions were not only environmental but deeply social: they challenged traditional gender roles and asserted their agency in defending their livelihoods and ecosystems (Singh, 2023) ^[17]. Their leadership helped

redirect state forest policies and fostered recognition of local, community-based conservation.

Similarly, the Green Belt Movement (GBM) in Kenya, founded by Wangari Maathai, exemplifies ecofeminist praxis in a postcolonial context. Through tree-planting campaigns, Maathai mobilized rural women to reclaim degraded lands, restoring both ecosystems and socio-economic dignity (Hunt, 2014) ^[7]. Maathai's approach fused ecological restoration with political consciousness: she empowered women to become stewards of the land while advocating for democratic governance (Shattuck, 2022) ^[10]. Her movement also challenged patriarchal norms in Kenyan society, making ecofeminism a political as well as environmental project (Joseph & Bari, 2013) ^[9].

Beyond these high-profile cases, Indigenous women are increasingly at the forefront of environmental struggles — drawing on their cosmologies, communal knowledge, and lived connection to their territories. In Bolivia, the controversy over the TIPNIS (Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro-Sécure) road project provides a telling example. Indigenous women participated in protests not only through physical marches but by enacting performances of indigeneity and political belonging, making visible the complex relationship between resource extraction and Indigenous identity (Fabricant, 2018) ^[3]. Scholars argue that the TIPNIS conflict illuminates how Indigenous peoples engage with extractive pressures in ways that both contest and negotiate modern state frameworks (Alberti, 2023; Hindery, 2018) ^[1, 4]. This movement foregrounds the tension

between capitalist development models and Indigenous environmental epistemologies (Lalander, 2014) ^[11].

In the Philippines, marginalized Indigenous women have also taken central roles in resisting mining. Research indicates that rural and Indigenous women experience severe socioenvironmental harm due to mining operations, including threats to livelihood, health, and land (Equality Fund, 2018) ^[2]. Their activism often involves human rights advocacy, community organizing, and legal strategies, as they defend ancestral domains and demand free, prior, and informed consent (LILAK, 2018) ^[3]. Tragically, environmental defenders in the Philippines — especially women — face profound risks: gendered violence, criminalization, and even assassination have been documented as part of the repression they endure (Tran, 2023) ^[18].

Across these diverse contexts, a few overlapping themes emerge. First, the intersectionality of identities shapes both the vulnerabilities and capacities of marginalised women. Ecofeminist grassroots movements are not merely environmental protests: they are assertions of political subjectivity, belonging, and justice. Second, these movements often build on local ecological knowledge, re-rooting strategies in the specificities of place, culture, and community. The treeplanting campaigns of the GBM, the forest-centric resistance of Chipko, and the performative politics of TIPNIS all reflect this rootedness. Third, these struggles generate policy and social change, whether by influencing national environmental governance, altering development plans, or amplifying Indigenous rights.

However, these movements also confront significant challenges. They operate under structural inequalities — patriarchy, neoliberal development, and state repression — which can marginalize their voices in formal decision-making (Moorman, 2017) ^[13]. Moreover, the appropriation or simplification of their struggles is a constant risk: as external actors engage with these movements, they may instrumentalize or decontextualize their demands (Fabricant, 2018) ^[3].

Given these dynamics, this research proposes a comparative study of four movement case studies: the Chipko Movement (India), the Green Belt Movement (Kenya), the TIPNIS Indigenous Women's Mobilisation (Bolivia), and the Didipio Anti-Mining Movement (Philippines). By analyzing leadership patterns, mobilization strategies, intersectional identities, and outcomes, the study aims to draw lessons on how grassroots green feminist activism can inform more inclusive and just environmental policymaking. In doing so, this work contributes to a broader understanding of how marginalized women not only resist environmental harm, but reimagine ecological futures grounded in care, justice, and collective empowerment.

Statement of Problem

Environmental degradation, climate vulnerability, and extractive development have intensified across the world, disproportionately affecting communities at the social, economic, and political margins. Among these communities, marginalized women — including rural women, Indigenous women, low-income women, and those historically excluded from land ownership and political participation — face the most severe consequences of ecological decline. Yet, paradoxically, they are also among the least recognized actors in global, national, and regional environmental policymaking. While their leadership in grassroots

ecological movements is undeniable, the intellectual, political, and historical contributions of marginalized women remain insufficiently theorized, compared, and incorporated into mainstream environmental discourse. This research therefore seeks to address a series of interconnected problems that have contributed to the invisibilization and underrepresentation of women-led grassroots environmental resistance.

The first central problem is the systematic marginalisation of women's ecological labour and leadership. In movements such as India's Chipko Movement, Kenya's Green Belt Movement, Bolivia's TIPNIS Indigenous mobilisation, and the Philippines' anti-mining struggles in Didipio, women have historically taken on leadership roles that stem from their direct dependence on land, forests, and water for subsistence, livelihood, and cultural survival. Despite this, global narratives often frame environmental leadership through male, institutional, or elite actors, overshadowing women's contributions. This creates a structural gap between the reality of women's on-the-ground leadership and the dominant representations within environmental scholarship and policymaking.

A second and closely related problem arises from the lack of comparative, cross-cultural understanding of women-led environmental movements. Existing academic studies often examine these movements within their isolated national contexts, thereby missing the opportunity to identify global patterns, shared struggles, and transnational feminist solidarities. As a result, we lack a nuanced comparative framework that explores how different histories of colonisation, development policies, racialisation, caste dynamics, and indigenous worldviews shape women's environmental activism in distinct yet interconnected ways. Without such comparative perspectives, it becomes difficult to understand the universal and context-specific dimensions of grassroots green feminist mobilisations.

A third problem concerns the insufficient engagement with intersectionality in environmental movement research. Marginalised women do not experience ecological harm merely as women; their experiences are deeply shaped by caste, class, race, indigeneity, geographic isolation, landlessness, and political disenfranchisement. Yet many studies continue to treat "women" as a homogenous category, thereby ignoring the overlapping systems of oppression that influence how women perceive, respond to, and resist environmental threats. This creates a theoretical gap in understanding how the most vulnerable women become some of the most active and effective environmental defenders.

The fourth major problem is the limited investigation into the political and policy impacts of these movements. While the Chipko Movement is often credited with influencing forest policy and the Green Belt Movement with shaping Kenya's environmental governance, there remains insufficient systematic analysis of the extent to which grassroots women-led mobilisations translate into structural, long-term change. Similarly, while Indigenous women's resistance in Bolivia and the Philippines has prompted national debates about sovereignty, cultural rights, and ecological protection, the outcomes remain fragile, contested, or poorly documented. This lack of comprehensive evaluation limits our understanding of how grassroots green feminism can inform sustainable and inclusive policymaking.

Additionally, these movements face profound structural and operational challenges, including state repression, criminalisation of activists, scarcity of resources, gender-based violence, and systemic disregard for local knowledge. Yet the existing literature often focuses on moments of activism rather than the challenges activists face in sustaining long-term resistance. This results in an incomplete understanding of the barriers that hinder the continuity and expansion of women-led environmental movements.

Finally, there is a broader epistemic problem: the undervaluation of women's ecological knowledge systems. In many Indigenous and rural communities, women are the primary repositories of knowledge on biodiversity, agriculture, forest regeneration, and water management. However, modern development paradigms, scientific bureaucracies, and statecentric conservation models often dismiss or devalue this knowledge. This epistemic erasure not only weakens women's role in environmental decision-making but also undermines sustainable approaches to ecological restoration.

Given these interconnected gaps, this research seeks to comparatively examine four significant grassroots environmental movements led by marginalized women — the Chipko Movement, the Green Belt Movement, the TIPNIS mobilisation, and the Didipio anti-mining struggle — through an intersectional, ecofeminist, and cross-cultural lens. By addressing the identified problems, the study aims to illuminate how marginalized women's environmental activism reshapes ecological politics and offers alternative frameworks for sustainability grounded in justice, community, and collective resilience.

Review of Literature

The academic literature on ecofeminism and grassroots environmental mobilization by marginalized women reveals a rich record of theoretical, empirical, and critical insights. Scholars such as Muthuki (2006) ^[14] critique traditional ecofeminist theory for its universalizing assumptions and argue instead for a decolonial ecofeminism rooted in local histories and material practices, as exemplified in Kenya's Green Belt Movement. Hunt's (2014) ^[7] analysis of the Green Belt Movement highlights how rural Kenyan women engaged in collective treeplanting initiatives not merely as a symbolic gesture but as a political praxis, cultivating what she terms "power-toward" — collective empowerment and agency that challenged both environmental degradation and patriarchal structures. Kinoti (2022) ^[10] further situates the Green Belt Movement in gendered socio-economic and postcolonial contexts, showing how environmental restoration efforts were intimately bound up with community-building, democratic participation, and resistance to land dispossession. In India, feminist environmental scholars like Jain (1999) and Singh (2023) ^[8, 17] examine the Chipko Movement, emphasizing that women's tree-hugging was not a romanticized act of ecological affinity but a pragmatic response to their dependence on forest resources and the risks that deforestation posed to their livelihoods; Singh (2023) ^[17] in particular argues that women in the Chipko Movement reconfigured communal governance by asserting themselves as strategists and negotiators rather than passive caretakers. Shameer (2015) ^[16] problematizes essentialist ecofeminist narratives around Chipko by underscoring the intersection of gender with class, caste, and resource access, arguing that

women's environmental activism must be understood within structural inequalities rather than through a simplistic gender-nature binary. In Bolivia, research on the TIPNIS Indigenous mobilization (Fabricant, 2018; Hindery, 2018; Sánchez-López, 2015) ^[3, 5, 15] illustrates how indigenous women strategically employed performances of indigeneity — through ritual, symbolic march, and public demonstration — to contest the construction of a highway through their ancestral territory; Fabricant (2018) ^[3] shows that such performances invoked cosmologies as political tools, while Hindery (2018) ^[4] reveals how women used gendered assumptions (e.g., that women are less threatening) tactically during protests to reduce state violence, and Sánchez-López (2015) situates these struggles within the broader tension between citizenship, indigeneity, and environmental sovereignty. Hope (2021) ^[6] contextualizes these Bolivian struggles within anti-capitalist and anti-extractive paradigms, showing how indigenous organizations negotiate between resistance and compromise with the state to defend both ecological integrity and political rights. In the Philippines, critical scholarship (Tran, 2023; Venès, 2023) ^[18, 21] shows that marginalized women — particularly indigenous and rural women opposing mining — face severe gendered violence, criminalization, and assassinations; Tran's (2023) ^[18] global statistical analysis demonstrates that women environmental defenders in extractive zones experience disproportionately high rates of lethal attacks, while her case study highlights how red-tagging, militarization, and displacement shape Filipino women's activism. Zimmermann (2025) (though slightly beyond traditional peer-reviewed journal scopes) and similarly Venès (2023) ^[21] document how women in the Philippines persist through community organizing, relational strategies, and transnational networks, resisting authoritarian and extractive pressures. A recurring theme across this body of work is the epistemic injustice inflicted upon marginalized women: their ecological knowledge, grounded in relational, embodied, and territorial practices, is often devalued or excluded from formal environmental governance (van der Hout, 2024) ^[20].

Van der Hout (2024) ^[20] vividly describes how Bolivian women defenders weave "meshworks" of resistance that are rooted in their bodies, their memory, and their land, challenging technocratic, extractive, and colonial modes of environmental management. Although the literature richly documents individual movements, many scholars note a lack of comparative, intersectional analysis: there are few studies that systematically interrogate how identities such as gender, indigeneity, class, and caste converge to shape environmental leadership across contexts (Venès, 2023; Hope, 2021; Singh, 2023) ^[6, 17, 21].

Furthermore, while case studies offer valuable descriptive and strategic insights, there is limited longitudinal research on the policy and structural outcomes of these grassroots feminist mobilizations, especially with respect to sustainability, institutional change, and environmental justice (Kinoti, 2022; Tran, 2023) ^[10, 18]. Scholars also call for deeper exploration of how marginalized women's relational knowledge — spiritual, place-based, and intergenerational — can inform more inclusive environmental governance and challenge epistemic hegemonies (Muthuki, 2006; van der Hout, 2024) ^[14, 20]. This gap points to the need for comparative, crosscultural research that recognizes marginalized women not only as resisters of ecological harm but as knowledge-holders,

political actors, and visionaries of alternative ecological futures.

Objectives

1. To comparatively examine the leadership roles and forms of mobilisation adopted by marginalised women in four grassroots environmental movements—Chipko (India), the Green Belt Movement (Kenya), the TIPNIS Indigenous Women's Mobilisation (Bolivia), and the Didipio Anti-Mining Movement (Philippines).
2. To analyse how intersecting identities such as gender, caste, class, ethnicity, and indigeneity shape women's experiences of environmental marginalisation and influence their participation in ecological resistance movements across diverse socio-political contexts.
3. To evaluate the impacts of these movements on environmental conservation, community empowerment, and policy change, and to identify the common challenges and strategies that contribute to the effectiveness of women-led grassroots ecological activism globally.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded entirely in secondary data analysis to examine the comparative trajectories of marginalized women's grassroots environmental movements across India, Kenya, Bolivia, and the Philippines. Secondary data was collected from peer-reviewed academic journals, scholarly books, conference papers, policy documents, and archival materials available through online academic databases such as JSTOR, ScienceDirect, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, and Google Scholar. The selection of literature followed a purposive sampling strategy, ensuring the inclusion of sources that focus specifically on women-led environmental activism, ecofeminism, indigenous resistance, and grassroots political mobilization.

A thematic analysis approach was employed to synthesize and interpret the collected material. The process involved open coding to identify recurring themes such as leadership strategies, gendered environmental roles, community mobilization, political repression, intersectionality, and environmental justice. These themes were subsequently organized into broader analytical categories to facilitate cross-movement comparison. The comparative framework allows the study to highlight both similarities and contextual distinctions across the four selected movements.

To ensure rigor and credibility, the methodology incorporates data triangulation by drawing from multiple academic disciplines, including gender studies, environmental politics and development studies. The analysis remains interpretive, emphasizing contextual depth and theoretical coherence rather than generalizable statistical claims.

Results and Discussion

Historical Context and Origins of the Movements

A clear understanding of each movement's historical trajectory is foundational for a comparative analysis. The Chipko Movement originated in the 1970s in the Himalayan region of India, where hill women organized to oppose commercial logging that threatened their subsistence and local ecological stability (Jain, 1999) ^[8]. These women's protests were not spontaneous romantic gestures; rather, they emerged from deeply felt vulnerabilities to

deforestation that directly impacted their livelihoods (Jain, 1999) ^[8]. In Kenya, the Green Belt Movement (GBM), founded in 1977 by Wangari Maathai, mobilized rural women facing land degradation, deforestation, and political marginalization; through planting trees, women challenged both ecological damage and the political structures neglecting their needs (Hunt, 2014; Kinoti, 2022) ^[7, 10]. In Bolivia, the TIPNIS (Isiboro-Sécure) conflict surfaced decades later, with Indigenous women mobilizing against a proposed highway through their ancestral territory; their resistance occurred in a context of state-led extractivism and contested notions of citizenship (Sánchez-López, 2015; Fabricant, 2018) ^[3]. In the Philippines, marginalized Indigenous and rural women have been active in resisting mining companies' incursions, and recent empirical scholarship documents how their struggle has intensified in the 21st century under increasing militarization and extractive pressures (Tran, Giessen, & Kretsch, 2023) ^[19]. Across contexts, these historical trajectories reflect how women's environmental activism emerges in response to cumulative dispossession, ecological degradation, and political exclusion.

Intersectionality and Marginalised Identities

A central theme across all four case studies is the intersection of gender with class, indigeneity, rurality, and other axes of marginalisation, which shapes both the activism and lived experiences of these women. In India, women in the Chipko Movement were often from subsistence-based rural households; their leadership cannot be reduced to gender alone but must be understood in terms of social and economic vulnerability (Shameer, 2015) ^[16]. In Kenya, the GBM brought together women who were marginalized not just by gender but by landlessness, poverty, and postcolonial inequalities; these intersecting identities infused their ecofeminist mobilization with demands for land rights and political participation (Muthuki, 2006; Kinoti, 2022) ^[10, 14]. In Bolivia, Indigenous women participating in the TIPNIS protests are shaped by the intersection of indigeneity, gender, and territorial marginalisation; their protests are deeply entangled with colonial histories and modern citizenship struggles (Sánchez-López, 2015; Fabricant, 2018) ^[3]. For Filipino women environmental defenders, the intersection of being Indigenous, poor, and rural intensifies their risk exposure: studies show that women in extractive conflict zones are disproportionately exposed to gendered violence and repression (Tran, 2023; Tran *et al.*, 2023) ^[18]. This intersectional lens reveals that grassroots green feminism is not monolithic but is deeply situated in colonial legacies, socio-economic stratification, and ecological dispossession.

Leadership, Mobilisation Strategies, and Forms of Collective Action

Leadership in these movements is often rooted in bottom-up, collective practices rather than hierarchical structures. In the Chipko Movement, women did not merely symbolically hug trees; they strategized, negotiated, and organized community assemblies, challenging traditional patriarchal and communal governance structures (Singh, 2023) ^[17]. The Green Belt Movement's model hinged on "power-toward" — a shared collective capacity built through tree planting, education, and civic engagement (Hunt, 2014). Kinoti (2022) ^[7, 10] emphasizes how GBM's mobilization was deeply relational: women supported each other, formed

groups, learned agro-ecological techniques, and built trust, transforming environmental restoration into a social project. In Bolivia, TIPNIS women engaged in performative protest, using marches, ritual, and symbolism to assert indigeneity and contest modern state frames (Fabricant, 8; Hindery, 2018) ^[3]. Their strategic use of gendered symbolism — such as leveraging the expectation that women would not face violence as readily — allowed them to navigate repression tactically (Hindery, 2018) ^[5]. Filipino women resisting mining have used a combination of legal advocacy, community organizing, international solidarity, and cultural framing to resist extraction; their movement also relies on the networks of local women who share knowledge and resources while facing state harassment (Tran *et al.*, 2023; Venès, 2023) ^[18, 21].

Epistemic Politics and Environmental Knowledge Systems

Another key thematic thread is how marginalized women claim and deploy ecological knowledges, contesting dominant technocratic and colonial knowledge paradigms. In Bolivia, van der Hout (2024) ^[20] documents how Indigenous women weave “meshworks” of resistance, rooted in embodied, relational territorial politics. Their knowledge is not just intellectual but bodily — they speak of territory, memory, and intergenerational responsibility (van der Hout, 2024) ^[20]. In Kenya, Maathai and GBM participants helped legitimize communal land ethics and indigenous ecological practices over state-centred conservation models (Muthuki, 2006; Hunt, 2014) ^[7, 14]. In India’s Chipko Movement, women drew on lived ecological experience — their deep familiarity with forest cycles, water flows, and seasonal patterns — to articulate demands for community-based forest governance (Singh, 2023; Jain, 1999) ^[8, 17]. In the Philippines, marginalized women defenders’ struggle also centers on local environmental knowledge: they contest corporate narratives of “development” by foregrounding ancestral land use, sustainable practices, and community frameworks for resource management (Tran, 2023; Venès, 2023) ^[18, 21]. By centering these knowledges, these women challenge epistemic injustice — that is, the dismissal or devaluation of their ways of knowing and caring for land.

Impacts, Policy Change, and Institutional Outcomes

The comparative study reveals that women-led grassroots environmental movements have had diverse but significant impacts on policy, governance, and social empowerment. The Chipko Movement’s activism contributed to the Indian government’s re-evaluation of logging policies and helped institutionalize community-based forest governance (Singh, 2023; Jain, 1999) ^[8, 17]. In Kenya, GBM’s tree-planting and advocacy resulted in reforestation, but also elevated women’s political participation, increased environmental awareness, and influenced governance structures (Hunt, 2014; Kinoti, 2022) ^[7, 10]. In Bolivia, TIPNIS protests forced national and international attention: indigenous organizations negotiated with the state, resulting in contested but significant policy outcomes, and influenced debates about indigenous sovereignty, land rights, and infrastructure development (Sánchez-López, 2015; Hope, 2021) ^[6, 15]. In the Philippines, scholarship shows that women defenders have used legal mechanisms, international advocacy, and community mobilization to pressure companies and governments; though policy gains may be

fragile, their activism has contributed to wider recognition of environmental defenders’ rights and brought transnational visibility to extractive risks (Tran *et al.*, 2023; Venès, 2023) ^[18, 21].

Challenges, Repression, and Violence

Notwithstanding their successes, marginalized women in all four movements face severe structural and practical challenges. In the Philippines, global data indicate that women environmental defenders are disproportionately subject to lethal violence, criminalization, and state repression (Tran *et al.*, 2023) ^[18]. Women leaders are frequently “red-tagged” (accused of being part of insurgent groups), harassed, and even murdered (Tran, 2023) ^[18]. In Bolivia, TIPNIS women countered not only extractive state projects but also gendered hostility; during protests, they deployed strategic gender symbolism to mitigate state violence, but repression remained a real threat (Hindery, 2018; Fabricant, 2018) ^[3, 4]. In Kenya, while GBM empowered women, movement participants still endured patriarchy, resource scarcity, and limited political recognition (Muthuki, 2006; Kinoti, 2022) ^[10, 14]. In India, Chipko activists faced bureaucratic indifference and institutional marginalization even after large-scale mobilization; their efforts were sometimes romanticised or co-opted without structural transformation (Shameer, 2015; Singh, 2023) ^[16, 17]. Furthermore, these movements operate under broader institutional inequities: environmental governance systems often privilege technocratic, top-down models over community-led stewardship, and women’s knowledge and agency get sidelined in formal decision-making (van der Hout, 2024; Muthuki, 2006) ^[14, 20].

Comparative Insights and Theoretical Implications

The comparative approach illuminates both convergence and divergence across contexts. Across all four movements, marginalized women challenge dominant development narratives through embodied knowledge, intersectional mobilization, and relational politics. Yet, the form that resistance takes is deeply shaped by local histories: Chipko’s communal assembly-based governance, GBM’s collective tree-planting and political education, TIPNIS’s performative protest and Indigenous ritual, and the Philippines’ legal and transnational advocacy all reflect contextually specific strategies. Theoretically, this suggests that grassroots green feminism is not a monolith, but a pluriversal phenomenon — a global feminist ecology that adapts to local power structures, cultural practices, and colonial legacies. Moreover, by centering epistemic politics, these movements challenge the dominance of state-centered and corporate-driven environmental governance, demanding that marginalized women’s knowledge systems be recognized and institutionalized.

In line with the first research objective — to examine leadership and mobilisation — the analysis shows that in all four contexts, marginalized women exercised agency through collective, non-hierarchical practices and negotiated power both within communities and with external actors (Jain, 1999; Hunt, 2014; Fabricant, 2018; Tran *et al.*, 2023) ^[3, 7, 8, 18]. Regarding the second objective — exploring intersecting identities — our thematic treatment of intersectionality highlights how class, indigeneity, rural marginalization, and gender jointly shape activism and vulnerability (Muthuki, 2006; Sánchez-López, 2015; Tran, 2023) ^[14, 18]. Finally, in relation to the third objective —

evaluating impacts — the comparative analysis shows that women-led movements have effected policy shifts, strengthened community governance, and challenged epistemic hierarchies (Singh, 2023; Hope, 2021; Venès, 2023) ^[6, 17, 21], even while confronting repression and violence.

Overall, the comparative thematic analysis underscores how grassroots green feminism, as practiced by marginalised women in India, Kenya, Bolivia, and the Philippines, represents a potent form of ecological resistance that is deeply embedded in social justice, identity politics, and community-based knowledge. These movements demonstrate that environmental protection and feminist struggle are not separate: they are interwoven in strategies that draw on local histories, gendered knowledge, and collective action. While successes vary, and repression remains significant, the comparative perspective affirms the importance of centering marginalized women in environmental research, policy, and activism.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that marginalized women across diverse sociopolitical contexts have been central to shaping grassroots environmental resistance, drawing on culturally rooted ecological knowledge and collective identities to challenge structural inequities. A comparative reading of the Chipko Movement, the Green Belt Movement, the TIPNIS Indigenous Women's Mobilisation, and the Didipio Anti-Mining Movement shows that despite varied geographies and power structures, women's activism emerges from shared experiences of environmental dispossession, gendered labour, and political exclusion. Their mobilisations reveal how intersectional vulnerabilities can become sources of ecological leadership, where women transform everyday survival struggles into powerful forms of collective resistance. The analysis also illustrates that women-led movements have achieved significant contributions to conservation, community autonomy, and policy debates, even while facing state repression, patriarchal constraints, and institutional neglect. Ultimately, these movements reaffirm the transformative potential of grassroots green feminisms in advancing both environmental justice and social empowerment.

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