

is only because of the co-existence of various elements of nature that human life arose and has been sustained for so long. It is this common characteristic of nurturing that weaves an important and critical bond between nature and women, which is cemented by the very real relationship of caring that women have had with the natural world, both in achieving sustenance from nature's bounty, as well as caring for nature to ensure she can continue to do the same for all people.

At the first world conference on women in 1975, held in Mexico City, the "women and environment" issue was brought into public consciousness by the physicist Vandana Shiva, now a global environment leader (see also Schultz et al.). She reported the struggle of the Chipko Movement in the Himalayan region of India, where Chipko village women embraced the trees to protect them against threats of deforestation. It is one of the oldest environmental protests by women against government and business joint policies. Various other movements such as the Women, Environment and Development; Alliance for the Future; and Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) came up in the late 1990s.

It is evident that women are major contributors, if not the majority stakeholders, and they share equal burden in this regard. Moreover, women have proven to be effective instruments in bringing reform and adopting ecological practices on a large scale. Their stake in environment and development cannot be ignored.

Laavanya Kaushik is currently working as a Legal Counsellor at the Delhi Commission for Women, a statutory body mandated to investigate and examine all matters relating to safeguards provided for women under the constitution of India and other relevant laws. She is also completing her undergraduate degree, with double major in Arts and Law. For the past five years, she has worked with the NGO, Folks and Us Foundation.

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CHRISTINA LLOYD

ON THE CHAMPS ELYSEES

she tells me that three doctors peered in
to declare her hymen intact, that church
edict demanded such proof.

I imagine Agnes' daggered throat,
Agatha's severed breasts and this woman
splayed, her faith tested clinically.

In the Louvre I join the processional of tourists
gawking at Murillo's numb-faced Madonnas,
Fra Angelico's shocking pinks.

Christina Lloyd holds an MA in Hispanic languages and literature from U.C. Berkeley and an MA in creative writing from Lancaster University. In addition to two chapbooks, her work appears in various journals, including, The North and Meniscus. She is currently working on a Ph.D. in creative writing through Lancaster University.