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Entangled Resistance: Material Ecofeminism and Sustainable Justice in Tahmima Anam's Uprising

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ABSTRACT: According to Material Ecofeminism, Tahmima Anam's *Uprising* depicts ecological degradation, gendered violence, poverty, and institutional injustice as materially linked systems of oppression rather than isolated social problems. *Uprising* shows how environmental precarity intensifies the exploitation of underprivileged women in a climate-vulnerable floating brothel community in coastal Bangladesh while encouraging collective resistance, communal care, and ecological knowledge. Material Ecofeminism along with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are used to analyze the novel's central episodes and align them with SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Analysis shows that poverty, trafficking, food and water insecurity, unpaid care, educational marginalization, climatic vulnerability, and gender-based violence are linked extractive mechanisms that subjugate women and the environment (Alaimo, 2010). *Uprising* presents sustainability as an ethical enterprise based on dignity, ecological responsibility, social inclusion, and community care, not a developmental or technocratic goal. This study integrates contemporary ecofeminist literary criticism with the Sustainable Development Goals to contribute to interdisciplinary debates on women, ecology, climate justice, and sustainable development and show how literary narratives can illuminate socially and environmentally just futures.

INTRODUCTION

Tahmima Anam's *Uprising* (2026) depicts coastal Bangladesh's environmental disaster, gendered oppression, and structural inequity. Rising tides and persistent floods endanger Banishanta, a low-lying “floating brothel” settlement in the book. Anam shows how patriarchal economic systems drive women to work on their eroding island as monsoon floods and river erosion destroy houses and livelihoods. The plot makes the climate catastrophe a “dark antagonist,” according to one observer.

This research uses Material Ecofeminism, a modern ecofeminist paradigm that views female bodies, ecological systems, and material surroundings as linked (Halberg, 2026). Material Ecofeminism builds on the work of Stacy Alaimo, Susan Hekman, Greta Gaard, Val Plumwood, and Karen Warren to show how patriarchal, capitalist, and anthropocentric systems exploit women and the environment through shared dominance (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008). Reading *Uprising* through this lens shows that ecological degradation, gendered violence, poverty, trafficking, and social exclusion are interconnected systemic injustices.

This research analyses the narrative through UN SDG Targets and Indicators to show how literary representations reflect the transformation of gender justice, unpaid care, social exclusion, trafficking, educational empowerment, water insecurity, climate vulnerability, and institutional injustice to promote an equitable and sustainable future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Uprising: The recent publication of Tahmima Anam has got limited attention from scholars. The available scholarship on this novel recognizes it for exploring gendered oppression, ecological vulnerability along with collective resistance through the voice of marginalized community children.

The narrative is described as a powerful encouragement to female rebellion that interweaves patriarchy and community resilience through the experiences of marginalized women (The Guardian, 2026). In an interview with the *Hindustan Times*, Anam states that the novel was inspired by Banishanta, a floating brothel community of Bangladesh, emphasizing the realities of displacement, exploitation, and struggle of survival (George, 2026). Another study interprets *Uprising* through collective agency and ecofeminism, arguing that gender oppression and environmental vulnerability generate forms of community-based resistance (Patra & Munda, 2026). However, the novel has not yet been examined through the theoretical lens of Material Ecofeminism integrated with the UN SDGs, a gap that the present study addresses.

Ecofeminism: Ecofeminism examines patriarchal structures' dominance over women and nature (Gaard, 2011). Early ecofeminists like Maria Mies, Carolyn Merchant, and Vandana Shiva documented women's ecological connections and patriarchal exploitation. Modern material ecofeminism, as Alaimo and Hekman's Material Feminisms focuses more on the bodily relationship between people and the more-than-human environment (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008). Trans-corporeality examines how bodies and surroundings are physically linked; poisons “become part of us” and natural forces impact embodied experience (Tronto, 2020). Plumwood's seminal work *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* criticized polarized thinking (Man/Nature, Culture/Nature, Human/ Animal) that is behind misogyny and environmental degradation (Plumwood, 2024). She also states that patriarchal civilization exploits women and nature by objectifying those (United Nations, 2019). Gaard emphasizes intersectionality in ecofeminism, highlighting gendered oppression as race, class, and species oppression; also seeks to integrate ecofeminism with environmental justice and ecological sustainability by “species justice” techniques (Gaard, 2011). Warren advocated relationality and different voices in ecofeminism, claiming that women's oppression illuminates ecological concerns (Warren, 2000). Our interpretation of *Uprising* is based on material ecofeminism, which views the island environment, bodies, and political economy as co-constituted in Anam's story.

Recent work improves these foundations. Tokay uses Plumwood to deconstruct ethical-political dualisms and promote ecofeminism and new materialism (Tokay, 2025). Simha & Subramaniam examine “feminist ecology,” from romantic maternal nature fantasies to indigenous and queer ecologies (Simha & Subramaniam, 2025). Gilligan proposes a “feminist future for ecology” outside disciplines (Gilligan, 1993). *Uprising*'s narrative, which invokes Bon Bibi, a local nature-spirit, and emphasizes the children's collective action, appears to participate in ecofeminist imaginaries.

SDG and social justice readings: The UN's 2030 Agenda sets sustainable development standards. Scholars increasingly examine and assess SDG implementation from an intersectional viewpoint. Scholars argue that SDGs on gender and inequality cannot be separated from climate objectives (Rezai-Rashti et al. 2021).

In summary, ecofeminist theory illuminate the interconnected oppression of women and the environment, and SDGs give socio-ecological objectives. Our material ecofeminist study of *Uprising* connects a contemporary fiction to SDGs, building on this knowledge.

RESEARCH GAPS

Uprising is a recent novel, and existing scholarship on this remains limited. However, current studies primarily have focused on how it represents gender discrimination through feminist interpretations. Those works have not examined the novel through the lens of Material Ecofeminism, particularly its emphasis on the material entanglement of women's bodies, power structures, and ecological systems. Furthermore, the novel has not been systematically analyzed through the SDGs to connect its literary concerns with contemporary debates on gender justice, sustainability, and climate resilience. This study addresses these gaps by integrating Material Ecofeminism with the SDGs to contribute in an interdisciplinary reading of *Uprising*.

Research Objectives

This research aims to:

1. Examine *Uprising* by Tahmima Anam through the theoretical framework of Material Ecofeminism to explore the material entanglements among women's bodies, power structures, and ecological systems.
2. Investigate how the narrative represents the intersections of gendered violence, labor exploitation, trafficking, poverty, institutional injustice, and climate change within the context of riverine communities of Bangladesh.
3. Analyze the novel using the UN SDGs as a conceptual framework by mapping its narrative to connect SDG targets and indicators concerning sustainable development.

Theoretical Framework

The study uses Material Ecofeminism as its theoretical framework, which unites ecofeminist criticism with modern materiality (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008). It stresses on (i) Trans-corporeality – the idea that water, chemicals, and pathogens cross the skin and shape subjectivity; (ii) Anti-dualism – rejecting binary oppositions (woman/nature vs. man/culture) that legitimize dominance; and (iii) Intersectionality.

Alaimo's idea that pollution is a shared material “trace” between people and earth helps explain how ecological deterioration practically contaminates islanders' bodies (Alaimo, 2010). The concept of nature's “mastery” by Plumwood helps the readers to identify the character of Amma as replicating the role of a dominant patriarch in the communal setting of the island (Plumwood, 2024). The environmental justice of Gaard advocates the novel's portrayal of manipulation in systemic injustice, which demands change in society to support sustainable living (Gaard, 2011). Thus, Material Ecofeminism helps us in perceiving the gender connections and ecological scenes are interrelated.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The research makes use of the UN SDGs as a conceptual lens to analyze how the book discusses sustainability, social justice, and environmental responsibility in relation to *Uprising*. Rather than analyzing policy, the SDGs serve as an interdisciplinary framework in which the literary depiction of environmental degradation, gender violence, poverty, human trafficking, and education in the context of global development is analyzed. Key events in the novel are concomitant with the SDG targets that relate to its main issues.

SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, and 16 reflect the interwoven nature of the vulnerability to climate change, economic insecurity, gendered violence, environmental racism, and organized resistance. The incorporation of these targets reinforces the central claim of this research that sustainable development is an ethical process and not merely government objectives. This will be achieved by mapping the narrative incidents in the novel to SDG targets and indicators:

SDG 1 (No Poverty): Target 1.2 involves working towards the reduction of poverty in all its forms, which is evident in the economic vulnerability and exploitation faced by the members of the floating brothel community. Indicator 1.2.1 conceptually illuminates the structural poverty that constrains the women's life choices.

SDG 2 (Zero Hunger): Target 2.1 focuses on ending hunger and ensuring access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round. Indicator 2.1.2 looks for the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES).

SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being): Target 3.1 (Reduce the global maternal mortality ratio) incorporates Indicator 3.1.1 (Maternal mortality ratio). Target 3.4 aims to reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases and promotes mental health and well-being, where Indicator 3.4.2 corresponds to the suicide mortality rate.

SDG 4 (Quality Education): Target 4.1 promotes equitable quality education for all. Indicator 4.1.1 is employed conceptually to demonstrate how literacy and learning become forms of empowerment and long-term social transformation.

SDG 5 (Gender Equality): Target 5.2 (eliminating violence against women and girls) and Target 5.4 (recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work), interpreted respectively through Indicators 5.2.1 (Women subjected to intimate partner violence) and 5.4.1 (Time spent on unpaid domestic and care work).

SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation): Target 6.1 promotes universal access to safe drinking water, while Indicator 6.1.1 provides a conceptual basis for understanding unequal access to safe water as an outcome of environmental degradation. Target 6.3 (Improve water quality by reducing pollution) is supported by Indicator 6.3.2 (Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality).

SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth): Target 8.7 calls for the eradication of forced labor, modern slavery, and human trafficking. Indicator 8.7.1 is used theoretically to analyze exploitative labor systems affecting women and children.

SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities): The deliberate exclusion of sex workers and their children from social, economic, and political participation exemplifies Target 10.2, whereas Indicator 10.2.1 stresses the more general principle of inclusion within development and social participation.

SDG 13 (Climate Action): The rising sea level, cyclones, river erosions, and salinity in the novel are a clear depiction of Target 13.1 that underscores resilience and adaptability to climate-related risks. Indicator 13.1.1 lays the theoretical framework of seeing environmental vulnerability in the perspective of climate justice.

SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions): The lack of any form of legal protection, violence, and neglect are related to the Targets 16.1 and 16.3, based on Indicators 16.1.3 and 16.3.1 that assess the link between structural violence, injustice and sustainable peace.

The targets and indicators are presented in Table 1 below; each being linked to particular evidence from the text of *Uprising*. The purpose is not to measure the extent of literary representation but rather to show how the novel foresees many of the key ethical, environmental, and social concerns depicted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Analysis

The discussion is structured around four sub-themes based on the central themes found in the novel. The focus here will be on how Anam's book brings out certain aspects of our theoretical/conceptual framework.

Gendered Bodies & Ecological Precarity

In Anam's *Uprising*, there is always an association between women's bodily fragility and environmental fragility. With the increase in the level of sea, there comes a risk of flooding for the colony of floating brothels; and Anam says in the beginning of her book that "The island had been shrinking and getting poorer, and the river was slowly eating away at it." (Anam, 2026, p.10) Climate-caused erosion has been shown in Farid's story: "Erosion ate his land, the freshwater turned into saline, and mustard no longer grew." (Anam, 2026, p.54). The sections demonstrate the impact of crumbling embankments and lack of adaptation on fragile livelihoods, highlighting SDG 13.1 - improving resilience to climate threats. These scenarios align with SDG Target 13.1, operationalized through Indicator 13.1.1. The indicator is quantitative in policy contexts but conceptually shows how recurrent flooding, riverbank erosion, saline intrusion, and displacement disproportionately affect marginalized women whose lives are removed from institutional disaster planning.

Female bodies are equally vulnerable as the environment. Kusum advises the girls to defy an exploitative, unprofessional lady who was called in to abort their pregnancy, as the children recall, "And so, in those months of pregnancy, fists punched us from outside, knives hunted us from inside" (Anam, 2026, pp. 59-60). Later, amidst labor pains, the children describe how they washed Kusum's wounds with river water and delivered her baby without intervention, "and we'd watched the water turn pink and then we'd thrown it into the river ourselves" (Anam, 2026, p. 61). The lack of institutional childbirth care highlights ecological vulnerability and bodily precarity. The program shows how disadvantaged women are denied safe maternity healthcare amid environmental catastrophes, demonstrating gendered care and resilience and supporting Target 3.1 along with 3.1.1, which promotes reducing the global maternal mortality ratio.

Pink river water from Kusum's blood is "thrown into the river," indicating body fluids and river stuff combining. Alaimo's trans-corporeality—body fluids and river waters move among bodies—shows how women's corporeality is connected to the environment. In the narrative, physical and environmental changes are interconnected, illustrating the concept that nothing is outside of it.

In the children's stories, sex labor depicts women's bodies as locations of exploitation and environmental indicators. The children are told, "...you are nothing more than the children of the island", emphasizing their connection to the land (Anam, 2026, p. 4). The phrase "We knew that the work was something that was paid for in money, and also in bodies. We knew that the women sold the work and the men bought it." directly ties money and bodies (Anam, 2026, p. 5). This passage highlights structural poverty and sexual exploitation. Transactional sex is essential to women's survival, which aligns with SDG Target 1.2's goal to eradicate all forms of poverty, supported by Indicator 1.2.1. The narrative shows prostitution as a result of ecological displacement, economic suffering, and a lack of sustainable livelihoods. When floods rise, "...all the food had run out and our mothers lined the shore, desperate for customers", suggesting that environmental circumstances impair women's economic stability through the income from the clients (Anam, 2026, p. 10). Environmental instability interrupts income, forces struggles for managing food, supporting SDG Target 2.1 and 8.7, connecting Indicator 2.1.2 and 8.7.1. It shows how climate-vulnerable economies entrench exploitative labor and trafficking. Material ecofeminism shows that environmental degradation destabilizes livelihoods and commodifies women's bodies.

These narrative aspects reinforce a tangible ecofeminist insight: patriarchy degrades women and environment. Patriarchal trafficking consumes women's autonomy like rising waters cover farmland. Island sinking mirrors women's debt and debt-bondage, "Amma gave each of our mothers a small loan until the monsoon passed." (Anam, 2026, p. 10). As women face continual sexual exploitation and gender-based violence in an institutional context that normalizes coercion, SDG Target 5.2, interpreted by Indicator 5.2.1, is also reflected in this material convergence. Ecofeminist philosophy emphasizes material entanglements, since their oppression is ecological, economic, and patriarchal. In Plumwood's criticism, "masters" (Amma/the Dictator) govern both female bodies and the natural environment, threatening both (Plumwood, 2024). The narrative is metaphoric while talking about nature's wrath (island as "cursed", river as "hungry"), yet climate change and governmental negligence are human-caused.

Climate challenges align with SDG 13 aims, emphasizing the requirement for adaptive ability (SDG 13.1) and especially on women (SDG 13.b). In particular, goal 13.b requires climate management, including focusing on women, youth, and local and marginalized communities. "... we were chorer- meye (Daughter of thieves)... Soon to be our mothers." expresses how disadvantaged coastal women are (Anam, 2026, p. 10). "No one told us to move, knowing we would refuse" in the tale emphasizes authorities' passive negligence (Anam, 2026, p. 191). This subject highlights the disproportionate effects of climate-related risks on vulnerable coastal communities, aligning with SDG Target 13.1 and Indicator 13.1.1. Similarly, SDG Target 10.2, interpreted through Indicator 10.2.1, emphasizes social, economic, and political inclusion, while sex workers and their children are marginalized. The community's isolation from catastrophe response, public acknowledgment, and institutional protection shows that environmental fragility and social inequality are linked.

Uprising embodies ecofeminist theory by combining ecological harm and gender oppression. Women face famine, salt intrusion, and violence as the land subsides: "the water was eating land from the south... the fresh water was turning to salt" (Anam, 2026, p. 54). Saline intrusion and worsening access to clean water highlight coastal women's disproportionate environmental costs, which align with SDG Target 6.1, conceptualized by Indicator 6.1.1. Kusum's informal education and caring anticipate SDG Target 4.1's transformational potential along with Indicator 4.1.1, as the children narrate, "...our education with Kusum had continued, we repeated the words she had taught us" showing that education is vital for ending intergenerational cycles of poverty, exploitation, and ecological fragility (Anam, 2026, p. 54). Literacy is seen as an emancipatory ecofeminist practice that can change lives and society. This confirms ecofeminist belief that information and voice, not force, are necessary to overthrow injustice. These depictions support ecofeminist claims that "in a heated climate" animal devastation and human precarity blend and highlight women's climate fragility (Brault, 2017). These representations show that *Uprising* conceptualizes sustainability through climate vulnerability, gendered violence, poverty, water insecurity, and community care. Thus, Material Ecofeminism lets the novel see ecological and social justice as interdependent ethical undertakings. We base ecofeminist theory on Anam's characters' experience by noting these scenes.

Marginalization, Labor & Structural Inequality

Uprising shows sex workers' socioeconomic marginalization and labor abuse in a patriarchal environment. The novel's children say their mothers were trafficked and coerced to the island: "They told us they had left their villages with smiles... brought with their hands tied behind their backs, blindfolded". Anam points out that those women being fooled by "rice and shoes" were

driven into debt-slavery (Anam, 2026, p. 4). Indicator 8.7.1 of SDG Target 8.7 to end forced labor, modern slavery, and human trafficking applies to this trafficking. The women's sexual exploitation reflects SDG Target 5.2 and Indicator 5.2.1, showing how trafficking and gender-based violence reinforce patriarchal oppression.

On the island, Amma institutionalizes women's economic work. An economy of debt ties them, "...a man would pay three hundred taka to our mothers. Our mothers would give one hundred to Amma, and they would give us ten ..." (Anam, 2026, p. 6). This shows structural inequality: women's work worth is sucked off, impoverishing them. SDG Target 1.2, evaluated through Indicator 1.2.1, matches this exploitative economic framework since debt bondage institutionalizes chronic poverty rather than individual economic failure. The structural poverty caused by patriarchal labor regimes prevents women from accumulating riches or escaping enslavement. Not surprisingly, children know their mothers "owed thousands of taka" and that even tiny candies are on credit (Anam, 2026, p. 4). Amma enforces an internal economy that converts women's salaries into "patriarchal debt" (Kabeer, 2023). SDG Target 10.2, interpreted by Indicator 10.2.1, prioritizes disadvantaged communities' social, economic, and political inclusion, which corresponds with this exploitative system. Women and their children are stigmatized, showing how structural exclusion maintains inequality beyond poverty.

Interpersonal objectification shows gender inequity. "Now, at last, they were seen. People – men – stared straight into their eyes, at their breasts." introduces the women as sexual commodities (Anam, 2026, p. 6). Ironically, this refers to their bodies as objects of desire, not functioning humans. An ecofeminist compares this objectification of women's bodies to nature. Both situations include usefulness (breasts or shrimp farming land), not intrinsic value. Material Ecofeminism views commercialization as an extractive logic that turns women's bodies into consumable commodities, like damaged ecosystems. Ecofeminist criticism is reinforced by the novel's depiction of patriarchal economics' commodification of natural systems and female corporeality.

Labor-inequality links class and ethnicity. Amma's terrible history (branded as "Sokina" - ironically meaning "peaceful") shows intersectionality. Children say victims are Bengali and Garo, highlighting ethnicity, caste, and poverty. Gaard's ecofeminism notes how poverty, race, and gender all contribute to women's exploitation. SDG Target 10.2 and Indicator 10.2.1 show how gender, class, ethnicity, occupation, and geographical vulnerability intersect to marginalize. Inequality in climate-vulnerable areas is shown through many mechanisms of disadvantage.

Avoiding additional medicines, concealing Kusum's pregnancy, and sharing information are little acts of resistance to this framework. Eventually, only the uprising can bring justice. Kusum's refusal to give up her pregnancy, her acts of mutual care, and the women's collective resistance also fulfil SDG Target 5.4, interpreted through Indicator 5.4.1, as caregiving becomes a political agency that sustains community resilience under structural violence. As one feminist organizer puts it, "systems of oppression conspire to trap the poorest women" (Frye, 1983). *Uprising* dramatizes this by showing how socio-economic constraints control even basic agency (marriage prospects, sending sons away). When Kusum says, "Farid has promised to marry me" Amma laughed. "No one, not even a dog, is coming for you, Amma scolded." (Anam, 2026, p. 60).

Labor is both physical and communal. Children help their mothers; mothers protect their children. The children say about their mother, "...when they would rise... we would greet them with smiles and warm rice." (Anam, 2026, p. 4). Another scene explains, "Our mothers couldn't help themselves. They protected their little buds of hope..." (Anam, 2026, p. 109). Moreover, mutual caring contributes to achieving SDG Target 5.4 (Indicator 5.4.1) since it emphasizes that unpaid care is vital and overlooked labor which sustains communities in spite of neglectful treatment. It is evident how gender, work, poverty, and ecological vulnerability are interconnected in floating brothels. Finally, it becomes clear from the film that genuine justice requires dismantling all the interconnected mechanisms of discrimination, environmental abuse, trafficking, and social exclusion.

Collective Resistance as Ecofeminist Agency

The mothers and children's rebellion against Amma in the story *Uprising* is an example of ecofeminist agency. The novel's camaraderie, revolt, and ritual reflect ecofeminist concepts of communal empowerment and alternate futures.

Anam makes Kusum a catalyst, an educated girl who disrupts conventions. She felt like "becoming a small organ in a living, breathing being" when she yelled in Dhaka rallies against the Dictator (Anam, 2026, p. 24). This resembles community involvement. As Kusum returns to the island to teach literacy and singing, the mothers and girls change. A scene depicts the

children's uprising: "When the men came to reclaim the island, we stood rooted in place with our eyes closed, unable to watch." (Anam, 2026, p. 162). Patriarchal brutality is met with empowered, collective, and defiant violence. SDG Target 16.3, expressed by Indicator 16.3.1, is reflected in the collective revolt as women and children seek justice without legal protection. Instead of institutional backing, community solidarity fuels their opposition, revealing systemic flaws in justice and equality.

Rebellion is often depicted as physical, emotional, and spiritual. Storms during the revolt are nearly sentient allies. After children burned cottages to capture invaders, "As the fires started on the huts...it started to rain." (Anam, 2026, p. 162). Ecofeminist symbolism suggests that the earth or the mother planet answers the daughters' uprising. Another scene reflects their belief on the nature, "Bon Bibi would remain eternal, and eternally ours." (Anam, 2026, p. 192). Kusum learns about Bon Bibi from the children, "Bon Bibi protects us. She's the daughter of the forest." (Anam, 2026, p. 74). In another scene, she states, "It's true, I am Bon Bibi! Kusum laughed. The daughter of the forest, come to save you." (Anam, 2026, p. 180). Material Ecofeminism sees this human resistance-ecological force confluence as a material connection, not a coincidence. The storm follows the revolt and supports the novel's claim that natural processes and human conflicts are interdependent, challenging anthropocentric ideas that separate nature from politics. The revolution is human and elemental, like ecofeminist perspectives where ecological forces combine human conflicts.

Most importantly, the mothers of the narrative have collective solidarity. The rebellion unites generations of women. The children narrate, "We shouted curses and spit and hit and slapped Amma...maybe this is where she would die...buried in the wet earth of her own land." (Anam, 2026, p. 163). Again they say, "We held Amma down and almost killed her..." (Anam, 2026, p. 167). A narrative twist of a storm saves Amma from their revenge, and she manages to escape. Yet the moment and storm have irreparably broken her power. As collective resistance breaks the pattern of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation that had ruled the floating brothel community for centuries, SDG Target 5.2 and Indicator 5.2.1 are shown.

Children rescue their mothers in the storm. Indicator 5.4.1 shows that care is reciprocal, collaborative, and socially transformational rather than a private home responsibility, showing SDG Target 5.4. Caregiving becomes the ethical underpinning of communal resilience in Material Ecofeminism. Contrary to saltwater menace, it suggests calm, pleasant water as life-giving again. Community cohesion was tested and changed. After Kusum is lost to the storm, the mothers and daughters unite.

Ecofeminist agency is local, embodied, and liberates people and the land. Amma confesses, "Well, here is Kusum's mother, and she was the one who sold her to me." (Anam, 2026, p. 189). Learning the truth that her mother sold her to get rid of their debts, Kusum refuses to forsake the island's women and her mother's advocacy. Even when she is asked to go, she stays and demands justice by forcing Amma to provide money. Kusum's leadership and the mothers' collective resistance fulfill SDG Target 5.4 and Indicator 5.4.1 by turning care into political action. This also advances SDG Target 16.3 and Indicator 16.3.1 by fighting for justice beyond failed institutional structures. Their unity strengthens SDG Target 10.2 and Indicator 10.2.1 by restoring dignity and social engagement to marginalized populations.

Uprising portrays collective resistance as relational from an ecofeminist standpoint. *Uprising*, as well as its consequences, such as storm-driven insurrection, the bravery of mothers, and hymns, represent an ecofeminist radical agency re-thinking process. "Women have constructed themselves as 'the wall of women' in their refusal to be victims" (Anam, 2026, p. 127). Thus, the story portrays a group of women who stand up for themselves, which is consistent with regular movements and climate justice theory. *Uprising* demonstrates institutional violence and injustice in vulnerable communities, furthering SDG targets 16.1 and 16.3, based on indicators 16.1.3 and 16.3.1. The story portrays how justice can appear as a result of community care and solidarity, when the institutions cannot provide protection to women. *Uprising* proves that the way to build ecological resilience lies in dismantling gender-based violence, social inequalities, and institutional negligence, broadening sustainable development theories. Moreover, *Uprising* suggests achieving justice through non-institutional cooperation.

Reimagining Sustainable Justice

In the last part of *Uprising*, these characters dream of sustainable justice in the form of communal compassion and ecological harmony rather than patriarchal law. The storm drowns the island, symbolizing a new beginning. In addition, myths and teachings come with survival on boats that embody positive endings. These youths grew up to become educated and earned a living in a way that "no one knew where we had been, or the things we had seen" in the coming years (Anam, 2026, p. 193).

SDGs 1, 4, and 10 assist them in ascending to self-determination from the state of being marginalized by birth. Education, respectability, and social mobility indicate sustainable justice as something that gives people agency and human dignity besides mere survival. Transformation of identity: “Of our days of protest, we remember everything... we taught our mothers... how they would rise from the smoke of their biris and smile at us as if we had just shown them God” (Anam, 2026, p. 193).

collective memory values justice as knowledge. Letters and songs help the mothers understand their battle as a common fight, not sin. Music by Kusum “set our souls free,” signifying cultural independence (Anam, 2026, p. 193). They accept the ecofeminist fact that “none of it had happened through any fault of theirs” critically (Anam, 2026, p. 193). As it shifts responsibility from victims to oppressive systems (Ammam, class, patriarchy), this awareness brings psychological and social justice. Since justice is rebuilt through communal dignity rather than formal legal institutions, this shift aligns best with SDG Target 16.3, defined through Indicator 16.3.1. Their joint learning, caring, and support exemplify SDG Target 5.4 and Indicator 5.4.1, showing that care is a revolutionary political practice that may heal fragmented communities.

An island handed back to nature, youngsters inventing “another story to ourselves” concludes the book, suggesting an escape from unsustainable cycles (Anam, 2026, p. 193). The corrupt order is left “for good” (“we told another story to ourselves. “Our story cannot end without Kusum and Amma.”) (Anam, 2026, p. 193). This new story emphasizes self-determination and community. By imagining the social participation of women and children historically excluded from public life, this new narrative supports SDG Target 10.2 and Indicator 10.2.1. Instead of shame, survivors build dignity, solidarity, and community. The communal togetherness and storm break Amma's authority, not an institutional trial or punishment. Ecofeminists advocate collaborative, restorative justice above patriarchal institutions. Kusum's educational legacy supports SDG Target 4.1, expressed by Indicator 4.1.1, since literacy helps future generations avoid poverty, trafficking, and social marginalization.

Oral history maintains resistance as legendary liberty. Telling stories promotes sustainable culture-building, aligning with SDG-13's focus on local knowledge and SDG-5's empowerment. Stories retain cultural memory and resilience throughout generations. The paper reiterates SDG Targets 4.1 and Indicator 4.1.1 by transmitting emancipatory knowledge, 10.2 and Indicator 10.2.1 by restoring marginalized voices to collective history. Target 13.1 and Indicator 13.1.1 preserve local climate vulnerability experiences as ecological knowledge. At the end, education, local livelihoods, and diaspora (cities) suggest a more resilient, just society from the ashes. Ecofeminism suggests that a new world can burn bright from the fires of injustice; transformative change is conceivable.

Overall, *Uprising* refuses to dissociate ecological sustainability from social justice. It shows that climate resilience requires poverty eradication, educational expansion, care work recognition, trafficking and gender-based violence elimination, and equitable access to safe water, inclusive participation, and meaningful justice. The novel integrates SDGs 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, and 16 into a coherent ethical vision of collective care, ecological responsibility, and structural transformation as mutually reinforcing foundations of sustainable futures through Material Ecofeminism and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Analysis of Findings

The following conclusions are from a thematic textual coding of *Uprising* using Material Ecofeminism and the UN SDGs. The study found patterns of material entanglement throughout the book and structured them into analytical codes rather than considering its social, ecological, and political issues as distinct categories. These codes—ecological precarity, bodily vulnerability, trafficking and labor exploitation, poverty, water insecurity, unpaid care, educational resistance, social exclusion, collective agency, and sustainable justice—are based on specific textual episodes and interpreted through SDG conceptual vocabulary. The coding technique illustrates that *Uprising* perceives environmental degradation, gender-based violence, structural oppression, and institutional negligence as interrelated forms of oppression as opposed to different issues. From the perspective of Material Ecofeminism, it is clear from the book that the female body, the natural environment, and the social institution are continuously overlapping since patriarchal and exploitative regimes perpetuate violence against both women and nature. In light of the identified themes, this study operationalizes SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, and 16 through targets and indicators. Climate vulnerability, gender-based violence, human trafficking, education empowerment, water insecurity, poverty, social marginalization, and institutional oppression in the literary works have been conceptualized within the context of contemporary sustainable development goals. These have been presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Analysis of Findings: Material Ecofeminism and SDG Alignment in Uprising

Material Ecofeminist Concept	Textual Evidence/s	SDG Targets	SDG Indicators
Economic Vulnerability and Survival Labor	Women repeatedly explain that prostitution is the only available means of survival after losing livelihoods and social support.	1.2 8.5	1.2.1 8.5.2
Ecological Poverty and Survival	The child narrator explains that the women survive by selling their bodies because "the work was something that was paid for in money, and also in bodies. We knew that the women sold the work and the men bought it." (Anam, 2026, p. 10).	1.2	1.2.1
Food Insecurity and Everyday Survival	After the floods, the children complain about their meals: "Why is it always the same. You're a terrible cook. Where is the meat." (Anam, 2026, p. 47).	2.1	2.1.2
Embodied Maternal Care and Health Justice	Kusum refused to abort her child and later the children nurse her wound during her childbirth.	3.1	3.1.1
Embodied Trauma and Physical Violence	Sokina's father forces her to bend over while "holding the branding iron into the fire," permanently scarring her body before she is later trafficked (Anam, 2026, p. 43).	3.4	3.4.2
Right to Education as Resistance Knowledge, Care and Community Empowerment	Kusum repeatedly teaches children the alphabet and explains, "Because there are other things to learn. Things you will need in the world." (Anam, 2026, p. 47).	4.1 5.5	4.1.1 5.5.1
Gender-Based Discrimination and Patriarchal Son Preference	After the birth of Kusum's son, the attitudes of those around her shift, exposing how motherhood—and especially the birth of a male child—reshapes a woman's perceived social value.	5.1	5.1.1
Material Exploitation of Women's Bodies	Sokina's father brands her with a heated iron before she is eventually forced into prostitution, an act that transforms bodily violation into economic commodification (Anam, 2026, p. 43–44).	5.2	5.2.1
Gendered Care and Community Survival	Kusum teaches literacy, prepares food and creates a safe learning environment for children despite social stigma (Anam, 2026, p. 45–47).	5.4	5.4.1
Collective Agency and Feminist Resistance	During the uprising, Kusum experiences herself as "becoming a small organ in a living, breathing being." (Anam, 2026, p. 24).	5.5	5.5.1
Sustainable Futures through Care	Kusum's continuing commitment to educating children despite poverty and social stigma culminates in her insistence	5.5 10.2 13.1 16.3	5.5.1 10.2.1 13.1.1 16.3.1

	that they prepare for "the world" beyond Mongla (Anam, 2026, p. 47).		
Water Insecurity and Climate Change	Kusum explains the floods and the children ask "why the water came up salty in the tube well now." She further explains, "The waters are rising everywhere... Because humans are greedy, and we spoiled the air and the water." (Anam, 2026, p. 47).	6.1	6.1.1
Trans-corporeality and Water Justice	The Children recall, "washed wounds... watched the water turn pink and then we'd thrown it into the river ourselves" (Anam, 2026, p. 61)	6.3	6.3.2
Trafficking and Bodily Commodification	Sokina is deceived and sold into the floating brothel, where girls are purchased, controlled and sexually exploited by criminal networks.	8.7	8.7.1
Trafficking, Exploitative Labour, and Bodily Commodification	The children understand that "the women sold the work and the men bought it," while Kusum herself becomes known as "the Flower of Mongla," for whom "the men paid extra" (Anam, 2026, pp. 10, 45).	8.7	8.7.1
Structural Marginalization and Social Exclusion	Kusum reminds the children, "Just because we are pigs doesn't mean we have to live in shit." (Anam, 2026, p. 45).	10.2	10.2.1
Intersectional Solidarity	The movement transforms social divisions as "the streets made them equal. The students and the daughters of fruit sellers were one and the same." (Anam, 2026, p. 26).	10.2	10.2.1
Trans-corporeality (Human–Environment Entanglement)	Kusum rejects fatalistic explanations for flooding by explaining that "The waters are rising everywhere... Because humans are greedy, and we spoiled the air and the water. But here, in Mongla, it's worse." (Anam, 2026, p. 47).	13.1	13.1.1
Ecological Embodiment	The narrator describes Mongla as "a place of broken things" where "the people inside the huts... were the most broken of all." (Anam, 2026, p. 28).	13.1	13.1.1
Environmental Justice	When the children believe flooding occurs because "God hates us," Kusum replies, "God doesn't hate your mothers." She instead attributes the disaster to human greed (Anam, 2026, pp. 46–47).	13.1	13.1.1
Institutional Violence and Injustice	The narrator observes that "the bullet had known exactly where to cause the most pain." (Anam 27).	16.1 16.3	16.1.3 16.3.1

DISCUSSION

The Material Ecofeminism theory posits that the environment, gender violence, and social inequalities are inter-related, evidenced in *Uprising*. Ecological disasters exacerbate economic vulnerabilities and sustain patriarchy instead of providing just the backdrop. Material Ecofeminism views the interconnection of material relations between human bodies, ecological system, and politics as giving rise to violence towards women and the destruction of nature through the same exploitative process. Rivers and storms define the social vulnerability and collective response in Anam.

This narrative uses the UN SDGs in order to demonstrate how literature can uncover the ethical dimensions of sustainable development. According to textual analysis, there are several SDG connections related to poverty, education, gender equality, environmental justice, and social inclusion, representing practical aspects rather than policy-oriented issues. Poverty leads to exploitation, education serves as resistance, and the failure of institutions in dealing with trafficking and environmental displacement is criticized, showing that it is only community solidarity that can bring justice.

This novel addresses marginalized groups of people by integrating issues of labor exploitation and neglect of institutions into ecofeminist discourse on environmental justice. *Uprising* is a response to the institution-based approach to development by calling for grassroots action and knowledge, and by providing care ethics for social movements. It redefines sustainability in terms of an ethical relationship among people, place, and power as well as argues that ecological sustainability and social justice cannot be separated. The contribution of Anam's novel to ecofeminist discourse is that literature can imagine sustainable future.

Relevance to Contemporary World

The book addresses the very pressing problems of our time such as climate migration, gender violence, human trafficking, water shortage, poverty and the marginalization of disadvantaged groups. By means of the concepts of Material Ecofeminism and SDGs, the novel shows that these phenomena should not be considered separately.

The relevance of the novel is that it contests prevailing development discourses in which infrastructure and growth are emphasized but which ignore communities that exist outside of recognized governance and societal structures. The stress that *Uprising* places on community care, education, environmental sustainability, and resistance makes explicit the moral imperatives underlying the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and shows that sustainability involves more than just protecting the environment; it requires dignity, inclusiveness, justice, and the representation of the disenfranchised.

Future Scope

This study creates various opportunities for future interdisciplinary research between literature, ecofeminism, and sustainable development. Although this current research concentrates on *Uprising* within the scope of Material Ecofeminism and the Sustainable Development Goals, future researches can develop this topic in the context of Tahmima Anam's other novels or any other South Asian literary works which talk about climate change, migration, gender labor, and environmental justice. Research based on comparative analysis of climate fiction from the Global South can also help in understanding how literature contributes to discussions on sustainability and ecological ethics in the present day world. Moreover, future researches can include Material Ecofeminism in conjunction with other theoretical perspectives such as Blue Humanities, Environmental Justice, Feminist Political Ecology, or Posthumanism in order to understand changing dynamics between women, ecological environment, and sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

Uprising by Tahmima Anam proves that literature can help understand the material entanglement of ecology, gender, labor, poverty, and justice that make up the sustainability challenges of today. Using the theory of Material Ecofeminism, the present study has shown that the novel breaks down the conventional distinctions between the bodies of women, environment, and institutions in question, pointing to the fact that degradation of the environment and patriarchal violence are a product of interrelated systems of dominance. Connecting this theory to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as an analytical framework allowed to prove that *Uprising* is relevant for SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, and 16, showing how climate vulnerability, trafficking, lack of water access, unpaid care, education empowerment, social exclusion, and institutional injustice define the lives of vulnerable women. These problems are not presented as separate problems, but rather as interlinked circumstances that call for interlinked solutions.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the concept of *Uprising* reinterprets sustainability as a moral venture based on communal care, ecological accountability, and social justice. It is through community solidarity, education, resistance, and restoration of human dignity rather than solely through institutional power that transformation occurs, as per the novel's suggestion. With regard to the dialogue between Material Ecofeminism and Sustainable Development Goals, the study provides a framework of literary analysis that bridges text analysis with issues of climate justice and sustainable development. In doing so, it demonstrates that literary narratives are not merely reflections of environmental and social crises but active sites for imagining more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable futures, reaffirming the central principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that no individual or community should be left behind.

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