

The Female Writers in Indian Women Writing

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Abstract—Since many critics focus on the literary portrayal of contemporary Indian women's issues, whether they are psychological, emotional, social, or economic in nature, the contribution of female authors to Indo-English literature has significantly increased. Women's literature is mostly or exclusively focused on in-depth explorations of more basic subjects, such as cross-cultural conflict. Within the well-defined "sphere of women," the female authors choose their subjects. A woman is given major priority and her connection with a man—often her husband—is the most touched upon. As a result, authors began challenging conventional pictures by delving into the meaning of a single experience; a feeling or attitude based on a moment or moments of rebellion. In addition, some tales describe the experiences of young women or girls transitioning into adulthood. While these constellations are undoubtedly similar to those of previous authors, there is one notable difference: women are frequently depicted as disturbed or even questioned, or as having a strained relationship with men. This is known as a feministic trend, and it often results from the woman's search for a meaningful life in society, whether it be in her career or in her social activities outside the home.

Key words: feminism, Individuality, womanhood, disempowerment, Rights of Woman

INTRODUCTION

Mary Wollstonecraft's "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792), which marked the beginning of the movement for women's empowerment in the late 18th century, was equivocal in character since it attempted to study gender interactions in the binary of male and female. Mary Wollstonecraft was the poet Shelley's mother-in-law and the spouse of philosopher William Godwin. Her whole life and body of work was a continuous protest against the systems that only allowed women to have the identity that they had inherited from males. In her work, she ties the political subordination of women to the body and pinpoints it as the site of a woman's disempowerment. Marriage, according to her, is "legal prostitution." "The

Subjection of Women" was written by John Stuart Mill in 1869. He supports social and legal equality for both men and women. One facet of Mill's conviction that individual liberty is vital to the advancement of society was his empathetic stance toward feminism. He wrote his book to show the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes – the legal subordination of one sex to the other – is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting not power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other.

In the past, women were not given the opportunity to explain the society, problems pertaining to human growth, and historical period of their globe. Women were never in a position to drastically alter the prejudiced environment. That is most likely the reason why no woman has developed a magnificent ideology or philosophical religious system that might serve as the foundation for the reformative ideals of human civilization. But America deserves the credit for having a well-organized women's rights movement. The Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolution, which was drafted and signed in Seneca Falls, New York's Obscure Village in 1818, called for women's suffrage and ushered in a new period of social and political change.

In the 1920s there were clear signs of new and different approaches in relation to women writers and literature. This was noticeable in Virginia Woolf's on essays on women authors who suffered from economic and cultural disadvantages in what she termed a „Patriarchal Society“. Her book „A Room of One's Own“ (1929) was to become a classic document of the feminist critical movement. She advocates herself to the issues of why there were so few women writers and why it is frequently difficult or impossible for a woman to write. Dorothy Richardson's very important twelve-volume stream of consciousness novel "Pilgrimage", the first volume of which appeared in 1915 (and the last posthumously in 1967), centre on

the female consciousness of the heroine. According to feminist theory, the subordination of women originated in primitive societies in which women served as objects of exchange between father dominated families that forward alliances, through marriages. Michael Ryan remarks, "The assumed norms in many societies are for women to be in charge of domestic labour and child rearing while men engage in more public concerns."³ The male domination results into male violence against women. Obviously, the question arises why women have been treated as subordinate to men. However, with the advent of new millennium the globalized world has become so small and compact. The woman of today is growing in height, in status, in leadership. She enjoys freedom in social, economic, judicial and personal strides crossing the threshold of house. She is steadily progressing in every walk of life. But the greatest problem woman is that she is a „woman“. She is shackled in the chains of traditions, conventions and age old social barriers. Today she is riding two boats simultaneously. She moves forward to new achievements, new avenues and new realms.

The liberal feminist method has been prevalent in India, where existing organizations have been used to organize action. Anita Desai has established herself as one of the leading authors who has made a substantial contribution to Indian fiction. She investigates the troubled mind of contemporary Indian women. Her female characters attempt to reconcile their innate desires with their academic goals. Deeply worn out by this trapeze, etc., they become even more confused when the existential absurdity of life is revealed to them. They experience loneliness, a lack of communication, and a lack of communality. Finally, when institutional and masculine pressure is added to make these problems worse, they are brought to mental crises. In her debut book, "Cry, the Peacock," published in 1980, Anita Desai tells the tale of Maya, a young, sensitive girl who is consumed by a childhood prophecy of calamity and whose intense sensitivity manifests as unfathomable loneliness. By revealing Maya and Gautam's relationship, the narrative opens with a focus on the issue of husband-wife estrangement. Mrs. Desai examines the unsettling emotional realm of the neurotic brought on by marital strife in her book. "He was not on my side at all, but across a river, across a mountain, and would always remain so," complains Maya, who is unable to speak

to the frigid Gautama (Cry, 131). The novel's central topic is the estrangement between husband and wife brought on by their temperamental differences, which is a significant existentialist issue.

One of the major of Anita Desai is Sita in the novel 'Where shall We Go this Summer', a novel that displays the great artistic sense of the age of characterization of the novelist. She presents the protagonist as a pessimistic and whimsical victim of situation. Her sharp sense puts her in troubles. People seem to her like Pariahs- "They are nothing-nothing but appetite and sex. Only food, sex and money matter, animals." Another prominent novelist is Nayantara Sehgal who in her novels presents the emergence of the new women who is no longer "a sex object and glamour girl, fed on fake dreams of perpetual youth lulled into a passive role that requires no individuality," but someone who can claim to be man's equal partner. Different types of married women are presented in Sehgal's novels. Saroj in 'Storm in Chandigarh,' Rashmi in 'This time of Morning', Simrit in 'The Day in Shadow' and Bushan Singh's mother in 'Mistaken Identity,' all have a mind and will of their own, and they are brave enough to question the established norms of conventional marriage.

The female characters in Sehgal's „This Time of Morning“ are products of a changed social condition in India and they emerge as characters endowed with greater individuality. Rashmi, the only daughter of Kailas and Mira, comes back to her parents, having deserted by discontented husband Dalip, an I.A.S. officer, contemplating divorce. Rakesh, her childhood friend, meeting Rashmi after a long interval observes "Now she looks displaced. It was marriage then, that had altered her, made her a moth trapped in cement. " She renews her relationship with Rakesh "who had been closer than a brother, more than a brother, more than a friend". Thus she accepts Rakesh as a true companion. Similarly, Saroj in 'Storm in Chandigarh' is unhappy, not been able to find a reciprocal emotional involvement with her husband Inder. Besides, the temperamental incompatibilities of the pair vitiate further their conjugal relationship. Brought up by fairly liberal parents, Saroj has a premarital affair in her college days which she confides to her husband Inder, hoping for a clean break from the past. Unfortunately to Inder her confession makes beginning of a nagging suspicion. Even after four

years of marriage with Saroj, and having two children, Inder continues to harbor a deep-seated doubt with regard to Saroj's loyalty and brutally torments her with questions on her premarital relationship, while he himself indulges in an affair with their children's teacher Mera. He believes in two codes of conduct obviously, One for men and another for women. To Inder, "A wife was one half of an enterprise, the complaint partner who presided over home and children and furthered her husband's career 8" (Storm, 53). In course of time, Saroj realises endurance in marriage is not a virtue in itself. She makes friends with Vishal Dubey, a liaison officer. She finds in Dubey, the understanding and mutuality in relationship which Inder has denied to her all along. Saroj begins to protest against Inder's authoritarian ways and soon the situation worsens and she decides to leave Inder's home forever asserting her individuality.

Simultaneously, in „The Day in Shadow“, Simrit is victimized by a selfish husband, Som. Obviously, tortured beyond tolerance she turns to Raj, who is understanding and sympathetic.

Another woman writer of the new generation who deserves a place of high respect is Shashi Deshpande. Early in her career Deshpande forget her own style and identified her own themes – family life, focusing specially on women and after probing their mind-which have since become her literacy trademark. Shashi Deshpande's novels reveal the women's quest for self, for exploration into the female psyche and an awareness of the mysteries of life and protagonist's place in it. All three protagonists in 'The Dark Holds No Terror', "Roots and Shadow" and 'That Long Silence' shed-off the chains they feel themselves engaged in, leaving their parental houses and find themselves entrapped in the same chains in the houses of their husbands or in-laws. Shashi Deshpande's protagonists in their self-quest undergo the process of individuation and establish themselves autonomous beings, overcoming and controlling their tendencies to inflation.

As in 'The Dark Holds No Terrors', Saru is hurt by her mother's preference for her brother Dhruva on the basis of gender difference only. "He is different. He is a boy9" are the words that haunt her mind and generate hatred for her mother. She feels guilty on account of her watching her brother drown and die. Her sense of guilt is further deepened by her mother's words, you

killed your brother...why didn't you die? Thus Saru's wounded self germinates in her hatred for mother figure. Later, Saru's love for Manohar proves to be failure, and results in frustration. „The Dark Holds No Terrors" reacts against the traditional concepts that everything in a girl's life is shaped to that single purpose of pleasing a male." Saru become a famous doctor and husband turned out to be simply a lecturer. This made her socially and economically his superior. The simmering inferiority complex of Manu burst out the day a girl had come to interview her, who has asked him "How does it feel when your wife earns not only the butter but most of the bread as well"? Manu's male ego is hurt. His masculinity asserts itself through nocturnal sexual assault upon Saru. Since that day Manu become a sadist: the benevolent, cheerful husband by day turns a lecherous, libidinous rapist at night.

Similarly in 'The Long Silence' "Jaya, the protagonist, when required to face a traumatic situation temporarily seeks shelter in neurosis which evades her responsibility as an adult individual for her without her being aware of her. Her suffering initiates the process of self-discovery in her which leads in the last analysis to her fresh perception of life. She emerges to the end of the ordeal as a woman with certain willingness to compromise with life's problems while earlier she showed a surprising lack of accommodation and expensiveness. Shobha De is yet another distinguished member of this new breed of writers. She depicts the breaking up of the institution of marriage. Her narrative holds our breath for sensuous opulence and subtlety of variation and the result is that the novel 'Sister' becomes a best seller. It makes a popular reading. Mikki, the protagonist of the novel 'Sisters' returned home following the deaths of her parents in a air crash Her father had sired another daughter, Ramanbai, a trusted employee of the Seth. Alisha decided to take on her step-sister one day. Circumstances forced Mikky to marry Binni, an elderly person. Binni showed his true colours after marriage. Mikki was beaten and forced to leave the house and came back to her parent's place. An incident brought the two sisters closer and they stayed together. Behind this apparently simple story lies the frustration in the lives of two women.

Like other women novelists Manju Kapur expresses her concern for women with a missionary zeal and seems to suggest, with sincerity and honesty, the

physical, psychological and emotional stress syndrome of women. ManjuKapur's first novel. "The difficult daughters" is a story in the background of partition. She describes the traumas of her female protagonists. She resonates with her feminine assertion, hatred for violence, blood, death and ill feeling in the name of God. Like "Difficult Daughters" "A Married Women" is a true confession of women's personality, her discontentment in marriage, her defiance and restlessness. "Her anxiety, discomfort, loneliness and isolation do not encourage her to give voice to her unhappiness over her troubled relationship". A woman is not only a wife-mother but something more. Dealing with religion, politics and social values Kapur realizes India as socially cosmopolitan, political egalitarian and religiously sectarian. The age old themes of marriage and politics are coupled with lesbian relationship. Acclaimed by jurists all over the globe, runner up for prestigious award "The Commonwealth Literacy Prize", GithaHariharan's "The Thousand Faces of Night" is a significant contribution to women studies. It is a Mahabharata of feminism in which women fight their wars and become victims to their own ambitions, humility, arrogance and submission.

Bharti Mukherjee is the most commercially successful among women writer of the Indian diaspora, she gained critical acceptance only during the last couple of decade. She is quite essentially Indian diaspora writer one who gives an authentic fictional treatment to the immigrant experience in such of her novel as "Jasmine". Her first novel "The Tiger's Daughter" (1972) depicts a satirical picture of Indian society, through the eyes of Tara Banerjee, a young expatriate, who visits her mother-land after a gap of seven years. She expects to find her country as she had left behind but is shocked at Calcutta's poverty and squalor.

CONCLUSION

Indian Women's writing has always enjoyed an equal status with the mainstream of Indian fiction in English. It initiated many debates and helped secure a more modern role for Indian women looking for new ideals and models for themselves. The theme of women identity has indeed been an important subject of contemporary Indian writing.

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