



The Indian Women Writers and their Contribution for Women's Empowerment

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Abstract: The present paper is an attempt to analyze the status of women empowerment through the female authors in India using various points freedom of movement, political place, acceptance of unequal gender role, Sexual Harassment, autonomy and decision making. Women empowerment is defined as empowering women, meaning that women can get supremacy in decision making whether it is at the internal level or worldwide. The independence of women is important in order to bring advancement in the political, public and economical aspects of the country. Women have been impoverished of rights for long periods of time, now it is the time to create change in this sight. After freedom of India, the constitution creators and the great leaders of India recognized the equal social position of women with men. The relation of any society and literature is very crucial, both serve as reason and effect to each other. However, the Indian female authors who tried to raise their authority in a male dominated environment as best as it is possible to them. Women novelists from India are the one to add a new aspect to the English literature of India. The Indian English writing started with authors Krupabai Satthianadhan, she was the first women novelist from India to write in English and published *Saguna: the first autobiographical novel highlighting the woman's interrogation of her disturbing experience of religious, mixture of cultural, and feminism in the colonial encounter*. The place and condition of females has also been highlighting by modern authors like Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Bharati Mukherjee, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Nair, Shashi Deshpande and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni have a special place in Indian English writing they mostly writes on the problems and issues faced by the women in today's male-dominated society. The paper has tried to briefly discuss the role of Indian women writers in the field of women's empowerment.

Keywords: Male dominated society, masculinity, feminine sensibility, identity

1. INTRODUCTION

It is believed that in the history of India “females are supposed to be in the custody of their father when they are children, women must be under the custody of their husband when married and under the care of her son as widows. In no circumstances is she permitted to assert herself separately. In the ancient philosophy, women have no divine right to perform any religious ritual, nor make vows or observe a fast, her only duty is to follow and please her husband and she will for that reason alone be exalted in heaven. Although, in Rigveda the role of women was the leader planner of the family, the first teacher; supplier of labour power and by playing principal role in the development of cultivation, business, service and during that time they were freely select their husband. Women contribute directly or indirectly for financial development. Empowerment is the process of gaining basic opportunities for marginalized people through the support of non-marginalized. The ancient proverb says “If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family or nation”. This proverb recognized the importance of education and has repeatedly become the inspiration for worldwide development efforts to offer education opportunities for female. Violence against females is counted as one of the biggest problems that today countries all over the world are facing, no country or society can claim to be free of domestic violence. Violence against women not only devastates female's lives and divides societies, but it also undermines growth efforts and the building of strong democracies and just, peaceful societies.

The modern women writers focus on the issues related to women, for instance; rape, and other societal issues as well, like corruption and injustice. Most of the novels based on the themes of unknown psyche of females, and many such stories where the sorrows of an unfortunate housewife are portrayed. These novels are much appreciated by the readers it's the reason slowly the modern woman has started caring for her social, emotional, cultural, religious and economic needs. Women writers and their writing style becomes tool for social change in India. Indian women are more empowered and aware now of their rights and the society has accepted their crucial role.

At the present time women's writing has been considered a powerful medium of modernism and feminist statements. The works of women writers consist of the burning issues related with female as well as those issues that have existed in the society since long.

Indian novelist Anita Desai's female characters whether it is Nanda Kaul in *Fire on The Mountain* or Maya in *Cry, the Peacock* or Monisha in the novel *Voices in the City*, are all liberated, emotionally advanced, with an autonomous identity. In the novel *Cry the Peacock*, Maya got all the attention and love from her father but after her marriage she lived her life with alienation. Gautama her husband calls her neurotic and blames her father for her idealistic nature. In the end of the novel, she totally lost his mental control and pushes her husband from roof. Although after killing husband, she also committed suicide the reason behind it she cannot get same love as her father gave her. Anita Desai's two works *Cry the Peacock* and *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* explore the traumatic experiences and psychological tensions that Maya and Sita suffer.

Bharati Mukherjee was an Indian American and Canadian author. She presents Indians as protagonist in her fiction and the theme of her novels were based on Indian immigrants who struggle to settle in an alien country usually America. The characters Tara in *Tigers Daughter*, Dimple Dasgupta in *Wife* and Jasmine in *Jasmine* are often victims of racism, sexism and such other forms of social oppression. In her second novel *Wife*, the protagonist Dimple dreams about her married life and so she excitedly waits for marriage. She believes that it will be filled with romantic love and grace. Dimple marries Amit Basu, a young engineer, but in the USA Dimple hates Basu and his behaviour. The reason behind it Basu cannot devote all his time to his wife as he has to remain out of house for long times. Dimple thinks he needs her only for sexual harassment. She feels it's a sort guilty. In the end here motionally upset state, she kills Amit in an act of self-liberation and eventually commits suicide.

Nayantara Sahgal a feminist author, affected by the western Third Wave Feminism. She spoke on the delicate issues without any fear and her main concern is with self-expression within marriage. She describes wedding as a "Life Long Damage". She presents her plot of the journey for opportunity through the outline of male heroes however she seriously attacks the male overwhelmed society. Nayantara highlights the issues of women in her novel *Rich Like Us*. The novel follows the lives of Rose and Sonali, two female protagonist and their fight to live in a time of political disorder and social re-organization. Nayantara projects her female protagonist, Sonali to express her emotion towards the problems of women. Sahgal is against any kind of discrimination in the life of women. She said that "No society can be developed without the development of women". In the novel Rose, Sonali, Mona, Nishi and Marcella, one observes in what way women deal with and wield power in more ways than one, while trying to usher in a positive change in their own lives as well as of those around them. In 1986 Nayantara Sahgal received the Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel *Rich Like Us*.

Anita Nair is an Indian novelist best known for her work *A Better Man*. She was born at Munda Kottakurissi, near Shornur in Kerala state. She shares the experience of her female characters with the readers. She places her protagonist in a cross-cultural scenario. Her novel "Ladies Coupe" deals with subjects by asking fundamental questions that not only shakes the ideological ground of man's patriarchal role in a outmoded society, but also imply the existence of an alternative reality. In the novel Akila think of her future life being married and leading a life of oppression as she believes marriage as a source of oppression for women. Her bitter past makes her believe marriage as a body used by men to control women. Therefore, she rejects being in relationship. Anita's writing the reform of male-female relationships that brings changes in social and interpersonal attitudes becomes the most significant basis of feminist liberation.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni was born in India but later on migrated to America. She has portrayed the feminine sensibility in her mostly works. Her famous works contain *The Mistress of Spices*, *Sister of My Heart*, *The Vine of Desire* and *The Palace of Illusions* (2009). She is known for her careful exploration of the immigrant experience, particularly that of South Asian Women. In her works *The Palace of Illusions* is definitely a feminist writing in which myths are re-phrased, reworked and retold from a female viewpoint. In the novel we are introduced to the novel's female speaker, initially named Draupadi. She later takes the name Panchaali. *The Palace of Illusions* is a woman's struggle for survival in a man's world, it is Divakaruni who raise the voice of Panchaali, the fire-born heroine of the Mahabharata. *The Palace of Illusions* captures the magical world of epic for its modern readers it depicts the situation of the female in the ancient age. It exposes the courageous nature of female, and their determination to live a joyful life. In Hindu mythology there are only few females who were belligerent and who spoke their intelligence in a world of men. Draupadi was one of them. Draupadi was strong not because she was born strong but because she believed that she was strong. She is the first feminist of Indian Mythology.

Shashi Deshpande's writing refers to the myths, epics, puranas as well as other divine books in which female have been presented as the embodiments of pativrata – obeying male persons and submitting to their wishes. Her famous novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, deals with an unusual character, Sarita known as Saru, who dares to rebel against traditional norms to marry a man of outside her caste. When she is a successful doctor with two children, their marriage is on the verge of failure because of her husband begins to behave with her cruelly. In the novel the character of Sarita is deprived of the motherly love, care and affection. She is just treated as a playmate and governess for her brother. The meaning of the title "The Dark Holds" is that, the life of Sarita, the protagonist seems dark. In her novels most of the time, marriage collapses due to lack of understanding between man and woman. It leads to the suffering and the struggle between traditional limitations and modern aspirations. Although Shashi Deshpande began her career with short stories and has by now authored twelve novels and four books for children. She won the Sahitya Akademi Award for the novel *That Long Silence* in 1990. *That Long Silence* is the story of Jaya, a housewife and mother to two teenaged children and is a writer in her free time. The phrase "Silence" in the novel's title refers to the silence of the main character, Jaya Kulkarni, who maintained silence throughout her life.

2. CONCLUSION

The above paper shows that female writers have gone up from difficult to tribal and rural areas too, but all of them have expressed their concern for rights for female and their problems. The variety of subjects in the novels, they have touched upon is a great role in creating awareness for the modern women generation all over the globe. The variety of subjects handled by them considering Indian environment needs an appreciation. Some of the writers have not claimed that they belong to feminist's movement yet their works suggest that their inner spirit, feelings and emotions are for the happiness of the women life only. But if we compared ancient times with 19th to 20th century the status of women has been changed slowly and gradually. Although in the western countries the women have got equal right and equal status with men in all phases of life. But the gender disabilities and discriminations are mostly found in India even today.

At the one sight the Parliament of India declared the practice of Triple Talaq illegal and unconstitutional and made it a punishable act from 1 August 2019, other sight the report of 2019 by National Crime Record Bureau shows the crimes on women increased 7.3 percent from 2018 to 2019, and crimes against lower Castes also went up 7.3 per cent. In India total of 4,05,861 cases of crime against female were registered during 2019. The state of Rajasthan reported the highest number of rape cases across India in 2020, with 5,310. This judgment not only provided relief to women, but also opened up the possibilities of challenging all Personal Laws that discriminate against them but Sexual harassment in a work place is a still sensitive issue. The organization must support the victim of sexual harassment, and help to overcome the negative effects of such an experience. Ismat Chughtai was an Indian Urdu novelist, her most popular and controversial work *Lihaaf* focussed on the theme of female sexuality. She spoke with reality that eluded many and her style of writings are representative of the quest for personhood to immerse into the depths of what it means to be a woman. The famous Indian writer in Bengali, Mahasweta Devi's writing focussed on telling tales of injustices meted out to marginalized communities and the lives of female belonging to the lower caste in

Rajasthan. She also worked for the rights and empowerment of the tribal humans of West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh states of India.

To sum up, Women empowerment cannot be possible unless women come with and help to self-empower themselves. There is a need to formulate reducing feminized poverty, promoting education of women, and prevention and elimination of violence against women. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award-winning author and poet her work "The Forest of Enchantments" does this brilliantly, bringing new life to the stories of the women in an epic tale. The Ramayana is a story many of us know so well, and reading it from Sita's perspective was a fascinating adventure. The Fourth wave of feminism is a feminist movement that began around 2012 and is mainly focus on the empowerment of women, sexual harassment, body shaming, and rape culture, internet tools, and inter sectionality. The female authors in India have created a prominent contribution on the field of women empowerment, their techniques and thematic works can help present world to understand women's issues and feminine concepts in different circumstances. Their writing aware females and reflects "Women are the real architects of society."

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