



## The Impact of Feminism on Sujatha Bhatt's Poetry

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**Abstract:** *The very emergence of women writing in English was of great significance, for their works; Scanty in output as they were, who wrote before and after them. The battle for emancipation was taken over by few educated women themselves who in their effort to communicate to the world their own bitter experiences as women as well as their ideas of social reform turned writers. Women writers struggled to give form and shape to their autobiographical accounts, which attracted publishers both in India and abroad.*

*Many women fail to understand the real spirit of feminism. The movement of feminism has many facets. It doesn't mean getting of equal rights which men & women for the recognition of their creative talent. In fact, it is more than that knowing the reality, feminism is not definitely some kind of chauvinistic or aggressive way of living, dressed up like man. A definition like feminism is therefore, a mode of existence in which the woman is free of the dependence syndrome."*

**Keywords:** *Feminism, Renaissance, Reformation, Motivation, Enlightenment, Injustice, Chauvinistic, Male Domination*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Each age has its own historical spatiality either in the social life of in the political sphere or in the religious field or in the sphere of art and literature, and reformation in the religious world. But towards the later part of the twentieth century a movement was developing all over the world, called, feminism. In this paper an attempt has been made to expose what is Feminism, Following the definitions and understanding of feminism, Indian trend in its relationship as well as difference with the general concepts of it. Taking into consideration of the general understanding of the concept and the dimensions of the same in Indian situation the conclusion has been drawn.

In fact Literature has always been an effective instrument in the hands of mankind since time immemorial and contributed for the all round development of the human beings and for bringing harmony among different cultures and societies. There are several forms of Literature but Drama, Poetry, Short story and novel occupies the major part of literature. What so ever be the form all literary works can be placed in a particular context. In other words, all literary works are written at a particular time amidst many social changes. So when we study a literary text it would help us to know more about these contexts or when and where it was written and what was happening in the society then. Myths and histories are written about them and a strong sense of national and cultural identity is constructed through writing.

The very emergence of women writing in English was of great significance, for their works; scanty in output as they were, were who wrote before and after them. This claim should be accepted as perfectly justified at least in respect of a few writers like Toru Dutt, Mrs Ghosal, Sarojini, Cornelia and Krupabai Sathianathan and so on.

The battle for emancipation was taken over by a few educated women themselves who, in their effort to communicate to the world their own bitter experiences as women as well as their ideas of social reform, turned writers. Women writers struggled to give form and shape to their autobiographical accounts, which attracted publishers both in India and abroad.

Themes of almost all the 'Poetic-out put' of the early women poets was the Indian woman, the new woman as the writers saw her emerge in the fast changing social milieu.

A careful glance of the poetry of the earliest women writers of Indian poetry in English as well as of the Post-Independence era helps us see a distinct continuity of trends and tendencies. There is in the

poems of all the women poets, old or new a naked pre-occupation with nostalgia, dream and introspection, frequent turning away from the Zeitgeist and not an infrequent flower and music.

The major motivation of the poetry from its birth had always been a projection of the social situation and social consciousness. The reflection of poetry has always been a social comment of social criticism. Women writers particularly shared the experiences of Indian women in general and transmuted them into fictional form. While reading them it becomes necessary to understand the situation which provides the material and motivation for their fictional writings. The early poetry by Indian women in all Indian languages was an effort to give expression to their agonies and suffering of which they never had any dearth.

The ability to write in English opened new vistas for young Indian women in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The precocious and sensitive Bengali girl, Toru Dutt, wrote *Binaca*, or the young Spanish Maiden, pub posthumously in 1878. *Binaca* moves from innocent girlhood to romantic love. Like Emily Bronte, Toru Dutt attempts an imaginative and powerful projection of young love in their literary exploration.

The women poets seem to be increasingly concerned mainly with women wallowing in the mire of lust with the rich, the powerful and the corrupt. The poems tend to reflect the contingent reality in an artistic way.

Poetry being the most characteristic and powerful form of literacy expression today, has acquired a prestigious position in the Indo – English Literature. As a distinct literacy form, the novel is undoubtedly a recent birth. It is in fact, the latest of literacy forms to be evolved and the most dominant and commonly agreed that the novel is the readiest and most acceptable way of embodying experiences and ideas in the context of our times.

Poetry by women poets constitutes a major segment of the contemporary Indian writing in English. It provides insights, a wealth of understanding a reservoir of meanings and a basis of discussion. Through women poets eyes we can seek it realize the potential of human achievement. In many appraisal of the Indian English literature, an appreciation of the writing of its women is essential.

Many of the Indian women poets focus on women's issues; they have a women's perspective on the world. It involves the writing of the materials and literature that deal, in a direct of implied fashion, women's improvements and their general enlightenment. One of the reasons that women have, in such large number, taken up their pen is because it has allowed them to create their own world. It has allowed them to set the conditions of existence, free from the direct interference of men. Similarly, so many women have taken to reading women's writings because it allows them to a 'safe place' from which they can explore a wide range of experience of the world, from which they can identify of existences. Women's writing has occupied a significant and central place in women's lives. In male-dominated Indian society, woman is still a "second person". By and large, women do not enjoy an equal status with men.

Indians have been writing in English for more than a century now. Contrary to the western notion of retiring, veiled, tradition encrusted, dumb race, some Indian women have proved to be quite vocal. Seen in its totality, literature has several thought provoking facets and the most visual of them is of course 'feminism' Sujatha Bhatt's poetry is also of no exception. Sujatha's fabric of poetry women not only with the elements of feminism but also with different outlook and approach.

It is necessary to arrive at a meaningful definition of the term feminism before how the women writer responds to the movement of feminism which has so far been variously defined. Feminism as many people view, does not mean 'femalism or femaleness' – the qualities which all the women possess. It includes personal courage. Feminism is not 'anti-siticism' in Indian context as some are fond of saying because Sita is often portrayed as symbol of submission.

Sita indeed, must have been very courageous to have been able to resist and fight Ravana for full one year. As to the question of individuality and self-respect, by no means is she lacking them. After uniting here sons with Rama, it is to her mother, the earth Goddess that she goes. Feminism at the same time is not living outside the marriage. Many women fail to understand the real spirit of feminism. The movement of feminism has many facets. It doesn't mean getting of equal rights which men or women for the recognition of their creative talents. In fact, it is more than that. No doubt, women raising their voice against the injustice, after having gone through agony for centuries, it led to

feminism. According to the French models of Feminism, as has been expressed in Beauvoir's 'The Second Sex' and other work, feminism implies greater sexual expression. If we take into account the British models, all feminists slowly become respectable, or reclaimed into the male world order. The American models are more outspoken in which we find an assertion of self-expression.

A woman in the past never gave a full throated expression to her creative talents. Though we see a lot of improvement in the social and conditions of life, and the freedom woman enjoys in writing and in exploring the hither to prohibited regions of experience, women is still suffering from physical and emotional harassment. The pain of woman is that of deep wounded feelings. Sujatha is also no exception to it. Despite, their feeble voice, majority of the poets on the scene can be read, criticism and analysis and they deserve critical attention. Mention may be made of Bhatt Sujatha, Tarapatel, Makarandparanjape,. TabishKhair, Anna Sujathamathaibhibupadhi, SumanJossan, Raja ram and others. This new generation is emerging with renewed spirit and honest efforts. They saw to carve niche for themselves. They write poetry with sincerity and devotion frankness and emotion and that is why an humble sense of intimate and intensity circumscribes their poetry. Moments, events situations, experiences serve as the subject, matter of their poetry. And their use of languages sparkles with directness and simplicity. There is no ironical stance, no castigation, and no complicated mode of device in expressing the smaller realities of life fidelity to experience and honest of expression remain keynote of these poets. Their use of technique is impressionistic if not imagistic.

Even when we talk of this new generation of poets we can divide them into two groups one group has been present for more than two years. This includes poets like raja ram, carmine D.Souja, Bhatta, Sujatha, Tara Patel and Anna SujathaMathai. The other group is relative 'young both in age and exposure' all these poets irrespective of sex and age maintain distinctive features about their generation.

Although this generation is familiar with the works of the older poets, they never seem to imitate or reveal their direct influence. They are definitely moving in their own direction and that is something respectable if not admirable.

Poets like SujathaBhatta, Tara patel, Jeet, SujathaMathai and Charmanyne use all elementary observations in their poetry. And they are so alert in responding to modern theoretical development such as post colonial studies, feminism, neo-marxism, psychoanalysis and soon. The feminism of SujathaBhatta, Tara patel, SujathaMathai and are among those who practice the modern theoretical development. Something even they are also glib and critics complain that today's poetry is not flourishing as it blooming in the past. It is limited to public reading, poetry workshops and the small presses it is not a genuine observation. We have more poetry than ever before. But it is not being exposed to many. It is not blooming in vacuume. Frankly speaking our trouble is not with poetry, but with poetic perception. The most visible fact is that it is less allusive, less comprehensive and direct. We can't say that there is no good poetry at all. Having seen progress in recent Indo-English poetry Kaki N. Daruwalla viewed "Not that the poetic mills were ever slow in churning away. It was the publishers who could not tolerate anything that rhymed or scanned on their.

Painting presses: There is good poetry around. All it needs in publishers"<sup>10</sup>. They have brought up very good collections of poems in volumes by different newly forwarded. It gives no safe, cautions, unornamented and assured. It gives no aesthetics pleasure or values, no philosophy ideas, no splendor of thought. Previously Indo-Anglian native is ornamental, sublime, over mind. They use language for sublime themes and mysterious ideas. Compares to pious generation of poetry today's poetry is shapeless, inartistic, smeared with rare splendor and delicious of touch. Yet undoubtedly they are worth enjoyable and readable.

For example markarandparanjape's poetry is a fine ramp through matrimonial love. It is a request of thirty love poems between a husband and wife. Irony and a quickly, self-deprecating humour abounds these poems. There is a passion in many poems which very compelling poems. A fine uneven poet, she mixes her tenses now and then. "Birthday notes" "Basics" and "To be alive" are fine poems which reveal bare facts of life. In "birthday notes" she moves from the present to the past, and back to the present. There is no single line without an acknowledge. Among the poems included in "Single women" "to be alive" marks a ponderable utterances in a refined manner. As she acknowledged the 'life-flow' has lost its decency life in this earth unless they found some new reason everyday "to be leave."

Tabishkhair's poetry could well be the 'pick of the pack' the hardly ever falter in his collection, my lord. He has an eye for landscape and gives a fresh angle to the themes he tackles. His line has a

whipcord tension about it and even though it may be unusually long on occasion, it is never 'limp or lucid' and there is finality about Calcutta is a miniature classic. For them Calcutta is already on its death bed

We are sure he expects Calcutta to live on forever, he uses the language awkwardly at times,' as if they feared the figures of the breeze' of mink coat happiness.

Bidhupadhi's "a wound elsewhere" reminds us of worthy predecessors in Philip larkin and A.K.Ramanjun, Padhi's poems deal with everyday, common place things such as listening to rain, a power cut a dead sparrow and a winter after noon, Certain motifs are re current and obsessive. There is no grand statement about life no sense of exuberant in the romantic senses. The romantic urge, as in Larkin, id always under cut. Constantly tempered by the realization of life's fatal flaws, Padh's poems remain subdued and low-keyed. A somber of awareness of decay and death comes as a frequent remainder not just in poems like 'Taking care of the dead', "burial in summer", "among the ruins" and "celebration". The treatment of death, however, is far from uniform. The poem "Rest" for instance, narrates the news paper report of the aged Danish father being frozen alive in snow in the act of providing warmth to his baby daughter the season's "ultimate snow" guarantees the journeys end. But has this death been of any consequence? Doesn't this prosaic event uncovered the perennial truth of sacrificing love.

Bhatt Sujatha's poems are like sparks struck from a whirring flint, they did not add up to a sustained illumination. Many of others poems spring from her personal life what it may be remorse loss or mere loneliness. Her personal utterances are used mark to conceal her true tragic personality. They are individual poems showing great moral insight, pity, concern, sweetness and moral philosophy in her life.

Her poetry is essentially poetry of moods and occasions of colours tone and stance. As a result her poetry becomes a mystic industry rather than anesthetic pleasure. She is not a poet of reformist not sings the brighter side of life. She honestly surveys. On the surface of realities of life illuminative poetry remains us of T.S.Eliot's the waste land. She wishes to make a home happy with faith hope and charity.

Her poetry sometimes questions the fundamental things of human lives. She questions can we go beyond love? A sense of loss, sorrow, a deep human suffering rules her mind off and on. She deals with everyday reality but it is deeply reflective and meditative, seeking to pierce the dazzling on humdrum surface realities to arrive at core of experience.

SujathaBhatta is a skilful and accomplished poet who brings her task great sensitivity an awareness of oth the possibility and limitations of her poetic vocabulary and a performance for sharply defined images and metaphors. There is always the danger that lyric poetry will degenerated into verified sentimentally. Sujatha's small lyrics seldom do and this in itself is no small achievement.

At first reading, she seems to be an illustrator of common truth and a story teller using verse as her medium and appeals to a wider audience. No doubt her poetry is directly in touch with the spoken language of the day. She is not of course merely a reporter of happening situations or events. In fault her poems do much of memory, genetic memory. At a more human universal level her poems form the colour of unresolved emotions type of mar me life prefer of remain quickly into the rockery of reflection. What is Sid in a line or a half line suggests the whole.

Today there is an increasing progress and a heightened awareness of actual Indian experience. Recent poetry is richer in its sense of location and range of subject matter. However modern Indian English poetry has to play an integral part in the modernization which includes urbanization, industrialization, independency, mobility, social change, more easy access to communication in the form of films, television, radios, journals and newspapers, national and international transportation networks, mass education and the resulting paradox that as an in independent national modern, usually westernized world. Then only more than a century and half old history of Indo-Anglia poets gets its total significance. It is time for current day caught in storms of dull standards.

Poets should manage to time their own cynical range and retain their creative fire. The writers of today can no more offered to line in their archaic ivory tower wither tried to respond to the various political, cultural and philosophical crises. To their societies our crises have been different and we will have to evoke our own concepts and theories. It is ultimate challenge of the writer to stay a truth letter inspire of reorganization or want of it to 'sing his own god'.



“Dear K After all our talks about the meaning” of a sari – the colour, the cloth, the style – we used words like ‘symbol’, ‘blessing’, ‘curse’, ‘power’, ‘personality’. After all our talks about the pros and cons of wearing a saree – I find my heart has other memories.”<sup>1</sup>”

Men are expected to express themselves through physical and other acts of heroism and adventure through their forays into the outer world because they are seen as natural heirs to authority just as women are viewed as naturally passive and susceptible to being objects. Clarity, beauty which we recognize the quintessential female and masculine elements.

Romance in the Indian context is necessarily shrouded in secrecy and guilt. It includes desire, lust and longing but ultimately refuses to grant these emotions any validity unless they are expressed in the context of future conjugality. Thus the experience of marriage becomes central to female sexual discovery and often this proves to be traumatic.

Women's writing has relevance and validity for reasons more than one. Not only does it project the observations situations responses and struggles of half of humanity. It also reflects a consciousness constructed by gender the being which is defined traditionally by frame works of kinship, marriage and procreation. At another level it questions values and structures hitherto considered axiomatic. Women's writing throws up all kinds of queries related to oppression and colonization. It has helped both to build and express the idea of a female “self” and dismantle the concept of the all-inclusive male “1”.

Working through radical movements and silent changes through legal and political battles and psychological barriers women are learning to know and discover themselves. “True all women writing is not feminist equally true that even when gender identification cross cultures.

Traditionally the work of women poets has been undervalued due to patriarchal assumptions about the superior worth of male experience. One factor contributing to this prejudice is the fact that most of these women write about the enclosed domestic space and women's perceptions of their experience within it. Consequently it is assumed that their work will automatically rank below the works of male writers who deal with ‘weightier’ themes. Additionally, Indian women writers in English are victims of a second prejudice that is their regional counterparts. Since proficiency in English is available only to the writers of the intellectual, affluent, educated class, a frequent judgment is made that the writers and their works belong to a high social strata and are cut off from the reality of Indian life. The majority of these novels depict the psychological suffering of the frustrated housewife this subject matter often being considered superficial compared to the depiction of them depressed and the oppressed lives of women of lower classes that we find in regional authors writing in Hindi, Bengali, Malayalam, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu and other native languages.

Sujatha Bhatt is one of the most distinctive and original of Indian poets writing in English. Most of her poems deal with the themes of “Interpersonal relations”, “Inter cultural relations” and “The element of feminism”. But the element of feminism dealt by her is not so impressive and within the frame work of established fabric of established feminism. Her experiences were limited and so also is her range. At the same time she is not Auto-biographical. She did not recognize her limitations as Kamala Das did. Her strength as well as her weakness as a poet consist in the fact that she is most herself and cannot be carried away by any literary influences. If this gives her an individuality and personal meaning. It also leads her to lapses of fact and a general looseness in verse structure. Otherwise in her poetry we have an expression of female sensibility at its best. For example in the poem “This room is part of the NYS Subway system”. Expresses her female sensibility in the following lines.

“We sleep in  
A room filled with Sylvia Schister's drawings.  
A room filled with point dark heads – stern,  
Pensive. They take up all the space on the walls.  
There is such beauty in the shape of their skulls:  
An ideal geometry of saw bones and cheek bones”.

Not only Bhatt, for that matter except kamala Das no other Indian women poet aggressively involved in the job of taking feministic flavors to the readers in their poetry. In fact Kamala Das poetry is unconventional shocking to the Othodoxical people her treatment of sexual love is a kind of rebellion against male dominant world. As a result her poetry is sharp, punching and untraditional. Though looks Unpretentional she sticks to her confessions. Sujatha Bhatt along with other set of contemporary poets are aware of female sensibility in security feelings of women in social fabric as well as domestic setup. Kamala Das attacks with the male dominated world in the following words.

“Then ... I wore a shirt and my Brother's trousers cut my hair short and ignored my womanliness. Drest in sarees be girl, be wife, they said. Be embroiderer, be cook, Be a quarreler with sentiments. Fit in. Oh, Belong cried the categorizers.

Sujatha Bhatt expressed the same but in a gentle and meak voice. No doubt she speaks of the common women and her basic need for love and security with inside knowledge. She likes to be a social rebel, sometimes to go against social norms, frustration and disillusionment with her were lot in life. Yet herself expression in her poetry is not Herpetic. Her poetry doesn't reflect the mirror of women life though they suffer under horrors and rare joys of love. In one of her poems “Honey moon” she views,

“I remember your power –  
Your distance : triumphant  
And the lack of any horizon on your face.  
But I always wanted to know, grandmother,  
What had you been denied?  
What great bitterness was it  
That made you decide.  
Your twelve year old daughter, my father's sister,  
Had to accompany my parents  
On their honeymoon?”

In fact Indo-English poetry originated from the quest of educated Indians to find a suitable medium for expression. Sujatha Bhatt familiarity with English Education system made her to express ideas encouragingly. As others use she also use English as it was her mother tongue. Being a member of a family with much literary heritage her attempts to projects her views were encouraged. She gives mixual impressions of unhappiness and disinterestedness in life. Happy or unhappy she continuous to live with them. Unable to bare some bitter realities of the world of course caused by male dominant, society, she wants to live in an imaginary world. “ In my mothers way of wearing a saree”, she opens windows to real and imagine land and cityscapes. Though primarily she is associated with India past and present remains ‘a necessary obsession’. She takes her readers to various parts of the world introduces new science, language, history not because she is familiar with them but wants to get a kind of relief she tells,

“The part I like best, the part I ask her  
To show me again and again is the way she  
Makes the pleats – snapping them into existence –  
As the neem tree in our garden starts snapping at  
The elegant bluish eloquent encalyptus leaves”.

She always imagines a dreamy land and finds place in that imaginary land In the beginning the main task of the Indo-Anglian poet is to present Indian life and environment in their varied colours without loosing the spirit of English meter. Toru Dutt Sarojini Naidu followed this native sensibility mastered the English language expressed their impressions, emotions and beliefs. At the same time they never fail to grasp the beauty of language and attaining the ingredients of poetry. But Bhatt Sujatha and other emerging new poets failed in this direction. They are very conscious bold and mystic. Their ideas endowed with beyond the physical elements. As a result they use to attain the renaissance in the

social fabric attitude but also a ray of spiritual growth. They are philosophical, symbolic, imagery, imaginative, transcendental, conscious and so on. They expected a lot from the universe itself instead of waiting for somebody to change the world. Sarojini Naidu states.

“Children ye have not lived to you it seems life is a lovely stalactite of dreams or carnival of careless joys that leap about your hearts like billows on the deep in flames of amber and of amethyst. Children ye have not lived, ye but exist till some resistless hour shall rise and move your hearts to wake and hunger after love and third with passionate longing for the things that burn your brows with blood re sufferings. Till ye have battled with great grief and fears and borne the conflict of dreams – shattering years wounded with fierce desire and worn with strike childred ye have not lived for this is life’.

## 2. CONCLUSION

Sujatha Bhatt is not impulsive towards the male dominated world. She is thinkitive and reflective but not impulsive. She uses symbols, images to explore the cry of ‘women problems’ at the same time she did not give any brand to her claim. She is neither specific in women problems nor in general in her attitude. She is evident from every bit of her poetry. In fact this is the plus as well minus in her poetry as well as in the emerging set of poets.

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