



ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION OF INDIAN WOMEN WRITERS IN THE WORLD LITERATURE- AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This article is a humble attempt to deal with the role and contribution of Indian women writers in the world literature. Indian Women writing in English is being recognised as major contemporary current in English language-Literature. The likes of Salman Rushdie, Amitav Gosh and Anita Desai have won worldwide acclaim for the quality of their writing and their imaginative use of English. These include the role of English as global lingua franca: the position of English in India. The Indian writers in English are writing, not in their native language but in a second language, and the resultant transcultural character of their texts. The Indian women writers who tried to stamp their authority in a male dominated environment as best as it is possible to them. They know very well that it is a very difficult path, as the women had to break through years of male dominance, taboos and beliefs that had heavily impregnated the society.

KEYWORDS : Dissatisfaction, Male Dominated Society and Discrimination.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian women writers who expressed their views and agony through their writings in the Post-colonial times for two major reasons. First, both patriarchy and imperialism could be seen to exert different forms of domination over those subordinate to them. Because of this, it was important for the experiences of women under the patriarchal influence to come out to the forefront and expose the undue cruelty be held on them by men. It was necessary for the women to oppose this male dominance over them. We observe that women continued to define the borders of the community, class and race. They tried to express their agony and dissatisfaction of male dominated attitude through their works. Though the Indian women writers try to depict the women as strong and focused in their vision to succeed in lives, they were, however, abled to succeed in their lives only in the space allotted to them by the men.

There are many Indian women writers both novelists and poets, based in the USA and Britain. Some like Jhabvala and Anita Desai are late immigrants while others, like Jhumpa Lahiri belongs to the second generation of Indians abroad. Most expatriate writers have a weak grasp of actual conditions in contemporary India, and tend to recreate it through the lens of nostalgia. Their best works deal with the Indian immigrants, the section of society they know at first hand. Sunithi Nam Joshi, Chitra Benerji, Divakarvas and Bharathi Mukherjee are the oldest, and naturally, the most prolific. Writers like Jhumpa Lahiri, Manju Kapoor, Kiran Desai, and Arundhati Roy too have written novels of Magic Realism, Social Realism and Regional fiction, and benefited from the increasing attention that this fiction has received National and International awards. They have probed into human relationships, since the present problem is closely concerned with mind and heart and the crusade is against age-old established systems. In order to make the process of changes smooth and really meaningful, women writers have taken upon themselves this great task.

Anitha Desai is the best known of the contemporary women writers. Of all the contemporary novelists, she is indisputably the most popular and powerful novelist. She has made commendable contribution to the Indian English fiction. She is a novelist of urban milieu and is a fine mixture of Indian European and American sensibilities. She is essentially a psychological novelist. She claims that her novels are not reflection of Indian society or character. She does not reflect on social issues in her works like Mulk Raj Anand. She sees social realities from a psychological point of view and does not look at them as a social intimate expression of the inner world of her characters. She makes each of her work a haunting exploration of the psychic self. Her last novel *Baumgartner's Bombay*, written at Griton College, Cambridge, was published in 1988. In the nineties, she has not published any novel as yet. Thus, she has double

sensibility, which gives her novels an objective effect. She however travelled widely in almost all the parts of India and her experiences of different sort of people and places have enriched her writing. Moreover, the same is true of Nayantara Sahgal, whose last novel *Plans for Departure*, published at the turn of the decade got her the Sahitya Academy Award.

The novelist with the most sustained achievement is Shashi Desh Pande who is labeled as feminist novelist succeeded in depicting the plight of a successful educated woman and problems of being a woman. She has written eight novels, six collections of short stories, and four children's books. Her popular novel *The Dark Holds No Terror* (1980) portrayed the life of a woman who marries a doctor and becomes the victim of brutalization. It is a story of courage and perseverance that she developed from within herself to break loose of society's traditional norms to gain her individuality and freedom. She has achieved tremendous amount of popularity through her writings. She depicts the Indian middle class mentality in all her novels. Her protagonist emerges from cultural rootedness in middle class Indian Society. Desh Pande generally has the heroine as the narrator and employs a kind of stream - of - consciousness technique. In another novel *Roots & Shadows* (1983), we are introduced to another rebellious woman who refuses to accept traditional family life and escapes to the city to work. She later marries a man of her own choice. As time goes by, she realizes that life in the city is no different from the village. Almost all her novels deal with a crisis in the heroines' life. Her work is women-oriented, but it would not be correct to term her a feminist, as she consistently rebates with the feminist identity. She simply portrays, in depth the meaning of being women in modern India.

Shashi Desh Pande's novel *That Long Silence* (1988) is viewed as her emergence as a major novelist. This novel won her the Sahitya Academy award for 1990, tells the story of an Indian housewife Jaya, an upper-middle class house wife who maintained her silence in Bombay throughout her life in the face of hardships that threaten to break it. The lack of depth in a woman's life is clearly depicted in this novel. She however, shows us that most of the family rules like the idea of trying to secure one's life by marrying a wealthy man and establishing a name in society by sending children to good schools, is shown how mundane, meaningless and mechanical a woman's life really is partly self-imposed by women themselves. In another novel *A Matter of Time* (1996), attempts to depict three generations of female human relationships. In her latest novel *Small Remedies* (2000), as we read this novel, we realize her over possessive attitude. This is a novel that dwells into the various aspects of motherhood. At last, Her, *The Binding Vine*, compels one to discover how the, binding vine of human emotions links and sustains diverse human beings as they go through life.

Gita Mehta is also another woman writer who proclaimed about the problems of the contemporary immigrant women with sublime standards. She wrote *Snakes and Ladders and Glimpses of Modern India* in 1997. It has become most widely read book particularly by those unfamiliar with India. In an interview, she said that her intention was "to make modern India accessible to westerns and to a whole generation who have no idea what happened before they were born" (24) (An Interview with C.J.S.Wallia). Gita Mehta's first novel is *Raj* (1989) which is a very powerful and enlightening readable novel. It is considered to be one of the great historical novels of our time. *Raj* is the story of the Maharani Jaya Singh, as well as the drama of India's struggle for Independence. However, Mehta's unique nature is to collect the richness of living in this rarity of perspective that gives her a witty ability to define her vision for India by her novels.

Arundhati Roy is the luminary among the contemporary women writers. She is one of the women writers who wrote about the plights of the downtrodden and the suppression of women in a male dominated world and the influence of Marxism on the lives of the downtrodden. When women writers maintained their reservations in offering a critical evaluation of Indian politics, Arundhati Roy emerged as a beacon of light to guide the Indian women writers. She has got overwhelming reception with *The God of small things* (1997), which has put her in the forefront of all the other writers. Her success with just the publication of her single book has already placed her on equal terms with Salman Rushdie and others. Moreover, She has surpassed even Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*. The characters are entirely imaginary, with no factual correspondence to real life characters. Arundhati Roy mentions the Veteran Marxist E.M.S Namboodaripad by name, but proceeds to invent fictions about him, which led to widespread protests in Kerala, the state where he headed the first elected communist Government in world history. It is also a comprehensive protest novel, which describes atrocities against the powerless, children, women and untouchables.

CONCLUSION

In the contemporary Indian Literary scenario, Indian women writers in English who reflect the truth of Indian reality. They bear numerous responsibilities in the world of literature. They execute with admirable aplomb as the anthropologists, sociologists, novelists, essayists, travel writers, teachers and slip into global responsibility for establishing peace as the ambassadors. They have excelled the global literary standards set by the post-colonial and postmodern writer's men and women like Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Vikram Chandra, Sashi Tharoor and Arundhati Roy etc. These have become the colossal central socio literary figures with the substantial bodies of work drawing the global attention. They also have become the only negotiators to mediate the core social and cultural problems of India and other colonized nations. All their major works have enjoyed immense academic attention across the globe and which have invited and produced a great amount of literary criticism especially on *feminism*. They have created a wide readership and a strong critical endorsement that reflect the attention of serious academicians and scholars. All the post-colonial and postmodern predicaments are wrestled to demonstrate a high level of self-consciousness, which continue, interrogate the social, philosophical, cultural issues of rape and sexual harassment of innocent women in the contemporary Indian society. Their works have initiated the emergence of critique of *feminism* with nationalism. Their intellectual insights, conceptual, theoretical and textual experiments have engaged and interpreted the complex colonial and postcolonial situations. They have also established a peculiar paradox of reading and appreciation eloquently responding to the issues of sexually harassed women both in post-colonial and postmodern issues of *rape and exploitation on the Indian women* in the contemporary society.

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