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## FEMINISM: A REVOLUTION IN THE CONTEXT OF ODIA SHORT STORIES

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### ABSTRACT :

Feminism is a sort of worldwide revolution viewed to strengthen the woman section to realize their best-selves. This revolution at first started in western countries as the woman society was considered to be second sex and they were dominated by the male class. This problem was already existed in the society but no woman raised voice against it for the sake of prestige and self-respect. When this revolution spread to almost all the countries in the world, the woman society become conscious about their rights and to enjoy equal opportunity with man. So the high handedness of the man society caused depression, exploitation to the woman class has come to a form of lawful support to protest all these things. Their existence in the society is supported by the source of Feminism. So it is a revolution that must continue so long as the problems of the woman class exist. Also the problems vary from country to country still the revolution is unique for their all round prosperity and existence. So the revolution is welcome and it is a sort of weapon in the hand of the woman society to feel as safeguard of their lives.

**Keywords :** Feminism, living together, extramarital, second sex, freedom of woman, revolution.

### INTRODUCTION :

“Feminism” is said to be a revolution that focuses on existence, improvement of the women society on the basis of analysing their problems, exploitation, depression caused by the male society for their high handedness. Though it has been considered that the women are the pivot of the whole structure of the mankind still they are being seriously neglected in every step of their lives without any solution thereof. That is why the women society is being mentally and physically harassed. In this context presently some changes are being found in the life process of the women society. It is not at all a regional problem but also a universal one.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES :

- 1.To know the concept of feminism and the factors led to turn it into a worldwide movement
- 2.To evaluate the impact of this movement in empowering the women
- 3.To know the hindrances in spreading of this revolution in Indian society i.e. the extent of acceptance in Indian culture.
- 4.To render a comparative study of this movement in the context of Odia short stories with the western literature as well as Indian literature

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

For this study secondary data has been collected. The short stories and criticisms in Odia literature have been studied for this purpose.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION :

“Feminism” is a worldwide revolution that a philosopher named Charles Fourier introduced the word for the first time in the year 1837. Later on this revolution spread to England in 1890 and to America in 1910. But this thing is differently felt and applied in different countries. In western countries it was observed in three phases. They are namely first wave, second wave and third wave. The first wave of the revolution started from 19<sup>th</sup> century to first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During this period especially the importance of women was felt in the political sphere and they got their franchise. The period of second wave is considered to be from 1960 to 1980. During this period the movement was started by the women society against the difference found between man and woman in Govt offices and the laws made separately for both the societies. The third wave still continues as the woman class is in backward state. This is why the discussion was made in New York in the presence of 68 women and 32 men. Since then the women society has been gradually putting forth their claims and to establish their rights. They demanded their liberty to the social status of men.

Among the philosophers who have been writing on feminism with a view to accomplishing all round development of woman society and to make them conscious in the sphere of the world, the efforts of poet Khalil Gibran & Simone De Beauvoir are noteworthy. They are of the opinion that woman is not a rubber doll and they must be granted with equal opportunity & right so far as the social status is concerned. Likewise Karli Churchill's play on feminism named *A mouthful of birds* raises voice to fight against the high handedness of male society on woman class in regards to treat them as slaves. Through this play it was protested strongly and adequate freedom of woman was demanded for their smooth living in the society. The desire for freedom of the woman society has been reflected as classicalism in European literature.

Simone De Beauvoir in his book *The Second Sex* has forcefully expressed the problems and difficulties of the woman society and their solutions. This book has a great importance in the world as a whole and the theme of the book encouraged the whole woman society for their perfect existence. This book was published in French language in the year 1949 and then in English in the year 1953 in America. The writer has described the man society as first sex and to the woman society as second sex. Through this book he inspired the woman society for their logistic existence and to get their rights at par with the man society. Norway writer Kamila Collet supported the revolution of the woman society through the book *The Governor's daughter*; likewise Varginia Woolf in the book *A room of one's own* put much emphasis on the moral and ideal sense of the woman class and their responsibilities in the social structure. The writer describes the inhuman activities of the male section on female society and also demands to abolish it forever. Elizabeth Hardy's *Solitude of self* published in 1892 is based on the thoughts of feminist. This book raises voice for equal status & rights on political and economical sphere. Adequate liberty is to be granted to them. According to the philosophers feminism has been classified as Black Feminist School, Lesbian feminist, Marxist Feminist, Psychoanalytic Feminist, Indian Feminist, Radical Feminist and Eco Feminist.

The revolution on feminism is also found in Indian literature though it was first introduced in western countries. Esmat Chughtai, the lady writer of Uttar Pradesh has written a story on feminism named *Lihaf* in Urdu language. In this story the writer has laid huge emphasis on free sex. So she was condemned for obscenity and illegal writing and a legal case was lodged against her in the Supreme Court. But later on she was awarded for her frankness and reality of expression. Amruta Pritam of Punjab has also written poems and novels on feminism. She has focused on struggle some life, emotion, physical and psychological strategies of woman society. She demanded liberty of woman in her poem *Nirbachita Kabita* in 1982. Likewise Kamala Das wrote on feminism and her creations have been published in English and Malayalam languages. She raised her voice against illegal restrictions imposed on women in the society. For the novel *Lazza*, Taslima Nasrin of Bangladesh is familiar in the world. Her *Nasta jhiara nasta gadya* is written on her practical life and now she has been tortured physically and mentally by the high handedness of the male society. She emphatically criticised the male society for their illegal activities on the woman class. A Telgu writer Volga in her novels *Swechha* (1987), *Manabi* (1989) & *Akali O Sangam* (1990) describes pains & sufferings of woman class; and also she struggled for the eradication of all these vices from the society. In this way the concept of “Feminism” crept into Indian literature.

It is observed from thorough analysis that the woman society has been dominated since inception as the man enjoys much importance the society. The pains, sufferings and inferiority are put to the female society in social structure. That is why all these things in later period turn into a form of revolution to get free from all these vague traditional social practices. Everything in this connection is placed and focused in western literature that we say “feminism”. The writers having this ideology have written so many stories, novels, poems and articles in Odia literature are regarded as feminists. They are regarded as patrons of Marxism. Their creations are mostly based on how the woman society will free from social stigmas and enjoy equal right as the male society does in every sphere of life.

Now-a-days it is seen in the society that there are lots of problems found basing upon the women life. They are feminists, extramarital life, living together etc. All these things have been imported to Odia literature from western system of life style. Though Odia writers have portrayed all these things in their creations, still it is hardly accepted by the people for it is not suitable to our noble culture that especially based on spiritual thoughts and practices. Yet there is

no voice of feminism in our Odia literature and that we see is only a thin curtain over our noble culture and it puts the human life from troubles to bloodshed.

In this context we may come to a view that for the first time revolution in woman mind against her exploitation and oppression has been focused in Odia literature in *Laxmi Puran* by Balaram Das who is one of the *Panchasakhas* of sixteenth century.

Similarly we may take the character of *Ganga* in the Odia version of the Mahabharat by Sarala Das. The story *Patent Medicine* by Fakir Mohan Senapati, *Nilamastrani* by Godabarish Mohapatra etc put forth the cruelty, exploitation, oppression made to woman society in the then period that continues till date. They presented the revolutionary attitude of woman being whipped and tortured by so called male society. They state that an Aryan woman cannot be equally compared with woman of western culture. Aryan woman stick to morality, ideal thoughts within social mats and bounds so far as her life process is concerned. In this way we find all these elements in Odia short stories too.

The revolution of woman society to establish their rights and adequate freedom is based on three vital aspects. They are as follows:

1. Freedom of woman
2. Extramarital life
3. Living together

Writers claim adequate freedom to woman class for their all round prosperity and expression of their thoughts freely in the society. Later on it has been granted in the sphere of administration. In this regard the story *Manamayee* by Binapani Mohanty is considered to be the best and appropriate. She has urged that all sorts of mats and bounds based on superstitions and blind beliefs meant for woman being practised in the society are to be abolished. She describes in her story that there are so many restrictions for a widow in the society to be obeyed but the same are not applicable to a widower. In this way she encourages the widow marriage to bring a reformation in the society as well as to facilitate the woman class to lead a social life. Likewise the writer Tilottama in her story *Sankalpa* raised her voice for woman freedom. The character *Suprabha* in the story *Digbalaya* strongly opposed the inhuman activities of her husband and at last left home forever. The stories *Bandhya Gandhari*, *Nuabata & Bimata* by Rabi Pattnaik are also based on liberty of women for expression of their best selves. The story *Bisabalaya* expresses about the strong determination of the character *Meghabarna* to lead her life with her only little son Badal but some antisocial persons tried to satisfy their lust with her. She protested strongly and survived. So the concept of *Survival of the fittest* is depicted in the story. The stories like *Agnidanda*, *Alia Abarjana & Papi* by Sadanada Tripathy present the women characters stating how they protested strongly all the odds, cruelty, injustice, inhuman activities made to them and survived as a human being in the society.

In the stories *Lady's Club & Kaincha* by Bijayeeni Das, *Pratham Sandhan & Matikandhei* by Susmita Bagchi, *Eka Eka Arundhati* by Pabitra Panigrahi, *Bata* and *Sabdakhela* by Jayanti Ratha the writers have tried to depict how the woman characters faced lots of troubles in every step of their lives and struggled hard for their existence and succeeded at last. These creations enhanced and help to flourish the idea of feminism into the brain, blood and heart of the woman society to struggle and live to bring a drastic reformation in the society.

Extramarital life is a strong obstacle in the path of life of a woman in the society. This mentality drags the mankind to the hell. The countries where this system is not enforced by law, the situation turns acute and social life becomes spoiled. This system of western countries has gradually influenced the mankind of the world as a whole. So we see elaboration of the system in Odia literature too. The stories like *Aranya Upabana & Sudrakara Prasna* by Krushna Prasad Mishra, *Lilanidhibabu O Gotia nari* by Mohapatra Nilamani Sahu, *Kalankini* by Rabi Pattanayak, *Shrestanse Subhadra* by Radhabinod Nayak are the bright examples of "Extramarital life." It is noticed how the characters in the stories involved and insulted for their immorality and vulgarity have been satirically shown for their change and to be sociable. In this way there are many stories in Odia short stories.

It has been ascertained that since the pre-historic age the conjugal life process of people in society was said to be civilized and sociable. But later on according to flourish of education modern people put much emphasis on enjoyment with woman thinking them as objects of entertainment. This thought of western people spread to the whole mankind. So there were no social restrictions those existed since a long for the woman class. For different purposes like education, service, politics they came out and came in contact of the people they did not know. Gradually their entertainment and enjoyment turned to free sex in the society. So there derives the tendency of "Living together" which was beyond social structure. This mentality and practices created disturbances in the society as well as conjugal life of the people. So this picture comes out to the literature and some of the countries in the world have granted this by legalising it. The mentality of living together wholly came out from the ill will people extremely guided by instincts. Nowadays this has been come to a practice in many countries being supported by law. Though this system is illegal, antisocial, anti-cultural & unnatural still most of the people in certain class demand to get it lawfully approved. This sort of western life style has influenced the writers to put forth in their creations. This ill will culture is hardly seen in Odia literature. Our country is based on noble Aryan culture & there is no place for such nasty practice in preferred and healthy conjugal life. But in course of revolutionary process of civilization, this practice has been gladly accepted in some countries. The Odia stories

like *Asundar Drushya* by Jasodhara Mishra, *Kakshyachyuta* by Susmita Bagchi, *Gapara Hatagoda* by Bhima Prusti are said to have been influenced by the western literature and touched the system “Living together”.

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of observation and analysis of the sources of “Feminism”, we may come to a conclusion that it is a sort of thorough investigation into the mentality of the woman class from different angles of their psychological action and reaction that reflects in the social activities. Moreover, this *ism* brings out the difficulties, obstacles, pains, sufferings & exploitations in woman life so far as the social structure in different countries is related. In this way injustice, cruelty, oppression etc made to them comes to the light through worldwide literature. So it makes the woman class conscious about their rights, claims and role in the society to bring a healthy nation. Now the concept of Feminism is being heard everywhere for the reformation in the life style of woman class through revolution. They are not toys in the hands of the man society to act to their tune. Now they are being treated at par with the man in every sphere of their life. They demand equal rights and status with the men in almost all the fields like education, politics, service, economics, social functions and practices. All these things now are possible for the revolution on the strength of Feminism. Nowadays it has come to a worldwide revolution that will help the woman class in future to lead a fearless, healthy and sound life process forever. To some extent their lives have become prosperous and free from illegal burdens in the society.

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