



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

A Brief Study on Post-Modern Feminist Writers and Their New Feminist Consciousness of Writings

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ABSTRACT

The core objective of this paper is to demonstrate how some of the postmodern feminist writers depict their women in their literature. It's also highlighted about the various social and feminist approaches of the woman writers whose presentation is a great analysis with their new consciousness. In this paper it is collected briefly about the woman writers who present their contemporary woman characters in their discourse. This is the paper which proves that the post-modern Indian feminist writers are genuine in the aspect of their feminist consciousness.

Key words:

Postmodern – relating to Twentieth Century

Feminism - advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes

Consciousness - a person's awareness or perception of something.

Introduction: Feminism in literature is pertaining to the representation of women in society and their related fluid position. The early postmodern feminist literature shows the clear signs of novel and varied approaches in relation to woman. Predominantly, some of the post-modern feminist writers are taken for citation to mark them as feminists. For the last three decades, Indo-Anglian literature has been significantly supported by the women writers- Kamala Das, Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prewar Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shobha De and some others. Every one of these writers is particular in their style of writing but they have certain similarity talking about their woman as well as analyzing their category. The stories of these women writers may have very little space in the main

discussion. The practical narratives composed by these women writers gave a chance to the readers to investigate deep into the heart of women and to find out how that these narratives would raise a question in their minds- is feminism really in search of identity?

Pertaining to the Indian woman writers of Post-independence, a remarkable development is there in the whole school of women novelists. However, many of them are artistic and exceptional woman writers. These writers are specially like; Meena Alexander, Nayanata Shagal, Shashi Deshpande, Gita Hariharam, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Jhumpa Lahiri...etc. having a mark of new consciousness about the feeble dilemma of the Indian women.

Novels by these Indian woman writers place in the most important part of the modern Indian writings in English. In the view of these woman writers, the reader can see the existing world. In the modern Indian English literary fiction, these woman novelists are getting succeeded by leaps and bounds and the woman characters in their novels usually stand substance to their feminist approach, outlook as well as perception. They are absolute in observing the life of the Indian women and their interests in the study of their inner mind. These writers, with their brilliant and panoramic portrayal of their predicament, center women in their novels on the existential dilemma. They also travail of the subservient women in a male subjugated society governed by the austere traditions and restrictions. As Patricia Meyer Specks remarks: "There seems to be something that we call in a woman's point of view on outlook sufficiently distinct to be recognizable through the countries."

Kamala Markandaya is an insider-outsider as well as an expatriate who has been living in England for a number of years. Her fiction evinces woman characters in different life-roles. It also encounters the theme of the East-West relationships. Her fiction has the impact of the modern urban culture brought in by the British rule on traditional Indian life. She is able to create living characters in meaningful dilemmas. She is a feminist to create a character, Rukhmani, a rustic woman in her first novel 'Nectar I a Sieve' the story of which illustrates the truth of Coleridge's line- 'work without hope draws nectar in a sieve'.

Nayantara Sahgal is usually regarded as an exponent of the political novel but her fiction is also preoccupied with the modern Indian woman's search for sexual freedom and self-realization. Her woman characters Maya, Rashmi, Uma, Saroja and Mara represent women chafing against the marriage code. One of her novels 'The Day in Shadow' is about the domestic plot.

Anitha Desai is the youngest of the major Indian English women novelists. Unlike Shagal, her fiction conveys the true significance of things. Desai's protagonists are mostly women from school girl to grandmother who are all fragile introverts trapped in their own skills. Her women characters are emotional, isolated and rebel by nature. Like Jhumpa Lahiri, Anitha Desai's fiction is also a reflection of social and

political realities take precedence over probing of the mind. It also pictures the East-West encounter as revealed in the lives of Indian emigrants to Britain. Desai's women characters; Maya from 'Cry, The Peacock', Monisha and Amala from 'Voices in the City', Sita from 'Where Shall We Go This Summer' Raka from 'Fire on the Mountain'..etc represent the feministic features of her writings.

Alexander is an Indian writer and her fiction reflects the multi-cultural life experiences among diverse ethnic and religious communities. Her works examine the disparate elements of her heritage and cultural displacements concentrating particularly on her status as educated woman. She is a feminist in the perspective of literary and cultural issues. She remarked herself: "While I'm writing, I do not think I consciously write as a woman, I have little doubt that some of my deepest emotions and insights spring from having been born into a female body learning to grow up as a woman in both a traditional Indian culture".

Alexander's verse generally favours Indian themes; feminist issues comprise the majority of her work. Her fiction dominates with female characters. For instance, her work, 'I Root My Name' intimates the painful experiences of women. Her 'Storm' contemplates the feminist ideal of recreating and rewriting a pure female self-identity. Her poetry of "River and Bridge" explores similar personal and feminist themes. Her fiction also relates with women's roles as a healer of communal ills.

Shashi Deshpande has earnestly been accepted as a significant literary figure on the contemporary literary scene. She was born in a famous educated Brahmin family in 1938 at Dhārwad in Karnataka. Shashi Deshpande's novels represent the contemporary modern women's struggle to define and attain an autonomous selfhood. Her female protagonists are at great pains to free themselves from stultifying, traditional constraints. The social and cultural change in the post- Independence India has made women conscious of the need to define themselves, their place in society, and their surroundings. Female quest for identity has been at pet theme for many a woman's novelist. Shashi Deshpande has also been one of such writers and she makes an earnest effort to understand the inner dimension of the female characters. For the portrayal of the predicament of middleclass educated Indian women, their inner conflict and quest for identity, issues pertaining to parent-child relationship, marriage and sex, and their exploitation. As, Shashi Deshpande in one of her Interviews expressed her inner thinking about feminist movement as, "*If others see something feminist in my writing, I must say that it is not consciously done, it is because the world for women is like that and I am mirroring the world.* "

Shobha De, a supermodel, celebrity journalist and the well-known author stands as a pioneer in the field of popular fiction and ranks among the first to explore the world of the urban woman in India. With her extraordinary ability, she presents very sensitive aspect of human life. Her way of narrating every aspect of human relationships is wonderful. Really, she is frank in narrating the incidents and situations with a touch of open heartedness. She has given importance to women's issues and they are dealt with psychology in her style of intimate understanding. Her novels indicate the arrival of a new Indian woman, eager to defy

rebelliously against the well-entrenched moral orthodoxy of the patriarchal social system. Her female characters break all shackles of customs and traditions that tie them in the predicaments and rein in their freedoms and rights. They are not against the entire social system and values but are not ready to accept them as they are. Very often women had enjoyed these things in the past so to develop their imaginative capabilities and personal freedom. Women were not recognized as individuals or autonomous beings. Women had to face many obstacles in the academic circuit, which symbolize the effects of an educational culture that radically restricts the scope of women's intellectual exposure.

Manju Kapur is a professor of English at Miranda House in Delhi. Her first novel, *'Difficult Daughters'* received the *'Common Wealth Award'* for the Eurasian region. Her novel *'A Married Woman'* which is a seductive story of a love at a time of political and religious upheaval, told with sympathy and intelligence. It is the story of an artist whose canvas challenges constraints of middle-class existence. Manju Kapur describes through her protagonist, Astha: *"A woman should be aware, self-control, strong will, self-reliant and rational, having faith in the inner strength of womanhood. A meaningful change can be brought only from within by being free in the deeper psychic sense."* Astha wants to break her dependence on others and proceed on the path of full human status that poses a threat to Hemant and his male superiority. She finds herself trapped between the pressure of modern developing society and shackles of ancient biases. She sets out on her quest for a more meaningful life in her lesbian relationship. She canonizes and comments on her feminine sensibility, by raising the social issues related to women. In her writings, Manju Kapur has emphasized on the issues of patriarchy, inter-religious marriage, and family bond, and male-female bond, co-existence of past and present.

Conclusion: Feminism in its literary sense is the physical and psychic liberation of women from the mean traditional rule of man. Since time immemorial in the world, particularly in Asian countries and in India the social practice and creeds have by and large control of man. Women writers like Mahasweta Devi, Sara Joseph and Arundhati Roy consider as a major source of inspiration to pave its way to activism. They are all socially devoted to serve the humanity and expand their helping hand to the poorest of the poor. Other noted woman writer of post-modern feminism is Manju Kapur. Jhumpa Lahiri's combination of two cultures creates an inner confusion for many of her woman characters who struggle the balance both the western and Indian influence.

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