

CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN IN INDIAN LITERATURE

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Feminism as a precisely define concept relating to sociological literary studies is a phenomenon of recent development. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term 'feminism' was first used in the latter part of 19th century and it was defined as having the qualities of females. In general, feminism is the ideology of women's liberation in all its approaches as a woman who recognizes herself and is recognized by others as feminist. The feminist consciousness is the consciousness of victimization. As a philosophy of life it opposes women's subordination to men in the family and society, along with men's claim to define what is best for women. Feminism is defined as a mode of existence in which the woman is free of the dependence syndrome whether it is the husband or the father or the community or religious and ethnic group. Even today an average woman feels uncertain about her identity as a social being. So feminism is committed to the struggle for equality for women rights historically and politically. It emphasizes the value of women as they are. The discussion of feminism in literary context, particularly in the context recent fiction in English should prove an endeavour of highly innovative nature representing a significant departure from the traditional mode of critical evaluation. Women writers have given a new dimension to the English and Punjabi literature. Before the rise of novel several women writers composed songs, short stories and small plays. It is still believed that the Vedas cry allowed, the Parana's shout; no good may come to a woman in the mid 19th century, more women started to write in the English and Punjabi language and witnessed several changes in the writing pattern. Women novelists have incorporated the recurring female experiences in their writings and it affected the cultural and language patterns in Indian literature.

The term 'feminist' has been handled rather cautiously by many women writers. They consider even the term "women writer" as derogatory, taking away their artistic autonomy and

identity and categorizing them by gender. Today is the generation of those women writers who have money and are mostly western educated. Their novels consist of the latest burning issues related with women as well as those issues that exist in the society since long. These books are thoroughly enjoyed by the masses and publishers make easy money out of them. The publishers feel that the literature actually survives because of these type of bold topics and commercial used by the women novelist. Indian women novelists in English and Punjabi constitute a significant group. They like their male counterparts successfully integrate the diversity of Indian culture and experience. Shashi deshpane, shobha de, Arundhati roy, Amrita Pritam, Dilip Kaur Tiwana, etc assume credibility and authenticity by seeking answer to their exploration against the Indian background – social religious and cultural. Quest pattern in these writers is also as diversified as in the novelists of the other gender. They describe the whole world of women with simply stunning frankness. Their write-ups give a glimpse of the unexplored female psyche, which has no accessibility. The majority of these novels depict the psychological suffering of the frustrated house wife. Shashi Deshpande presents in **That Long Silence** with the help of symbols and dreams of Jaya. This central character represents the trauma of house wives who are really fed up with their married life.

Since long, feminism has been used by the women novelists. Their novels reflect that the present age women have realized that she is not helpless and is not dependent. They feel that a woman is an equal competent just like a man. Today a woman has also become a direct money earner and she is not only confined to household works. The modern Indian women think in different lives and that is what is depicted in the novels of the Indian women authors. Through their novels they spread the message of what actually feminism is, which actually is very broad. These women writers say that feminism means putting an end to all the suffering of a woman in silence.

Indian English writing started with Sarojini Naidu. This great poetess charmed the readers with her writings. That's why she was dubbed the nightingale of India, published her first set of poems at the age of 16 and went to England where she was educated. Her writings reflect her honest and heartfelt concerns about the situation of her country.

Towards the mid 19th century more and more women began to write in English. Some of them such as Rukeya Sekhawat Hussain created a world of feminist ideology. In Sultana's

Dream she talks about a world dominated by women; a world which has imprisoned men in a male equivalent of zenanas. She creates a world that is much better than the one man managed.

If we talk about Punjabi literature Amrita Pritam is one who wrote fabulous novel *Pinjar* in which *Puro* lead a life of helplessness as she could not remove the hate for Rashida because she ponder over the time when she got kidnapped by him. Her existence is nothing more than a skeleton.

In this way the writer pours her own experiences of loving through the partition into pinjar as it brings out the multitude of misfortunes that would strike a girl for no faults of hers. But why all the time a girl is objectified as a vessel of honour, a vessel tint had to thrown away if it broke. There was no mercy in the ossified social system no hope for rehabilitation.

So this time also female face injustice, the frustration it begets and occasionally, the strength it forces the victim to find within herself. Because they are bound themselves to feudal system and engaged them to old value that can't be discarded the ties. They still ache to be reconciled to them.

Dilip Kaur Tiwana's Eho Hamara Jeewna (And such is her faith) is a poignant tale of lower class rural woman *Bhano*. She is powerless to achieve her simple dream of leading a dignified life which for her is to be a wife and a mother. Mrs Tiwana paints a tragic picture of simple woman caught in the circumstances of her existence. She reflects the social reality in order to rethinking of the knowledge, such a society lives by. In her other novel, *Tumri Katha Kahi Na Jae* she has attempted to paint the life-sketch of a girl born to Bishan Dei, wife of Harjas Rai, a rich khattri of Lahore. He names his daughter Ajit believing that none of the five vices mentioned in Gurbani has victory over her. When Ajit comes of marriageable age, she wedded to Gobind Rai, son of Guru Teg Bahadur. Ajit, who is later popularly known as Jeetan, bravely fights against the Mughals to her end. It is a historical novel covering the period of the 18th century. It is a study that completely enveloped with a strong resonance of the power of human destiny and the vicious network of social predictability. As Tiwana raises important issues through her works but she does not offer any solutions as she leaves it to the readers to do soul searching to reach the right conclusion.

But some female writers are very bold like *Taslima Nasreen* and *Veena Verma* who depicts their boldness through their works. Mr. Salman Rushdie calls Taslima an advocate of free love and I will call her an outright hedonist. It is shocking to see this woman's vision not

progressing beyond burly bodies and hairy chests. The body images as reflected in *Shodh* calls for an urgent sorting out of the concept body as she means of celebrating life has been an old eastern view.

With same boldness other Punjabi writer *Veena Verma* has written many stories with boldness in theme and style and sensitive in treatment. Her great work we ;the women presents her depth of feminism. she mostly writes short stories about the problem of women ,especially those of the Asian community and picks up contemporary issues to bring to fore the trials, tribulation, strenght and resilience of a woman. Verma has penned three autholies of stories and one of poetry. Her writings stem from life, experiences and people around her.

“ There are such heart wrenching stories of young girls moving abroad after marriage and then being abandoned on the streets,the high rate of domestic violence or the new craze of parants wanting to send their children abroad to study and not realizing the exploitation and mentel trauma the go through in my latest story *Do Deviyan* , i look at lesbian relationship with a sensitive eye”says Veena Verma. Her stories are are a challenge to stage as they are powerful, bold and portray women, who face the odds with both dignity and strength. In her work *Firangian Di Nooh* ,which is the story of an illiterate woman who moves to the UK to join an abusive husband. She walks out of the marriage with her children and then the helpless lady takes up a job as a cleaner in a hospital and after long strive makes her children settle with success. In this way she depicts a true picture of feminist struggle.

To summarise the above discussion we can say that almost women writer talked about numerous problems of female whether with meekly accepts the restrications around them and some of them revolted against the biasnees and bluntly criticised the place of female in Indian society. No doubt they do not provide any way out to these problems but they opened the door of literary writings for women in which they can express their pant up feelings with the aesthetic satisfaction. In this way most of the female inspired by these kind of works which depicts the certain images of female truly. It is also very beneficial in women empowerment but at certain place the condition of women is still thinkable and worse. With the hope of better future of female in India feminism remain progressive with its different colours.