

FEMINISM IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The word feminism refers to the support of women's right on the ground like social, economic and political impartiality of the sexes. Women were restricted to the domestic area whereas public life was reserved for men. Women were denied the right to own property to study or to participate in public existence. Feminism is inspiring women so that men and women are treated equally. It is not based on women having power over men; rather, the idea is that women should have power over themselves. The feminists believe that men and women are equal and women deserve the same rights as men in society. The feminist literary analysis used up most of its power relating how women were represented in literary works by both men and women writers.

KEYWORDS: - Feminism, Feminists, Literary Feminism

INTRODUCTION

The term feminism coming from French in 1872. Its origin from the Latin word "Famine" which means woman and was first used with observe the issue of equality by women's right movement. Feminism is the association against the patriarchy. It is awareness against women's domination and utilization in society. It is a awaken action by both men and women to change this situation.

..... "In childhood a women should be under her father's control, in youth under her husband's control, and when her husband is dead under son, she should not have independence".(Buhler 1992)

In other words, it relates to the belief that women should have the same social, economic and political rights as men. Women were restricted to the domestic area, while public life. Feminism is inspiring women. So that men and women are treated equally. It is not about demeaning men or declaring them inferior. It is not based on women having power over men; rather the idea is that women should have power over themselves. Feminism is an attempt to get rid of this idea of authority and subordination to bring both genders on the same level.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand gender inequality and focuses on gender politics power relations and sexuality.
2. Focuses on the promotion of women's rights and interest.
3. Breaking gender stereotypes women should cook, should not work outside home.
4. To make women understand that we are not the slaves of the society and they have equal rights to bring out good in them.
5. To improve their lives and living conditions, particularly with respect to problems that are unique to them.

FEMINISM IN INDIAN CONTEXT

Traditionally right from the ancient days, India was a male dominated culture. Women's of India had suffered from lack of slays, boundation and followed the alot of taditonally typical culture. Feminine literature has been subject to many great changes over the past few years with the help of well built characterstics of draupadi, she has been shown as the women who faces most pain and is the most sacrificing lady. Draupadi a woman born out of the fire avenged the disgrace meted out to her in the Mahabharata. Durga Maa an incarnation of goddess Parvati was created as merger of all the gods to destroy evil. In the Ramayana, Sita fought for her indepedence and raised her

two sons single handedly. Sita's character as a musical embodiment of beauty, softness of heart, wealth of compassion loyalty, wisdom of the truest type, courage of heart and patience that served her well always asserting herself for her rights. Sita, Draupadi, goddess Durga, Rani Laxmi Bai so many untold names as thye role model of womanhood. We had some great feminist icons in our culture and history. In ancient India, many scriptures had written about the situation of the women, where she enjoyed equal status as that of men. Vedas like Rigveda and Upanishads wrote about women sagis and seers, gargi and matreyi. After the medieval period the position of the women got deteriorated and evil practices like sati child marriage ban, on widow remarriage became part of social life in India. To name some women who excelled in the field of literature, politics, religion and education. Razia sultan who ruled over Delhi, Durgavati the Gond queen, Chand bibi fought against Mughal forces of Akhbar, Mirabai a female saint poet was an important Bhakti movement figures. In comtemporany times women have been at high post in the nation like India that includes the post of president, prime minister, speaker of loksabha and leader of opposition party respectively. Women have done exceptionally well in different field of life, be at academics, teaching, defence, media or enterpreanure etc.

You swing and you swing
 O sea, you play a child's game
 But,
 I must pose
 I must pretend
 I must act the role
 Of happy woman

Happy wife. (Kamla Das, The Sucide 1973)

Women in India, have usually held the role of nurturer, whether wife or mother. While many womens enjoy this role and are fulfilled by serving family and others. Kamla Das's poem written in 1973, gives voice to many women who struggle with this role that is assigned to them at birth and the choices that they are not given. The poem suggests that the roots of feminism were slowly taking hold inside the Indian woman who was realizing that she was satisfied with the way things were. The history of feminism in India can be divided into three phases: the first phase, beginning in the mid nineteenth century, initiated when male European colonists began to speak out against the social evils of sati. The second phase from 1915 to Indian independence when Gandhi incorporated women's movements into the quit India movement and independent women's organizations began to emerge. Third phase, post –independence, which has focused on fair treatment of women in the work force and right to political party.

TYPES OF FEMINISM- There are various models of Feminism.

1. Liberal Feminism
2. Radical Feminism
3. Socialist-Marxist Feminism
4. Cultural feminism
5. Eco Feminism

Liberal Feminism- Men and women are equally rational. They are both therefore qualified to fulfill social and pratical roles at any level.

Radical Feminism - Here man is the source of all oppression all culture is male dominated patriarchal separate women's culture with separate set of values, which are different from that of man.

Social – Marxist Feminism - They represent demarcation between private and public sphere of activity maintained by capitalists for their own interests.

Eco Feminism – Eco faminism examines the connections between women and nature.

FEMINISM AND LITERATURE

The literature written mainly by women and concerned to women is called feminist literature. In the Indian context several feminist have realized that the subject of women's invasion in India should not be reduced to contradiction between men and women. In the post independence period of India there emerge a group of modern women writers in English, who have a distinct sense of their identity. The second generation of Indian women novelists like Anita desai, sahashi deshpande, bharti mukherjee, and shobha de, mahashweta Devi.

Anita Desai- Anita desai is one of the best-known contemporary women writers of Indian fiction in English. She has gained distinction in exploring the human psyche and the emotional feelings of her protagonists. She examines the deep psyche of her character, especially women characters. According to her literature is neither a means of escaping reality, nor a vehicle for parading her political, social, religious and moral ideas, been an exploration and an inquiry. She has an independent approach to women's problem in Indian society as well as life in general. Anita desai is especially prominent for the insightful depiction of the inner life of the female characters in her writing. Many novels of Anita desai explore the tension between family members and alienation of middle class women. The novel **Cry the Peacock** is mainly concerned with the theme of disharmony between husband and wife relationships. Desai look in to the reasons for marital dispute and illustrates how such conflict affects of the family. Maya and Gautama have strained relationships because of their mismatched temperament. Maya is dreamy, emotional and sensitive, while Gautama practical, insensible and rational. Maya has tenderness, softness and warmth, Gautama is hard and cold. The matrimonial bonds that bind the two are very delicate and tenuous; the growing tension between them reaches when maya kills Gautama and then commits suicide. Desai's second novel **Custody** she focuses on theme of marital argument and relationship problem of Deven and Sarla lead an unhappy marital life. They are quite different from each other in their temperament. Deven is a Hindi lecturer in a college and sarla was no interest in literature. She is ignorant that she concludes her husband's frequent visits to Delhi for meeting his girlfriend. Sarla is a picture of an abandoned wife.

The status of women in modern India is a sort of a paradox. If on one hand she is at the peak of success, on the other hand she is mutely suffering the violence afflicted on her by her own family members. The women have left the secured area of their home and are now in the battlefield of life fully unbreakable with their talent. They had proved themselves.

Shashi Deshpande- Sahitya academy award winning novelist Shashi Deshpande is among the most important and versatile Indian english writers since the 1988. Her novels and short stories explore the psyche of educational middle class Indian women. Deshpande's fiction especially concentrates on the domestic situation and the man women relationship within marriage. Deshpande's feminism does not uproot the woman from her background but it only tries to expose the different ideological element that shapes her. These include socioal and psychological factors such as woman's subordinate position in the family and her restricted sexuality. In shashi deshpande's novel **"The Dark Holds To Terror"** rejects the traditional concept that the sole idea of wife's existence is to please her husband. It potrays the protagonist's fight to survive in a world that offers no easy out. The story line is mainly on the waking up of greedy knowledge that there is more to life that dependency on husband or parents. The woman has established herself as independent being. Free from the restrictions imposed by society, Culture and free from her own frears and guilt. Saru decides to declare and fight her own battle. She realizes that her life is her own which she will have to shape as well as face the events of her life. Saru has come to realize that her profession as a doctor is her own and she will only decide what to do with it "My life is my own". She will no longer be a puppet. The fact is that saru being a lady a doctor is always gives more importance. People come to her and respect her and it is something which her husband can not digest. This proves how the woman has triggered into male institutions which were largely meant foe men. The novelist's objective is to show that one should take shelter in the self which means that woman should assert and determine herself so that she can over come or batter the supporting forces. In **"Roots and Shadows"** a novel by shashi deshpande explores the inner self of Indu, who symbolizes the mew woman who are educated and married to Jayant but her feminine character for expression is suppressed. Being smothered in an oppressive male dominated and tradition bound society. She attempts to explore her "uniqueness. Indu rise up often wished to be free and uncontrolled. The author has beautifully voiced out how a women overcomes the power by men. She can "voice up" the frustration and distress and challenging the serious concept of male dominated society.

Bharati Mukherjee- Bharati mukherjee is one of the well known feminist writers and novelists whose writings focus on major issues of the women. She is an Indian born American writer. She was born in 1940 in kolkata. Mukherjee experiences of alientation, position of new immigrants, Indian women and their struggle. Her writings also use the women characters to present the spatial and activist scope among different cultures. In Bharati mukherjee's first novel **"The Tiger's Daughter"** the protogonist Tara Banerjee returns to India after seven years stay in America. Here Tara's relatives cannot accept a woman who not accompanied by her husband David. According to Indian tradition, a man should lead the woman. He plays a protective role. Travelling alone, living alone and moving alone are part of unfamiliarity in many part of India. In Indian tradition one should marry in his own caste, if anyone marries from another caste, he will be treated as an outlast or a sinner. The protogonist Tara violating these rules and marries a foreign man who is a Jew. Mukherjee makes a criticism of the traditional attitude of the Indians who are crazy of foreign things and clothes but they do not appear of marriage with foreign people. Tara feels alienated. Tara becomes mentally confused and makes her return to the U.S.A. In her first novel she finds the feeling of alienation of Tara. In her second novel **"Wife"** the protogonist Dimple wants to break through the traditional taboos of a wife. The story of quiet young girl is full of dreams about her married life and so she eagerly and impatiently waits for marriage. She marriage Amit Basu. She visualizes a new life for herself in America where Amit is expecting to immigrate. She is expected to play the role of an ideal Indian wife, stay at home and keep the house for the husband. Her frustration is built up gradually by the situations. But herself identity is avoided by marriage. She aspires for self recognition and dream fulfillment. But Basu behaves in a different way. He wants her to a submissive. He needs her only for sexual harrassment. She feels it's a sort guilty. Finally in her mentally upset state, she kills Amit in an act of self-liberation and eventually commits suicide. Bharati mukherjee is a typical feminist writer. Her novels truly stick on to the temperament and mood of the society in which she lived.

CONCLUSION

The feminism theory is very important in our India because it shows hoe unequal society is when it comes to gender. Women get treated unfairly in India every single day. This needs to change; we could use more women in government positions, more publicity of womens sports, and more mangements for women in the workplace and start expecting more out of women. It is highly unlikely that we will ever have a completely fair India, but the thought of it is quit nice

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