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Editor
Neeraj Kumar

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EDITORIAL

In the ever changing and ever evolving reality of life the status of women all over the world and particularly in the Indian continent has undergone rapid and phenomenal changes. The woman's past has been a pathetic one, governed and dictated by male standards. However, today the changes brought about by education and economic freedom have enabled her to emerge from the cocoon of the suffering and sacrificing self. Till recent times they have been assessed by male standards and have been forced to play subordinate roles as the obedient wife, the self-sacrificing mother and the dutiful woman. However, now she has succeeded to a great extent though not fully to break the fetters of her servility and oppression and prove her worth to the world. In the changing scenario, in order to envisage a new social order for herself and to assert her own strength and individuality she has employed certain strategies to confront the patriarchal demonstration or for that matter, any kind of domination. Feminism, as an active force with its stress on equal opportunity for women, gave her the resoluteness to redefine her role and establish her prowess and mettle. She felt the need to assert her autonomy and claim her rightful place both in the domestic and social sphere. And this initial step had a strong impact and proved a tremendous success as it widened the woman's vision to understand the constraints that had been imposed on her through the ages.

The writers too, in general and women writers in particular have portrayed the 'New Woman' who refuses to be a toy in the hands of men, a determined woman who insists on falsifying the old belief – 'It is a man's world; woman's place is in the home.' Today women in most of the cases are trying to deconstruct the myth of male sovereignty and are trying to come out of the margins and to occupy the Subject positions. Change in the socio-economic conditions has changed our patriarchal attitudes to gender and contemporary change is being reflected in literature. We no longer have women characters just as victims or as commodities to be sold or brought but we have women as occupying the central position. The old established myths about 'male' and 'female' no longer prevail and one can perceive that subjectivity has been redefined. Thus literature today presents an image of woman, which is totally different from the image of woman in the past. Things have changed to the extent that we can now speak of a genre of feminist literature—one of the most innovative areas of contemporary literary production. Many women writers have written about women from woman-centred perspective. The shaping of women characters, thus is influenced by the emerging view of women. The existing reality calls for a reconsideration of women's rights and status, a radical restructuring of thought. A new attitude has to be built up—an attitude which would be relevant to the new needs, and literature, we know can play a vital role in this direction by bringing about the desired social changes.

The papers included in the present issue of the Journal deal with diverse

areas. It comprises twenty one papers ranging from the poetic world of Nissim Ezekiel and A.K. Ramanujan to the world of Greek and Tamil elegies; from the eco-critical world of Amitav Ghosh and Kamala Markandaya to that of feminist vision of the Caribbean writer, Rosario Ferre, Kiran Desai, Anita Desai; from the world of socially excluded Dalit to the world of British novelist, William Golding and from the world of Anderson, the Danish author to the lesbian world of Ismat Chughtai; and from the world of fairy tales to the spiritual world of R.K. Narayan. Besides, writers like John Steinbeck, S.K. Pottekkatt, Kiran Desai and Aravind Adiga have also been dealt with from comparative viewpoints. There are a few papers related to English Language Teaching, translation studies and tragedy. In addition to the scholarly papers, the Journal also includes creative writing section—containing a number of poems, penned by experienced professors as well as the budding poets. The poems have been followed by one short story entitled "Covid-19: Awakening amidst Aestivation", quite relevant to the present situation. A book review has also been accommodated in the present issue of the Journal.

The challenging task of publishing the present issue of the Journal has been possible only because of the constant encouragement of my mother, Dr. V. R. Agrawal, former Professor & Head, Dept. of Sanskrit, Post-Graduate Centre, Gaya College, Gaya (Magadh University, Bodh-Gaya) who shaped my personality and raised me to the height where I am. I invoke her grace for any good that I may do in this life. I feel obliged to the members of the Advisory Board and all the Associate Editors also to the panel of reviewers but for whose continuous support and encouragement this Journal would not have seen the light of the day. I thank all the contributors, who during this critical period of pandemic contributed their scholarly papers to the Journal. I also thank my departmental colleagues, friends, well wishers and all associates who rendered support to me in one way or the other.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not record my thanks to my wife, Dr. Shalini Agrawal (Assistant Professor, Dept. of Botany, Dr. V.K.S. College, Rafiganj, Aurangabad, Bihar) whose active and ungrudging help proved fruitful in completing the work requiring sustained and patient labour, undivided attention and pointed concentration. I also bless my sons Arush Agrawal (II year, SLS, Pune) and Ansal Agrawal (Std. X, DAV Public School, Cantt. Area, Gaya) for helping me in numerous ways. Sri Ajay Kumar Proprietor, Shivam Computer Press and Mr. Tufail Ahmad too deserve thanks who designed and printed the present issue of the Journal.

Finally, I invite the active co-operation from readers in the endeavour to promote a proper understanding of literature as an aid to make living really worthwhile. Constructive criticism and suggestions from scholars are earnestly solicited for the improvement of the Journal in future issues.

1st July, 2020

Neeraj Kumar