

Role of Indian Women Writers in English in the Psycho-Emotional Emancipation of Women in the Post-Independence India

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Abstract. Patriarchy is that social institution which provides superior status to the male and inferior to the female. It promotes that power-structured relationship in which one section of the society is controlled and governed by the other. The domination of men over women is chiefly the outcome of the bitter truth that earlier girls or women were kept away from acquiring education, therefore, they were denied of the opportunity to be economically independent and self-reliant. Due to the lack of knowledge they could not dare to establish their own identity and abilities in the outside world. They were considered to spend their whole life remaining confined within the four boundaries of home only. Obviously enough, they could not justify their worth as an individual in the socio-political spheres. They were not able to express their dissatisfactions and agonies openly and had to suffer silently throughout their lives. However, in the post-independence India, the conditions of women got much improved due to the equal opportunities of education made accessible to them by the Indian constitution. The present research paper aims at focusing on the role of the Indian women writers in English in the psycho-emotional emancipation of women in the post-independence India. The paper will try to analyse how Indian women influenced with feminism have been expressing their thoughts and feelings by becoming a concerned writer after independence. It will elucidate the endeavours made by them to give voice to the pain and sufferings of Indian women from a woman's point of view. The paper will throw light on the development of self-esteem and fearlessness among the majority of women of the country by dint of the literary contributions made by the women litterateur and authors.

Keywords : Patriarchy; psycho-emotional emancipation; power-structured relationship; feminism.

The skill of creative writing provides a wonderful golden opportunity to an individual to give vent to his or her thoughts and emotions. The skill proves to be an extremely empowering gift, specially, when women writers

are talked about. Women have been very good storytellers for ages, but their contributions as story writers have brought long-lasting name and fame to them globally. The skill of writing indeed makes an individual perfect. In the patriarchal society of India, the voice of women has always been suppressed. Patriarchy is that social institution, which provides superior status to the male and inferior to the female. It promotes that power-structured relationship in which one section of the society is controlled and governed by the other. The domination of men over women is chiefly the outcome of the bitter truth that earlier girls or women were kept away from acquiring education, therefore, they were denied of the opportunity to be economically independent and self-reliant. Due to the lack of knowledge, they could not dare to establish their own identity and abilities in the outside world. They were considered to spend their whole life remaining confined within the four boundaries of homes only. They could not justify their worth as individuals in the socio-political spheres. They were not able to express their dissatisfactions and agonies openly and had to suffer silently throughout their lives.

However, in the post-independence India, the scenario has witnessed a great change. The constitution of the country provided equal rights and opportunity to men and women both to lead a respectable life. The constitution of India guarantees freedom of speech and expression to all citizens. This right is enshrined in Article 19 (1) (a). After independence, those women, who were supposed to keep mum in all the conditions and do not interfere much in the familial and societal matters, specially, when men were taking the lead, understood their decision making abilities. They got constitutional rights to express themselves. Women, who were considered to be the subordinates to men, now started raising their voice in their writings for being considered as individuals with self-respect.

After getting the needed access to education, women found themselves flying in the sky of self-respect and self-enlightenment. A pen has rightly been considered mightier than a sword. Swords can kill a few individuals, but words can win the heart of whole humanity. If used properly, they can create wonders by bringing the desired amelioration in the societal scenario. Many women authors moved their pens in order to change the servile mentality of Indians and bring constructive upgradation in the nation. Educated women are not ready to be commanded by men like lifeless puppets now. They are not ready to listen

to men silently now, if the latter are capricious and wrong. Women have started expressing their objections, sorrows and happiness freely now-a-days. They have started participating in many such works, which were once considered to be done by men only.

In the post-independence India, the conditions of women got much improved due to the equal opportunities of education made accessible to them by the Indian constitution. The major Indian women writers in English are also the outcomes of that great socio-political change in India. Indian women started writing not only in Hindi or English, but almost in all the Indian languages. Before independence women's work were undervalued due to patriarchal assumptions about the superior worth of the experiences of men in various domains. With the demolition of colonialism and focus on feminist discourse, the era witnessed the emergence of many prominent women writers. Writers such as Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Das, Arundhati Roy, Shobha De, Indira Goswami, Anita Nair, Shashi Deshpande, Chitra Banerjee, Bharati Mukherjee, Toru Dutt, Rukmini Nair, Kiran Desai et. al. have given quite new definitions to the womanhood in India. These women authors have proved their worth and identity in the realm of literature and have paved the way for many women to tread on. Their forte to express their tears and laughter from their point of view, has done a lot in the psycho-emotional emancipation of women in the post-independence India.

Now-a-days, Indian women writers influenced with feminism, have been expressing their thoughts and feelings by becoming concerned writers. They are making constant endeavours to give voice to the problems faced by different categories of Indian women from the feministic point of view. The appearance of women on the horizon of Indian English literature has boosted much self-esteem and fearlessness among the majority of women of the country. By dint of the literary contributions made by the women litterateur and authors, the orthodox concept of womanhood has been upturned. In almost all the languages and literatures of India, the women writers are transcending the boundaries and making their presence and value felt on the nationally and internationally. Authors, such as Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shashi Deshpande et al are highly acclaimed and celebrated ones, who have not simply made contribution to the literary world, but also bagged prestigious literary awards. Stories of such successful women writers are very inspiring for new women writers.

Literature has made woman mentally strong and emotionally endurable to cope with various ups and downs meted out to life boldly and bravely. The celebrated poetess Sarojini Naidu played a very crucial role in the empowerment of women in India. She, strongly advocated for women's rights and education. Naidu believed that education was key to empowering women and was a strong supporter of women's education. She wrote many beautiful poems and proved her worth as a peerless writer. On the other hand, when one reads the novels of authors like Anita Desai, one finds the true psycho-analysis of a domestic women, suffering constantly on the altar of incompatible marriage. Neeru Tandon, a celebrated feminist has observed in her book *Various Feminist Theories*:

The feminists also attacked love as an institution that promotes vulnerability, dependence, possessiveness, susceptibility to pain, and prevents the full development of woman's human potential. (Tandon, 45)

Desai sketches the agony of married, unmarried and widow women within the boundaries of household. Almost all her women characters turn neurotic, commits suicide or opt for lonesomeness. The rebellious thoughts of Maya can be summarized with her expressions when she says :

Is it madness? Am I gone insane? Father!
Brother! Husband! Who is my saviour?
I am in need of one. I am dying, and I
am in love with living. I am in love, and
I am dying. God, let me sleep, forget,
rest. But no, I'll never sleep again. There
is no rest any more- only death and
waiting. (*Cry, the Peacock*, 84)

However, Arundhati Roy, has portrayed Indian women in her magnum opus novel *The God of Small Things*, being disgraced and maltreated badly in the familial and socio-political domains by their own family members and acquaintances; police and politicians.

Anita Desai's women characters cherish the rebellion within, but they seldom dare to cross the set boundaries of Indian tradition, where women are denied of the opportunities of raising questions. However, Arundhati Roy has created women characters like Baby Kochamma,

Ammu and Rahel, who are breaking the tradition of man-worship. Roy has shown that educated Indian women are ready to abandon their atrocious and betrayer husbands. After getting divorce from their former husband, they dare love again, throwing away even the caste system to the wind, as one finds in the case of the true and caring lovers Ammu and Velutha, a paravan. Roy poignantly shows the cruel discriminations made by the parents between a girl child and boy child. Mammachi, who had favoured Chacko's illicit advances towards the factory workers declaring the same as men's needs, is not ready to accept Ammu's love relationship with Velutha. This proves the dual norms of the society :

She was aware of his libertine relationships with the women in the factory, but had ceased to be hurt by them. When Baby Kochamma brought up the subject, Mammachi became tense and tight lipped. "He can't help having a Man's Needs", she said grimly. (*The God of Small Things*, 168)

Women are not only celebrated writers, but journalists and social activists as well. They are showing true mirrors to the whole society by their compositions and various means of mass and communication. Women are the writers, columnists, reporters, editors, journalists, and ministers as well; and are serving the real purpose of writing. They are striving hard for the sake of a good life and society. Now-a-days, social media is also serving as a strong platform for the literary excellence of women.

Obviously enough, the truth may be accepted that the Indian women writers in English have been contributing enormously in the psycho-emotional emancipation of women in the post-independence India. The journey has to be continued and many more glorious literary outputs are awaited.

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