In Indian English Novels, Feminist Perspectives

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Abstract - Feminism is reflected in literature as well as other works in western nations, but due to the oral tradition and increased illiteracy in the east, especially in countries such Asindia, the influence of these studies was limited to the urban population. Aside from the current Indian ring ages, Indian ladies have been writing in English for a long time. Poets, novelists, playwrights, short story authors, and reviewers are no longer behind their male colleagues. Their literary work has earned a permanent position in the anthology of global literature. They have made a substantial contribution to the richness of Indian English works, notably in the fiction category. India's female authors have reached the pinnacle of their careers and have gained international acclaim.

Keywords - Protagonist, Socio- Political Realities, Existential Predicament, Feminine identity

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INTRODUCTION

It is described as "a movement which rejects every discrimination between persons based on sexuality, abolishes physical intimacy advantage and burden and aim to construct the civilization of woman & man as the foundation of law and custom," according to the Feminist Dictionary." "I personally have never been able to figure out exactly what feminism is," Rebecca West, a well-known British writer & critic, once said, "I only know that other people label me a feminist anytime I express thoughts that distinguish me from a doormat and prostitute." "As soon as you seek to analyse everything that has been uttered or published in the name of feminism, it's becoming evident that this is not one unified notion, but rather a broad and multidimensional gathering of ideas, and perhaps acts," writes Jane Freedman in her book Feminism. She goes on to suggest that rather than 'feminist,' there are 'feminisms.' As a result, finding a complete definition of feminism that encompasses all of its components is difficult. There are many different definitions of feminism, each focusing on a different facet of feminism. For example, Chaman Nahal, the well-known.

In the following lines, an Indian writer & critic recognises the fundamental notion of feminism:

> *Women who identify as feminists are liberated from the dependency syndrome, in my opinion. Dependency syndrome may affect anybody, whether it's a spouse, a parent, a neighbourhood, or a congregation. In my view, feminism is realised when women break away from the dependency syndrome and lead a normal life.*

According to Eisentein,

> *i see an element of luminary futurist thoughts in my knowledge of the term "feminist." this includes a idea of social transition as part of the ultimate liberation of women, as well as a change for the better in all human relationships. feminism is about men and social change, even though it is centrally with women, their experience, and condition.*

Regardless of the many definitions, feminist may be defined as a movement that recognises women as one of the most oppressed group, defends their rights by portraying them as people and human beings, and promotes their abilities to be self-sufficient, intellectual, powerful, and successful. Feminism, in other terms, is concerned with women's lower status in society and the prejudice they face as a result of their gender. To minimise and finally eliminate discrimination against women, all feminists urge for changes in the social, economic, political, and cultural order. In works of fiction, feminist literature incorporates and depicts these viewpoints. Feminist literary works challenge prevailing societal stereotypes of women as subjective, biassed, and one-sided. They portray women's depressed state while also indirectly providing solutions to their difficulties. They argue

for a type of writing that is devoid of prejudiced images of people based on race, class, or gender.

Feminism, then, is a feminist movement that seeks to equalise women's social, economic, legal, moral, and rights . for example with men. It's a feminist movement led by fist-shaking, foot-stomping, rights-demanding women who reject androcentric or male supremacist ideologies. It is a feminist anti-masculinist movement led by women, for women, and by women. This movement acknowledges the inadequacies of male-created beliefs and aims to achieve spiritual, racial, economic, and social equality for women who have been "sexually colonised, historically ignored, and anatomically subjugated."

Feminism may be broken down into three broad categories:

1. Theories with an emphasis on the essentials;

2. Feminist literary canon views, as well as theories that strive to reinterpret and re-imagine literature from the less patriarchal perspective

3. Studies of sexual difference and political sexism are also included in this category.

FEMINISTS' VIEWS ON LIBERALISM

The legalisation of same-sex marriage is supported by a large number of liberal feminist groups. In their view, the government has no role in determining what kind of consensual relationships people may have. The pro-choice stance taken by liberal feminists in abortion issues is the norm. Many proponents of this view argue that individuals should be able to make medical choices about their own bodies because of the inherent autonomy that comes with this.

Prostitution is typically opposed by radical feminists as well as the religious right because liberal feminists tend to advocate legalising or decriminalising prostitution because of their attitude to self-ownership. There are many women's rights advocates who see the prohibition of prostitution as an oppressive act that stems from patriarchal control over women's private lives.

Women's occupations and men's jobs are divided into two categories.

- Low wages for female employees

- Top-level jobs are only open to a select few.

- Mothers who work outside the home are unable to afford daycare.

- Abortion restrictions

- Women-owned enterprises are under-supported in this country.

FEMINIST MARXISM

As a sub-type of feminist theory, Marxist feminism is concerned with breaking down capitalism as a means to free women. Capitalism, according to Marxist feminism, is at the foundation of women's oppression since it creates economic disparity, dependency, political confusion, and ultimately harmful social relationships between men and women

People's abilities and desires and interests are viewed to be influenced by the method of production in the society they live in, as according Marxist theory, in capitalist countries. Capitalism, according to Marxist feminists, is the root cause of gender disparity in the workplace and society as a whole. Racism and sexism are also class oppression since they benefit the capitalist class. Women's subjugation is an example of class oppression. Women's labour in the home and in the workplace are examined by Marxist feminists in order to justify their perspective.

Her 1975 essay "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Economics And politics of Sex," in which she coined the term "sex/gender system" and took Marxism to task for what she believes is its incomplete explanation of sexism under capitalism, despite dismissing Marxism.

Marxist feminism was criticised by radical feminism, which arose in the 1970s. Because contemporary society and its institutions are the creation of men, they have a patriarchal nature according to radical feminist thinkers. According to many who hold this position, the greatest way to end the oppression of women is to regard patriarchy as a separate issue from capitalism. As a result, eradicating male dominance implies eradicating all types of female oppression as well. However, radical feminists, like the majority of feminists, think that a culture & policy of equality should take the place of such dominance.

The Marxist description of women's experiences was mocked by Austrian economist Ludwik von Mises. A woman's movement, he claimed, was not revolutionary, but rather a continuation of what capitalism had already accomplished for women. In order to prove his point, he used a comprehensive historical examination of the emergence of liberalism to demonstrate that women benefited. As a first start toward freeing women from the subordinate position they have

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held since the age of violence, the marriage contract was a first step.

Critics of Marxism's interpretation of feminism claim that class and patriarchy are inextricably linked in the Marxist interpretation.

FEMININITY VS. MASCULINITY

It is the degree to which people view themself as masculine or feminine in relation to society's idea of what it means to become a man or a woman. When it comes to gender identity, it's all about the social rather than biological. As a result, men and females characterise themselves as masculine and feminine, respectively, based on the definitions of their peers in society.

Gender roles, which are common expectations of conduct based on one gender, should be distinguished from other gender-related notions such as gender identity, as described above. When it comes to gender roles, women may play the position of housewife, while males play the role of worker. Gender stereotypes, on the other hand, are common beliefs about personality qualities typically connected to one's gender, such as instrumentality in males and expressiveness in women. Gender identity is an entirely separate notion. A person's gender identity is distinct from the perspectives of others or circumstances generally associated with one's gender, such as males thinking about justice & women thinking about caring. Gender roles, stereotypes, and attitudes all play a part in shaping our sense of self, but they're not the same as having a strong sense of self as a woman or a man. Gender identity, from a sociological point of view, encompasses all the meanings that one attributes to oneself based on one's gender identification, and these self-meanings serve as a source of incentive for gender-related behaviour. People who identify as more masculine should participate in activities that are more male, such as being more domineering, competitive, and independent. What matters is not the actions themselves, but the messages they convey.

Social contexts such as interactions with parents, friends, and teachers play an important role in shaping children's self-perceptions of their gender from the moment they are born. It is possible for people to get disillusioned with the traditional masculine and feminine cultural model of gender identity as a result of relying on societally transmitted shared cultural perceptions of what it is to be male or female. Instead of perceiving herself in stereotypically feminine terms like expressive, warm, and subservient, a person may perceive herself more in terms of stereotypically masculine terms like instrumental, logical, and dominating, even though she identifies as female. Some individuals see themselves as more feminine, while others see themselves as more masculine; still others may see

themselves as a combination of the two. Their gender identity is based on this significance along the feminine-masculine axis, and this governs their actions.

The Development Of Femalinity And Masculineness

Femininity and masculinity's evolution may be explained by three main theories:

1. Theory of psychoanalysis

2. Developmental theory and cognitive psychology

3. Learning theories that highlight the need of immediate feedback and modelling

There is a two-step mechanism at work in each of these hypotheses. To begin, the youngster learns either she or he has gender identity. In the second section, the kid learns what it means to be female or male in terms of feminine or masculine identity.

A person's gender identity is formed through identifying with the parent of the same sex. During the oedipal psychosexual development, a person's identity is formed via struggle. A youngster forms a strong sexual bond to the parent of the opposite sex by the time they are three years old. At the same time, hatred and envy against the child's same-sex father arise. Child overcomes mental struggle by giving up desire for opposite-sex parent and embracing same-sex parent at age six. Consequently, males are taught to be masculine by their dads, while girls are taught to be feminine by their moms. Gender identity development may also be explained by the cognitive-developmental hypothesis. There are important events in the formation of gender identity that are cognitive instead of psychosexual in origin, according to this idea, which is similar to psychoanalytic theory. A person's gender identity is formed before they identify with their same-sex parent, according to psychoanalytic theory & learning theory. It is only when a youngster has developed a strong sense of their own gender identity that they are compelled to exhibit gender-congruent attitudes and actions.

Gender identity development is broken down into two distinct phases, according to Kohlborg: Getting a firm grasp on one's gender identity and maintaining that identification throughout time. When a youngster hears the word "boy" or "girl" used to them, they begin to identify themselves as male or female. Gender identity may be established by the time a kid reaches the age of three. A person's gender identity is established at this point. Gender designations are accurately assigned to others by four-year-olds. It's very uncommon for children to reach the second essential stage of gender constancy in as little as a

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year or two. Her sexuality will not change, no matter how old she gets or how much she changes in look.

Learning theories are the most socially of the aspects of gender identity formation. According to these views, a child's gender identity is shaped by the people in their immediate social surroundings, such as their parents and teachers. A parent or teacher may educate a kid how to be feminine or masculine by rewarding or punishing them, or by acting as role models that the youngster can copy. A child's outer appearance, such as what they wear , object preference , and conduct are often the subject of direct reward or punishment. Children are taught acceptable appearance and conduct via the use of incentives and punishments. Modeling same-sex parents, teachers, classmates, or media models is a common way for children to learn about their gender identity in an indirect way. Children mimic awarded models because they believe they will be rewarded in the same way as the rewarded model.

We are still grappling with the question of gender identity stability and change. It is possible that future research may study how gender identities are influenced by involvement in social institutions like the economy, religions, and politics. A good example is whether or not companies teach their workers to have certain attitudes about gender roles in order to keep things running smoothly and make money? Are certain people more receptive to this kind of socialisation? Individual gender identification may have a role in this. Gender identity is also a topic of study in its own right, with a focus on how people, communities, and even civilizations perceive gender. It is the likelihood that a certain identity will be evoked in a given scenario (Stryker 1980). This is dependent on the circumstances, but it may also differ from person to person. For some people, gender is irrelevant, while for others, it is a major factor. What this means is that our predisposition to perceive the world in gendered categories, coined by Bern, is once again brought to our attention.

We know relatively little about variances in the definitions of femininity and masculinity at the sub-cultural, cultural, or cross-cultural levels. Margaret Mead found long ago that these patterns are not universal, which is why we know so little about other civilizations. There is a need to examine the concepts of masculinity and femininity in relation to each other. It is possible to get insight into a society's division of labour as well as how power and prestige are distributed, in general, by doing such research. To change the social structure, it may be necessary to begin by rethinking the definitions of masculinity and femininity among individuals.

IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT, WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS

In Anita Desai's Vices in the City, her aunt Lila comments, "Our nation belongs to its males." Before Gandhi, fathers and husbands considered women as property that could be possessed, controlled, and disposed of as they pleased. During Gandhi's time in India, the feminism movement was given a new direction & depth. He liberated women from the constraints of domesticity and servitude. In his view, men and women were equal participants in society and in politics, with equal responsibilities and equal rights. Because of a lack of education, opportunities for self-development, and a lack of interest in social issues, Indian women's municipal vote was not fully employed until 1885. Even if this "Howeverism" is granted from time to time, saints and scholars, reformers and rebels as well as poets and writers have supported the cause of women's rights. Adhering to the Indian concept of ardhangini, Gandhi embraced the notion that men & women are inseparable, and that one cannot exist without the other.

An anti-feudal movement was launched by Indian women in 1921, the All India Women's Conference in 1927, and in 1930 the National Council of Women.. The women's suffrage campaign was headed by Margaret Cousins & Annie Beasant. For the first time, women were granted the right to vote in Cochin &Travencore in 1920, as well as the Madras presidency in 1921., which offered Indian women a broad range of rights. In the past, India's culture has been ruled by men. In literature and in real life, Indian women were suffocated by a thick, limp veil of prejudice, habit, ignorance, and reticence. Because of Western culture and education, Indian women are now a completely different creature. A new female literary tradition has been born out of a woman's curiosity and anxiety. She has an insurgent, subordinate voice. Despite its tardiness, the feminine sense has emerged in Indian English literature as a creative force to be reckoned with.

A woman writer enslaved by her societal dogmas & stigmas had to pick her creative canvas from a limited range of experiences, with certain vistas staying out of reach. These vistas, which had previously been off-limits to her, are now being artistically explored and openly delimited. New female authors such as Namita Gokale, Anita Nair, and others have emerged. "Make love, not war," was the 1960s anti-war slogan in the United States. 'Make War, not Love,' is the anti-masculinity mantra of today's Indian lady. The modern Indian lady is no more the subservient Sita or Damayanti. She's a Draupadi, a Damini, a Nora, a Candida, or a Joan of Arc, to name a few. Political revolutionaries such Mahatma Gandhi & Pandit Nehru, as well as social reformers such Raja Rammohan Roy and Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, gave her a new depth and a new direction. As a result, feminism emerged in India as a different way of living, a new viewpoint, with

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the feminine mentality attempting to redefine women's place in society. Indian women authors have moved inward to study the individual's private rather than public existence. As a result, their work has primarily taken on a confessional and intimate tone, and its objective style has been called feminine, despite the fact that males use it as well. Feminist in Indian English literature has been a succession of struggles and ordeals just on side of the woman in a transitory culture to establish roots, belong, and declare her individuality. Women are born free, yet they are enslaved. She has been relegated to the role of'subordinate sex.' However, this isn't always the case. Not all women follow the rules. They fight and then reconcile. They are both Kali and Durga, goddesses of destruction and creation.

From the beginning, women in India have been referred to as 'woe-man.' Women have been considered as second-class citizens in all spheres of culture—familial, religious, political, economic, and social—and are compelled to perform a secondary role while males rule and decide. The belief that women are inferior to males and incapable of serious thought may be found in all faiths, nations, races, and times. Feminist critique questions and analyses this assumption and propensity through examining literature and language, as well as stereotyping in myths, tales, and epics. Feminists study mythological and historical writings in order to uncover a gender prejudice that exists throughout civilizations. This trend may be seen in Greek, Roman, and Indian myths. In Greek mythology, for example, Athena supports Apollo's male-oriented argument, which claims that a mother is not a parent to her child and proclaims patriarchy's superiority over matriarchy.

"One is not born but rather becomes a woman" is an oftenquoted remark from Simone de Beauvoir's theory of gender as a cultural construct. Great writing by males shows a clear preference for women. In the patriarchal system, even the created may flourish. In order to show this patriarchal hierarchy, the Scripture is often used.

> *therefore, god made man in his image. in order to get adam to go asleep, the lord caused him to fall into deep sleep. he then took one of his ribs and finally closed the flesh in its place. he then made a whole woman out of that rib, which he brought up to adam. because she is now made of my bone and my flesh, adam declared that she would be known as woman. because man took her out of the world.*

Man becomes a woman . When Adam married Eve, he referred to her as Eve since God is a man. Humans were formed first. According to folklore, people who name things own them, and those who control the word govern the world.

Historically, there were two opposing and diametrically opposed perspectives on India, its major mythologies, histories, and literary works. A woman is both revered and marginalised in a world where she is both revered and marginalised at the same time. Two examples from the Manu Smriti, as cited in this post:

> *"yatranaryasthupoojyanteramantetatradevatahatatradevataha"*

As if this weren't bad enough, let's also have a look at the opposite side of the coin:

Throughout her life — from her father's neglect as a kid to her husband's protection as an adult to her son's care as an elderly parent — this lady has never been really free.

CONCLUSION

The creation of a new woman with her own desire & ambition, quest to break free from the shackles of bondage that binds her to patriarchal norms of subjection and abjection that devalue her, was aided by the constitution's grant of equal status to women with men after independence, the women liberation movements of the 1960s, postmodern onslaught, and western feminism. The majority of the female characters are educated women who are groaning under self-doubt in the context of marriage and their customarily given responsibilities. After independence, Indian women novelists in English and regional genres depict educated women in changing socioeconomic situations, rebelling against exploitation. Indian woman authors' post-independence literary works have reshaped the conversation around women. They have given expression to the outraged conscience of the female population.

Men were in charge of a lot of the early reforms for Indian women. However, by the late 19th century, their husbands, sisters, cousins, and other legitimately impacted by conflicts, such as those fought for women's training, had joined them in their attempts. Women's self-governance became increasingly important in the late 20th century as a result of independent women's organisations. In independent India, women's enthusiasm in the fight for opportunity grew, as did their fundamental attention to their work and rights.

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