

Indian English Literature in the 21st Century: The Representation of Women

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Abstract - The writer has described the role of women or the character of the female world in English literature from twentieth century to the contemporary age of the twenty-first century in this STUDY. The study depicts the progression of women's features after the conclusion of World War I. This was the era when women learned to go outside of their comfort zones and were eager to break free from the stereotypes instilled around them by the masculine patriarchal system. Multiple new female authors with feminist methods in mind have questioned the legendary approach or the strong masculine persona.

Keywords - Indian Novels, Feminism, Character, society

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INTRODUCTION

They fight for women's reproductive rights, safety from domestic violence, workplace violence, and public place violence, as well as economic rights such as equal pay, equality, pensions, and poverty, as well as political, social, and religious rights. Inevitably, Indian authors, particularly female novelists, examine these viewpoints and techniques in their works. There are themes like as widowhood, widowership, remarriage and inter-caste marriages that Deshpande explores in her works as well as feminist problems like woman empowerment and man-woman relationship dynamics. Using a feminist lens, Manju Kapur depicts the lives of educated middle-class women living in metropolitan centres and their experiences of gender inequality, marginalisation, and rebellion. Protesting against masculine oppression and marginalisation is a major theme in her work. All of these themes are addressed in Chetan Bhagat's books about the 21st century Indian youth — from adventure to music to politics to education. In order to better understand the current state of women's portrayal in Indian English novels, five books, namely "Moving On," "A Married Woman," "In the Country of Deceit," "The 3 Errors of My Life," and "Revolution 2020," were chosen and analysed.

FEMALE CONCEPTION

Male attitudes toward women are examined by Deshpande and Kapur in their book. It's interesting to see the conflicting attitudes of men (Hemant) and women (Astha) concerning domestic workers in Kapur. The male gaze treats domestic servants inhumanely, whereas the female gaze treats her as a woman.

If that woman is still here, I'm going to fire her. The very last time Mala was sick, he called Hemant.

the best way to describe how you treat her is that she feels like a member of the family. servant management is essential.'

'see?' too much dependence is placed on her,'

her job is to look after them, so it's only natural that they'd be fond of her.

every night, astha's father-in-law tells her husband that she is a wonderful person.

where the happiness ends if you have a daughter!

Astha's discussion on her sister-in-law, Kapur demonstrates the importance of the daughter-in-law in Indian society.

in the summer, she spends all of her time with us.' instead, she is made a slave in the house by her in-laws; she is only an unpaid servant. a complaint from her means that her husband will side with his parents.

he tells Astha,

do you realize that as a good family woman, your place is in the home, not on the streets?'

the fullness of womanhood is dependent on her pregnancy, according to Kapur

never, said hemant passionately, with a sigh. "a real woman much more than a girl."

Hemant, on the other hand, wants his wife to be more sensual and gorgeous. In preparation for this, he brought a slew of erotica and lingerie for his wife, Astha.

she balked at the suggestion of sensual clothing. how do you perceive me? was she a whore, then?

The husband sees his wife as a plaything, a sexual object, and a source of pleasure, rather than a partner.

'So, i'mgonna be your teddy bear?'

While attending a driver's education class, Deshpande investigates how the average guy feels about the ideas of laywomen. The teacher has a preconceived notion that women would be sluggish, prone to making careless errors, and generally unprepared. Female students are safeguarded from the professors' probable amorous attentions, which is significant. Manjari, on the other hand, took the situation in her stride and learned to drive. The teacher was taken aback.

You are not like any other woman, Madam, I tell you that.

another character in chetan bhagat seems to notice vidya's well-dressed appearance and additional makeup as she walks around the business.

the shopkeeper was scanning vidya's face up and down as i said, "excuse me."

Bhagat examines how males in India and Australia regard women. In Australia, a woman may work as a waitress and have sex with males without fear of repercussions. Indian women, on the other hand, are restricted in their ability to engage in these kinds of relationships.

'yet you two are single. you have to be surrounded by beautiful women in india.' everyone started to look. we don't have any female friends, omi said. "why not?" michael rolled his eyes as he said, "indian women are hot!"

Indian men believe that investing time and energy on romantic relationships with women is a waste of time and a waste of energy, which is why they avoid it.

men in business should not waste the time on dumb physicians.

Bhagat discusses the viewpoints of ladies and shiva from Mankarnika Ghat in this chapter. That's what they say about them.

'don't. why is it bad? for you, in particular.' 'why?' for the reason that you are female.' my elbow was smacked by him. "so what?" you ask. "we talk." girls who sit on the ghats holding elbows aren't looked upon favourably.

He chose an orphaned Harijan girl above his own parents, in the same way as Badri's father does. Harijan girl's father used the most insulting and harsh language possible. He has a tendency to use harsh and abusive language when referring to "girls," which suggests a patriarchal and discriminatory attitude toward women. Discriminatory attitudes and opinions regarding education and marriage are shown by Bhagat in his depiction of Indian parents. Because of their daughter's upcoming marriage, they are too concerned. Arati asserts,

indian parents, i believe, have turned a switch at some point. instead of continuing on with their original goal of 'studying', they now have the goal of 'marrying' in order to achieve their desired outcome.

Gopal tells Arati that,

what happened to your parents??

In response, Arati says, "What?"

"indian parents are insane when it comes to children."

Unlike his wife, Vasu, Badri doesn't attach much attention to reading his sister's novels, preferring instead to focus on his medical studies. While he acknowledges the importance of women's reading and writing, he also argues that they do it just to kill time. RK, on the other hand, was proud of Vasu as a writer and included her in talks and listened to her ideas. He inspires her despite her sluggish Marathi-accented English.

For Shyam, Manjari's mother is behaving bourgeoisly.

'bourgeois' he had called myself, when i argued with him. said he: 'like your parents,' he told them. it was just like his mother. "like you mother."

what are these mai's manuscripts?! it's a dreadful thing! everyone didn't take her seriously as an author, and she didn't take herself seriously as an author, either.

When it comes to dealing with their daughter-in-laws, mother-in-laws use a variety of techniques, according to Manju Kapur. The first is a ready acceptance of the rebellious daughter-in-law, while the second is a rejection and advise to her to adhere to the customs of the family. Pipeelika's Muslim mother-in-law recognises her daughter-in-Hindu law's heritage. With the Sampradayakti Mukti Manch, Astha is actively involved in political activities. Her mother-in-law encourages her to pursue careers as a teacher, artist, etc., and to be a good wife and mother, but also warns her against participating in street protests.

is it really necessary to abandon your family and roam the streets of some strange city like a homeless woman?' 'to protest,' in other words.

these thoughts were not fit for a woman, and she said so resolutely.

Astha's involvement in social movements is also a source of contention for Hemant. Traditional views of a woman's role in her household and as a good wife and mother are upheld by both husband and mother-in-law.

RELIGION AND CULTURE

Badri's grandmother is very concerned about her grandson, who is being held in a prison that houses inmates from many backgrounds and faiths, such as Muslims and Harijanis. Because of this, she is planning on doing a puja to cleanse her kid and the rest of her family. In MW, the mother of Astha is a traditional lady who prays daily.

she wanted to ensure that her daughter had a good husband

Traditional practises, such as praying, presenting jasmine buds and flowers, and lighting silver lamps every night, are what she adheres to. She also cooks a dinner that is first presented to the gods and then to her family. A pious lady, Hemant's mother is likewise a devotee.

pundits are being hired to come each day perform a variety of rituals for her.' 'why?' a grandson, that is.

To illustrate that Arati prays for victory by lighting diyas and floating them in the sea, Bhagat includes this detail in his RTL.

holding my hand and saying, "let's pray together for success," she

comforted me. there may be hope in kota,' she said, her eyes shut.

When students at Bhagat's RT appeared for JEE exams, their families performed little puja ceremonies to bless their success with the subject matter. Additionally, Deshpande explains on her CD about the rituals Indians undertake to enter their new homes, such as reciting mantras or performing gruha-pravesh pujas.

Prior to moving in, we performed the customary PUJA, which was to ward off demons and evil spirits.

In TMML, Bhagat depicts Govind's mother as a sensitive, emotional, weak, and superstitious woman. For her issues, she turns to superstition in the hopes of reuniting with her husband, who took a second wife and abandoned her.

For another year, she consulted astrologers to find out which planet was responsible for her father's decision to leave, and when that position would change.'

Although she is energetic, brave, contemporary, and fearless, Rani in CD nevertheless adheres to religious rituals like as doing pujas and bringing flowers to the temple. In the United States, educated contemporary Indian immigrants are also adopting similar practises for big events, such as the opening of a store, building, or residence. Before beginning construction, Hemant's parents conduct a puja at the project site. At the wedding of Astha and Hemant, Kapur portrays a Pandit and chants mantras & seven steps around the fire to represent Indian culture. In Hinduism, wives are not permitted to refer to their husbands by their first names. KN are the initials that Rani uses to refer to her spouse. Except for her spouse, a woman is not allowed to shake hands with any other males. When KN introduces his buddy Iqbal Sharif to Devayani, she is taken aback when he shakes hands with her.

in rajnur, men did not shake hands with women.

Indians have a variety of customs, such as not allowing their children to marry until three years after the death of their father or mother. As Deshpande demonstrates, there are significant cultural differences between the Rajnur and the urban areas. When it comes to traditional practises, the residents of a small town tend to adhere to them, whereas those in larger cities are more open-minded and allow women greater freedom. Asha advises Kavita to alter her look and attire in accordance with the cultural norms of the community.

you had to change, of course.' a skirt was all she was wearing, devi, and i couldn't believe it. it's a tight skirt in addition, there is somewhat of a gap...' 'a slit...', he said. on one

*side, that is. without heels like this...'
make a tapering action, he did.*

The perspectives of marriage and family in the West are shown by Kapur. Astha tells a coworker about her American-based sister-in-law, who claims that her husband has cheated on her and is seeking a divorce as a result.

'till the age of 60-70, they go on divorce-marrying.' 'they have no idea what family means.' think of themselves only,' they say. in other words, "three out of four people get divorced." to be a woman, to sacrifice, they have no idea what it means.'

Through Ali's mother's brown salwar suit, Chetan Bhagat demonstrates the Muslim custom of women's clothes, with a dupatta covering most of her face. Modernity and tradition are at odds in Deshpande's work. Rather of a human skeleton, her husband, a doctor, installed a statue of a Ganpati and a Devi in her home.

GENDER-SPECIFIC SYMBOLS AND SENSITIVITIES ARE EXAMINED.

In their writings, Kapur, Deshpande, and Bhagat make use of traditional symbols such kumkum, mangalsutra, and other clothing, jewellery, and accessories to depict femininity. Among the several bangles and chains worn by Devayani's grandmother in CD are 3 or 4 chains, a mangalsutra, and a chandrarahar, as well as three or four hefty todas on her wrist and patlis at her elbow. As Devayani's mother did for her eldest daughter Savitri's wedding, she redesigned her jewellery to reflect the new style. The jewellery worn by married or unmarried women has a distinct significance and is accompanied by specific instructions. In contrast to Vasant's three married sisters, unmarried females may wear four bangles, earrings, and a chain; yet, the ladies in Vasant's family are loud, noisy, and colourful.

gold jewellery or a new sari were given to astha. gifted to anuradha and the child's aunts were gold necklaces

For special occasions like as weddings, holidays, and other religious observances, people often follow certain customs regarding the clothing and jewellery they wear. For her wedding, the Bride wears a custom-made wedding sari as well as the mangalsutra, silver toe rings, and more. Female identity and jewellery are shown in a skillful manner by Deshpande

as well as the mellow tones of kamala's voice and the jingling sound of her bangles as they converse, argue, and laugh in unison with bk and baba's voices. as she walked down the aisle in her pastel saris, her

hair neatly knotted, the diamonds in her ears glittering, the gold bracelets on her arms, she was a picture of elegance.

Along with BK, Kamala and Baba's conversation, laughter, and the soothing sound of their voices, there's the tinkling of their bangles. A beautiful Kamala, her hair beautifully tied, the jewels in her earrings glistening, the gold bangles on her arms jingling.

once, when her came home loader than usually with a bunch of johnson's jewelry, his warning was expressed as warning: 'if you wear all that stuff, the income tax people will be finding you.'

Kapur uses feminine symbols to illustrate cultural differences. She has rounded fingers, short nails, clear nail polish, long - sleeved of kurta and fitted, bangles, etc. Aijaz's mother is a beautiful woman. 'Heavy gold necklaces, thick gold bangles etched with flowers, and a pair of pearl and ruby jhumkas' she gave Pipeelika.

Only the outside edges of her nails were coated in a glittery gold nail polish. The question is, how do women think about these concepts?

It is common for ladies to match phoney gold jewellery to their real gold jewellery as a status symbol. Arati in RT wears similar jewellery with a dark blue full-length gown that was provided to her by relatives in the United States. For his daughter-in-law, Gopal's father wishes to retain the jewellery his wife wore when she died. Bhagat, on the other hand, takes a more contemporary approach to jewellery when he decides to sell his wife's jewellery in order to pay for Gopal's engineering coaching sessions.

it was encircled by a large gold band.. 'i don't want this garbage ring,' he said. a few of your mother's jewelry is also in our possession. are you interested in selling ma's jewellery for coaching classes?' when you're an engineer, you'll be able to buy all of this for your wife on your own.'

Young people of the new age, like Gopal, are turning away from conventional practises, such as the wearing of the sari as a sign of feminine.

'wow, you've changed so much,' i explained. 'different? formal? do you really think that is all you have to say? mocked herself out. you look amazing,' i repeat. except for the

sari, i said; i did not expect you to come into a sari.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF FEMALES

Women like cooking and feeding people. It's a topic Kapur focuses on: women's roles in the home of their in-laws. Besides being a wife and a daughter-in-law, Astha is also a mother and grandmother. It is her duty as a woman to look after her husband's clothing, including his shirts, trousers and socks.

Love and marriage were served by the time being spent in the kitchen trying out new recipes.

Women's key desire for alleviating discrimination at home is to be freed from onerous job at home. An obvious remedy to these inequalities and the empowerment of women is equitable labour allocation at the home level. Women maidservants are employed in Indian society to alleviate the burden of daily labour on women. A temporary answer to women's independence is offered by Kapur, who has trained housekeeper Astha to be an expert in household duties.

athas interest in mala grew as he learned about her speed and ability. it didn't take her long to get the job done, and she didn't need to be told anything again.

In addition, Kapur exposes the slum girls' hard labour, mistreatment, and misery. As a result of their hard work and dedication to the family business, they are often made to feel as if they are worthless. 'They cook, wash clothes, take care of the animals (cow/buffalo) their younger siblings, send them to school and help in the family firm, but are often made to feel as if they are worthless because of this.'

According to Deshpande's portrayal, men and women, sons and daughters, boys and girls and husbands and wives all have unequal obligations. In contrast, women are occupied with menial tasks such as housekeeping, cooking, and caring for children, while men take on more important and prestigious duties, such as ensuring the well-being of the family, ensuring the marriages of family members, and dealing with financial and property matters, among others. When it comes to Kamala and her children, she's all about the drudgery whereas her husband Balkrishna is all on public and national events like literature and music. Bharat is an automotive engineer employed by the firm. It's easy for men to abandon family obligations and spend their time and energy where they desire, even for pleasure.

Women Deshpande demonstrates that women are hard-working and possess coordination, commitment, collaboration, and other attributes. Mala, Kapur's maidservant, serves as a role model for women's

responsibility. She is in charge of the household, including the kids, their food, and their assignments. As an ubiquitous symbol of domestic duties, Mala signifies the role of a woman in the house. Women are raised with an understanding of their obligations and a sense of responsibility from an early age. To teach Shree and Bakula about the significance of caring for their food, Malatijji uses tales to do so.

A woman's primary role in a patriarchal culture is to take care of children and elderly family members. In order to please her spouse, she spends her time preparing her body. To support their families, many women had to leave their homes to work and pursue their careers. Self-care is out of the question for her in this twilight state. Health, safety, and security are just a few of the basic things she ignores. Devayani spends her whole life to taking care of her ailing father and mother, as well as dealing with their financial woes and the upkeep of their home. As a result, she was deemed too old and hence unsuitable for an arranged marriage. When Vasu is in MO, she covers her pain and refuses to talk about it.

CONCLUSION

Indian women authors in English who portray the realities of Indian life are rare in today's Indian literary scene. In the field of literature, they have a lot of obligations. As anthropologists, sociologists, authors, essayists, travel writers, and instructors, they perform well, and as ambassadors, they assume worldwide responsibility for achieving peace. They have outperformed post-colonial and postmodern authors like as Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Vikram Chandra, Sashi Tharoor, and Arundhati Roy in terms of worldwide literary standards. These have grown into huge major social literary characters, with large volumes of work attracting worldwide attention. They've also become the only ones who can negotiate India's and other colonial countries' most pressing social and cultural issues.

All of their main works have gotten a lot of scholarly attention across the world, and they've sparked a lot of literary criticism, notably on feminism. All post-colonial & postmodern predicaments are fought to show a high degree of self-awareness, which continues to investigate the social, philosophical, and cultural concerns of sexual assault and rape of innocent women in contemporary Indian culture. Their work paved the way for a feminism-nationalist criticism to develop. They have addressed and interpreted the complicated colonial and postcolonial contexts via their intellectual insights, theoretical, theoretical, and literary explorations. They've also developed a strange contradiction of reading and appreciation, eloquently reacting to sexually harassed women in both post-colonial and postmodern themes of rape & exploitation on Indian women in the twenty-first century.

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