
Indian Feminism in the Novels of Anita Desai

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Abstract:

Literature is the reflection of the society and the characters are the images of writers. ‘We can do it’ was the early Symbolic depiction to bring women out from the sufferings in the male dominated society. It is a movement started by women for the wellbeing of women. Since women came to know about their rights and duties they started revolt for their self-existence and for self-individualism. The movement started in western countries as many Authors’ embodied in literature and other books that the women liberation movement started and took a revolutionary feel in the west and spread round the corner of the globe. The authors not only cited the issues of Feminism but also supported the concept of equality in the society. Even though the concept and the revolution for self-respect was started late in eastern countries but India is one of the countries which own oral, traditional and great illiteracy, the impact of such revolutionary movement is still restricted to urban areas only. However in recent years rural areas have been covered due to the ever-spreading wing of electronic media. The issues like reproductive rights, domestic violence, maternity leave, equal pay, women’s suffrage, sexual harassment and sexual violence all of the which fall under the label of feminism are customary were the customary issues in India but recent years women have been trying to get rid of all suffering and wants equal status in the society.

Though men is said to be the old writers in India but in recent times women have been trying their hands in different languages more especially in English. Indian women is no more lagging behind in literature, Indian women is writing ranging from poetry, novel plays, short story, and critics. In literature women is no more less than her counterparts, they have acquired a permanent place in the gamut of world literature. They can contribute as well as give tough competition to male counterparties for the significance and enrichment of literature. The women novelists of India have reached the zenith of success and had won many international awards as well as global recognition. Some of the eminent female authors of inida are Carnelia Sorabji, Iqbal-un-nissa Hussain, Kamala Markanday, Anita Desai, Shakuntala, Arundhati Roy,

Key words: *Feminism, Role, Rights, exploitation, Awareness, Revolution.*

Full Research Paper:

The present paper is the result of my hard work and dedication. This paper mainly focuses on feminism in the novels of Anita Desai. Among the above said, eminent Indian women novelists, Anita Desai are the one who is more interested and more elaborative in her novels? She explains the interior landscape of the mind rather in the politics or socio-political realities. In the novels of Desai, she always protagonists women and the sufferings of women in the male dominated society, who have reached different stages in life due to the conservatism of counterparties. Even the women in her novel are fragile introverts rapid in their own skill but these emotional dreams sometimes led to a violent death. Besides that central theme of her novels is the existential predicament of women as an individual. She projects this phenomenon through incompatible couples, in actuality, sensitive and dutiful wives but in sensitive and un-understanding husbands. Her frictional environment is the Indian in transactional which is bound by cultural and ethical values in the melting pot. In each of her novel, one should sense a novelist seager for a way of living, which would respond to the inner most earning of the Indian women for self-emancipation and self-dignity

As from the novels it has been found that Anita Desai is more interested in the exploration of female psyche dealing with thoughts, emotions and sensations at various levels of consciousness. Further in her novels it is found she is inspired by D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf as she uses technique used by them earlier.

In her median Novel cry, the peacock 1963, Maya the chief female protagonist is obsessed almost from the beginning of the novel with awesome prophecy of an Albino Astrologer. According to the prophecy, she or her husband would die during the fourth year of her marriage. Maya's Marriage to Gautam with the lack of emotional attachment is in contrast to her joy's childhood. Those past memories over shadow her present with gloom. She can establish no effective communication with her husband. Maya's life is woven to her instincts and longs for emotional and physical satisfaction in marital life but both of these are denied to her, one by Gautams intellectuality and indifference and other by his age. Further, Maya's sensuous thrills and excitement are dampened by the non-attachment philosophy of the Bagwat Gita. She is child less who accentuates her isolation and this frustration become total when she murders her husband in a fit of insane fury. Maya seeks communion of this kind the peacock seeks and makes intense mating calls. Through Maya's tragic end, Desai tries to emphasize the great yearning of the women to be understood by her male partner.

In her novel, voice in the city Desai sets the story in Kolkata the city of Goddess Kali, the Goddess of Death, to narrate a tale of alienated individuals. Narode and his two sisters, Manisha and Amla rebel against the solid conventions of middle class life and crave for creativity and self-space expression. Each of the encounters grief, Narode end up as a drifting Bohemian, Manisha comments suicide and Amla is heart-broken when her love is rejected. So this novel too, projects novelist's prime concern to depict the existential predicament of women as an individual. Desai earges to find a suitable way of living, which would respond to the innermost yearning of Indian women for their emancipation

Both in cry, the peacock and voice in the city, Desai deals with the problems of communication between husband and wife. In the marital relationships of Gautam and Maya, Jiban and Monisha, she depicts the psychological suffering of women (wives) on account of the passive indifferent and callous attitude of men (husband). Both Maya and Monisha seek real companionship from their life partners here Desai is concerned with the emancipation of the women, actually the emancipation of their souls within the corpus of matrimonial bonds. The childlessness of Maya and Monisha leads to their frustration and throws a flood of light on the depression of educated women of IndiaS who fail to build their bright careers and are compelled marry with egocentric individual to maintain the prevailing norms and customs of the society.

In the novel where shall we go this summer (1975) Desai unveiled the world of inner reality in which Sita, the protagonist is less morbid than the Maya who has four children. The cruelty and conceived again, she grows panicky at the thought of bringing a new fragile being into this harsh world and so runs away to a small island Manori, which has childhood associations with her, but eventually she allows her husband to persuade her to return. This island is an evocation symbol of a lost paradise. This novel dramatizes the theme of alienation and lack of communication in martial life in a controlled and less exotic manner and reminds us of Virginia Woolf's to the light house, Desai explores the world of women where their dignity and self-respect is under the attack of psychological dissatisfaction. Sometimes they are treated as performing animals, as treated by their keepers. She wants to convey through their portrayals that the spirits of companionship based on mutual understanding give meaning of life. In the India society where patriarchy prevails as the dominating force, women lead lives dependency a completely parasitic existence loneliness, contented with their husband's unreciprocated emotionality.

Desai's character is not projected as representative of a homogeneous category: they testify to the heterogeneity of female experience and the need to recognize the situation of all frames of oppression as well as modes or resistance. There is no attempt in Desai's novel to create a pan Indian identity, although the character is culturally defined by their location, attitude and memories. In the journey of Ithaca, the central character is not India, although India continues to function as a catalyst in the dramatic changes that overtake their lives. Realism is a mode Desai had once rejected in favor of languages of the interior, but as her recent statement indicate this does not blindness to writer's social role.

I think the society is always rather uncomfortable when it has a writer in its mindset because the writer is thought of as a critic or as a satirist or else somebody that uncovers uncomfortable truth. I think a writer has to assume that role although it's not given to him. He has to seize it, cling to it, and hold on to it, it is considered a particularly unseemly role for women to play

For a novel about family life Clear light of a day has surprised large number of characters who are single women, surviving on the periphery of a society that regards marriage and motherhood as the primary female goal. Bim has several shadow selves who inhabit this impossible realm. The plight of Mira Masi, a poor, childless widow is only an extreme version of the dependency of Mira sisters, back in their father's house after their marriage have failed, trying now to eke out of meager living from music and dance lessons while brothers lead to indolent life.

Almost in all novels of the Anita Desai, she has always tried to convey the inner urges of her female protagonists through her writing and depiction of situation in a proper way that has echoed to all. These things have helped her to peep into the inner world of the women and delineated their reality in totality. She has always acted in her own way and attempted to express the feminism in her own way. She has contributed to the India with the feminist concern; the most important thing about her is the way of expression. Her all novels revolve around men and women of exception, incompatible couples and have always tried to explore the feminism in varied ways She has always covered the women of all age group and all types like children, old, intellectual, dull etc. in her writings which has made her one of the great feminist of the times.

Before independence the women were not given the equal status and were getting exploited. But after the independence and introduction of women liberation movement which led to the rise of new women with her own choice, taste and preference and breakage of bands started that had bounded the women and devalued her. Most of the women who are educated grow under self-conflict in terms of marriage, traditional roles. The writers of the post-independence have attempted to show the educated women in the present scenario where women socio-economic conditions have totally changed and they are now revolting against their rights and exploitations. They are now showing better marriage lives and even follow the traditional as well as modern roles in their lives. The current case study on Anita Desai has performed a significant function of instilling a positive "Feminine" identity rather than a female identity, role model women who deters the dependence on men. She has raised voice for the India women.

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