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Feminist Sensibilities In The Post-Independence Indian English Fiction

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Female-bonding, feminist, orthodox, society, women.

ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on Feminism as a broad socio-political movement especially advocating women's welfare in society. Deriving upon this philosophy many women writers, thinkers, and critics have formulated a school of thought that searches for such instances in the literature. The main task of the feminist literary critics seems to stand guard against the curbing patriarchal norms which have been inherited perpetually. The marginalization of women, their predicament, struggle for identity, finding their own space, and celebration of the female body is the chief subjects of the trend. The study of feminist theories begins in the 18th century and continues today. Feminist theories try to identify such biases and then negotiate them by sensitizing readers to their existence.

1.0 Introduction

Women suffocated throughout the centuries from the domination of men either in the family or in society. They had no chance to breathe in fresh air either inside or outside the family. They could not achieve the self-reliance and independent status which they were aiming for a long time. Her limits have been imposed in her by the man who is ruled by the mastery-motive. It is the male ego that has given women an inferior status through the ages. During the post-colonial period, a marvellous change has been brought by the great Indian women novelists such as Bapsi Sidwa, Manju Kapur, and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. They have portrayed the women characters as individuals who fight against suppression and oppression of women by the patriarchal society.

"Introduction", gives a brief account of Feminism and that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. This chapter also introduces the history of feminism by different feminist writers. The struck of women at home after marriage and discriminated in the society. Feminists have worked to protect women, girls from domestic violence, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. Equal rights were given to women after the post-independence era.

The Review of Related Literature. This chapter attempts to undertake a critical inquiry into the literary world of women writers. Particularly, Bapsi Sidhwa, Manju Kapur and Chitra Banarjee Divakaruni. They stated about women's struggle for equality and her household responsibilities. Further, it is indicated about dowry deaths, female infanticide, female foeticide, patriarchy, gender discrimination, self-employment, purdah system, and the situation of widowed women. The trap of women in her family, sexual harassment, and suicide deaths.

Feminist Theories in Indian Context; Feminism in India is a set of movements aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal political, economic, and social rights and equal opportunities for women in India. It is the pursuit of women's rights within the society of India. Feminism does not particularly talk of equality and rights of a woman but it is more about compassion, respect and understanding from the male counterparts.

Feminist theory that has become prominent in feminist thinking. The

goal of post-Independence feminism is to destabilize the patriarchal norms entrenched in society that has led to gender inequality. Post-Independence feminists seek to accomplish this goal through rejecting essentialism, philosophy, and universal truths in favour of embracing the differences that exist amongst women. Post-Independence Feminism has resulted in some of the most ground breaking research in the last twenty years.

The Feministic Aspects in the Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa. Her novel 'The Crow Eaters' is based on the view that the workings of the Parsi mind, social behaviour, value system, and customs. The theme of the novel is that woman is the constant source of worry for men. Moreover, women-to-women harassment can be seen in this novel. Her novel 'The Ice Candy man' deals with the partition of India and sexual harassment through the eyes of a girl, Lenny growing up in a Parsee family, surviving through female bonding and rebellion. The theme of the novel is the bloody partition of India, rape, sexual harassment, and violence. Her novel 'The Bride' is about marriage, honour, partition, and the position of women in Pakistani society. The theme of the novel is a woman undergoes an experience of exploitation. She is treated as a salable entity and a commodity of gratifying her husband's animal instinct and cruel behaviour.

Feministic Aspects in the Novels of Manju Kapur. Her novel 'Difficult Daughters' is about a mothers-daughters relationship, tracing it through three successive generations. The theme of the novel is the woman tramples and defies the patriarchal constraints and expectations to assert her identity and achieves self-satisfaction and self-fulfillment in her life. Her diasporic novel 'The Immigrant' is about dislocation; the theme of the novel is the pain and suffering of the women who migrated abroad. She suffers from frustration, disappointment, and nostalgia. Her novel 'A Married Women' takes a deep and satisfying look at the sense of displacement often felt by women in the traditional institute of marriage and family. The theme of the novel is married life offers women sumptuous smoothening through conjugal bliss, dissatisfaction, and male-dominated treatment. She sets out on her quest for a more meaningful life in her lesbian relationship with a woman Peepilika. Her

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novel 'Home' is about equality between men and women. She has to struggle to establish her identity. The theme of the novel is the problems women face with their marriage and her struggle for equality to survive in a patriarchal society.

The Feministic Aspects in the Novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. In her novel 'Sister of My Heart' in which the novelist has artistically portrayed the physical and psychological tensions and tortures to which women are subjected. The theme of the novel is the struggle of Indian women as they seek new pastures in a world that would have made them submissive. The pain and suffering of women in their married life can be seen in this novel. In the novel 'The Mistress of Spices' in which Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has characterized the lifeless spices as living characters and women were degraded in the society. The theme of the novel is there is no identity for women until she proves her talent and shows her skill in society. The protagonist of the novel prescribes spices as remedies for her customers.

The writings of Bapsi Sidhwa shed light on the status of women in society, especially on the pitiful life of the widows. It explores the various aspects of the men's authority and the women's subjugation. The theory of feminism has been used to conduct in which the men marginalize women in various ways. The women are assaulted sexually but this assault does not let them suffer only physically rather their lives are shaped by it. Their present is determined by their sexual past.

Manju Kapur is a post-colonial writer who intuitively perceives the position of women in a patriarchal society and deals with the problems of women. Her novels present the yearning struggle of women to establish identity. She described the traumas of her female protagonists from which they suffer and perish for their triumph. Her fiction stresses

the women's need for self-fulfillment, autonomy, self-realization, displacement, dispossession, unbalancing quest for home and resettlement dominates the novel's matrix.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni portrays her women through their lives, experiencing their jealousy, loss, depression, surprise, and prolonged separation, and finds that these battles and triumphs hold a universal thread with which women of many cultures can easily identify. She has artistically portrayed the physical and psychological tensions and tortures to which women are subjected.

Conclusion

Post-Independence feminists began to redefine the extent to which women were allowed to engage in the workforce. Before independence, most feminists accepted the sexual divide within the labour force. However, feminists in the 1970s challenged the inequalities that had been established and fought to reverse them.

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