

**RELATED LITERATURE IN FEMINIST TRAITS IN SELECTED NOVELS OF POST INDEPENDENCE ERA**

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Abstract: Feminism in India goes for characterizing, setting up and shielding equal political and social rights just as equal open doors for Indian women. Feminism in Indian Fiction in English is, as normally considered, is a magnificent and over-the-top idea dealt with quietly under confined conditions. India women essayists have frequently brought assortment of topics up in a style that generally poetry and novels are fit for advertising. Indian journalists have frequently raised their voice against social and social inequality that obliged women's freedom and executed institutional withdrawal of women. Kamla Das investigates the women's predicament enduring in their days to day life. Shashi Desponde manages repentant state of women. Bapsi Sidhwa features financial state of Parsi women. R.K. Narayan is worried about house-spouses of working class families. Mulk Raj Anand caricaturizes the socio-religious pietism common in different strolls of society. Anita Desai fundamentally manages human states of enduring women. Kamla Markandeya picks the subject of east-west experiences. Salman Rushdie is stressed over sexual maltreatment of youngsters. Shobha De displays an idea of new women who absolutely scorn the conventional lifestyle. Along these lines, Indian essayists in English are acutely mindful of women related issues and they argue for sexual orientation equality in their own particular manner.

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Introduction:

The word feminism alludes to the support of women's right chasing to evacuate confinements that victimize women. It identifies with the conviction that women ought to have a similar social, economic and political rights as men. Feminism has frequently centered upon what is missing as opposed to what is available. The word feminist alludes to the individual who supporters or practices feminism and it takes political position. Female is the matter of science and feminine is a lot of socially characterized qualities. Indian feminists have additionally battled against social issues inside the male centric society, for example, legacy laws and routine with regards to widow immolation known as sati. In contrast to the western feminist developments, India's development was started by men and after that joined by women.

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 Banerjee 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 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 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.

Review of Literature:

After 1975 the feminist movement gained momentum and feminist writings highlighted the new age women who was capable of taking decisions, managing her affairs and was a self-reliant economically independent

person. Women were educated and were publishing novels in English, Hindi, Urdu and all regional languages. Feminist writings now were encouraged and were published by feminist presses like Zubaan and Women Unlimited. There was variety in the publications. The writers selected in this module may not be strictly “feminist” but they present a women’s point of view on various issues.

Lalitambika Antarjanam (1909-1987) was born in Kerala to parents, both of whom were both poets. She was not formally educated and was married into the Namboodiri community. She joined the Indian Freedom Movement and later was a social activist. Her husband’s encouragement helped her in opting for a literary career. There was a contrast between the family she was born in and the family she was married into. She wrote nine collections of short stories and six collections of poems. *Adyathe Kathakal* (First Stories), 1937 *Takarna Talamura* (Ruined Generation), 1949 *Kilivaathililode* (Through the Pigeon Hole), 1950, *Kodumkatil Ninnu* (From a Whirlwind), 1951 *Moodupadathil* (Behind the Veil), 1955 *Agni Pushpangal* (Flowers of Fire), 1960, *Seetha Muthal Satyavathi Vare* (From Sita to Satyavati), 1972 *Agnisakshi* (Fire being the Witness), 1976 are novels and short stories written by her. Amongst the published works *Agnisakshi* won the Keral Sahitya Akademi Award. She wrote about the life of women in the Namboodari Brahmin household also known as *antarjanam* meaning the ‘secluded ones’ as they were completely forbidden to go out of the inner courtyard. She would look after the household, pray to God, make garlands for worship, sings songs in praise of Lord Shiva and Parvati and had to consider her husband a *dievam* a visible God- *Pati devata*. In this way, the women were literally living in claustrophobic conditions discussing petty politics and jealousies within the house and working in the kitchens that were smoky and damp. Lalitambika nevertheless observed the dedication amidst hardships of these women and found them to be courageous and persevering. She herself had to live in difficulties having seven children and endless domestic work but writing gave her peace and solace. She was touched by the plight of the Namboodari women and has drawn a brilliant picture of their lives in her novel *Agnisakshi* (Fire being the Witness). In a story *Revenge Herself*, a young lady, Tatri’s, husband brings home a prostitute. He tells her, “I know perfectly well she is a whore. I love her for what she is. If you could be like her, I might like you better.”⁵ Tatri is shocked to hear that her husband prefers a prostitute to a *pativrita*. Tatri decides to take up her husband’s suggestion, becomes a prostitute and very popular. She waits for her husband to come and one night he does come. “For that night I had debased myself; for that night I had loved

and waited.” Before leaving he says to her, ‘In all my life, I have never met a woman so beautiful and so clever. I wish I could live with you always.’⁶ Then Tatri says “Think of your wife, was she any worse than I?”⁷ He sees her and disappears immediately. In the story she exposes the baseness and vileness of Namboodari men and their hypocrisy. The rebellion in the voice of Tatri, a woman of the nineteenth century, voices the change that Lalitambika desired should take place with the changing times.

Ashapura Devi (1909-1995), was a Bengali writer and winner of *Bhartiya Gyanpeeth Award* in the year 1977 for her novel *Pratham Pratisruti* (First Promise) (1964). It is a trilogy with sequel *Subarnlata* (1966) and *Bakul Katha* (1973). The novels depict the long journey of women of four generations for freedom from the patriarchal subjugation that leads to a life that is full of mental agony, dissatisfaction and that hinders the girls to bloom fully in their womanhood. She has written 150 novels, many short stories and poems. Her works center around family life since that was the place where women spent their lives. The women question the traditions and thus expose the prevalent malpractices and social injustice done to them. In the *Gyanpeeth Award Ceremony*, Ashapura Devi said “Why are women so deprived of rights? Why do they have to spend their lives in suffocating atmosphere of suppression”⁸ *Agnipariksha*, *Asha Purna Devir Rachanaboli* [in 10 volumes], *Asha Purna Bithika*, *Anamaniyaa*, *Bakul Katha*, *Sashi Babu'r Sangsar Biswas Abiswas*, *Chabibandha Sinduk*, *Lila Chirontan*, *Chitrakalpa*, *Noksha Kata Ghor*, *Chosma Palte Jai*, *Dibyahasini'r Dinolipi*, *Sthan Kaal Patra*, *Drishya Theke Drishyantore* are some of her famous novels.

Mahashweta Devi (1926- 2016) was born in Dhaka in a family of creative artists and was educated at *Shanti Niketan*. She grew up at a time when the freedom movement was at its prime. She was active as a social volunteer in the great famine in Bengal (1943) and was connected with the social and political organizations of that time. She launched her writing career with a biography of *Rani of Jhansi Jhansir Rani* (1956). In her novels she wrote on social movements of that time, the tribals and the Naxalites and also the agrarian movements. Devi especially portrays the oppression of the tribal women. Some of her best known novels are *Hazar Chaurasi Ki Ma* (Mother of No 1984) in 1974 and *Rudali*. *Hazar Chaurasi Ki Ma* is the story of a boy who turned towards the leftist group and became a Naxalite. He was killed and his corpse no was 1084. His mother came to know about his activities after his death. She meets his accomplices and tries to learn more about his struggle. She decides to take his work forward. She and her husband are killed and end up as corpses in the morgue. Mahashweta was actually very

familiar with tribal life and their struggles so her work is an authentic depiction of the difficulties they face. She focuses on the voice and role of women in the tribal struggle. Some of her wellknown works are Aranyer Adhikar (The Occupation of the Forest, 1977) Agnigarbha (Womb of Fire, 1978), Chotti Munda evam Tar Tir (Choti Munda and His Arrow, 1980) Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Imaginary Maps (translated by Gayatri Spivak Routledge, 1995), Dhowli (Short Story) Bashai Tudu (Translated into English by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Shamik Bandyopadhyay. Thima, Calcutta, 1993), Titu Mir Rudali, Dust on the Road (Translated into English by Maitreya Ghatak. Seagull, Calcutta.), Best Stories (Translated into English by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Seagull, Calcutta, 1997), Of Women, Outcasts, Peasants, and Rebels (Translated into English By Kalpana Bardhan, University of California, 1990.) Ek-kori's Dream (Translated into English by Lila Majumdar. 1976) The Book of the Hunter (Seagull India, 2002), Outcast (Seagull, India, 2002) Draupadi, Our Non-Veg Cow (Seagull Books, Calcutta, 1998. Translated from Bengali by Paramita Banerjee.)

Ismat Chughtai (1915-1991) was educated at Aligarh University and was associated with the Progressive Writers Association started by Sajjad Zheer and other prominent writers during the freedom movement. She wrote in colloquial Urdu of Lucknow. She captures the world of women through her outspoken style. Her stories centered around middle class household. She belonged to a middle class Muslim family which considered education unnecessary for girls. She had to fight for her education. At a young age, her friends were from lower castes and this was frowned upon by her family. She persuaded her parents to let her study and even threatened to run away to a missionary school and convert to Christianity. She started writing much before she published her stories. The stories were picked straight from the life around her. The subjects she wrote about were taboo in those times and could not be accepted by the reading public. More over because of her traditional parents she could not publish her stories when she wrote them. Her first and most famous story Lihaf (The Quilt) is about lesbian relationship between a landlord's wife and her maid servant. The British Government considered it pornographic and Ismat was pulled to court for the obscenity. The trial lasted four 7 years. 9 . Her voice was a voice of rebellion and she spoke against the double standards of society. Her feminist ideology and her uninhibited style of writing makes her an icon of women empowerment. Her other well known works are Ziddi (The Stubborn One) and a number of short-story collections: Chotan (Wounds), Kaliyan (Buds), and Chui Mui.

Amrita Pritam (1919-2005) was born in Gujranwala now in Pakistan. Her mother passed away very early in life, when she was just eleven years old but her influence on Amrita is evident in her writings.. Amrita's father did not allow her to mix with other children becoming more protective after her mother's death. This left her lonely so she took to writing. She was married at the age of sixteen to Preetam Singh. Her first book Amrit Lehren was published in the same year (1936). After Independence she shifted to Delhi. Her works are dedicated to womanhood. She wrote both in Punjabi and Hindi and was the first woman to win the Sahitya Akademi Award for her long poem Sunehe (Messages). She later on received the Bhartiya Gyanpeeth Award in 1982 for Kagaz te Canvas (The Paper and the Canvas) She was also the recipient of the Padma Shri (1969) and Padma Vibhushan (2004) She began her writing career as a Romantic poet but after she joined the Progressive Writers Movement she echoed the voice of the people. Amrita Preetam penned 28 novels of which the popular ones are Panjab , Doctor Dev, Sagar aur Seepiyon, Rang Ka Patthar, Autobiography- Rasidi Ticket (1976), Shadows of Words (2004) Short Stories - Kahaniya Jo Kahaniyan Nahi, Kahaniyon Ke Aagan Mein Besides being a novelist, she also composed innumerable poems in Punjabi. 5. The Advent of the New Woman With women moving ahead and sharing the economic burden with their male counterparts, the world of women's expression in fiction brings to the fore front the relevant question of gender justice. The woman who was till now a victim of patriarchal society and unable to move on her own was no more culturally and economically as disadvantaged. Feminist writers stressed that nature had not created woman as she is but her condition was a product of cultural norms and restraints .The protagonists in the fictional world of women writers throw light on the condition of women . They are torchbearers for women in society, they challenge established practices and break out of expected stereotypes. There are a host of women writers in modern India who have made a mark for themselves. Among the first generation of such writers come Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Shobha De. They have created a place for themselves in the world of fiction and have each written several novels. They belong to urban upper middle class families and write for an elite English reading public. The issues concerning women, their dilemmas, their predicaments, how society constraints them, how marriage works, their search for identity and autonomy are all addressed in the writings of these three novelists. Anita Desai The works of Anita Desai that specially focus on gender equality are Cry, The Peacock (1980) Voices in the City (1982) Where Shall We Go This Summer (1982) and Fasting, Feasting

(1999). She explores interior landscapes and her protagonists are women who are inward looking, sensitive and intuitive. Cry, The Peacock is the story of Maya, a childless daughter-in-law whose mother-in-law is involved in social work and does not understand her suffering. Her husband is a practical man and is indifferent to her. The insensitive attitude of the family brings in alienation and loneliness that eventually ends in a disaster. There is nobody "who would act as an anchor any more"¹⁰. This is a major problem of modern society where women are unable to express or share their grief and therefore their desire for "Contact, relationship, communion" are not fulfilled. Voices in the City is set in the city of Calcutta, which becomes a metaphor for life and depicts three siblings, Monisha, Amla and Nirode trying to adjust to urban life there. The young dreamy eyed Monisha finds marriage to Jiban an unfulfilling experience and recedes into her own world, a world of books. The women at home do not understand why she prefers books to saris. She feels claustrophobic in Calcutta, becomes mentally isolated and longs for physical solitude. She has no privacy even in her own room where her sisters-in-law lie on her bed to discuss her "blocked tubes". She enjoyed her husband's posting out in a district, away from the city and family—"the solitude of the jungles there... our house which we had to ourselves..."¹¹ Her inability to adjust with the family leads to a point where she attempts suicide. The protagonists of both these novels are sensitive and educated, but so introverted that they are unable to communicate and connect with people. The author's sympathies are with those who say no to society with a quiet passion and defiance. In Where Shall We Go This Summer the protagonist is an over sensitive and reserved married woman who does not want to give birth to her child and bring into a harsh world. Her cool husband, Raman was a "middling kind of a man... dedicated unconsciously to the middle way."¹² He is very different from her and their temperaments are not compatible. She cannot adjust to living in a joint family. Her husband moves to a separate house yet Sita feels alienated and spends most of the time in the balcony smoking, looking at the sea. ⁹ When the question "Where shall we go this summer?" comes from Raman she has a prompt reply, "I shall go to Manori." She intends to go alone as it brings back childhood memories and it seems to her that the place could provide solace and answers to all her questions. Sita is a neurotic character with expectations from her husband that are unrealistic as she expects her husband to feel and think exactly like her. She realizes that she cannot stay endlessly on the island. She accepts the fact that, "Her time on the island had been very much of an episode on a stage, illuminated by gaudy, sunset effects and played to thunderous storm music."¹³ In

the end she realizes the difference between necessity and wishes, "between what a man wants and is compelled to do" Sita rises above Maya and Monisha in her capacity for a positive acceptance of life and its reality. She decides to bear a child and return to her husband. An ode to patriarchy, Fasting, Feasting (1990) is the story of Uma in her forties a meek and rather ordinary woman who has been saddled with the care of her old parents and young siblings. Although she loved school, she was withdrawn because she was needed at home to look after her brother. Indeed, Uma has always been busy with Mama Papa, brother Arun and Sister Aruna. As a young girl Uma had desires and dreams but they had to be foregone due to the responsibilities of her family. Parental apathy affect both daughters. In this upper middle class family Uma is the unfortunate one. Due to different reasons, three attempts at marriage made by Uma's parents end in failure. She is responsible for none of them. All attention is paid by her parents to send their son to study abroad. The daughters are seen as persons who have to be married off as soon as possible. The question of higher education does not even arise. Uma pays the price of being meek and sensitive—perhaps so conditioned that she continues to be the dutiful daughter in the face of all odds. Aruna is married off and brother Arun goes to Massachusetts to pursue higher studies. While in America, he spends time with an American family, the Pattons. He sees the material wealth of the family along with its dysfunctional nature. Mrs Patton and her daughter have a stressful relationship with the daughter feeling let down by her mother. Desai seems to question why is marriage for women considered necessary for leading a full and happy life. Shashi Deshpande focuses on the world of women who struggle in modern Indian society unable to fully defy traditional patriarchal norms of society. The women in her novels attempt to realize and preserve their identity not only as women but also as human beings. They are not stridently anti-male, but try instead to achieve a balance between the inner 10 reality of their lives and the social reality that constitutes their every day lives. Deshpande's female protagonists are not rebels but recognize that they live in a patriarchal world, a world in which the odds are generally stacked against them and in the course of their encounters with this reality of life, they learn to cope with the male oriented world and survive. Her three novels, The Dark Holds No Terror (1980) and Roots and Shadows (1983) shall be dealt with briefly here. The Dark Holds No Terrors is the her published novel. It is the story of Saru, a successful doctor living in Bombay, of a middle class background, married to Manohar, lecturer in a Medical College. As she grows in stature, the reverse begins to happen to him. Unable to endure, his wife's growing success, Manohar

becomes a sadist. The novelist is trying to show how financial independence does not emancipate a woman in the true sense. Saru says "If Draupadi had been economically independent, if Sita had an independent identity, you think their tones would have been different?"¹⁴ Manohar, a normal lively person during the day becomes a brutal monster as night. Terrified of her husband's beastly behaviour, Saru develops a terror of darkness. She starts reliving the sad memories of her seven year old dead brother Dhruva, three years younger to her. When her brother was afraid of darkness she used to console him saying, "The dark holds no terrors. The terrors are inside us." The innocent solution given to Dhruva then does not help her in adulthood. She has recurring dreams of her dead brother who died drowning. The novelist claims, "My characters take their own ways, I've heard people saying we should have strong women characters. But my writing has to do with women as they are."¹⁵ Saru leaves her home and goes to her father where she lives as she tries to comprehend what has happened in her life.. She realizes that "Whatever life you choose you have to face it as there is no escape. You are responsible for your own happiness and sadness". By now she also understands that her own behaviour is responsible for her unhappiness. She can talk to her husband to sort out their problem. Her decision to face reality, accepting the drawbacks in the family is as if she has come out of darkness. The darkness holds no terrors for her now. Deshpande's protagonist Saru, is a well educated self-reliant woman yet subjected to brutal treatment by her husband, parental neglect and gender bias but she finds solace in compromise alone.

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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