

Feminism in Society, Art and Literature: An Introspection

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/gijash.20230101>

ABSTRACT

A society is a group where both men and women co-exist, keeping the ride rolling. The best way for a woman to define her presence is to have equal access to high-quality education, political participation and empowerment. She enters politics to broaden the scope of her social engagement, takes care of her household, practices a professional career, takes care of her children etc. Feminists have engaged themselves into a large spectrum defining the role of women in various aspects, her status and the barriers faced. The present paper is an attempt to study the depiction of woman in society, art and literature, looking into the roles she takes part into and the problems she encounters.

Keywords: Women in Literature, Social Study, Portrayal of Indian Women, Women in Art, Women in Politics

INTRODUCTION

In light of the past two crucial decades, feminism researchers have engraved essential protest to the way social science has outlined men, women, and society. Since the beginning, debates over epistemology, technique, and methodology have been entwined with discussions on the best ways to correct inaccurate and incomplete accounts within the framework of traditional analyses. One needed to observe the implications of the most obvious methods one may aim to modify the androcentrism of the traditional analyses in order to grasp the breadth and depth of the metamorphosis of social sciences required to identify women and gender activities. Women have been "added" to these analyses

by feminists. We discover three different types of women who emerged as unquestionable candidates for this mechanism: women who contributed to public life and were already the subjects of social science studies; women who are social scientists; and lastly, women who had fallen victim to the most egregious and flagrant manifestations of male pre-eminence.

FEMINISM AND THE THEORY

What constitutes literature is one of the fundamental questions in literary theory. Despite this, many literary historians and modern theories contend that neither the term 'literature' nor any connection to the use of language exist in the field. Definite theories are praised for how they construct meaning from a 'text', as much as for their conclusions and methodology. Theorists agree that these writings do not convey a single, set meaning that is deemed 'correct', nonetheless. Usually, such moulding and shaping results in the cessation of telling made-up tales, or even invoking intense emotions or spreading concepts. The idea that form is merely clothes attached to meaning alarmed the Russian Formalists. Instead, the form persists on its own, which is what distinguishes literature as 'literary'. It is interesting to see that meaning does not energise form. Form has a distinct past and set of norms. Formalism aims to limit the ontological substance surrounding the field to a minimum while yet maintaining its social relevance by either prohibiting or drastically reducing qualities to any type of

intra- psychological and/or intrapsychic motivating force. Individual level of determinants was recognised by formalists as merely an epiphenomenon that might be 'reduced' to a real structuralist mechanism. The Russian-born theories, while still possible, have a higher degree of lost their usefulness. When examining a woman-centric approach to analysing society and its norms, let go of the formalists' ideological dogma because the content and method of examining social situations, rather than the form, are what give feminism its greater validity.

WOMEN IN LITERATURE AND WOMEN OF LITERATURE

The God of Small Things, Arundhati Roy's first book, eloquently depicts the milieu she grew up in. "My fiction is an inextricable mix of experience and imagination," says Arundhati Roy in her own words. Through the story of Ayemenem House near Kottayam in Kerala, the Booker Prize winner exposes her personal battle with the apparatus of caste discrimination, political manipulations, and gender bias. The setting and events have been described in beautiful details. The fluidity with which the Meenal River, the bustling jungle, painting vivid pictures of nature's life, the Communist demonstration that occurs as Chacko travels with Ammu, her twins, and Baby Kochamma to the airport to meet Margaret and Sophie Mol, the operation of the Paradise Pickle factory, and police atrocities are all described. When Rahel comes to Ayemenem after a long absence of 23 years to meet with her twin soulmate, Estha, who was returned by their father, these circumstances lend the atmosphere of an unsettling story. No matter how contemporary a civilization is, there are always taboos. Taboo is defined as something that is restricted and forbidden that is positioned in a cultural, social, or religious context but is too sensitive or sacred for the general public. Inter-religious marriage, sex, divorce, incest, homosexuality, and other long-standing

practices have been prohibited or severely restricted in Indian society since the dawn of time. The Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud discovered that patricide and incest were the two moral taboos that formed the foundation of civilisation. Taboo violations are frowned upon since it is widely held that they bring about the doer's social disapproval while also portending bad portent. Thus, it is crystal clear that breaching a taboo is seen negatively. Indian culture has nonetheless fallen prey to several taboos, even though they are not present everywhere or at every level. The yellow pages of a novel, according to Roy, is a nearly compact medium for communicating such widely accepted taboos.

The Duchess of Malfi's premise is consistent with Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things (1997), evoking a book of the present and bearing combat zones that are even strategically comparable. Feminist notions, which are socio-political in The Duchess of Malfi and domestic and social in The God of Small Things, might be used to analyse the tensions. Despite the fact that women have excelled in a wide range of regimes and spheres of the private and public spheres for millennia, from the time of the Elizabethans to the present, it is obvious that women have not yet achieved the position of supreme importance in the patriarchal society. Women are still underrepresented in politics, self-arranged marriages are frequently disapproved upon, and attempts at violence and honour killings are on the rise in our society. Therefore, these seem to be the sociological problem of our day in India, which even Arundhati Roy foresaw, and which is very similar to the Duchess's situation. Even though they come from two very different eras, continents, societies, and political (governmental) structures, the two female characters of Roy and Webster are remarkably similar and give witness to female tyranny across millennia.

FEMININITY AND FEMINISM IN INDIAN MYTHOLOGY AND PAINTINGS

Since the beginning of time, readers and listeners have been drawn to mythology because it is an interesting subject. In order to uphold the ideals and morals of the society, mythology plays certain functions and makes use of its sacred myths, art, and rituals. The entire subcontinent used this approach to create mythology-related books, and it resulted in its own Sanskrit-language literature. The renowned Sanskrit master Kalidas' *Abhijnana shakuntalam* is one such masterpiece. A significant portion of the population was therefore unaware of these incidents and values because mythology in the form of literature was only available to a relatively small group of people, including the elite, literate, scholars, etc. It is said that Raja Ravi Varma, known as the "Father of Modern Indian Art," introduced these tales to the common people through both painting and printing. This encouraged the preservation of principles in addition to drawing a sizable number of individuals to mythology, Hindu culture, and tradition. He handled the novel medium of oil and the cutting-edge form of photo-illusionism with skill. His mentors and clients both regarded the unique painting and illustration style he had developed as being significantly 'better'. The methodical application of these strategies and skills was equally important. His life-size portraits were decorated with all the finesse of the Western Academic oil painting techniques. It is fascinating to note how Ravi Varma approached painting Indian women because this subject matter ultimately became his main focus. The ideas and methods of symbolism, traditions of romanticism, and sensuality developed by Ravi Varma from the European Academics of the period and became works of art that became trailblazers.

In his final studies of the human body and mythical paintings, Ravi Varma conceived and idealised the feminine figure. The 'guileful mannerisms' employed by Academy paintings were also utilised by

Ravi Verma. He also added an element of Indianness by using cloth and ornaments, which are typical elements of intricate Indian outfits. Along with these, he imagined Damayanti, Shakuntala, and Draupadi as the main characters in the story paintings. These images took on the roles of the new faces and revered 'devis' of Hindu mythology. It is interesting to note that Ravi Verma referred to European pictures even at this location. These women in Ravi Varma's paintings were transformed into stereotypical representations of femininity thanks to their seductive looks, expressive faces, and laid-back demeanour.

PRESENT SCENARIO OF INDIAN WOMEN IN SOCIETY AND POLITICS

India has a wealth of human resources. Through the skilful application of education, this labour force can be strengthened and educated. Since education can help eliminate inequalities and poverty, it is regarded as a crucial instrument for both individual and societal development. As a moral need, gender equality emphasises justice and equity. Curiously, this frequently includes a wide range of social, political, and cultural proportions and dimensions. In the 20th century, a number of nations around the world made great advancements in achieving gender equality in employment, education, and entrepreneurship. When it comes to the main factors, education is crucial for women's political engagement, which is advantageous and correlated with one another.

Political engagement is hampered by illiteracy. Thus, those in the educated strata of society offer a different perspective, whereas others who are less educated or ignorant are viewed as passive citizens, whose political participation is restricted to casting a ballot. Compared to their male counterparts, women in politics frequently have more polished educational backgrounds. Education emerges as a very important factor in bringing about a favourable and constructive transformation that reflects on the political standing of

women. This culminates in placing its beneficiaries in a world that is independent, more informed, and transforms a person into one who is intellectually and culturally wealthy. Women who have received an education are thought to be more conscious of and appreciative of the rights of women, which extend to obligations leading to the political mainstream. This enables students to develop their understanding of how oppressed women see themselves as well as their capacity to come up with solutions to political problems. It broadens their perspective, increases their awareness, and speeds up how quickly they comprehend the environment around them. The modern education has significantly improved the prospects for women. The principles they upheld while being coerced by lures have undergone a significant transformation. To be more specific, a new conception of womanhood is emerging in India, which intriguingly stands in stark contrast to the conventional assumption that women should exclusively devote themselves to and confine themselves to the domestic sphere. The scenario for this mechanism in the twenty-first century is entirely different. A woman is in charge of managing the household as well as taking an active role in public life. Education enforces and starts the process of resolving gender disparities. Secondly, education fosters remarkable effects for dynamic shifts in how people view women in politics, especially in emerging nations like India. Our goal is to determine whether education has a functional impact on the ways, to what degree, and in what ways women participate in politics.

CONCLUSION

Education is widely acknowledged as the foundational component of human resources. The impact of education on life expectancy, population control, nutritional status, infant mortality, and the strengthening of civil institutions are all well-known and play a part in the economy's growth. The new transitory

century is now upon us. The main difficulty we face right now is to start the process of changing society so that gender discrimination no longer exists, not only to raise awareness of gender equality. On improving women's conditions, not much has been stated or done. As a result, women must be made independent. Here, it is also argued that the 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution is meaningless unless and until there is a consistent rise in literacy among rural women and they become economically dependent. Women's empowerment and their participation in politics and decision-making therefore have a dialectical relationship and tight interplay. It is possible to develop a set of tactics and measures to address the shortcomings, empower women in many ways, and support their successful participation in politics. A shift in quality would result from such participation. There is also a considerable rise in the literary and artistic spheres, where women have been taking part both as a reader/perceiver and an artist/writer. Yet there is a long journey to be taken to make the theories complement the praxis

Declaration by Authors

Acknowledgement: None

Source of Funding: None

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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How to cite this article: Birbal Saha. *Feminism in society, art and literature: an introspection*. *Galore International Journal of Applied Sciences & Humanities*. 2023; 7(1): 1-5. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/gijash.20230101>
