

A STUDY OF FEMINISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF MANJU KAPUR, ANITA NAIR AND SHOBHA DE

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The present paper will analyze and evaluate theme of Feminism in the selected novels of Manju Kapur, Anita Nair and Shobha De. Manju Kapur, Anita Nair and Shobha De are eminent women novelists in Indian writing in English. Their novels deal with various themes. Their novels depict contemporary situation of society perfectly. It's not possible to cover all issues or themes of their novels in present dissertation. Therefore, the present thesis focuses on Marginalized female identity in the selected novels of these three women novelists. Manju Kapur, Anita Nair and Shobha De are contemporary novelists who have made their mark in Indian English fiction. They have chosen for their subject matter the most significant aspect of contemporary Indian life, the depiction of the theme of feminism in their selected novels.

Feminism is a movement which advocates granting the same political, social and economic rights to women as those enjoyed by men. Women's efforts to seek their independence and self-identity started a revolution all over the world which was termed by analysts and critics as "Feminism". It can be considered a movement which is fought against female oppression. It recognizes that sexual pleasure is a central part of women's lives and does not discourage woman who knows how to achieve it without any sense of guilt or regret. The new generation of feminism embraces beauty and power of women's sexuality to achieve their needs. They consider sexual pleasure human rights. Many writers in India have talked of pleasure and its manifestations.

The woman protagonists in the novels of Manju Kapur, Anita Nair and Shobha De search for individuality and identity, trying to carve a life for themselves, breaking the age-old traditions

and norms of the society in which, they live. They are bold and strong enough to make new choices, which the society normally does not accept. But the truth lies in the fact such relationships do exist invisible to the eyes of people. The credit goes to the writers who have realistically portrayed the society as it is and eventually prove that literature essentially reflects the societal conditions. Almost all the protagonists explore new possibilities beyond traditions to seek individual freedom and secure emotional independence and live a life up to their own wishes.

Manju Kapoor was born in Amritsar in the year 1948. Manju Kapur is married to Gun Nidhi Dalmia and lives in Delhi. She has three children and three grandchildren. She teaches English literature at Miranda House College, Delhi University. Manju Kapur is the author of six novels. Her first, *Difficult Daughters* (1998), won the Commonwealth Prize for First Novels (Eurasia Section) and was a number one bestseller in India. Her second novel *A Married Woman* (2002) was called 'fluent and witty' in the *Independent*, while her third, *Home* (2006), was described as 'glistening with detail and emotional acuity' in the *Sunday Times*. Then she wrote *The Immigrant* (2008), has been longlisted for the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature. She lives in New Delhi. She has written *Custody* (2011), Her most recent novel *Brothers* (2016).

Anita Nair was (1966) was born in Kerala. She grew up in an ordnance factory housing colony in a suburb called Avadi near Chennai, then known as Madras. Anita moved back to Kerala and she did her B.A. in English Literature. She began with a poem "Happenings in the London Underground" which was included in an anthology brought out by the Poetry Society of India in 1992. Stories started appearing in print.

Her fiction was broadcast on the radio on numerous occasions. She started contributing regularly to the Times of India. She published in 1997 a collection of short stories titled *Satyr of the Subway and Eleven Other Stories*, in 2000 *The Better Man*, written with remarkable ease and restraint, and in 2001 *Ladies Coupe*, an even greater success. In 2002 she published *Malabar Mind*, a collection of poems that explore love, failure, lust, hope and anguish. She also wrote *Mistress* in 2005, *Lessons in Forgetting* in 2010, *Cut Like Wound* in 2012 and *Idris Keeper of The Light* in 2014. She lives in Bangalore.

Among the distinguished literary writers of South Asia, Shobha De holds an elevated position. Being a novelist and a columnist, she contributed profusely to South Asian literature. She was born as Shobha Rajadhyaksha on 7th of January 1947. She grew up in Maharashtra and was raised by a Saraswat Brahmin family. Shobha completed her early education from Queen Mary School, Mumbai and later received a degree in psychology from St. Xavier's College of Mumbai. Her first career choice was modelling which she pursued for some time and had proved herself as well. In 1970, she switched her career to journalism. Shobha offered her editorial skills to renowned magazines like *Stardust*, *Celebrity* and *Society*. Her column for *The Times of India* named 'Politically Incorrect' earned great praise. In her columns, she comments on various issues ranging from social, economic to political dynamics.

Subsequently, she directed her attention toward literary writing choosing the novel form as medium of her work. In 1989, she published her debut novel entitled, *Socialite Evenings*. Later she wrote *Starry Night* (1989), *Sisters* (1992), *Uncertain Lionsions* (1993), *Saltry Days* (1994), *Shooting from the Hip* (1994); *Small Betrayals* (1995); *Snapshots* (1995), *Second Thoughts* (1996), *Surviving Men* (1997), *Selective Memory: Stories from My Life* (1998); *Speedpost* (1999); *Spouse: The Truth About Marriage* (2005), *Superstar India* (2009); *Sandhya's Secret* (2009); *Shobha at Sixty* (2010). On the whole, she has written eighteen

books and her latest creation is titled *Sethji* (2012).

All the female characters of Manju Kapur are seen as women struggling against all odds. The strains of feminism are obvious in her writing. This is overtly seen in the struggle of her woman characters, their vulnerability, struggle for identity, liberating attitude, the female psyche and the female biological world. Astha in *A Married Woman* shows the forte of a liberating soul. She constantly struggles for recognition and a social cause. Nisha in *Home* undergoes sexual assault as a child at the hands of her teenaged cousin Vicky. After the incidence Nisha is sent to her aunt Rupa Masi where she blossoms as good student. By horoscope Nisha is declared as mangli. This again is a torture by fate. The *Immigrant* narrates the predicament of an Indian woman in a foreign land.

Anita Nair is a post-colonial feminist writer of literature. She has presented the plight of Indian women who are oscillating between traditional and modern roles. Her works are based on purely Indian background. She has shown the subordinate position of women in the traditional bound Indian society. The existing norms in this society are the hindrances for the rights of women and side-line their existence as human beings. Her main themes in her novels are the issues of "gender discrimination and social conditioning of women, husband-wife relationship: the assailant and the suppressed, and the sexual exploitation of women" within and outside the marital frame.

Shobha De fought spiritedly against all the traditional beliefs and moral values denouncing them. It gradually turned into an explicit annoyance and finally took shape of an open rebellion since the ancient age. Women have written novel in plenty but their novel attempted picture of life as it is seen through the eyes of man. But now Shobha De breaks the world of English fiction by shifting from Man's angle to woman's angle and emphasis from the external to the internal world. The heroines in Ms. De's novels rebuild their lost fortunes; make all efforts to look glamorous by losing weight and spending money in massage parlours. They try to look and act differently

from the conventional and traditional women. They love to fall in love with their looks by which they try to attract people. It gives them immense pleasure when people fall head to heels in love with them and they are least concerned about it.

The present research paper is an attempt to study the theme of feminism in the novels of Manju Kapur, Anita Nair and Shobha De by examining their important works. It discusses the position of Manju Kapoor, Anita Nair and Shobha De in Indian writing in English and also discusses major issues in their novels and it's importance in present era.

A Classified Bibliography.

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