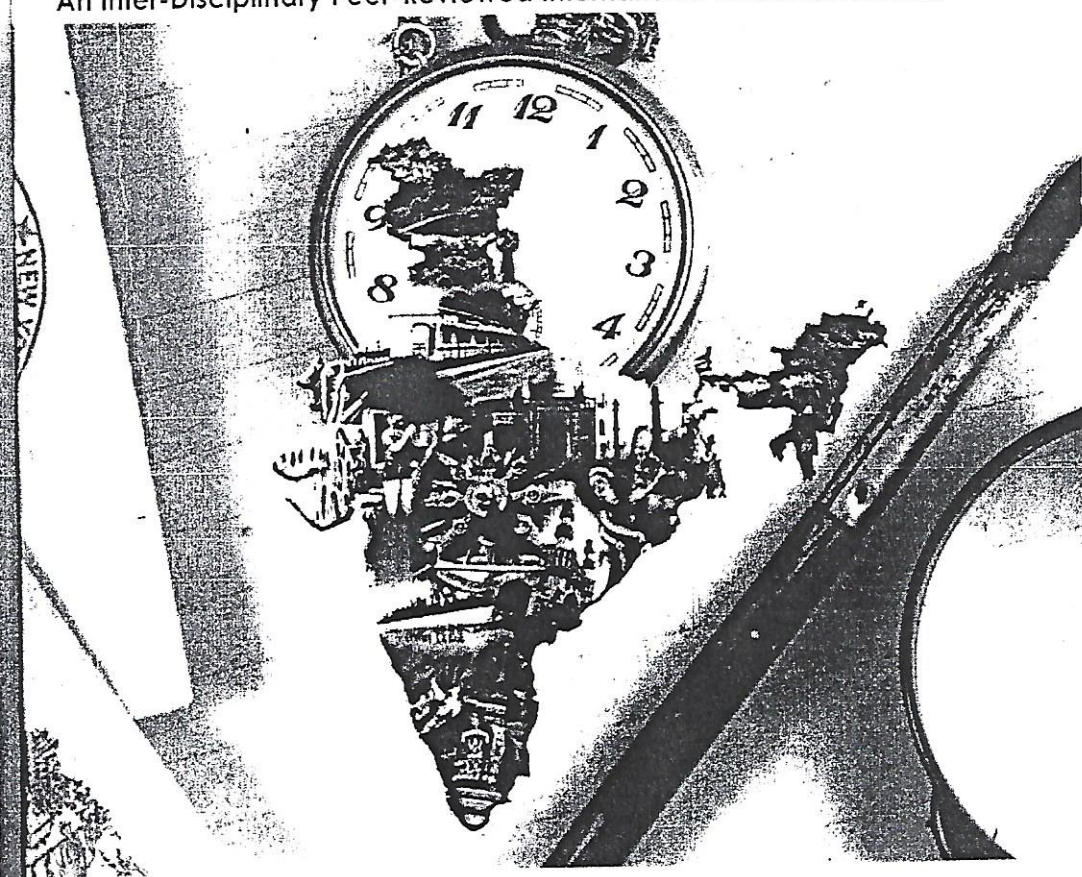




BULLETIN OF INDIAN SOCIETY AND CULTURE

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and aware and an awareness of the ironies of the feminine condition is a recurrent theme of the fiction of these women writers" (Nair 152).

For centuries human experience was synonymous with the masculine one, one that concerns man either in real life or in his dreams. But the "New women," the educated liberated woman has sensed her strength and is coming forward to assert her independent status in society, her rights as a human being equal to man. Woman writers writing in English present the birth throes of such women. Women, who are aware of their emotional need and the right to self-fulfillment. They reject existing tradition and social set-up and fight for freedom and equality with men. Shashi Deshpande and Shobha De introduce harbingers of this modern woman with image of man in their works.

As women began to get educated they looked up to their better-placed counterparts in the west and slowly there started on increasing urge to voice their feelings. They began to recognize the various areas of female subjugation and see how early marriages ensured the subjugation of the female spirit. Their world was limited to drawing water, cooking, cleaning and giving birth and release came only in the form of death. Widowhood was even worse and often women felt that the pyre was better than the ignominy of widowhood.

The newly educated woman had an excellent instrument to voice her feelings—the English languages. Thus a number of women writers appeared in the latter half of the nineteenth century; Toru Dutta, Raj Laxmi Debi, Krupabai Sarthianadhan, Shevantibai Nikambe, H. Kaveribai and Svarna Kumari Ghosal are a few names to mention. However, there was a full after these early women writers may be due to the Second World War and its pressures (Shirwadkar 202).

The list of Indian women novelists also comprises popular names such as Bharati Mukherjee, Nergis Dalal, Krishna Sobti, Dina Mehta, Indira Goswami, Malati Chendur, Shashi Deshpande, Gauri Deshpande, Namita Gokhale, Ruth Jhabvala, Shobha De,

Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri and many more. They are known for the contemporary approach in their novels. The novels of authors like Shashi Deshpande or Shobha De are really out-spoken. Most of these female novelists are known for their bold views that are reflected in their novels. Basically, these are the novels of protest and an outburst of reservations and contaminations. Unlike the past, where the works of women novelists were given less priority and were actually undervalued, classification of feminist or male writings hardly makes any sense today.

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Indian Women Novelists: A Review

V.W. Wahule

The last two decades have witnessed phenomenal success in feminist writings of Indian English literature. Today is the generation of those women writers who have money and are mostly Western educated. Their novels consist of the latest burning issues related with women as well as those issues that exist in the society since long. These books are thoroughly enjoyed by the masses and the publishers make easy money out of them. The publishers feel that the literature actually survives because of these types of bold topics and commercials used by the women novelists. Their novels encourage the women freedom to flirt. They describe the whole world of women with simply stunning frankness. Their write-ups give a glimpse of the unexplored female psyche, which has no accessibility.

In the present age, women have realized that they are not helpless and are not dependent. They feel that a woman is an equal competent just like a man. Today, woman has also become a direct money earner and she is not only confined to household works. The women of modern era think on different lines and that is

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what is depicted in the novels of the Indian women authors. These facts are incorporated by the women writers. Indian women writers explore the feminine subjectivity and apply the theme that ranges from childhood to complete womanhood. Through their novels, they spread the message of what actually feminism is, which actually is very broad. These women writers say that feminism means putting an end to all the sufferings of a woman in silence.

In the past, the work by Indian women authors has always been undervalued because of some patriarchal assumptions. Indian societies gave priorities to the worth of male experiences. In those days, women used to write about a woman's perception and experiences within the enclosed domestic arena. On the other hand, male authors used to deal with heavy themes. Thus, it was assumed that their work would get more priority and acceptance in the society. During the 18th century, these factors led towards the decline of Indian women writing. And with all these factors, production of women's literature declined further. In the 19th century, more and more women actively participated in India's reformist movement against the British rule. It again led to the women's literature. At that time, their write-ups mainly concentrated on the country's freedom struggle. Over the years, the world of feminist ideologies began to influence the English literature of India.

History claims that the in ancient India women were given equal status with men. But due to many reason she was relegated to a secondary position in life in course of time. Literature about women either idealized them as embodiment of virtues or projected them as helpless creatures dependent on man. The real woman was long absent in literature and, with the coming of Indian writing English, attempts were made by both men and women writers to present women in flesh and blood. thus, the inside story of the woman slowly began to come out in post-independence fiction and especially in those of women Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Nayantara Sabagal, Attia Husain, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Shobha De. "They present the modern Indian woman, who is educated. Intelligent

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