



Rising feminine sensibility in Indian women writings – A Kaleidoscopic view

Dr. K. Lalitha Bai

Department of English, Vidya Jyothi Institute of Technology, Aziz Nagar Gate, C.B.Post, Hyderabad, Telangana 500075, India.

E mail : lalitharavulapati@gmail.com

Received: 27 May 2025; Received in revised form: 19 Jun 2025; Accepted: 23 Jun 2025; Available online: 29 Jun 2025

©2025 The Author(s). Published by Infogain Publication. This is an open-access article under the CC BY license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Abstract— In the middle of the 19th century the fiction of women novelists in English obtained a separate identity and many renowned women novelists like Jane Austen, George Eliot, Bronte Sisters, and Virginia Woolf proved greater than men qualitatively. They established their own great tradition. Through their novels they described their powers, their inspirations, their weaknesses and their self-realization. Indian women writers writing in English have raised their voice against gender bias and male chauvinism in the patriarchal Indian society. In fiction there is a plentiful expression of feminine sensibility. Indian women novelists have obtained a remarkable place in English literature. Through their novels they introduced the culture of India to the world. Even though in India women are considered as inferior they have proved themselves that they are not less intellectual than their male counterparts. Through their novels the women novelists have vividly portrayed their feminine sensibility.



Keywords— Women writers, gender bias, self-realization, patriarchal, feminine sensibility

I. INTRODUCTION

In India Torn Dutt, the well-known writer wrote a novel in English and since then many women writers like Krupabai Sathianathan, Shevanthi Bai Nikambe, Raj Lakshmi Debi, Cornelia Sorabji, Swama Kumari Ghosal, and Iqbalunnisa Hussain too have made their mark in Indian fiction in English. After the Second World War there has been a galaxy of accomplished women novelists whose works are now an integral part of literature. Novelists like Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Attia Hossain and many others articulate the content of their novels with remarkable excellence. The key of the success of women novelists lies in the fact that women are born storytellers and they are endowed with the gift of delving into the human mind and heart with sympathy, sensitivity and understanding.

II. DISCUSSION

Kamala Markandaya is a well-known novelist in Indian English Literature. She is an expatriate and her fiction offers a greater variety of setting and character. Markandaya concentrates on contemporary Indian social, economic, political and cultural problems. Her first novel *Nectar In A Sieve* (1954) deals with a realistic picture of the Indian villagers, their customs, cultures and traditions. The theme of the novel is the identity crisis resulting from a clash between western value systems and Indian value systems. Her second novel *Some Inner Fury* (1955) focuses on the major thematic concern of East West encounter. Her third novel *A Silence of Desire* (1960) deals with the layers of spiritual reality and mystic vision of India. Possession (1963), Markandaya's fourth novel is in a sense, a sequel of A Silence of Desire. Her fifth novel *A Handful of rice* (1966) deals with the theme of urban economics. *The Coffer Dams* (1969) presents Clinton, the British engineer who sets out to build a dam across a South Indian River. Her next novel *The Nowhere Man* (1972) relates to the same theme of East-West encounter.

In *Two Virgins* (1973), the theme of the adolescent's loss of innocence is developed. It is a story of the contrast between the two sisters, Lalitha and Saroja. *The Golden Honeycomb* (1977), her most ambitious novel is considered as a historical fiction. This is a series of three generations of the princely family of Devapur, covering a period of about a century from 1850 to Independence. Markandaya's last novel *Pleasure City* (1982) emphasizes the cultural confrontation. A multinational corporation comes to a fishing village to build a holiday resort, Shalimar, the pleasure city, and the villagers struggling at subsistence level.

After Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabvala obtained a renowned place in Indian English literature. She wrote twelve novels. Her first novel *To Whom She Will* (1955) relates to the young man and woman, Hari and Amrita enjoy the illusion of romantic love before accepting a separate arranged marriage. Her Second novel *The Nature of Passion* (1956) is a story of a successful attached to his daughter, Nimmi that he is reluctant though the match will further his own business interests. Jhabvala's another novel *Esmond In India* (1958) presents the character of Esmond, a colonial minded English expatriate who comes from England to India to teach Indians about their own country.

In *The Householder* (1960), she describes the newly married couple, Prem and Indu and the pains of becoming a householder. In *Get Ready for Battle* (1962), Jhabvala presents the picture of a rich businessman Gulzarilal. Gulzarilal is living in a sin with a widow, living with her brother and trying to find solace through social work. In her *A Backward Place* (1965), she develops the theme of emptiness in marriage relationship. In *A New Dominion* (1973), Jhabvala portrays a set of three European girls caught in the toils of a fake Swami. *Heat and Dust* (1975) describes her strong emotional involvement in the character of Olivia, a young English girl. Her novel *In Search of Love and Beauty* (1983), focuses on a group of German and Austrian refugees in New York.

Jhabvala's next novel *Three Continents* (1987) presents the world of Harriet, a young American girl who inherits a fortune and goes to London. There, at London she meets an Indian holy man and later marries his son Crishi. She is too much obedient to Crishi and her degradation is complete when she allows Crishi to murder her twin, Michael for his wealth. *Poet and Dancer* (1993) is her only novel which is set in New York. The setting of *Shards of Memory* (1995) is America, England and Europe. In this complicated story of avarice and love, the only lovable character who is spanning four generations is

Baby, born of a Jewish American mother and a Parsi father. The most distinctive characteristic of Jhabvala's novels is the preciseness and skillfulness with which she unravels the threads of intricate human relationships.

Nayantara Sahgal is also one of the well-known Indian women novelists. In most of her novels she discusses political issues. Her fiction also relates to modern Indian woman's search for self-identity. Her first novel, *A Time To Be Happy* (1958) deals with two north-Indian families. The protagonist, Sanad, the son of a Zamindar is considered as 'Brown Englishman' to the social and political realities of newly Independent India. *This Time of Morning* (1968) claims to be one of the best political novels by an Indian Writer. *Storm In Chandigarh* (1969) reflects the political of the division of Punjab.

Her next novel *The Day In Shadow* (1971) is a domestic novel dealing with the theme of failure of marriage. *A Situation In New Delhi* (1977) deals with the aftermath of Nehru's death, the Naxalite movement and student unrest. *Rich Like Us* (1985) is considered as her best political novel. In this novel she presents a picture of India in 1975-1976 in which Indira Gandhi declares the state of National Emergency. The novel also reflects the theme of exploitation of women. In her novel *Plans for Departure* (1985) she describes the Indo-British relationship. Her last novel *Mistaken Identity* (1988) is related to the life of Bhushan Singh who is the only son of the Raja of Vijaygarh.

Anita Desai is one of the great Indian women novelists. Her novels offer a satirical view of social change. In her first novel *Cry, the Peacock* (1963) she describes the character of Maya and her relationship with her husband, Gautama. Maya is obsessed with the prediction about her marriage that her marriage is going to end in its fourth year with the death of either wife or husband. In that frustration she murders her husband. Her second novel *Voices In the City* (1965) develops the theme of alienation. The story emphasizes the life of Nirode and his two sisters, Monisha and Amla. These two sisters rebel against the conventions of society. At the end Monisha commits suicide. Amla is frustrated because of her failure in love. Her next novel *Bye-bye Blackbird* (1971) depicts the lives of Indian immigrants in England. The novel also develops the theme of East West encounter. In *Where Shall We Go This Summer* (1975), the protagonist, Sita is a woman of aggressive nature. She is married to Raman. She does not like the family members who dominate her. So her ill-behaviour and smoking alienates her from the society. Her novel *Fire on The Mountain* (1977) again deals with the theme of alienation.

Clear Light of Day (1980) is a story of two sisters Vimla and Tara, living with their neurotic younger brother in a mood of nostalgia. *In Custody* (1984) is her next novel that presents the life of a lecturer, Deven Sharma who is the teacher of Hindi but loves Urdu. Her eighth novel *Baumgartner's Bombay* (1988) describes the world of a German Jew. In *Journey To Ithaca* (1995), Anita Desai emphasizes the picture of the life of Matteo and his bride Sophie who come to India from Italy. But Sophie is overcome by the heat and dust and she goes back to Italy. She comes again to reclaim Matteo, who is living in ashram. Matteo wants the definition of this world and his own self. *Fasting, Feasting* (1999) develops the theme of East-West encounter. Fasting reflects Eastern conditions and feasting reflects Western conditions. She reframes the subject-matter of foreigners and displacement in *The Zigzag Way* (2004). In this novel she portrays the character sketch of Betty Jennings. The novelist records the saga of Betty's adjustment to her new life in a strange land. The novel also describes the character of Eric, the protagonist and his adventures in Mexico.

Shashi Deshpande is a leading woman novelist in the horizon of Indian English Literature with eight novels to her credit. She received the Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel, *That Long Silence* in 1990. Her works have been translated into a number of languages. She writes about simple, day-to-day life of the Indian middle class. Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980) emphasizes the world of the successful doctor, Sarita. The Hindu tradition destroys the life of Sarita. Manu, Sarita's husband feels embarrassed with the rising status of his wife. At the end Sarita compromises with her husband. *If I Die Today* (1982) and *Come Up and Be Dead* (1983) are Shashi Deshpande's detective novels, set in a Medical college and girl's school, the stories develop with many mysterious deaths and suspense.

Deshpande's another novel *Roots and Shadows* (1983) depicts the agony experienced by woman in a male-dominated and tradition-bound society. In *That Long Silence* (1988) she portrays the character of Jaya, as a subservient wife. The Indian tradition reflected in the story is that the husband is like a 'Sheltering Tree' which must be kept alive at any cost and without it the family becomes shelterless and insecure. *The Binding Wine* (1993) deals with the tragedy of women as the victims of man's lust and woman's helplessness. *The Matter of Time* (1996) depicts an extended family over three generations. Her novel *Small Remedies* (2000) narrates the tragic tale of Savitribai Indorekar, doyenne of the Gwalior Gharana. Savitribai and Madhu both of them are victims of the double standards of society. Deshpande's most recent novel *Moving on* (2004) is about Jiji Ahuja who is visualized as a complex

character juggling frantically between the conflicting demands and roles of her life.

Bharati Mukherji is an expatriate writer. Her first novel *The Tiger's Daughter* (1972) deals with a rich industrialist's daughter Tara, who returns Calcutta after seven years in the U.S.A. only to experience that she is as much alien in Calcutta as abroad. *Wife* (1975) is Bharati Mukherji's another novel which depicts the pre and post-marital experiences of protagonist Dimple Das Gupta, an ordinary-looking, middle-class girl. *Jasmine* (1989) is a tragic story of an uneducated but courageous Punjabi peasant girl Jasmine and her journey from Punjab to U.S.A. In *The Holder of The World* (1993) she describes the story of Beigh Master's visits to various museums for a wonderful diamond called the 'Emperor's Tear'. In her search, she becomes fascinated by Hannah Easton. In this novel Bharati Mukherji attempts to integrate contemporary travelogue and ancient history.

Her fifth novel *Leave It To Me* (1997) is totally American. The story relates to the world of the protagonist, Debby Dimartino. In *Desirable Daughters* (2003) she describes the tradition of Hindu family and the restrictions under which the daughters are pressed. In the story, the three sisters, Padma, Parvati and Tara are bent upon breaking traditions and to live their own lives. Mukherji's latest novel *The Tree Bride* (2004) explores the life of Tara Lata Gangooly who according to a legend marries a tree at the age of five after the tragic death of her bridegroom. Tara develops tree like characteristics.

Githa Hariharan is also a well-known novelist in Indian English Literature. Her first novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992) presents the picture of the life of three women of different generations and the dullness in their lives. It deals with the world of the protagonist Devi, her mother Sita and the old maidservant Mayamma. *The Ghost of Vasu Master* (1994) portrays the character of a retired school teacher, Vasu. He has with him only the memories of his dead wife, his two sons who live in another town, his father, his dead grandmother and Veera Naidu, the principal of the school. Mani is a mentally handicapped character lives with him. Her third novel *When Dreams Travel* (1999) is a thought provoking novel which describes the story of two sisters, Shahrazad and Duniyazad, and their husbands.

Santha Rama Rau's first novel *Remember The House* (1956) portrays the character, Indira Goray, known as Baba and who is very much like the novelist. The novel deals with a quest for the self and the East-West conflict. Rau's next novel *The Adventuress* (1970) deals with the story of a woman's search for fulfilment. Nergis Dalai's experience of journalism has influenced her fiction. Her

novel *Minari* (1967) is an account of high class life at a hill station. Her second novel *Two sisters* (1973) deals with twins at opposite poles both physically and mentally. *The Inner Door* (1976) presents the guide motif of enforced sainthood. *The Girls from Overseas* (1979) deals with the theme of East-West encounter. Venu Chitale's *In Transit* (1950) is an evocative picture of three generations of a Poona Brahmin joint family. Zeenuth Futehally's *Zohra* (1951) deals with the city Hyderabad in the Gandhian age. Attia Hossain's famous novel *Sunlight on A Broken Column* (1961) deals with the theme of the partition of India.

Kamala Das, the renowned poetess, has written two novels: *The Alphabet of Lust* (1980) and *A Doll for the child Prostitute* (1985). *The Alphabet of Lust* is about Manasi, the protagonist, whose life is a long and persevering quest for identity. The urge for identity and liberation overtakes her and she discards all barriers, inhibitions, moral and social codes. She finally succeeds in becoming the Home Minister. By asserting her individuality she thus succeeds in attaining the highest pinnacle of success, power and glory. Her second novel, *A Doll for The Child Prostitute* also deals with the theme of liberation of women and quest for identity.

Some minor novelists write historical fiction. Vimala Raina in her novel *Ambapali* (1962) describes the India of Buddha's time. Manorama Modak in her novel *Single In The Wheel* (1978) deals with the fall of the last Peshwa in the early nineteenth century. In psychological fiction Shakuntala Shrinagesh's one novel *The Little Black Box* (1955) depicts the thought processes of Sarala. Perin Bharucha's *The Fire Worshipers* (1968) deals with Parsi Life.

Nina Sibal in her novel *Yatra* (1987) depicts the Sikh history especially the political unrest of the 1920s in Punjab. Dina Mehta's *And Some Take a Lover* (1992) deals with a young Parsi girl who loves Sudhir who is a dedicated follower of Mahatma Gandhi. Anjana Appachana's novel *Listening Now* (1998) deals with the themes such as the discrimination against the daughter, the silence of women and the lack of communication between the sexes. Mrinal Pande's *Daughter's Daughter* (1993) emphasizes on gender bias. The novel is a series of episodes presented through the eyes of Tinu, a little girl. Pande's second novel *My Own Witness* (2000) is bound with the experience of Pande in the field of journalism and television. Indu K. Mallah's novel *Shadows In Dream-Time* (1990) depicts the life of an Indian Widow. She is cut off from all social and cultural customs.

Belinder Dhanoa's *Waiting for Winter* (1991) portrays a character of Pratibha who belongs to a rich

family in Chandigarh. She is well educated and married to an Indian settled in the U.S.A. At the end of the novel she finds that her husband is already married to an American. Zai Whitaker in her novel *Up The Ghat* (1992) describes the heroine, Azra who has studied abroad. She marries Hussain who is a dedicated officer in the Indian Administrative Service, whose idealism gets him into trouble. Zai Whitaker wants to show the comic side of the frustrations of the Indian woman. Shama Futehally, Zai's sister wrote an impressive novel *Tara Lane* (1993) based on the character of Tahera. Another novelist K. R. Usha wrote *Sojourn* (1998) in which she portrays the picture of small town life and cosmopolitan urban life from the protagonist, Neeja's point of view.

Suniti Namjoshi is also a prominent woman novelist. Her first novel *The Conversations of Cow* (1985) deals with the protagonist, Suniti, who is a lecturer of Indian origin. Her Guru appears in the form of a cow. In her second novel *The Mothers of Maya Diip* (1989), Jyanvi and the Blue Donkey are invited to the Indian Kingdom of Maya Diip. Maya Diip escapes many of the evils of male dominated society, but the other evils arise from common human failings like jealousy and love of power. The novel is based on matriarchy. *St. Suniti and The Dragon* (1994) is a novel about love and sainthood. The narration of the novel is based on songs, dialogues, dramatic monologues, postcards, prayers and diary entries. Anuradha Marwah - Roy's first novel *The Higher Education of Geetika Mehendiratta* (1993) sets in the provincial town of Desertvadr. The novel deals with the narrator, Geetika's experiences in Jana University. Her second novel *Idol Love* (1999) presents a chilling picture of an Indian dystopia in the twenty-first century.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* (1997) depicts the heroine, Tilottama who is the mistress of spices. Her second novel *Sister of my Heart* (1999) describes the complicated relationships in a family in Bengal. Prema Nandkumar's *Atom and The Serpent* (1982) portrays the picture of Indian University. Ranga Rao's *The Drunk Tantra* (1994) states that promotion depends on contacts and not on merit. Rita Joshi's *The Awakening: A Novella in Rhyme* (1992) deals with the experiences of a lecturer in Delhi. Meena Alexander's *Nampally House* (1991) based on a real life incident of police repression in the town of Hyderabad. Her second novel *Manhattan Music* (1997) deals with the lives and problems of Indian immigrants living in America, Rani Dharker's *The Virgin Syndrome* (1997) contains satire on college life and the seminar circuit.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) received the Booker prize in 1997. Her novel depicts the

world of the protagonist, Ammu. It gives an open access to the agony of Ammu, Margaret, Baby Kochamma, Rahel, Estha and Velutha. The novel is set in a small place Ayemenem near Kottayam in Kerala. It is a story of a Syrian orthodox Christian family. The action of the novel moves as a flashback of Rahel's memory. Ammu is attracted to Velutha, a young Paravan. The character of Velutha is considered as 'A God of small Things' in the novel.

Anita Nair's *The Better Man* (1999) reflects the East-West encounter theme. Another novelist Kaveri Bhatt-Nambisan's first novel *The Truth About Bharat* (1991) deals with the young medical student, Bharat. The novel describes the picaresque adventures of the narrator, Bharat. Her second novel *The Scent of Pepper* (1996) is the most substantial of her three novels. In the novel she describes the life in Kodagu, the changing relationship with the British, the life in Post-independence India. In *Mango coloured Fish* (1998) the central character is a young urban girl, Shari. In the novel she portrays a remarkable picture of India. Manorama Mathai's *Mulligatawny Soup* (1993) deals with Elsie-Nora, a Eurasian, who belongs neither to India nor to England when the Raj ends. Sohaila Abdulali's *The Madwoman of Jogare* (1998) form the setting of Maharashtra. The focus is on ecology. The novel deals with the protagonist, twenty-five year old Ifrat, who is privileged to lead a free life.

Manju Kapur won the 'Commonwealth Award' for her first novel *Difficult Daughters* (1998) in 1999. The novel deals with the life in the Punjab in the decades before partition. It portrays three generations of the protagonist's family. The third generation daughter, Ida is shown going on a journey to understand her mother Virmati and her grandmother. *A Married Woman* (2002), her second novel is considered as a sequel to her first novel. The novel focuses its attention on the relationship between Astha, the protagonist and her husband Hemant. It also focuses the physical attraction between members of the same sex. It is the story of love set against the background of the aftermath of demolition of Babri Masjid. Her recently published novel, *Home* (2006) deals with the actions and counteractions of the family members of merchant class during the days of the partition of the Indian subcontinent.

Indira Mahindra's *The Club* (1984) moves around the character of Lucy and her step-sister, Mabel who have stayed on in India even after the other English people left. Her second novel *The End Play* (1994) deals with a young woman narrator revealing the power struggle in an Indian joint family.

Namita Gokhale's first novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion* (1984) deals with the crust of contemporary Indian society in metropolitan towns and the characters change their sexual partners like clothes. Her second novel, *Gods, Graves and Grandmothers* (1994) is notable for its social realism. *A Himalayan Love Story* (1996) deals with the lives of two star-crossed lovers who grew up in Nainital. Gokhale's fourth novel *The Book of Shadows* (1999) deals with the life of the protagonist, Rachita, who is a supercilious teacher of English at a Delhi college. Achala Moulik wrote historical novels. In *The Conquerors* (1996) she chronicles three generations of Ruthvens, from 1857 to 1867, describing the expansion of British rule in India. Her second novel, *Earth is But A Star* (1997) deals with the Spanish empire.

Suma Josson's *Circumferences* (1994) portrays Sarala, a painter. Sarla's parents arrange her marriage at nineteen, and do not approve of her artistic inclinations. Kamalini Sengupta's *A Seasoned Couple* (1994) is an account from marriage to death, of the life of Aditi and her husband Ashok Prasad, a civil servant. Nirmala Arvind's *A Video, a Fridge and a Bride* (1995) presents a clear picture of the middle-class life in Kerala. It relates to Elizabeth Cherian and her parent's efforts to find a husband for her, but they do not succeed because they cannot pay the high dowry. Neelum Sharan Gour's novel *Speaking of 62* (1995) recounts the fantasies of children whose outlook was changed by the Indo Chinese war of 1962. Deepa Shah's first novel *The solitude of Surabhi* (1997) focuses on Surabhi, a young girl exploited by all with whom she comes into contact. Bulbul Sharma's *Banana Flower Dreams* (1999) concentrates on the victimization of woman. Shakuntala Bharvani's *Lost directions* (1996) uses a variety of narrative techniques including letters, folk tales and short stories to present the difficult situations of her narrator.

Esther David in her *The Walled City* (1997) presents the usual pressures and anxieties of the protagonist, a young girl's growing up in India are compounded by her Jewishness. Nirmala Moorthy's *Maya* (1997) deals with the life of a South Indian Brahmin family. It focuses on traditional concepts of marriage. Her second novel, *The Coiled Serpent* (2000) investigates the psyche of the protagonist. Radhika Jha's *Smell* (1999) is an account of a young girl who is uprooted from her comfortable life in Kenya. Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises* (2000) deals with a young mother trying to cope with a mentally handicapped baby. Her second novel *Rani* (2007) is a historical novel that deals with the Rani of Jhansi and her adventures in 1857 Freedom Struggle. Lakshmi Kannan's *Going Home* (1999) is concerned with

the tradition which denies women a fair share of ancestral property.

Sagarika Ghose's *The Gin Drinkers* (2000) portrays the heroine, Uma Chatterjee who is just back from Oxford. Ghose presents a vivid picture of life in contemporary Delhi. Sunny Singh's novel Nani's *Book of Suicides* (2000) deals with Mini, the protagonist and her Nani who has the magical power of entering other people's minds and reading their dreams. Shona Ramaya's novel *Flute* (1989) deals with the psyche of the hero, Julian. Indira Ganesan's novel *The Journey* (1990) sets in an amalgam of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. Her second novel *Inheritance* (1997) deals with the young protagonist who is the youngest of three sisters, and all with different fathers.

Another novelist, Sunetra Gupta wrote four novels. Her first novel, *Memories of Rain* (1992) won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1996. It deals with the theme of East-West encounter. Her second novel, *The Glassblower's Breath* (1993) is set in the cities of London, New York and Calcutta. The protagonist is a young Indian woman in search of ideal love and companionship. Her third novel *Moonlight into Marzipan* (1995) deals with the protagonist Promothesh's scientific discovery in Calcutta. Her fourth novel *A Sin of Colour* (1999) describes the character of the hero, Debendranath Roy who falls in love with the wife of his elder brother.

Atima Srivastava's first novel, *Transmission* (1992) relates to the protagonist Ungellie, who is a television researcher working about an HIV positive couple. The theme is continued in her second novel *Looking for Maya* (1999). In this novel a young, brilliant student is shown falling in love with an older man, an Indian Professor. Meera Syal's first novel *Anita and Me* (1996) is a clear picture of nine year old Meena's interaction with her British neighbours. Her second novel *Life Isn't All Ha Ha Hee Hee* (1999) deals with the youth and middle age of three school friends. Kirin Narayan's *Love, Stars and All that* (1994) describes the protagonist Gita Das who believes an astrologer in India.

Anita Rau Badami's *Tamarind Mem* (1996) presents the life of Saroja who is referred to as Tamarind Mem by her servants because of her sharp tongue. Ameena Meer's *Bombay Talkie* (1995) describes the Indian Sojourn heroine born in the U.S.A.

Kiran Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998) is a superficial treatment of a common theme of Indian fiction: the holy man and the gullibility of the public. Her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) is the winner of Booker Prize. In this novel Kiran Desai talks about the problem of migrant people. The novel also

focuses on India's current political problems such as War of Gurkha land. Shauna Singh Baldwin's *What The Body Remembers* (1999) sets in the village in the Punjab. It is the story of sixteen year old Roop, the beautiful daughter of a poor man, whom the forty-plus Sardaiji marries so that she can give him a son.

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* is the first full length novel released in 2003. The protagonist is Nikhil 'Gogol' Ganguli, a young man about the same age as the author, born like her to immigrant parents from West Bengal. The novel locates the issue of identity-crisis in a host culture.

Shobha De is known as one of the prominent feminist writers. Like other women novelists, she also concentrates on women's problems. Her first novel *Socialite Evenings* (1989) is about the journey of a prominent Bombay socialite Karuna, from an ordinary middle class girl to a socialite. Her novel *Starry Nights* (1991) deals with Asha Rani, a film star who leaves no stone unturned to achieve her goal. Her third novel *Sisters* (1992) deals with the fast emerging urban culture and its evils. It is a story of suspense and conspiracy, crime and punishment. The novel portrays the world of Mikki Hira Lai and her step sister Alisha. *Strange Obsession* (1992), another novel of hers depicts lesbian relationship. *Sultry Days* (1994) deals with the protagonist Nisha who has love affair with Deb, known as God. Her next novel *Second Thoughts* (1996) deals with a young middle class Bengali boy Ranjan and his wife Maya. It also describes her disillusionment. The novel offers a slice of urban life and it is an explosive tale of love and betrayal that exposes the hollowness of Indian marriage system. Her novel *Speed Post* (1999) is an account of pains and pleasures of parenting. She writes letters to all her six children expressing her love for them and giving them advice. *Snapshot* (1995) tells about the explosive reunion of a group of school friends, now forced to confront the dark secrets they thought they had buried deep in the past. *Spouse: The Truth About Marriage* (2005) deals with her views about marriage, 'marriage is all about trust, companionship, affection and sharing'. Marriage also means the art of balancing between parents, children, friends and a career.

III. CONCLUSION

After taking a brief review of the works of all these Indian women novelists we can say that the Indian women novelists occupy a unique place in Indian Writing in English. Whatever may be the situation or condition due to gender differentiation within Indian family, one thing is clear that issues regarding gender, needs to be

given utmost importance. Industrialisation, liberalization and urbanisation have brought about some obvious changes in stereotyped concepts of masculinity and femininity, affecting household composition, residence patterns, sleeping arrangements, specific kinship relationships, male and female attitudes and behaviour.

The present trend in gender research is to question the negative ramifications of rigid sex typing in restricting personal fulfilment for both males and females by limiting the options open to them (Huter, 1983). The concept of 'androgyny' is particularly relevant in the Indian cultural context where the proper amalgamation of the so-called "masculine" and "feminine" personality traits into the concept of '*Ardha Nariswar*' (half-male-half-female) is the stated ideal (Chowdhury, 2007).

It is further interesting to note that present day Indian political, social and economic scenario is changing drastically to accommodate the 'women on top'. The mindset is changing, even though the progress is slow, it needs to be taken up at family level to make it faster and provide the real status of women in the family and society in general for a better future.

REFERENCES

- [1] Alan W. Watt. *The Book on the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are*, Jonathan Cape Ltd, London 1969, pp.66. Print.
- [2] Carter David. *Literary Theory. Pocket Essentials*, Hebburn. pp.90-97.2006.www.pocketessentials.com. Web.
- [3] Choudhary, Bidula (2005). *Women and Society in the Novels of Anita Desai*. New Delhi: Creative.
- [4] Desai, Anita. *Voices in the city*, London, Peter Owen Ltd., 1965.Print.
- [5] Desai, Anita. *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Delhi Vikas Publishing House, 1975. Print.
- [6] Desai, Anita. *Fire on the Mountain*, New Delhi: Allied publishers, 1977. Print.
- [7] Desai Anita (1980). *Cry, The Peacock*. New Delhi: Orient paperbacks. Print.
- [8] Kadam Sachin Kumar L. and Lomte Prameshwar N. *International Journal of*
- [9] *Advanced System and Social Engineering Research* ISSN 2278-6031, Vol 3, Issue2, 2013, pp 55-57 <http://www.bipublication.com>
- [10] Millet Kate. *Sexual Politics*, Columbia University Press, New York 1969, pp.7. Print.
- [11] New Asian Writing, Online Asian Literary Community. 'The Domestic Maid' by Anita Desai", 06/03/2014.<http://www.new-asian-writing.com/the-domestic-maid-by-anita-desai/>. Accessed 15 June 2023.
- [12] Yadav, Bharat, and Priya Chetty "The portrayal of Indian women in the novels by Anita Desai & quote Knowledge Tank, Project Guru, 08 Oct 2022, <https://www.projectguru.in/the-portrayal-of-Indian-women-in-the-novels-by-Anita-Ddesai/>. Accessed 17 Jul 2023.