Reflection of Gender Encounters in the Society Portrayed in Literature

Jala Srilakshmi

M.A., M.Ed., M.Phil., SET, Degree college Lecturer in English , TSWRDC W Khammam, Telangana, India

Abstract— *The gender perspective examines the impact of gender on people's opportunities, social roles, and interactions. The successful implementation of policy goals, programs and projects of international and national organizations is directly influenced by gender impacts and thereby back to the social development process. Gender is an integral part of all aspects of the economic, social, daily and private life of individuals and societies, and of the various roles that society attributes to men. and women. Representation of gender in literary works always show differences of the male and female characters in the novel, short stories, or films, by analysing the gender role or the representation of the literature work, it can be found that the authors of literature is following the patriarchal or feminism idea. The gender representation is shown in any genre of the literature. Virginia Woolf literature Woolf's most famous statement about the relationship between gender and writing. Analysing gender discrimination in Anita Desai's novel, Fasting, Feasting. Gender Bias by Sudha Murthy. The advancement of technology is one of the important factors contributing to closing the gender gap in the workplace. This approach looked for strategies and measures to compensate women for their social disadvantages. Since we all know that gender equality means equal rights and equal access to resources and opportunities for women and men, digitization has helped people improve their skills in their respective fields. Today, they can connect with anyone in the world through digital platforms and participate in online knowledge-sharing sessions.*

Keywords— *Gender discrimination, literature, feminism, societies, gender bias*
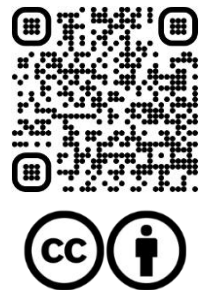
I. INTRODUCTION

There are plants, animals, other living things and animate objects in the universe, but the human being is considered as the supreme creation of nature. Man is being endowed with some abilities which other living beings do not possess. Man and woman are two forms of divine energy. They are created to complete each other. There are biological and psychological differences in man and woman. Generally, men are considered physically stronger while women are more delicate and silent. Due to this and other differences both are given different roles to play and they are even treated distinctly in our society.

Gender is the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes the norms, behaviours, and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl, or boy, and relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. Gender is hierarchical and creates inequalities that intersect with other social and economic inequalities. Gender discrimination intersects with other discriminatory factors such as race, socioeconomic status, disability, age, geographic location, gender identity and sexual orientation, among others. This is called intersectionality. Gender interacts with, but is distinct from, gender and refers to the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males and intersex people such as chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs. Gender and gender are related to, but distinct from, gender identity. Gender identity refers to a deeply felt, inner, individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to a person's physiology or gender assigned at birth.

More than half a century ago, India was one of the first countries in the world to elect a woman as prime minister, and the country currently has several highly influential women politicians, including Sonia Gandhi, the head of one of the major national parties. Today, most Indians say that "women and men make equally good political leaders," and more than one-in-ten feel that women generally make better political leaders than men.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Abirlal Mukherjee (2022) A Padma Shri awardee, chairperson of Infosys Foundation, and an active member of public health care initiatives of the Gates Foundation, Sudha Murti, is a multidimensional character. Her journey of coming from a small town in Karnataka to becoming the first female engineer hired at TELCO, itself is a story of breaking stereotypes and fighting gender inequality. Three Thousand Stitches (Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives), an autobiographical writing, was published in 2017. The book has eleven chapters, among them "Three Thousand Stitches", "How to Beat the Boys", "Cattle Class", "No Place Like Home", "A Powerful Ambassador" and "I Can't, We Can" deal with basic human rights violations, devadasi culture, female health, communal animus, social judgement. The article looks into the social animus and social judgement along with human rights issues in the text. Sudha Murty recorded the real-life incidents from her own experiences in these chapters which are studied to understand the social beliefs of the time and to identify the instances of basic human rights violations.

Monika Duggal (2022) Gender dis-crimination is deeply ingrained in human nature and physiology in Indian context clearly revealed in the writings of Indian writers who write in English. This is universal across cultures and manifests itself in nearly every aspect of life. God made man in His own image and man created male and female according to the Biblical perspective of humanity. Anita Desai and Githa Hariharan were the catalysts for this shift. The research reveals how they express their feelings on gender interaction in their female characters in their writings. They emphasize an individual's identity, particularly that of an Indian woman. This article delves into the origins of gender disparity in India, as well as the Socio-cultural factors that contribute to it. It also highlights the advantages of having a new self-concept, of being a new woman or being a modern woman. A new woman's self-concept evolves from a series of gender interactions set in the framework of sociology, psychology, ideology, history, and feminism in the novels of Anita Desai and Githa Hariharan.

III.   GENDER ROLES AND SOCIETY

One striking characteristic of the 20th century was the women's movement, which brought women to the forefront in a variety of societal arenas. As women won the right to vote, achieved reproductive freedom through birth control and legalized abortion, and gained access to education and employment, Western culture was forced to examine its long-held views about women and the roles they play in society.

The study of gender and gender roles dominated much of the scholarship in sociology, anthropology, and psychology during the last half of the 20th century. The terms gender and sex are often used interchangeably, but these terms define different concepts and are not interchangeable. Gender schema theory, a combination of the stage and the socialization theories, suggests that humans develop schemas for learning about gender and gender roles. Symbolic interaction theory posits that gender is strictly a social construction, and based on society's definition of masculine and feminine, distinct gender roles are passed on and reinforced by different mechanisms within society.

Especially important to this study was the symbolic interaction theory of gender roles. Symbolic interaction attributes gender role development to the process of socialization which is "the lifelong process through which individuals learn their culture, develop their potential, and become functioning members of society". Symbolic interaction suggests that social roles are learned over time and are subject to constant reinforcement. Additionally, symbolic interaction theory holds that a person's understanding of his or her role is subject to change. If plays are considered social models, then how female and male characters are presented suggests how society at large views the roles of women and men. Furthermore, the presentation of gender in plays can serve to reinforce or to call for a change in accepted gender behavior for women and men.

Gender roles in society means how we're expected to act, speak, dress, groom, and conduct ourselves based upon our assigned sex. For example, girls and women are generally expected to dress in typically feminine ways and be polite, accommodating, and nurturing. Men are generally expected to be strong, aggressive, and bold.

IV.   POST STRUCTURAL AND POSTMODERN FEMINIST SOCIAL WORK

Post structural and postmodern theories have questioned the notion of identity or experience-based knowledge that features in some feminist work, because poststructuralist theories do not treat language as a reflector of reality, but

rather a powerful way of constructing knowledge. Thus, any claims that feminist social work should be based upon validating the experiences of women are thrown into question because those experiences are not merely authentic, they are motivated, linguistic accounts, which aim to achieve certain effects, and they are open to different interpretations.

Feminist poststructuralists also challenge the notion of women's shared experience, since the category "woman" is itself experienced differently and fractured along race, class, sexuality, disability, age, and other lines. Earlier feminist debates also centered on potential exclusions of the category "woman" by race, sexuality, and so on, but here the concern is more with the powerful effects of language use. Postmodern feminist social work, based upon difference, diversity, and recognizing the marginalized do not sound particularly challenging, their questions about the potentially oppressive nature of gendered or racialized categories used by social workers raise important concerns regarding the nature of social work knowledge.

Postmodern feminist social work theories reject the notion of egalitarian power relations as a fantasy that does not engage with the power dynamics that always exist between social workers and clients, a point also made in earlier work. Power is not seen as a one-way street; that is, something always held by social workers over service users. There is no space outside of power relations, and so postmodern thinkers call for reflexivity about power within all practices. The feminist model of empowerment, for example, may be criticized because it sees power as somehow given to the (always) powerless service user by the (always) powerful social worker, but also because the notion of "empowerment" has been co-opted by neoliberal state welfare, so that it replaces any concern for wider structural change with individualized notions of "choice.

V.   THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN NOVELS

Virginia Woolf

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) was an English novelist, essayist, biographer, and feminist. Woolf was a prolific writer, whose modernist style changed with each new novel. Her letters and memoirs reveal glimpses of Woolf at the center of English literary culture during the Bloomsbury era. Woolf represents a historical moment when art was integrated into society. Virginia Woolf is a name that has inspired different feelings in different people ranging from downright disparagement to great adulation. None who have come in contact with her or with her works have remained unaffected by it. Her work has not appealed to all her readers equally for she has always demanded an

informed readership; but discerning readers have found that they could respond to the various aspects in Woolf starting from the traditional readings of Woolf in respect to the autobiographical elements of her works or her narrative technique to the most sophisticated readings pertaining to the postmodern theories. She has invited Feminist, Marxist, Structuralist and Poststructuralist readings and such is the multi-faceted nature of her work that it has been possible to approach her from different angles with equal conviction.

Considering the relevance of the concept of androgyny to the present times, it would be worthwhile to examine it in the context both of its presentation by Woolf as well as the critical debate it has generated. In her novel, The Years, Woolf represented the ideal relationship between man and woman by an image of a couple riding in a taxicab. Earlier in A Room of One's Own, Woolf had used the same image to suggest the need of a balance between the masculine and the feminine elements of the human mind. A marriage had to be consummated within the mind itself of each individual, a union between the masculine and feminine principles, Woolf reiterated. The androgynous self that Woolf envisions as the ideal self is not a single definable self, but one which contains within itself a multitude of selves with unlimited potential, one half of which has lain unutilized in every socially conditioned individual down the ages.

A Room of One's Own: For Woolf the recovery of the lives and works of women writers who had gone before, and the establishment of a female literary tradition was vitally important. Woolf argued that 'we think back through our mothers if we are women'. Each generation of women writers builds upon the successes of those who have gone before, and for that to be possible the lives of those women need to be known and their books read, studied, valued and enjoyed. Today, the challenges facing women writers have changed. In the 1970s publishers such as Virago began returning books by neglected women authors to the literary canon. Representation is now very much a concern, and ensuring that women from ethnic minorities have their work read, reviewed, promoted and marketed on a level playing field with their white peers is increasingly important. The more perspectives we encounter the richer our understanding of life.

Anita Desai

Anita Desai born on 24 June, 1937 at Mussoorie. She is a well known Indian writer. Her novels focus on the tortured , tormented, trodden image of women and the struggle of women against the male dominated world.

The novels Cry, the Peacock (1963) and Voices in the City (1965) deal with depressed housewives in altogether

different way. In Cry, the Peacock, Maya-the protagonist has to suffer as her husband can't understand her various needs while in Voices in the City, Monisha, suffers due to husband's insensibility as well as the cruel nature of mother-in-law.

In the novel Where Shall We Go This Summer? (1975), Desai presents the predicament of a married women who wants to win over the difficulties and sufferings of her life. The novel Fasting, Feasting (1999) , takes place in a small village. This is a story of Uma and Arun. Uma an older women who is unmarried and no one cares about her future. She works hard in home and serves the old parents. On the other hand, a lot of efforts are taken to ensure Arun's education and future life. Because he is the male member of the family.

Sudha Murthy

Sudha Murthy is born on 19th August 1950 in Shiggaon in Karnatka. She is a well known author in Kannada and English language. She has written novels that promote her views on feminism. She writes about women's struggle, problems and other feminine aspects. Mahashweta (2000) is a heart touching story about Anupama , a poor but beautiful girl. Dr. Anand falls in love with her and gets married to her. Suddenly she discovers a white patch on her foot and learns that she has leukoderma. Afterwards her life gets totally changed and she has to suffer a lot of problems in the course of time. Dollar Bahu (2003) tells the story of NRI marriages. It depicts the condition of Indian wife and NRI wife. The mother-in-law thinks that Indian daughter-in-law is not as good as NRI daughter-in-law. The novel highlights man woman relationship and various aspects related to women in male dominated society.

Gently Falls the Bakula (2008) is a story of marriage that losses its ultimate aim and becomes a failure as a marriage. The novel tells us about Shrikant and Shrimati. Shrikant works relentlessly and achieves success in IT company. While Shrimati gives up her academic aspirations and becomes husband's shadow, only fulfilling her duties as a corporate leader's wife. In the process she losses her own identity.

The novel House of Cards (2013) deals with the story of Mridula and Sanjay who settled in Bangalore after marriage. Sanjay is a doctor and in the course of time he earns a lot of money by corrupt practice. When Mridula comes to know about this truth, she has to face discontentment in married life despite a love marriage. This intricately woven novel explores human relationship and holds up a mirror to our society.

VI.   CONCLUSION

All during the 20th women have faced significant human rights challenges and social impediments due to the prevalence of male-dominated social structures. There is a direct line between literature and inequality. Sad occurrences, terrible circumstances, and the condition of women in the 18th and 19th centuries are often depicted in literature. In most cultures, women are expected to lag three steps behind males. Whether Anita Desai, Sudha Murthy and Virginia Woolf is portraying a male or female role, it is always the women who end up being the dominant ones. A major patriarchal strategy used to prevent women from realizing their actual identities as independent self-existence is the vivid depiction in literature of patriarchal ways of imposing a false identity on them.

REFERENCES

[1] Monika Duggal (2022) "Gender discrimination in the novels of Anita Desai & Githa Hariharan", IJAR, ISSN: 2394-5869, Volume-8, Issue-11, Pp:283-287

[2] Aradhana Singh (2022) "Gender discrimination in the novels of ruth prawer Jhabvala", IJCRT, ISSN: 2320-2882, Volume 10, Issue 7.

[3] Vishwa Bandhu Sharma (2015) "A study gender issues in Indian writing in English", Globus an International Journal of Management & IT, ISSN: 0975-721X, Vol 7, No1.

[4] Fazal Karam (2022) "An analytical study of gender discrimination in Anita Desai's fasting, feasting", Palarch's journal of archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology, vol. 19 no. 1

[5] Noor-A-Jannath Tania (2022) "Virginia Woolf's "Women and Fiction": A Turn Toward the Impersonal", Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science, Volume 10 ~ Issue 8 (2022) pp: 56-59, ISSN(Online):2321-9467

[6] Abirlal Mukherjee(2022) Basic Human Rights Violations in Sudha Murty's Three Thousand Stitches", International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences, Issn no-2456-7620 , Vol-7, Issue-2;

[7] Dr.Naushad Khan (2018) "Critical Review of Past Literature on Gender Inequality in the World", Research on Humanities and Social Sciences, ISSN 2225-0484, Vol.8, No.13.

[8] Senft, Theresa. (2020). Reading Notes for Donna Haraway's Cyborg Manifesto. 10.13140/RG.2.2.28370.99521.

[9] Satya Prakash Das (2005) "Human rights : a gender perspective", The Indian Journal of Political Science Vol. 66, No. 4 , pp. 755-772.

[10] Catherine Verniers (2017) "Justifying gender discrimination in the workplace: The mediating role of motherhood myths", PLOS ONE, Volume-13, Issue|-1 https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0190657