

Feminism in the Poems of Indo-English Poetry of the New Millennium

Dr. Ruchi Rani,
AT-PipraTol,
PO-Parwa,PS-Jainagar,
Dist-Madhubani,
Pin-847226.

Abstract:

The very emergence of women writing in English was of great significance, for their works; scanty in output as they were, who wrote before and after them. The battle for emancipation was taken over by few educated women, themselves. Feminism is a range of political movements, ideologies and social movements that share a common goal: to define, establish and achieve political, economic, personal and social rights for women. There have been bunch of feminists in Indo-English poetry of the New Millennium like Imtiaz Dharkar, Kanak Lata Tiwari, Sujata Bhatt, Meena Alexander, Mamta Kalia etc. The movement of feminism has many facets. It does not mean getting of equal rights which men and women for the recognition of their creative talent. In fact, Indo-English poetry of the New Millennium is the culmination of the efforts put up by the voice of the young and effortless writers, through their scathy and compact expression.

Keywords:-Feminism, Millennium, Domination, Recognition, Scathy.

Feminism: An Introduction

Feminism is a range of political movements, ideologies and social movements that share a common goal: to define, establish and achieve political, economic, personal and social rights for women. This includes seeking to establish educational and professional opportunities for women that are equal to such opportunities for men. Feminist movements have campaigned and continue to campaign for women's rights, including the right to vote, to hold public office, to work, to earn fair wages or equal pay, to own property, to receive education, to enter contracts, to have equal rights within marriage, and to have maternity leave. Feminist have also worked to promote bodily autonomy and integrity and to protect women and girls from rape, sexual harassment and domestic violence.

Feminist campaigns are generally considered to be a main force behind major historical social changes for women's rights, particularly in the west, where they are nearly-universally credited with achieving women's suffrage, gender neutrality in English, reproductive rights for women, and the right to enter into contracts and own property.

Feminist theory, which emerged from feminist movements, aims to understand the nature of gender inequality by examining women's social roles and lived experience; it has developed theories in a variety of disciplines in order to respond to issues concerning gender. Walters(2005:p:176)¹

Some Feminists in Indo-English poetry of the New Millennium:

There have been bunch of feminists in Indo-English poetry of the New Millennium like ImtiazDharkar ,KanakLataTiwari, K J Somaiya, MilanieSilgardo(1956), Sujata Bhatt(born, 6 May 1956),MamataKalia,Meena Alexander, Tara Patel etc. The main themes of Dharkar's poetry includes home, freedom, journeys, communal conflicts and gender and politics. Purdah and other poems deal with the various aspects of a Muslim women's life where she experiences injustice, oppression and violence engineered through the culture of Purdah. The mixed heritage and itinerant life-style is at the heart of her writing: questioning, imagistic and richly textured poems that span geographical and cultural displacement, while also interrogating received ideas about home, freedom and faith. Lemer. G (1993:P-18-20)²

ImtiazDharkar belongs to that generation of post independence women poets who have given a convincing assurance that Indo-English poetry matches the best anywhere. They have not only broadened the thematic concern of Indo-English poetry but also shown how words and images-simple, suggestive and highly evocative can recite the music of their anguish and agony,their irritations and humour,their observations and reflections with no sign of pretension. This serious and well considered response to the observed and lived experiences is a drama of daily life here and there poeticized.

The present study includes only Purdah group of poems and "I speak for the Devil (2001)"and her "Postcards from God (1997)" and "The Terrorist at My Table (2006)" have been deliberately kept out of purview for such is the demand of the present venture. ImtiazDharkar regards herself as a Scottish Calvinist Muslim and her poetry is a confluence of three cultures.Tyson.L(2006:P83)³

MeenaAlexander'sA House of a Thousand Doorsfor instance is an Indian women living in the United States. She often hears voices of the village women she left behind. During her birth pains in New York these women come in dream to deliver her. In a moment of this primeval pain, all barriers collapse and women come together in mutual sympathy, understanding and concern.

SunitiNamjoshi directly addresses the need to legitimize lesbianianism and argues that a woman's love for a woman is both natural and quiet ancient . She complains that books, stories and society all collude in propagating the myths of compulsory heterosexuality and all in these versions men love women and women love men, and men ride off and have all sorts of adventures while women stay at home.

In a number of poems included in her collections, **Jackass and the lady** and **The Blue Donkey Fables**Namjoshi celebrates lesbian eroticism.

Sujata Bhatt is one of the most distinctive and original of Indian poets writing in English. Most of her poems deal with the themes of "Inter-personal relations", "Inter-cultural relations" and "The element of feminism". But the element of feminism dealt by her is not so impressive and

within the time frame work of established fabric of established feminism. Her experiences were limited and also is her range. At the same time she is not auto-biographical. She did not recognize her limitations as Kamala Das did. Her strength as well as her weakness as a poet consists in the fact that she is most herself and can not be carried away by any literary influences. If this gives her an individuality and personal meaning, it also leads her to lapses of fact and a general looseness in verse structure. Otherwise in her poetry we have an expression of female sensibility at its best. For example in the poem, "This room is part of the NYS subway system" expresses her female sensibility in the following lines:

"We sleep in

A room filled with Sylvia Schister's drawings

A room filled with point dark heads-stern, pensive.

They take up all the space on the walls.

There is such beauty in the shape of their skulls:

An ideal geometry of saw bones and cheek- bones."

Not only Bhatt, for that matter except Kamala Das no other Indian women poet aggressively involved in the job of taking feministic flavours to the readers in their poetry.

Infact, Indo-English poetry originated from the quest of educated Indians to find a suitable medium for expression. Sujata Bhatt familiarity with English education made her to express ideas encouragingly. As others use she also uses English as it was her mother tongue. Being a member of a family with much literary heritage her attempts to project her views were encouraged. She gives mixed impressions of unhappiness and disinterestedness in life. She takes her readers to various parts of the world introduces new science, language, history not because she is familiar with them but wants to get a kind of relief she tells,

"The part I live best, the part I ask her.

To show me again and again is the way she

Makes the pleats- snapping them into existence-

As the neem tree in our garden starts snapping at

The elegant bluish eloquent eucalyptus leaves."

Sujata Bhatt is not impulsive towards the male dominated world. She is thinking and reflective but not impulsive. She uses symbols, images, to explore the cry of "Women problems" at the same time, she did not give any brand to her claim. She is neither specific in women problems nor in general in her attitude. She is evident from every bit of her poetry. Infact, this is the plus as

well as minus in her poetry as well as in the emerging set of poets. She always imagines a dreamy land and finds place in that imaginary land. In the beginning, the main task of the Indo- Anglian poet is to present Indian life and environment in their varied colours without losing the spirit of English meter. Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu followed this native sensibility mastered the English language expressed their impression, emotions and beliefs. At the same time they never fail to grasp the beauty of language and attaining the ingredients of poetry. But Sujata Bhatt and other emerging new poets failed in this direction. They are very conscious, bold and mystic. Their ideas endowed with beyond the physical elements. As a result, they use to attain the renaissance in the social fabric attitude but also a ray of spiritual growth. They are philosophical, symbolic, imagery, imaginative, transcendental conscious and so on. They expected a lot from the universe itself instead of waiting for somebody to change the world. Rahman, A & Ansari (2009:p-29)⁴

References:

1. Walters, M. (2005). *Feminism: A very short introduction*, Oxford University. P.176. ISBN O- 19- 280510-X
2. Lerner, G. (1993). *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness From the Middle Ages to Eighteen- Seventy* Oxford University Press.pp.18-20
3. Tyson, L.(2006) *Critical theory today: A user- friendly guide*. New York: Routledge Publication, p.83.
4. Rahman, A& Ansari,A. K.(2009). *Indian English Women Poets*.ed. New Delhi: Creative Books , p. 29.
5. Barry, P.(2002). *Beginning theory: An introduction to literary and cultural theory*. Manchester:Manchester University Press,P.73
6. M.K,Naik, “ The achievement of Indo- English poetry” *Perspectives on Indian Poetry in English*, ed.
7. M.K, Naik, op. cit. pp. 219.220
8. Kumar, P.(2009). *Poetry, Politics and Culture: Essays on Indian Texts and Contexts*. India: Routledge.p.19