CHAPTER III

IMPACT OF FEMINISM
"Indians have been writing in English for more than a century now. Contrary to the Western notion of a retiring, veiled, tradition encrusted, dumb race, some Indian women have proved to be quite vocal. There is now a considerable body of poetry written by Indian women. Seen in its totality, this literature has several thought-provoking facets. The most visual of them is, of course, feminism," — PREMA NANDAKUMAR.

Before we glance at feminist trends in Indian women poetry and how it has been showing its impact on current day women poets focussing on Anna Sujatha Mathai, it is necessary to arrive at a meaningful definition of the term 'feminism' which has so far been variously defined. 'Feminism' as many people view, does not mean femalism or femaleness — the qualities which all women possess. It includes personal courage. Feminism is not 'Anti-Sitaism' in Indian context as some are fond of saying because Sita is often portrayed as a symbol of submission. Sita, indeed, must have been very courageous to have been able to resist and fight Ravana for full one year. As to the question of individuality and self-respect, by no means is she lacking them. After uniting her sons Luv and Kush with their father it is to her mother, the earth
goddess that she goes. Feminism at the same time is not living outside the marriage. Many women fail to understand the real spirit of feminism. The movement of feminism has many facets. It doesn't mean getting of woman equal rights with men or a movement for the recognition of their creative talents. It is more than that. No doubt, women raising their voice against the injustice after having gone through the agony for centuries, it led to feminism. Indeed, the factors for their agony varies from one nation to the other. According to the French models of feminism as has been expressed in Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and other works, Feminism implies greater sexual expression. If we take into account the British models, all feminists slowly become respectable, or reclaimed into the male world order. The American models are more outspoken in which we find an assertion of self-expression.

Feminism is not definitely some kind of chauvinistic or aggressive way of living, dressed up like a man. A definition like, feminism is "a mode of existence in which the woman is free of the dependence syndrome" sounds rather meaningful. Karen often, in her brilliant attempt, to define feminism has grouped different stands of feminism into two arguments, 'Relational' and 'Individualist'. The
'Relational' feminist thought proposed a gender-based but egalitarian vision of social organisation. It mainly featured the primacy of companionate, non-hierarchical, male-female couple as the basic unit of society. 'Individualist' arguments emphasized the individual as the basic unit. While the first stressed women's rights as women in terms of their child bearing or nurturing capacities in relation to men and insisted on women's distinctive contribution to the broader society, the second emphasised more abstract concepts of individual human rights and celebrated the quest for personal independence, rejecting all socially defined roles. These two arguments, though appear to be separate, are in fact, interwined and the interplay of these two strands can be seen in the later 18th century British writer - Mary Wollstonecraft, and the 19th century American suffragist Elizebeth Cady Stanton. Wollstonecraft in 1792 showed in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, a clear sense of women's role and responsibilities as mothers. Cady Stanton argued in 1869 that "because man and woman are complement of one another. We need woman's thought in national affairs to make a safe and stable government". And later in 1892 she insisted on woman's right to 'her birth-right to self-sovereignty'. The
self-sovereignty was more a 'moral imperative' rather than a 'categorical absolute' in the thought of these two women.

The Anglo-American feminist tradition, however, advocated the individualist thought as the only politically correct form till as recently as 1970s. This strand placed political priority and on demolishing the gender stratified educational system and economy that disadvantaged women through occupational segregation. As the situation changed, this thought has come under attack. The claims for uncompromising self-realisation perhaps cause the current resistance to feminism, especially among women who have chosen marriage and motherhood.

Today's feminism must be viewed as a rapidly developing major critical ideology or system of ideas in its own right. It's developmental stages have historically been dependent on and in tension with male-centered political and intellectual discourse but whose more recent manifestations transcend discourse. 'Feminism', thus "emerges as a concept that can encompass both an ideology and movement for socio-political change based on a critical analysis of male privilege and women's subordination within any given society".4
Having influenced by the feminist movement and its temperament Indian women poets aptly respond to many aspects of feminism. A random survey on feministic approach in Indian women poetry in English lacks the inspiration and encouragement from all walks of life. One may suspect the lack of authenticity and vitality in their works. Despite, their shortcomings lack of encouragement and inspiration their predominant feeling was that a woman is a sex object stands at the mercy of capricious men who act within the idiom of an accepted society. Therefore, a sense of being helplessly carried away by the forces of time, nature and circumstances expresses itself in a vocabulary which tries desperately to capture fluctuating moments, memories and emotions. The most common factor which characterises the woman is deprivation — they are deprived not only of material things but also of security, support, care, even 'sunlight and air'.

A keen observation of Indian women-poets in English reveals some concerns that are common to women elsewhere in the world, and some that are specific to Indian social realities. Firstly, women's pursuit of love and happiness, secondly, male attitude to woman as object, thirdly the idealisation of motherhood, fourthly,
fulfilment in conception and child-birth, fifthly, the
development of the self, over and beyond, but not separate
from tradition and other man-made restrictions, sixthly,
consciousness of social and religious atrocities on women
and lastly, the tragic effect of communal violence,
especially in the lives of women — the images of terror,
sexual harassment, bloodshed, exploitation and loss of
shelter. Feministic approach is not new to contemporary
women poets in English. These poets do have literary
mothers in both Sarojini Naidu and Toru Dutt. Though,
English was a merchandise from the West, the concept of
feminism is very much Indian. Women occupied palatable
position in the past. Unlike West, women here have
always been the first — sex. For every concern the
supreme ground was woman. We proudly address our
'Janmabhoomi' as 'Matrubhoomi' — the motherland. "It
was only in the west that woman had allowed herself to
be considered a subservient species, a second sex. For
the West, the supreme godhead was a man, Zeus. For them
the national pride is held up by the Deutschland, the
Fatherland. But, in India woman had gathered 'A noble
roll call of honour' in this concern. All our ancient
heroines — Savitri, Sita, Damayanti, Draupadi, Devahuti,
Devayani, Sukanya, Kannaki and the rest — were fighters.
They all faced critical situations in life with a rare
spiritual strength. Since the 'pativrata' concept was seen as the Crown Jewel of the Indian ethos, no one could point a finger at a woman and say; 'Frailty, thy name is woman!' as Shakespeare said.

Paradoxically, despite, the past glory and the present achievements by women, the Indian woman as a class still continues to be discredited and ill-treated all over India. Apart from 'dowry system' and 'Sati' women are discriminated in the matter of education and health-care. Though, some women do manage to get an education and achieve a measure of economic independence, they still remain prisoners behind invisible familiar societal bars.

The crime-map against Indian women is growing. The increasing domestic violence, the misuse of the female body for advertisements, the increasing rape and 'strip-in-the public' crimes, female infanticide and so on question the status of women in the society.

A woman in the past never gave a full throated expression to her creative talents. Though, we see a lot of improvement in the social environment and conditions of life, and the freedom woman enjoys in writing and in exploring the hither to prohibited regions of experience woman is still suffering from physical and emotional
harassment. She still happens to be highly vulnerable to male victimization and exploitation. Women became a sex object for exploitation in every way, within the family walls dowry reigned supreme. Either dowry prevented young girls from getting married or it became a cause for the death of a married women. The Indian poetesses can show, that it is not only the poor woman who suffers violence, deprivation and betrayal but woman in general.

Women don't want to suffer any more or even want to become weepy, suffering women in the society. It might be the key reason as to why men and women differ in their writings. They do carve, invent, discipline the world according to their own vision of life. As a result, they can only see what women's eyes can see.

According to Mathai the ideal picture of women was not that of an uncomplaining wife, serving her husband and his family and sacrificing herself for them. She was otherwise called no separate entity. Being physically weak she was clearly inferior to men. Where does the real authority lie in a family? If a mother finds her child ill she must first ask the permission of her parents-in-law or her husband to take the child to health centre. They are merely confined to home alone and are not allowed, to participate in the developmental activities
of society. They have been suffering from lack of support, depressed state and social barriers.

Mathai's collection of 38 poems The Attic of Night and two previous collections We the Unreconciled and Crucifixions cover poems of anger, rage, frustration, protest of women and silence imposed on them. Mathai complains against man in general and husbands in particular for being stupid and insensitive. She also exposes social evils like female infanticide and foeticide, dowry deaths, wife-beating and other forms of sexual and social exploitation of women. There is an overwhelming evidence of solitariness, emptiness, and her images are repeatedly 'Attic of Night', 'Darkness', 'Winter', 'barren tree', 'falling leaves' and so on. As she feels, woman state of despair always sets on the sky and above the stars. Mathai, arrests the fabric of woman's anguish and deep sense of suffering even in her small poems like "Poem", "Pain" and so on. Woman desires to go away from pain, and loneliness. But her desire to go away from pain seems to appear an optical illusion twice removed from reality. She compares woman's anguish to fading petals of a rose. She tells that even fading petals find relief while separating from rose. Where as woman's anguish is 'tight-budded', suppressed. And their
desire to get relief from pain is a mirage. Woman, despite, her desire to get relief from pain, and deep suffering is caught in the storm of men's brutality. We don't know what exact reasons lead Mathai to write on woman's suffering. Anna Sujatha Mathai, says Prema Nandakumar, "Having gone through a traumatic experience in married life and struggled hard to achieve economic independence for bringing up her son, knows what she is speaking about".\(^5\) Woman in India tries to hide her sorrow through silence and suffering, sadness seems to be the lot of all women.

"Can you feel the agony of the tree?
Bare, denuded, Sensitively alive.
This mute pain, dimly recognised
Is the bond between all creatures,
And is the root from which love grows".\(^6\)

In Indian society people have a very elevated idea of woman. Womanhood is the primeval fact in the whole of evolution. She is the creative element in the human race. She is responsible for the continuance of the race. She too needs her husband's loving care after her marriage. She has no idea of duties and responsibilities before marriage. Women should get more freedom in the presence of their husbands as they get in the presence of their parents. Men marry women because marriage is the
easiest way in which they could satisfy their sexual urge. In "Coming Running Jumping", Angela, a woman of true love expects genuine love and affection from her busy scheduled husband who always is attached to materialistic world. As a result their family life remains futile. Angela a symbol of suffering describes her husband's mechanical behaviour without any temptation. As Angela tells,

"he puts it in the bag. 
He coming running jumping down the stairs, 
He closing garage door and putting suitcase in the car. 
He say no goodbye. 
Master very naughty man".?

Even the only nephew that she has, gives no protection to her. He waits for chance to steal her nose rings. Likewise, woman has been suffering from insecurity and the brutality of man. As Mathai tells;

"Angela knows about long silence and loneliness - 
She has only that nephew, 
Who coverts her nose - ring. 
Who care for me when I be old 
Who bury me when I die?".8

Here, there seems to be a personal touch in this poem as it is pointed out by Prema Nandakumar. Yet it is the
condition of women in general. Prema Nandakumar views: 
"Anna Sujatha's poem "Coming Running Jumping" records with exquisite power the moment when her husband walked out on her and she found her life suddenly in shambles. Actually, such betrayal calls for choicest words dipped in vicious acid. Yet Anna Sujatha Mathai rejects the temptation". The poem even opens,

"The day I came home, in the afternoon, small son in tow - we'd just had lunch, fried fish and rice, sitting in the school garden - we were met by an old Angela at the door".

Further Prema Nandakumar feels that "Having projected an apparent domestic Eden, Anna Sujatha Mathai describes Angela in such a way as to inspire pity and laughter in us for the domestic help".

"Black and wrinkled, her fake diamond nose-ring and ear-rings glittering wickedly - She'd got them from the pawn shop - her nephew had his eyes on them, she said".

It is true because gone are the days where women enjoyed perfect bliss but now the fate of woman has changed. To live alone or as a single woman - unmarried, widowed or abandoned in Indian society is still not an easy venture. Woman like Angela can be vocal, but
the educated upper-class woman must lacerate herself only in the silence of her heart.

"who care for me when I be old?
Who bury me when I die?". 13

The social set-up of family gives no security to woman. The role of families shatter the dreams of a woman. Mathai has no faith in families. She dismisses them as futile institutions. Usually family is the basic unit in Indian social set-up which guarantees of economic residence, social security and mutual protection. The essential function of family is procreative and protective. The wife serves her husband, rears the children and gives exclusive privilege of sexual relations to her husband. The husband too, on his part remains faithful to his wife, protects the family provides economic resources for the continuance of healthy life. A wife is as necessary to the man as man is to the wife. But, what is happening to a woman in a family? What is the place of wife in a family? Disgusted with life there are times where woman welcomes death in repulsive mood. Woman suffers from moods of depression and longs for death. Mathai views that "families" are obstacles on the way to progress. They put up all kinds of barricades on the way
to achieve success and harmony. In beautiful simple images Mathai explains that families are held to obliterate or shatter each other's dreams. She sarcastically assesses the different ventures set out by families. For instance "families" slaughter the infants at birth itself and destroy the sweet smell and fragrance of the innocent flowery people. In a wail of grief she views the configuration of families. As she experienced the texture of family she tells:

"It seemed to me that families held each other's dreams down, that families blocked the stairs that led outwards, strangling the infant stranger at birth, destroying the smell of flowers for ever, that families were forces, seas, waves, fields, where planting went on mechanically tides, rhythms, pulls with no choice granted". 14

Perhaps, Mathai, being separated from family knows its true spirit. Almost standing alone strengthens her views on family and says that families hold each other by secret bonds whether of love or hate. Her sharp use of simple images 'well', 'River' and 'Sea' indicate that families lead to indefinite danger.
"But now, alone, and without family—
I see that families are held by secret bonds
whether of love or hate,
families are the steps that
lead out of the well
the way down to the river
which leads to the sea
families are boats where
strangers cling together". 15

The Indian women writing in English either in poetry or in any other form of literature there is an expression of female sensibility at their choice. They sing about the harm done to them by men. In a male dominated society women are caught in a traditional parameter. They are not allowed to live fully according to dictates of their reason or instinct. Their freedom is often curbed. Woman is first considered as a housewife, then a partner of her husband and then as a working woman. Men never look at woman as a rational being who can take decision without depending on men. Being born as woman she struggles within herself, all alone, with her own strength and power against her own flesh and body. Pain is the common destiny of their life. The pain of woman is that of dumb calf which cannot express its deep wounded feelings.
"What that calf feels
Is the dumb part over pain,
The pain we can never express,
The heaving, silent pain
That tears at the stomach,
And makes the heart beat,
That does not know the relief of tears,

This mute pain, dimly recognised
Is the bond between all creatures,
And is the root from which love grows,
our common destiny of pain
Makes each of us part of the other".16

In Indian social fabric, people have a very elevated idea of woman. She is responsible for the continuance of the race. She needs her husband's loving care. But contrary to it, what is happening to her? As Mathai tells women feel:

"In a room
In the largest city
In the world
I struggled
with a feeling of suffocation,
The worst of loneliness".17

In many poems of Mathai, women feel nostalgic and records the experience of pain set forth by male dominated world. Woman has no place in the Indian social
fabric especially for a single woman — a woman separated from her husband, unmarried, widowed or abandoned. Women became mere sex objects in every possible way. In "Night and children of slums" Mathai describes how women were raped by men. The poem opens with the mentioning of rape in the slums though it ends with a note of compassion. The images of 'Night', 'Flower', 'the black onyx', and 'rose' stand for the insecurity of women. 'Night' symbolizes for an invitation to sin and envelops the inexplicable cry of women. Night a flower of great beauty envelops all evil presences as flower conceals the black onyx. Here, the use of symbol 'the black onyx' is inadequate yet it indicates the darker side of women's life-questioning the brutality of Man she says: 'When shall man be king over himself?'. Woman in the 'Attic of Night', reflects on the monotony, frustration and humdrum existence of life in less civilized society.

"Night, a flower of great beauty,  
Flares with the black onyx of death.  
The raped woman bleeds upon  
a crucifix of light,  
Closed doors can't hide the mutilated child's cry.  
...... ....... ...... .....  
Woman, in the attic of night,  
Burn your dead". 18
Are women not more than a baby machines? or mere sex objects? Men are conditioned to believe that they can prove their manliness if they 'Conquer' women's will power or their wish to enjoy freedom in society. Men blindly indulge in sex without understanding the consequences and with no knowledge of the outcome. In "Night of Karthika Purnima" we see how woman caught in ugly visions of beauty and terror while watching at her own reflection of life. A poor woman being caught in the men's brutality suffers silently in a lonely night with a helpless cry.

The collection of 38 poems *The Attic of Night* constitutes something of a milestone. It demonstrates that writing poetry by Indian women is now so much a part of the mainstream that it no longer dwells exclusively upon what is seen as 'Women concerns'. A good number of poems including *We the Unreconciled, Crucifixions*, deal with the experience of being woman. Being alone, separated from 'A tight bond' She understands the problems of woman in general. Describing woman's place in society Laurence S.Fallis and Silver city feel, "To be a woman and a poet in a modern India is to know both loneliness and scorn. Alienation is the coin in which gifted women are paid in a culture dominated by the masculine mystique; ridicule
is the fruit of artistic labors in a crass and materialistic society*. Mathai being a woman writer brings her voice of protest in the following lines.

"Let us guard out Family
Let us multiply our money
Let us keep our society intact
the heart bleeds
will be prisoners always?
It is through woman
That society has maintained its solidarity,
So woman particularly
Becomes a static image,
Merely a symbol.
When, oh when, will she be free:
To be herself?
If woman is not free
How can her children be free?".  

Accepting the misuse role of woman in the society further she complains:

"There is no place for you ...
You better your life away
Against a wall of stone,
Will the world always kill
The wise and the tender?". 

Women's loneliness, pain and tragic life is something which is incommunicable. While she longs for perfection she finds pain quite contrary to her desire.
True love leaves her like dreams lost in the night. A sense of awareness of their pious bond, which is the common lot of womanhood makes them to remain silent. Their suffering can be shared, but not spoken out:

"But no one knows about this,
She bears children,
She cooks and cleans,
and her body grows old.
The men she loved
Search for younger lovers
But beneath the every day
below the surface
Lies a woman's loneliness." 22

Men have every advantage in misusing women's personality. Women have been prevented from realising their creative possibilities. Woman has not been defined as a subject in her own right but merely as an entity or commodity that concerns man either in his real or fantasy life. As a result, women raised their voice against men demanding justice and banning of male domination. Having gone through the pain for centuries they started endless war on them which led to 'feminism'. A protest was made against the depiction of women as marginal, docile, subservient to men's interest and emotional needs. That is why, misrepresentation of women, literary abuse and
textual harassment in literature has been exposed through feministic movement. Women, despite, the suppression of their creative abilities in the male dominated world; they have been establishing distinctive female tradition in the field of literature.

Women poets have a lot to say; to brood over. Moreover, they are saying more directly, boldly and artistically than ever before. They are focussing their voice on feministic issues. Many of their poetic lines whirl us into their orbit by sensational statements and revelations. In reality, feministic approach is limited not only to the present day women poets but also to the entire history of Indo-English women poets. They express female sensibility in every possible way. The current day poets have their own literary mothers as models to express their female sensibility. Anna Sujatha Mathai, Tara Patel and Sujatha Bhatt are the poets to show 'female aching sore'. Sarojini Naidu is literally our first feminist poet. She is also struck by the glorious position awarded to women by Indian tradition but found that reality was rather a harsh experience. Woman could talk of possessing her individuality only at the cost of domestic bliss. It is evident from the carefree attempts of her first two volumes of poetry, The Golden Threshold (1905), The Bird of Time (1912), are singularly muted in
her third volume, *The Broken Wing* (1917). The long lyrical poem *The Temple*, the section 'A pilgrimage of love' is emotionally eruptive and the conclusion marks the note of feministic expression. The conclusion is very obvious. The Indian woman is born to accept her fate tearfully — or to die. In fact, long before the bier has to be got ready, the woman dies for her individuality, she pitilessly crushed by our own social norms;

"They came, sweet maids and men
men with shining tribute,
Garlands and gifts, cymbals and songs of praise ....,
How can they know I have been dead,
Beloved,
These many mournful days".$^{23}$

Toru Dutt (1856-1877) who belongs to a Christian family was fond of the ancient secular legends of Indians that glorified women. Goddess Uma, princes Savitri and Queen Sita have been immortalised by Toru Dutt. Goddess Uma was full of power and glory filled with spiritual strength and feminine grade.

"Not weak she seemed, nor delicate,
Strong was each limb of flexible grace,
And full the bust; the mien elate.
Like hers, the goddess of the chase
On latmoss hill, — and oh, the face
Framed in its cloud of floating hair
No painter's hand might hope to trace
The beauty and the glory there!
Well might the pedlar look with awe,
For though her eyes were soft, a ray
Lit at times, which kings who saw
Would never dare to disobey".  

The post-Independence decades brought to the open the sheer despair of Indian women. They had taken part in the Independence movement in a big way and had achieved some amount of freedom to come out into the open air, get education and take up a job. Thus a free Indian was looked upon by the educated women as a veritable heaven that would assure them equality in every way. As mentioned earlier, woman is victimised in every possible way. For instance, within the family walls dowry ruled supreme. Either dowry prevented young girls from getting married or it became a cause for the death of married women. The post-Independence Indian woman thus found herself possessing nothing but shattered dreams. Students of sociology and women's studies have been documenting the betrayal of woman power in post-Independence India. The facts and figures would certainly make angels weep.  

Inspired by the feminist movement in the west, perhaps Indian women poets just made a complete jump to
the other side, little realising the basic interest in the heritage of the accident which had not role-models except Joan of Arc for women who wanted to be strong and free. In the heat of the moment when the amazonian New woman of the west rose on the horizon, the Indian woman too made a bid for freedom from everything.

Kamala Das, the most important poet of this scenario, appeared on the literary scene very much like 'a ruthless Urvasi' who would never grant 'Pururavas' their ultimate triumph over woman. Kamala Das is fully conscious of her role in the society as a woman unlike Sarojini Naidu. Kamala Das explaining her role in poetry tells "Sarojini Naidu was there, but I certainly did not want to be like her. I would never write that she did. That is altogether different territory, lot of beauty. I have not seen so much, I cannot write about it. I see beauty of a horrible kind, in people. I see a kind of beauty which Sarojini Naidu did not see, and she had seen a kind of beauty I do not see. We have two separate visions". It is true because Kamala Das was fully conscious of her role in the society. She has come up in the literary scene to change the position of woman a little bit if possible. That is why she deliberately slipped into a role which is different from Sarojini Naidu. She further writes, "I had to make up for the
sins committed against the women, the silence inflicted upon them. I did not want to suffer. I did not want to become a weepy, suffering woman".26 Her aim of writing poetry is to find out a place for women in the female society where women can enjoy true love and affection. She feels that a man who is not loving a woman but only feeling has no right to possess her. She feels it is like counterfeit money. And she regrets that the whole world is full of male domination concealing genuine love. "And that is precisely what I have written about, nothing else, nothing more shocking"27 says Kamala Das. Henceforth, woman will try to be a devourer for a change. Here is Kamala's unabashed call:

"Woman, is this happiness, this lying buried Beneath a man? It's time again to come alive, The world extends a lot beyond his six foot frame".28

Kamala's poetic desire is an invitation for freedom, a solace from tradition imposed chastity.

"Freedom became my dancing shoe. How well I danced, and danced without rest, until the shoes turned grimy on my feet and I began to have doubts. I asked my husband, am I here to am I lesbian or am I just plain frigid?".29
The feminist strength of Kamala Das degenerated into a feminist screech, and she was succeeded by several imitators such as Suniti Namjoshi, Eunice De'Souza, Tara Patel, Anna Sujatha Mathai and so on. Suniti Namjoshi's poetry has no profound lines yet every syllable of her poetry is used to advance sex-act variable as we see in "The Arbitrary order". Eunice D'Souza relates, however, a real life news item to the invidious way in which the Indian male denies woman her dignity. She adequately records the feminist grouse akin to that of Sylvia Plath in modern American poetry. Charmayne D'Souza's "spelling Guide to woman" is sharp and witty; exposes the problems confronted by a woman who wishes to live unmarried. Apart from Imti Dharker and Nirmala Pillai who feel frustrated under purdha system which isolates and enslaves woman there are two more emerging poets contributing significant publications to recent feminist poetry in English. As discussed earlier, Tara Patel and Anna Sujatha Mathai are those who shared feministic views in their contribution to poetry. They feel that the major problem of feminism in India is to get men and women accept the idea of women living alone pursuing what they consider right. But acceptance from the society is still far away as it is made clear by Tara Patel.
"The more you want out -
of being someone's daughter,
of dreaming of being someone's wife,
of trying to be independent,
the more your dreams close in on you
to make a killing
you dream in a system programmed
to punish you.
Mean words pluck out petal's and
growing feathers
rob the phosphorescence of the wages
you ride to shore". 30

The woman became part of the working force
and her normal desires can never achieve a normal life
on her own. The woman in India rarely achieves a haven
of peace, contentment and individual achievement claims
Anna Sujatha Mathai:

"What that calf feels
Is the dumb part our pain,
The pain we can never express,
The heaving, silent pain
That tears at the stomach,
And makes the heart beat,
That does not know the relief of tears.
Can you feel the agony of the tree?
Bare, denuded, sensitively alive.
This mute pain, dimly recognized
Is the bond between all creatures,
And is the root from which love grows."
Our common destiny of pain
Makes each of us part of the other.\textsuperscript{31}

Mathai, reflects female sensibility to a larger extent because her social background influenced her much more than any external factor.

Mathai, as she switched off from married life knows her role in the society. In one of her letter, expressing the hurdles of life she writes, "I have single-handedly brought up a young child on my own, struggled on all fronts with no support other than that of aged parents".\textsuperscript{32} And certainly her agony seems to be reflected in many of her poems. It is true because, the work of literature according to psychology enables the reader to study the interior life\textsuperscript{'} of the writer. The unconscious repressions and desires of the artist are discovered, and this results in a better understanding and more exact interpresentation of art. Similarly, as psychological approach asserts Mathai\textsuperscript{'}s unconscious repressions are also partly responsible to her art of writing poetry. There is so much verbal violence in her poetry. She fears that 'To live as a single woman' — unmarried, widowed or abandoned in India is still no easy task. It is evident from "Coming Running Jumping".
Angela may be vocal, but the educated upper-class woman must lacerate herself only in the silence of her heart. Maneesha Dupe points out, that Indian women suffer mainly because of their fear imposed silence; "A silence of misplaced devotion, a silence which maintains a facade of a successful marriage. A silence to avoid scandal. But the silence that ensures the crime is repeated again and again". It is evident from a situation succinctly flashed by Tara Patel.

"A woman's life is a reaction
To the crack of a wip,
She learns to dodge it as it whistles around her".

Yet, with a kind of meaningful and powerful poetry being written by women poets like Anna Sujatha Mathai and Tara Patel, Indian woman need not be silent any more. In fact, the status of woman in the society at present has changed a lot. Gone are the days when women were never allowed to give a full-throated expression to their creative talents. But now, the social environment and condition of life has changed. We find woman enjoying a greater measure of freedom in expressing their feelings whether of love or hate. The small poem by Manjit Tiwan is one such example where she explains her feelings freely.
She exaggerates husband as an hungry woolf. In a saucy, spiteful mood she tells:

"A husband is a hungry wolf
who shields you from all other wolves
But himself ...
Fixing you between his jaws
He boasts:
"See, how safe you are!
I don't devour you' ...
A husband is a hungry wolf
who shields you from all other wolves
But himself ...
A machine
He fits in all your spare parts,
Weeding out every hair on the body of your existence.
Questions:
'Who the hell are you?'
Instantly, like Red Riding Hood
You want to run away
But like a lightning flash he catches you.
Bewildered, you search desperately for yourself".35

Woman suffers, and even commits suicide due to their endless grief. They feel unprotected, isolated, frustrated. Mathai has done her job well in depicting the gloomy and pathetic conditions of woman. She welcomes genuine feminism yet hates those who pretend to be feminists. Mathai writes in one of her letters "When I hear women who are admired as feminists, but here full support of husbands and other men, I am hurt by their feminist pretenses".36
REFERENCES:


4. Ibid, p.139.


8. Ibid, p.58.


13. Ibid., p.58.


15. Ibid., pp.13-14.


21. Ibid., p.43.


24. Ibid., p.xxii.

26. Ibid., p.158.
27. Ibid., p.159.
29. Ibid., pp. xxiv.