

ABSTRACT

1. Introduction:

Indian Writing in English has been a significant body of literature in the mainstream of English literature written in the world. As there is a tradition of British and American women novelists. India also has a tradition of women novelists. Their contribution to the tradition of social realism initiated by Mulk Raj Anand in the realm of Indian novel in English during the post-independence period, is significant. This tradition shows two kinds of women novelists: the women writing about the diverse subjects of social reality in India and the women writing about the conditions of women in relation to the patriarchal social structure of modern Indian society. If Ruth Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya and Nayantara Sahagal represent the former group, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Arundhati Roy represent the latter group. Andrienne Rich (1976) defines patriarchy as the power of the fathers in terms of a system which is financial, social and political in nature and in which men by force, direct pressure or through rituals, tradition, customs and education determine what part women shall play and not play, and in which the female is everywhere subordinated and suppressed. The efforts world-over agree that man-woman relationship has been characterized by male superiority and the lower status of women. Attempts have been made to change this unfair social reality. The nature of the power relationship between man and woman, as perceived in the traditional social structure, signifies the need for empowerment of woman. However, it also shows the need of empowerment of man in relation to the equality of responsibilities and duties at the wake of the family welfare, realized in the form of kinship, harmony, progress and peace.

The present research consists of the studies of the nature of man-woman relationship in the selected novels of Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Arundhati Roy; alongwith the studies of imagery and narrative technique. Anita Desai's three novels, *Cry*, *The Peacock* (1963), *Voices in the City* (1965) and *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975) and Shashi Deshpande's two

novels, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980) and *That Long Silence* (1988) have been selected alongwith Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997). In fact, the marital relationships and other relationships in the families portrayed by the novelists have been considered in the light of patriarchal value system and its repercussions on the lives of the individuals. The other conditions of human life have also been taken into account in the ultimate judgment formed about men and women and their relationships. The two literary devices – imagery and narrative technique – have been studied in order to know their use by the novelists in vivifying the nature of reality emerging from the conditions prevailing in the lives of the individuals and their relations. The novels have been studied with a view to search for the social and psychological reasons and resources behind the behavioural patterns of the characters.

The comparative study of the three novelists based on the selected novels – in terms of similarities and differences – have been done alongwith the vision of social change, as emerging from the novels. In the analysis of imagery, the imagery evolving from the figurative language in the form of similes and metaphors and the allegorical situations has been focused. The narration of the novels is studied mainly with reference to view point, initiation, ending and some other characteristics of the narrative. The research is carried out by using the critical ideas, theories and principles from sociology, psychology and literary theory. In fact, it is the demand of the structure of the analysis itself. Without it, the comprehensive understanding of the conditions of human life is not possible. Though this work refers to the feminist studies and references, it is not essentially a feminist work. It thinks of man-woman relationship in terms of family welfare, and the ultimate status of women, envisioned by the novelists.

2. Theoretical Discussion:

The present research work is based on the hypothesis that the history of mankind is the history of evolution and revolution where change has kept pace with Time. The awkward position of the gap between 'culture' and

‘civilization’ has given rise to problems in the modern age. They are found reflected in the modern literature. M.H. Abrams (1953) emphasizes the need of the application of multiple theories in order to extract the aesthetics of a work of art. According to him, a good critical theory is tested mainly from the scope and precision of the insights which it yields into the properties of a single work of art. Therefore, the researcher applies the theories and ideas of T.B. Bottomore from Sociology, Karen Horney, Abraham Maslow, and Erich Fromm from Psychology, and M.H. Abrams, W.H. Clemen, Sudhakar Marathe and Jasbir Jain from the imagery and narrative technique as Literary craft.

Bottomore’s notions such as ‘family of orientation’ and ‘family of procreation’ are significant in the life of an individual. They define the functions and responsibilities of the elders regarding the development and socialization of the young ones in the family. The families portrayed by the novelists in the novels have been studied in the light of these notions. The ideas of ‘culture’ and ‘civilization’, analytically perceived by Bottomore have been used in the ultimate judgment about social change emerging from the material and non-material conditions of human life reflected in the novels. Karen Horney and Abraham Maslow occupy a significant place in this work. The fundamental concepts such as ‘real self’, ‘actual self’, ‘self-actualization’, ‘basic anxiety’, ‘lower needs’, ‘higher needs’ have been used for studying the exact situations of the characters in their life processes ranging from childhood to the moment of crisis. Erich Fromm’s ideas such as ‘dynamic’ and ‘static’ adaptation, ‘moral aloneness’, ‘sadistic and masochistic tendencies’, ‘freedom from ... freedom to’ have been applied for perceiving the socio-psychological conditions of the individuals. These scholars emerge from a new school of human understanding set by C.G. Jung’s vision that man’s life is governed by a number of factors apart from sexual reasons. M.H. Abrams and W.H. Clemen discuss imagery as organic to the structure of the text. Sudhakar Marathe locates the writer’s specified vision in the beginning and the ending of a novel. Jasbir Jain perceives a number of strategies used by the women novelists in their works.

3. The Scheme of Chapterization of the Thesis:

The entire structure of the thesis has been formulated in terms of six chapters. Their characteristics and contents can be briefly stated:

Chapter-I, 'Introduction', serves the purpose of defining the entire plan of the research. It consists of introduction to the topic, significance of the theme of the present research, the review of the research work already done in this area, aims and objectives, hypothesis, methodology, scope and limitations of the present research, and conclusion.

Chapter-II, 'Theoretical Framework', shows indepth discussion of the theories, ideas and concepts used by the scholars in sociology, psychology and literary craft. It emphasizes the need and the exact application of these ideas in the system of analysis followed in the present research.

Chapter-III., 'The Novels of Anita Desai', throws light on the evaluation and analysis of the nature of man-woman relationship in her three novels *Cry, The Peacock, Voices in the City* and *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* The use of imagery and narrative technique by the novelist has also been studied.

Chapter-IV, 'The Novels of Shashi Deshpande'. consists of the studies of the conditions of man-woman relationship in her two novels – *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, and *That Long Silence*, alongwith the evaluation of imagery and narrative technique used by the novelist for the ultimate depiction of man-woman relationship.

Chapter-V, 'Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, shows the analysis of the multiple structures of man-woman relationship located in the novel, in addition to studying imagery and narrative technique.

Chapter-VI, 'Conclusion', communicates the finding from the novels of the three novelists and concludes with the sense of insecurity of Indian families in modern times due to 'cultural lag' between culture and civilization.

4. Findings and Conclusion:

Anita Desai's female protagonists show lack of fulfillment of basic needs. Therefore, they are neurotic. The state of neurosis remains unresolved, leading to crisis. They are much below self-actualization and higher needs. On

the contrary, the male characters, in the marital relationship show well-formed real selves and self-actualization, but they are traditional in nature. Therefore, they execute their male-dominating power against their powerless and miserable wives without showing genuine concern and sense of understanding.

Shashi Deshpande's women show their real selves intact. They have analytical mind and talent for education. They are born and brought-up in the families which have a clear family-structure. Though they have some trauma, they overcome it with their actual selves. The self actualization is strong. They are career-conscious women. They have a sense of self-conceit and ego evolving from their sense of superiority and individualism. Their husbands belong to poverty-ridden families. They have to forsake their real selves and struggle for career through their actual selves. The real struggle of Deshpande's women is for the fulfillment of their higher needs in their married life. These women prefer family over aloneness and anxiety. Therefore, they are reunited. Out of a sense of superiority and individualism, Desai's men ignore their wives and Deshpande's women neglect their husbands. If patriarchy is the chief motivating force in Desai's men, a sense of individualism is the growing factor in Deshpande's women. Both the situations cause conflicts. In Desai's novels they remain unresolved while in Deshpande's novels, they are resolved.

Arundhati Ray's *The God Of Small Things* shows the meanest spirit of patriarchy. The family of orientation and the family of procreation remain dysfunctional in case of Ammu. The father and the husband remain irresponsible patriarchs pushing Ammu in the value of misery and death. Her children live a death-pale life. The patriarchal attitudes and acts destroy the generations of women.

Anita Desai's imagery shows poetic character which can be the result of her mindset and her studies of English literature. Shashi Deshpande's imagery is prosaic. Certainly, it is due to her spirit of journalism and her sense of documenting the facts. Arundhati Ray's imagery has a strong intellectual sense that expresses her ironic vision. In narration, no novelist uses 'stream of

consciousness' technique as such, but they use other forms of narration such as, internal analysis and internal monologue.

The findings show that the families portrayed, are not safe and harmonized. They are imbalanced and disintegrated, showing no active and progressive future. The chief reason of the fragmentation is patriarchy wherein women are subordinated and suppressed. The social vision of the three novelists shows that there is a gap between culture and civilization.