Abstract

Indian English Literature is an honest enterprise of Indian writers who have been making significant contributions to the world literature. The Indian writers found novels as a suitable medium of expressing their thoughts. The Indian English novels passed through several stages before attaining present day popularity. The novelists in the beginning imitated Victorian style and translated their regional literature works into English. The themes of early literary works were basically humanistic. Later, literature became a tool for writers to promote social reforms, awareness of social problems, patriotism and nationalism.

The rise of women’s literature is one of the notable developments in Indian English writings. Early women writers like Toru Dutt, Swarna Kumari Ghosal, Rajalakshmi Debi, Krupabai Sathianadhan, Rockey Sakhowat Hossain, Pandita Ramabai Saraswati, and Cornelia Sorabji gave importance to the moral aspect of women as prescribed by the society. There is a rapid increase in the number of Indian feminist writers after the Second World War. Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Das, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Bharathi Mukherjee, Geetha Mehta, Manju Kapur, Esther David, and Namita Gokhale are the modern writers whose protagonists are strong, independent, unconventional, and rebellious in nature.
Namita Gokhale is one of the most noted and popular women novelists of India in recent times. Her language and description is lively, sometimes humorous, pathetic, romantic and entirely attractive. Her style is spontaneous and realistic. She sketches each character highlighting their psychological struggle. Her novels focus upon feminism, interpersonal relationship, search for self-identity, alienation, obsession with death, love and violence.

The present study entitled *Reflections of Feministic Unconscious in Namita Gokhale’s Fiction* demonstrates feminism in Namita Gokhale’s fiction. Feminism is a movement which claims equal rights, opportunities, and power on par with men in the political, economic, cultural and social perspective. Unconscious is a term popularised by Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. According to Freud, unconscious mind comprises of mental processes which are inaccessible to conscious mind, but they may influence one’s judgement, emotion, and behaviour. Though the writer once said that she is not a feminist, she unconsciously expresses her feministic views in her writings. The researcher attempts to prove that Namita Gokhale is a feminist writer.

The first chapter introduces the background of Indian English literature, Indian English fiction and rise of feminists in Indian English fiction. It also investigates the life of Namita Gokhale and a brief account of all her works.

The second chapter “Feministic Unconscious” deals with the elements of feminist unconsciousness in the writings of Namita Gokhale. Today, women experience humiliation and oppression in the family and society. Namita Gokhale’s
novels depict women’s consciousness in the moral, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Her female protagonists are not the conventional silent sufferers, but they give due importance to their passion and go beyond the restrictions set by the family and society. The novelist depicts female characters with masculine traits of will power, bravery, and competitiveness. She redefines the image of women from timid, dependent and dumb persons to self-respecting, self-confident individuals.

The third chapter “Quest for Self-Identity” sorts out the quest for self-identity of the women characters. Every man in the modern world has the quest for self-identity. The realisation of self will not be attained in a single day. Namita Gokhale’s female characters have quest for self-identity right from their childhood because of some unforgettable mental agony or conflict. Their unhappy marriages too affect their psyche. The failures make them realise the truth about life as well as their hidden talents. Some characters know the importance of spirituality in life, thereby acquire their true identity. When a person fails to know about his/her true self, he/she feels alienated and isolated. Some of Namita Gokhale’s women face similar situation and their quest remains unfulfilled because of their wrong decision of going beyond cultural norms.

The fourth chapter “Psychoanalytical Study of Characters” analyses the characters in accordance to psychoanalysis. Namita Gokhale applies psychoanalytical concepts skillfully in her works. She deconstructs femininity in her novels. She explores the conscious, subconscious and unconscious mental state of her characters. She artistically narrates the psychological constraints of female characters. Some of
her characters are abnormal and meets their tragic end because of some unsolved trauma. Her novels are autobiographical in tone. Her true self is evident in her writings. For her, writing is a therapy to heal herself from her physical ailment and mental pain.

The concluding chapter recaps the discussions of the previous chapters and analyses the style and technique used by the writer and further area of research to be done on the writer.