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## **IMPACT OF FEMINISM ON INDIAN-ENGLISH NOVEL WRITING**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Indo-Anglian writers, especially women writers, have worked intensely under the influence of feminism. Feminism has played a significant role in shaping the Indian-English novel. Since it came rather late in India, has spread its wings in all spheres of Indian-English literature. Feminism is a voice of suppressed and down-trodden woman. The feeling of anxiety, aversion and boredom has been part of feminism. The present section aims at clarifying the concept of womanhood (feminism) as it emerges from the works of eminent Indian writers in English. A consistent picture of the changing social realities has been presented and it is still being tabled by the Indian-English novels.

**Key words :** Feminism, English

### **INTRODUCTION :**

English education was introduced to India in the 19th century, serving as an ideological force behind social reform and control. Indian English Literature has developed over a period of time and writing in English did not start a day, it took many years and several prominent personalities helpful to bring the present status and distinct place to Indian English literature among world literature. With the passage of time, Indian English literature has witnessed several changes in the writing pattern. Literacy spread rapidly and women begun to utilize the power of the pen. But it was very difficult path, as the women had to break through years of male dominance, taboos and beliefs that had heavily impregnated the society.

Shashi Despande is a novelist and short story writer who began her career with short stories and has by now authored nine short story collections, twelve novels and four books for children.



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Three of her novels have received awards, including the Sahitya Akademi Award for *That Long Silence* (1989). Some of her other novels are *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *A Matter of Time*, *Small Remedies*, *Moving On*, *In The Country of Deceit* and *Ships that Pass*. Her latest novel is *Shadow Play*. Many of her short stories and novels have been translated into a number of Indian as well as European languages. She has translated two plays by her father, Adya Rangacharya, (Shriranga), as well as his memoirs, from Kannada into English, and a novel by Gauri Despande. Apart from fiction, she has written a number of articles on various subjects - literature, language, Indian writing in English, feminism and women's writing - which have now been put together in a collection 'Writing from the Margin.' She has been invited to participate in various literary conferences and festivals, as well as to lecture in Universities, both in India and abroad. She is one of the novelists whom you can read with seriousness. She is never after gimmicks. There is an earnest voice, very serious about the story being told and its manner. She is one of the writers with little posturing. Her novels usually have women as the protagonists. This has led readers to call her a feminist writer. She has often complained against this title. She deals with the themes of geo-centric vision, feminine sensitivities, gender differences, predicament of Indian women placed between contradictory identities through her works. She has focused on the psychological suffering, oppressions of the frustrated housewife whose only option was to suppress the storm within the inevitable existential predicament of women in a male dictated society. She won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1990 and awarded Padma Shri in 2009.

In defining its nature and scope mainly two problems were confronted by the historians of this literature: first, this body of writing had been designed variously as "Indo-Anglian literature"; "Indian-Writing in English"; and "Indo-English literature"; secondly, the failure to make clear-cut distinctions had also often led to a confusion between categories such as "Anglo-Indian literature"; "Literature in the Indian Languages translated into English and original composition in English"; Hence E. F. Oaten in his *A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature* (1908), considers the poetry of Henry Derozia as a part of "Anglo-Indian literature, and also includes Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore among "Anglo-Indian Writers" along with F. W. Bain and



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F.A. Steel. In his extensive survey Indian Writing in English (1962), K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar has included English translations of Tagore's novels and plays, done by others in his history of Indian Creative Writing in English. John B. Alphonso Karkala Indo-English Literature in the Nineteenth Century (1970), used the "Indo-English literature" to mean "literature produced by Indians in English".

Thus Indian-English literature may be defined as literature written originally in English by authors who belong to India by birth, ancestry or nationality. It is undimmed that neither "Anglo-Indian literature" nor literal translations by others can legitimately form part of this literature. Now it is apparent that Indian-English literature, thus defined, is not a part of English literature. It is legitimately a part of Indian literature.

Another problem which the historians of this literature used to face was that to choose from among the various appellations given to it from time to time, as – "Indo-Anglian literature"; "Indian-Writing in English"; "Indo-English literature"; and "Indian-English literature". The first of these terms was first used as the title of the Specimen Compositions From Native Students, published in Kolkata in 1883. But after alterations the Sahitya Akademi has accepted "Indian-English literature" as the most suitable appellation for this body of writing.

After the Battle of Plassey (1757), the British who had come to India to sell, decided also to rule. The business of ruling naturally involved the shaking of India of her roots. But those engaged in shaking were also instrumental in planting the seeds of a modernization process in the eighteenth century which started burgeoning in the nineteenth century. The rise of Indian-English literature was an aspect of the Indian renaissance.

Novel is a work of fiction in which imagination and intellect both are combined to express life in the form of a story. Imagination is always directed and controlled by intellect. Novel is more concerned in men and women as they are rather than in romance or adventure. It aims to show the motives and influences which govern human life, and the effects of personal choice upon character and destiny. Such is the true novel and a true novel opens a wider and more interesting field than any other type of literature.



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## **INDIAN-ENGLISH NOVEL WRITING**

The Indian writers, especially women writers appear much concerned with the challenges and problems of contemporary woman in present society. Indian writers of fiction in English are exploring the psychological and sociological strains in woman's life. The rise of feminism as a movement on continent gave woman various ways to express her feelings. She found a canvas to paint her own world. Fiction by women writers contributes a major segment of the contemporary Indian-writing in English. A potential of human achievements and a totally different world have been realized by women writers because in any sphere of Indian-English literature and appreciation of the writing of its, woman is essential.

The Indo-English novelists until thirties wrote the nationalist orientation everywhere partook of social and radical movements which were greatly influenced by the Gandhian ethos. But the novelists of the 1960s shifted the focus to the individual's quest for personal meaning and his or her existential problems and social relationships. After independence, several women writers tried to analyse psyche of the exploited woman. Post-Independence literature reveals the woman's quest : quest for identity; quest for a separate and special place in contemporary society, is giving rise to a number of issues. After the nineteenth century, there was a change – a protest was recorded and sympathy for women was expressed. Feminist ideology, which came to India from the west, is widely spread in India. Intellectuals, writers and the educated of the urban area feel its ideological impact. Feminist trends came into conflict with conventional moral code. Post-Independence literature in India voices the clamours of women for a new way of life.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Ultimate contradiction in Indian society happens to be that woman is regarded as the weaker, insignificant in a land where since time immemorial, people have been worshipping the marital goddess (which happens to be a glorification of woman's powerful personality). As a matter of fact, woman is not treated as a subject of serious or even a normal concern. Either she is a



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goddess of power or the weaker sex; in no way is she a normal human existence, endowed with normal powers and demanding normal attention. Questions of minorities, slaves, savages and underdog have been taken up and worked upon. Gradually they ceased to be any questions at all, or their size, at least, was reduced. Question of woman as a weaker, neglected, backward class – still holds its initial shape and size. It seems we have started enjoying woman's existence as a question.

The motto of these novelists is to reveal that the greatest revolutions take place in mind; all revolutions begin here. So we have to change the mindset of our patriarchal society. They always stress that it is not necessary to watch out, to commit adultery, to divorce, to prove a defiance or a rejection of tradition. None of these are modern anyway. Both woman and man have to work a lot to create a balanced atmosphere. Both will have to give space each other's world, then there would not be any need to celebrate woman's day. Certainly, woman will have to work hard to achieve that position which she demands.

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