

CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

7.1 Focus of the Research

This research work surveys feminist issues in the light of the novels of India's most acclaimed contemporary female fictionists Anita Desai and Pratibha Ray. The thesis attempts to identify the key contexts and concerns of Indian feminism, and is an in-depth analysis of the psyche of married women in Indian society. It is a sincere attempt to compare and contrast Anita Desai and Pratibha Ray's approaches to feminism. In the contemporary era a number of female fictionists attempt penetrative insight into the complex issues of feminism and gender parity. The present study revolves round the internal agony, trauma and sufferings of most accomplished, educated and esteemed women in the society. This study highlights how since epical time till contemporary period women become victims of patriarchy, male hegemony and male domination in Indian society.

Both Anita Desai and Pratibha Ray express issues of women with holistic views in their novels. Their women are neither dancing puppets nor mute sculpture but human beings of flesh and blood who have virtues as well as follies. These characters have their own voices and are spokes-persons of women's issues. They even raise their voices for social justice and social development but still stick to their traditional social set up. They never break their tradition, culture or family but they have spirits of revolution in their psyche. They advocate their sensible desire for love, compassion and respect from their counterparts. They demand justice and not pity from society. They seek escape but not at the cost of social disturbance. They self-actualise at the end of the novels and realise the solitariness and infidelity of their lives at the end of their life journey. This thesis attempts to provide a comparative study of the psyche of female protagonists of Anita Desai and Pratibha Ray in the light of feminism. Both the writers have the ability to reveal the very sensitive aspects of human emotions and human relations in general and female sensibility and female emotions in particular. In their novels the emphasis is always on the psyche and psychology of their female protagonists.

Both the novelist enriches Indian literature with a number of novels. It would be quite impossible to analyze each and every novel written by them. In this research work the focus is on Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* and *Fire on the mountain* and Pratibha Ray's *Yajnaseni: The Story of Draupadi* and *Ahalya: A Woman's Eternal Quest for Love*. This research explores the images of Indian women as reflected through the novels of these women novelists. Anita Desai and Pratibha Ray have explored the universe of female subjectivity in Indian context. Both Desai and Ray through their novels help both genders in understanding, respecting and recognizing each other's contribution for smooth featuring of individuality, society and humanity. The characters taken into consideration are traditional in outlook yet rebellious in spirit, they are submissive to their duties yet courageous enough to speak and act for their dignity and identity as women. In this thesis, the observation of female psyche is done with an emphasis on incompatible marriages, emotional negligence from counterparts and patriarchal social set up. The researcher makes a modest endeavour to portray each and every psychic nuance of Indian women through the female characters.

The focus here is to highlight the place and plight of women in the patriarchal social set up. This research analyzes the role of patriarchy towards the social and psychic miseries experienced by women in this subcontinent throughout the ages. The themes of alienation, existence, anxiety, disharmony and rootless-ness are explored through Desai's novel. She has expertise in exploring the troubled sensibility and disturbed psyche of her female protagonists. Pratibha Ray is a master in retelling, reinterpretation and reincarnation of mythical and epical characters. She reconstructs past and makes her epical characters as contemporary. Her major protagonists are women. She observes these well known, epical women characters from feminine angle and represents them from feminine point of view. Anita Desai and Pratibha Ray, are successful in visualising the inner nuances of the psyche of their female protagonists. They present a realistic expression of women's suppression and suffering; their conflicts and constraints and the hallucination and hollowness within women. Both the novelist crusade against the atrocities on women across the Indian subcontinent and make them iconic to the global context.

7.2 Major Findings of the Research

Themes such as agony of existence, woe of endurance, interior turmoil and psychic plight of women recur again and again in the writings of Anita Desai and Pratibha Ray. Both the writers have a revolutionary spirit with which they strive to write on feminism and gender issues. Their major works are the outcome of suppressed desires and long silence of Indian women. They accelerate momentum to Indian fiction through their exploration of unexplored desires and underestimated identity of Indian women. They efficiently balance both tradition and modernity in their fiction. Although at times they become socialistic and humanistic in their tone, still they use a feminine mode of writing. Anita Desai and Pratibha Ray focus on psychological sufferings and identical oppressions of women. They mirror the still unexpressed women psyche in the patriarchal social set up across the world.

A thorough and careful observation of the psyche of the female characters of Anita Desai in *Fire on the Mountain* and *Cry, the Peacock* and Pratibha Ray in the novel *Yagnaseni: The Story of Draupadi* and *Ahalya: A Woman's Eternal Quest for Love* has been done. The characters taken into consideration are being observed in the light of feminism. Basing on this research work the following findings have been drawn:

- Feminism is the essence of writing for both the novelists Anita Desai and Pratibha Ray.
- The stark social realities experienced by women are revealed.
- The need of feminism movement in Indian context is emphasized.
- The spirit of feminism found in the psyche of women characters is highlighted.
- Patriarchal subjugation and male hegemony are focused as the causes of women sufferings and suppressions.
- The consequence of incompatible marriages and emotional negligence in couple life is revealed.
- The compelling male decisions upon women and its aftermaths are brought out.
- Understanding of women's issues from women's point of view is stressed in the novels.
- Exploration of female plight is observed from feminine angle.
- The need of balanced relations and emotions in married life is considered.

- The gender exploitation in the patriarchal social set up is exposed.
- The changing conceptions and perceptions of Indian society with regards to women is explained critically.
- Women's plight in India from Vedic time to contemporary era is focussed.

The researcher would like to wind up the research findings with Margaret Fuller's statement in her book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845):

We would have every path laid open to woman as freely as to man... what woman needs is not as a woman to act or rule, but as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern, as a soul to live freely and unimpeded, to unfold such powers as were given her when we left our common home..Let her work as she will. Let us have one creative energy, one incessant revelation.

(Fuller 331)

7.3 Scope for Further Research

For new innovative research, it would be appropriate to suggest scope for further research in this area. The patriarchal society prevalent in India has jeopardised the mind set up of Indians to such an extent that men consider themselves not only superior to women but also become their living gods in the process of time. Further women are treated as objects and confined to the four walls of their home only. Although society has gone through a number of transformations in the twenty-first century but inequality is still deep rooted and prevalent in our society. Though the modern men accept that women are not only mere spectators or followers but they are good performers, initiators and leaders as well, but still the concept of superiority prevails in the mind of millions not only in India but also across the globe. Although the nation has gone through a number of changes regarding women in many spheres, still a long road has to be crossed to eradicate inequality, discrepancy, humiliation and injustice in the name of gender.

The further research avenues in the area are as follows:

- Feminism and mysticism in Indian context.
- Re-visioning of mythical characters in the light of feminism.
- Ethnography and women's studies.

- Auto ethnography and gender issues.
- Social media as a tool for exploration of feminism.
- Role of social media in eliminating gender inequality.
- Digital feminism as global necessity.
- Black feminism.
- Dalit feminism.
- Tribal feminism in Indian writings.
- Scope for comparative study between Pratibha Ray's *Yagnaseni* and Divakaruni's *Draupadi*.
- Mysticism and Feminism with reference to Indian culture and tradition.
- Feminism in Post-colonial novels.

Works Cited

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