



IMAGE OF WOMEN IN THE NOVELS OF ANITA DESAI

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Abstract

This study proposes to analyses the tragic lives of women in the novels of Anita Desai. Among other things, the writer shows a deep awareness of the influence of old Indian traditions in the delineation of her characters who are caught up in the painful transition from old values and traditions to new values and ideas, and are subject to the stresses and strains natural to such a process.

Keywords- Freedom, Consequently, Strained, Distortions, Profitable, Relationships, Approach.



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INTRODUCTION-

In the present day Indian society, attitudes no doubt are changing fast, and people are, by and large, looking to the west to attain the same kind of individual freedom and dignity as occur there. But the tragedy is that the changes in aspirations and attitudes of individuals are not being backed by corresponding structural changes in society. Consequently, there is imbalance in society and the old and the new concepts are constantly in conflict. This results in strained human relationships and distortions of personalities. This is not an aspect often noticed in the studies of Anita Desai's novels. It will be profitable to approach her novels from this point of view.

HYPOTHESIS-

Anita Desai has been profoundly influenced by feminism.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY-

The research is based on the secondary data collected through various resources like journals, books, and web sites.

OBJECTIVES-

- To analyses the tragic lives of women in the novels of Anita Desai.
- The Principal objective of this research work is to bring out the dynamics of the Women in India and Traditional Social Structure.

In this phase of transition in our society, human beings are playing a double role - one is traditionally oriented and the other is rationally oriented. In India the old cultural ties and the

hold of ancient traditions are so strong that any individual who wants to be directed by his inner-voice stumbles in his progress towards attaining a complete selfhood . That speaks for the process of his growth where the traditional links to the social institutions are so strong that they cannot be broken easily. All these ancient customs and traditions in our society have remained intact enlarge households where the old religious and cultural values were inculcated in the minds and hearts of young people from their childhood. Even when fully grown up, such people could not even think of discovering any reasoning or logic in the old precepts. When we see the characters of Anita Desai against this background, we find the real malady lies in the process of their growth, their past which does not leave them and in their incapacity to develop in to fully adult and mature human beings who can love said in love in return. Though the joint family system in its traditional sense is declining fast, the old mental ethos and loyalty to this age old traditional ideal lingers on in the minds of an average educated Indian today. In order to study the far-reaching impact of this ancient institution, we have to see what this system really means and to what extent it has influenced the social life of an individual and also its characteristics in terms of structure, distribution of functions, social role and the place of the individual in it. And because we are mainly concerned with the position of women in Indian society, we have to go deeper still to understand her role and status in this peculiar social setting. In India the joint family has endured for as long as the records exist. The times of 'Ramayana*' and 'Mahabharata', the joint family system had existed. Manu has also defined the duties of family members in a joint family*. This only goes to prove that this age old institution has deep roots in our ancient society. Even with the advent of Muslims and the British this solid structure of joint family could not be destroyed entirely. With the *Manu has specifically laid down the rules for inheritance and partition in a united family Industrial development of the country and introduction of western concepts and ideology by the British, the joint family system in India came under a lot of pressure and part of it got destroyed as well. But even today we see the traces of this age-old institution and its vitality can be felt in the thinking of Indian people who still have a nostalgia for this system though many of them have setup their nuclear families on the western model An ideal picture of the traditional joint Hindu family has been precisely drawn by Irawatl Karve -

A joint family is a group of people who generally live under one roof who eat food cooked at one kitchen, who hold property in common, participate in common family worship and are related to one another as some particular type of kindred. Apart from this, the joint family also included such characteristics as domination by the elders who fielded absolute authority, common income as well as property and mutual rights and obligations# In the traditional

large joint family, there used to be one male head, whose decision and word was respected and obeyed without protest by the rest of the family. For all practical purposes, he used to be the representative of the males of the family in the administration of family property, social obligations and other matters pertaining to the discipline within the family. The roles and duties of others were only in the direction of aiding the male head and in maintaining family honor and peace. Any deviation from this set code was dubbed as indiscipline and rebellion which called for punishment. Roles and functions *were* distributed among the family members according to their age, status and capabilities.

Thus, in all the protagonists of Anita Desai's novels, we find powerful sub-conscious traces of ancient tradition. Indian traditions have a deep root in the old mythology and in order to understand the old heritage upon which we rest till today, we have to consider the mythology and the not in propagated through our epics and scripture. Further, we may undertake a rapid survey of the gradual changes leading to the present age. Only such a perspective will enable us to understand the social roots of dilemmas and problems that appear highly individualistic and introspective.

In the battle, the Peacock (1963) the individuality crisis of the character Maya, bases from various interconnected elements. She's an enthusiastic and sensitive young lady married to her lawyer father's dependant Gautama who is a practical tending individual, came off from emotions, she is completely different to him. Maya needs a beloved spouse with broad understandings, extremely conscious, creative and susceptible disposition which Gautama lacks. She is from an orthodox Brahmin family which trusts in astrology and added prophetic lines of Brahmin order. But then, Gautama's family comprises the intellectual face of living. Her sadness is, yet, much a product of her own awareness and her unfitness to outgrow her romantic and secure childhood as well the divination of the Albino priest. She's not able to face the trivial truths of living.

One more character reference in the novel is Maya's friend Leila who's married a tubercular man opposing their parents' wishes. She married a man even when she was aware of his disease. Her mental attitude towards life is fatalistic. The novel concludes with the death of Maya. The mental retrogression proposes that Maya was not been able to adapt herself in the world of fact and after killing her husband, she mentally gets back of her secure and spoiled childhood. So in the role of Maya, Anita Desai has showed the feminine mind of both a girl and a woman. The issue of female, a hot subject in feminism, is addressed by Anita Desai with sensitiveness. In their research for a feel of accomplishment, women remain to trust on the family. When it gets broad thereto the family can't meet their sentimental

sacred vacuum, they decide to withdraw. Withdrawal turns a symptom of Maya. To examine the quandary of Maya, it is crucial to project her life as organized among her father's home and her husband's. Equally the positions turn as a mirror image of her, an enchanting figure-nurtured by the esteems of her family, she as well turns a menace to that actual home. By Maya's role, Anita Desai carries a new aspect of feminist publishing. Maya stands separate from every female character in the novel. She's the most exciting and psychologically amazing amongst whole Desai's female characters. She stages a sort of women who silently abide from the men. Her activities and responses could not forever get one's fellow feeling and shall be dismissed as the worthless ideas of a princely mind. Her abiding is as well rich tolerating but the needs of the social shifts put forward by the novelist cannot be neglected. The way of surviving out from the paternal family, the mother surviving off the kids and the expanding busy living, are a few fractions of modifying practices. The novelist has therefore spot lit the feminine predicament in several prospects. She stands out, especially in expanding the unfortunate status of extremely sensible and passionate women punished by negligence and aloneness. For sure the novel is around Maya simply all the secondary roles like Nila, Pom, Leila, the mother etc. Add to the poly timbered articulation of the women and the problems associated. Anita Desai just not entirely researches and presents the feminine psych of a common woman merely as well the abnormal bounding on abnormal women. These are the women who due to several elements are in so sure of mental tension that they can't be addressed foolish on the other hand for sure it is not. She is incapable to face the common truths.

Almost in all novels of the Anita Desai, she has always tried to convey the inner urges of her female protagonists through her writing and depiction of situation in a proper way that has echoed to all. These things have helped her to peep into the inner world of the women and delineated their reality in totality. She has always acted in her own way and attempted to express the feminism in her own way. She has contributed to the India with the feminist concern; the most important thing about her is the way of expression. Her all novels revolve around men and women of exception, incompatible couples and have always tried to explore the feminism in varied ways She has always covered the women of all age group and all types like children, old, intellectual, dull etc. in her writings which has made her one of the great feminist of the times. Before independence the women were not given the equal status and were getting exploited. But after the independence and introduction of women liberation movement which led to the rise of new women with her own choice, taste and preference and breakage of bands started that had bounded the women and devalued her. Most of the women

who are educated grow under self-conflict in terms of marriage, traditional roles. The writers of the post-independence have attempted to show the educated women in the present scenario where women socio-economic conditions have totally changed and they are now revolting against their rights and exploitations. They are now showing better marriage lives and even follow the traditional as well as modern roles in their lives.

An attempt had been made to study the portraits of contemporary Indian women to be found in the novels of Anita Desai. Considering the condition of women against their social and cultural background which determines their roles in society, and the beliefs, attitudes, myths accompanying such roles. The Researcher have tried to show that these women as still deeply entangled in tradition, despite having won a measure of economic independence and an advanced education. Anita Desai shows a deep insight into the innermost recesses of her different women characters, including those who live on an emotional plane and those who have acquired an intellectual outlook. Her women characters bear the mark of the contemporary society which is still struggling between the old and new value systems.

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