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Women Empowerment in Indian English Literature

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Abstract

"Empowerment" refers to the process of giving someone the authority, right, and power to perform certain jobs and responsibilities. In order for women to have an equal part in society, they must be made more conscious of and vigilant about their rights and responsibilities. In Indian society, women are not treated equally; instead, they are mistreated, misbehaving, and viewed as inferior to males in some spheres of life. Empowerment also refers to women's freedom of mind, spirit, thoughts, and ideas. Women are equal living beings with men, not inferior to them. Indian literature serves as an example of women's emancipation. This paper aims to explore women empowerment in Indian English Literature. Several female authors have contributed literary works. They portray a world of affluent women. They have placed a high value on the study of sociocultural uniqueness and deeply insensitive women. They depict contemporary Indian women who are conscious of their fundamental wants and issues. They categorise the ladies because they might strive to free themselves from the constraints of customary servitude. The paper explores the changes in the society with special reference to Indian female writers in India.

Keywords: Self-identity, Women empowerment, sustainable development

Introduction

If all Men are born free, how is it that all women are born slaves? -Mary Astell.

A woman can assert her rights since she is a human being with the right to happiness. It is true that she has grown psychologically and become capable of being self-sufficient as a result of societal and technological advancements. She is prepared to assume more responsibility, whether it be financial or political. Women's status relates to their place in the social hierarchy, the responsibilities placed on them, and the privileges granted to them. She doesn't think the outside world is a secure place.

The concept of women's empowerment

In the past few decades, social science research and the study of The concept of women's empowerment has received a lot of attention in public policy. very complicated and hotly contested subject. However, it is widely accepted that the idea of In the context of women, empowerment can be defined as a relationship between women and society that is founded on the principles of equality, freedom, and rights despite its complexity and philosophical differences. in relation to this theme. In essence, empowering a woman involves respecting her as a complete human being. It's all about enabling a woman to assert her humanity. Empowered women will have more choices and be able to bargain for better conditions so they may participate in decisions that impact them. The notion of and endeavours. Concerning women's empowerment, efforts are made to attain fairness in both the domestic and global social and economic systems. Obstacles to Women's Empowerment: Despite decades of awareness of women's empowerment and efforts by governments and campaigners, women are still unable to significantly contribute to decision-making processes in many nations. As a result, efforts to promote justice and gender equality still need to pick up momentum. Essentially, a woman needs to be freed from what may be called "dependence syndrome."

Literature's Contribution to Women's Empowerment

According to the author, empowerment is the ability to perform and accomplish one's own aims. The individual is the main focus of this empowerment concept.

Other writers take a somewhat more focused method that takes into account the rules and conventions of the institutional, social, or political frameworks in which the players make and follow their decisions. Various authors like Shashi Deshpande and Charlotte Bronte, Virginia Woolf, Tony Morrison, Margaret Atwood, and many others, wrote on the freedom and empowerment of women's lives. They also supported the empowerment movement, made recommendations to society, and attempted to alter people's perceptions of women. The empowerment of women has been the subject of numerous novels, short tales, satires, and poetry. But as here we are talking about Indian Writing in English, so we will talk about two famous female writers of Indian English Literature- Shashi Deshpande and Charlotte Bronte.

Both of them are well-known female authors in English literature. They gave examples of powerful, fearless, and courageous female heroines who, on their own, set the standard for self-identification. These female heroines face all of life's challenges, conflicts, and hardships while ever giving in. Renowned author Shashi Deshpande has a profound understanding of women's consciousness. With her constant focus on the family, she exposes the antiquated roles of women. Her book portrays the patriarchal society and the predicament of contemporary women. She presented current social realities that women encounter in society. In addition to fulfilling their obligations as moms, wives, and sisters, her female characters' rebel against the traditional, male-dominated world. She talks about ideal women who make sacrifices, are patient, devoted, and endure quiet agony.

A unique component of contemporary literary and intellectual conversation is feminism. The numerous novels written by Shashi Deshpande only reflect it. She has stated that the primary focus of her fiction is Indian culture. The author looked into the predicament of Indian women and noted the challenges faced by women in today's culture. She fights for women's liberation from the conventional world. She thought about women's silence in society. She is adamant about raising awareness of the oppression of women in patriarchal societies.

In previous years, Shashi Deshpande has been seen as a second-class citizen. She gained notoriety for bringing attention to women's issues. In societies, women are controlled and marginalised. A few opportunities are given for their well-being. A mother is struggling for the wellbeing of her children, husband and family. However, men treat women differently when it comes to equal treatment. Men shaped the perception of women. Shashi Deshpande has put a lot of effort into establishing a bond between a man and a woman. A woman in a suppressed state is one who has been sheltered by her parents, husband, or children. After marriage, an unmarried woman becomes her husband's property. She was required to follow her husband's instructions.

She has played the part of a quiet, chaste, obedient, charming, gentle, and subservient woman. The author has made audacious attempts to give voice to women's concerns and disappointments. The woman is now acutely aware of the prejudice she faces. She does not think that women should be submissive and docile because they are flawed. In every way, the woman is content with herself. Women merely need to feel secure in themselves. The absence of harmony among women is the largest obstacle to their

empowerment. In the patriarchal system, Indian women are thinking about themselves and their sociocultural replacement. A woman is gradually moving closer to her path of liberation.

A new generation of women emerged

She focusses on the issue of her sexual confusion and lack of significance in conventional society. She is aware that the confinement of marriage has set up a series of traps in her life. In her publications, she has made every attempt to shed light on the perceptions of women. She has provided fresh length to the field of feminism in society. She attempts to address the underlying causes of a number of societal problems. Crosscurrents of traditional beliefs can be seen in Indian society.

Sarita's quest for identification and her demand for equal opportunities with her brother and husband are depicted in Shashi Deshpande's first book, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980). It tells the tale of Saru, who is entranced by her desire to succeed at all costs and feels like an enthralled animal. She must locate someone who will look out for her. She realizes how pointless her search was after hearing her mother's remarks about the Mahabharata's war's conclusion. The protagonist of the book is Sarita. Even as a young child, she was conscious of her gender. She has a strained relationship with her spouse and a loveless one with her parents. She starts looking for herself as a result. At the start of the book, Saru returns to her parents' house after a fifteen-year absence. She made a self-promise to never return. She does, however, endure horrendous harassment in her marriage. She returns to seek her parents for assistance, but they refuse. She has the chance to consider her connections with her departed brother Dhruva, parents, husband, and children. Saru's relationship with her brother has been emphasized. Her brother Dhruva treats her disrespectfully and ignores her. She is not loved by her parents. She is not respected in the family. In summary, the ladies portrayed by Shashi Deshpande in the stories mentioned above adjust to the life that is surrounded. Her women's belief in the eradication of their male counterparts due to their ease of mobility is a concern. However, their individuality is suppressed in exchange for their life's stability. Her tales imply that the typical Indian middle-class woman's existence is marked by compromise. As a result, the inclination towards self-withdrawal develops. Nonetheless, the author is in favor of overcoming polarization and achieving the new "human wholeness." In actuality, the Victorian era was characterized by disagreement, discussion, and debate. These discussions focused on nationalism, democracy, individualism, and women's education. In reality, religious instruction in a national educational system was hotly contested, and education became a general concern. The prevailing attitude of the time was deliberately moralistic. Because of this, a novelist like Bronte highlights through Jane Eyre's actions that characteristics like sincerity, purity, and respect for male-female relationships have a unique place in life. The story of Jane Eyre, an orphan girl who is exploited, persecuted, and victimized by both her surroundings and society, is a passionate and spiritually uplifting account of the hurricane passion of love and frustration. Because Jane falls in love with Mr. Rochester, who is more than twice her age, the romance is unusual. The issue of elemental love and spiritual enlightenment is therefore powerfully explored and

expressed feministically in these novels in a way that illustrates each character's identity, career, and development in the face of challenges, humiliations, and sufferings. In summary, the ladies portrayed by Charlotte Bronte and Shashi Deshpande in the aforementioned works adjust to the cyclic existence.

Conclusion

The following are some ways that literature can serve as a platform for women's empowerment:

1. The essence of human existence is expression. Since sharing and expressing oneself brings happiness, catharsis, and clarity, one always wants to do so. One of the best methods to learn about the socio psychological world of women and what society expects of them is through literary expression. Women's writing serves as a vehicle for their subtle release from both internal and external limitations. Writing aids authors in solidifying their identities. Women's intentional reading would broaden their consciousness and enhance and change the intellectual and spiritual spheres of their lives.
2. Women can use writing as a quiet but effective kind of advocacy. It might give students a chance to consider gender and sexuality issues critically within the framework of social and interpersonal relationships. Women can share their opinions, aspirations, and identities with a larger society through writing.
3. Women's experiences in a historical, psychological, and social context are explored through literature. Such investigation would present us with a different reality than the one we currently inhabit and challenge us to discover the irony and complexity of human feeling. In this way, literature will empower women by providing fresh perspectives on their advancement.
4. The style and content of masculine and feminine compositions should differ. Women's literature aids in our comprehension of how men's and women's conventional and contemporary roles are socially constructed, as well as the reactions to these roles and the tensions they cause. Policies and initiatives aimed at empowering women in the real world can be based on this idea.
5. Gendered realities typically influence women's experiences. Their usual socio-psychological and economic circumstances are reflected in their literature. In order to find micro realities and circumstances that are not represented in the macro concepts related to women's empowerment, literature representing these unique conditions would be helpful.

Literature is a powerful tool for both speaking to and listening to a woman's inner world because of its intimate link to her identity and empowerment. An important step towards women's empowerment through the writings of female Indian English writers is creating institutions and locations where these voices are heard and nurtured. Women's power and the general well-being of society would be profoundly impacted by opening and encouraging access, creation, identification, interpretation, and transmission of writing for, by, and of women.

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