

NATION AS MOTHERLAND: DECONSTRUCTING THE IMAGE OF “BHARAT MATA”

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ABSTRACT

The practice of representing nation-state through the metaphor of the mother is a patriarchal ploy of exploitation and subjugation that perpetuates its function by confining women to gender stereotypes. In the Indian nationalist discourse, the evocation of the image of “Bharat Mata”, though usually upheld as an instrument of cultural triumph, leads to similar sorts of exploitation. Glorifying the sacrificial attributes of mother, such analogy reinforces the gender stereotype that proposes to delimit women only up to the task of reproduction and nurture and denies all other forms of existence. Through an analysis of the evolution of the image of “Bharat Mata” over the course of the Indian nationalist struggle and post-Independence politics, the research article will make an attempt to assess the significance and implications of the mother-nation analogy from a feminist perspective.

KEYWORDS: *Nation, Motherhood, “Bharat Mata”, Gender Role, Gender Stereotype*