

AUTOBIOGRAPHY, A PATHWAY TO NEW VISTAS OF KNOWLEDGE

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ABSTRACT

The autobiographical genre opened up new vistas of knowledge for women writers and got the new-fangled significance. Women's life narratives/histories, a generic term for women's autobiographies, memoirs and testimonies, hagiographies have emerged as a genre. Through these narratives, they depict the 'I' with a focus on the individual notion of a private self in addition to revealing a split between public and private self-representations. It is a very positive medium and it reveals their minds. They are proud to be born as women and are concerned with articulating what womanhood means. Thus, women's autobiographies deal with the expressive turbulence of women and their associations in the social set up. Nevertheless twentieth century came a set of women writers exhibiting extraordinarily intellectual and distinctive personalities like Amrita Pritam, Kamala Das, Mrinal Pande, Dilip Tiwana, Saranjeet Shan, Shobha De, Vijayalaxmi Pandit, Krishna Hutheesing and Nayantara Sahgal and Taslima Nasrin, arrived on the literary scene who were no longer passive docile, submissive 'Sita' or Gandari 'Savitri' but absolutely dashing and bold. They were innovative in their techniques of writing also. Here are the five women autobiographers who have subverted the marginal position and have acquired an independent position in the patriarchal Indian society. They represent their collective persona and individual selves in society. The women are victims of the tenets of patriarchal society, yet they fight their ways through it, to emerge as worthy individuals.

KEYWORDS: *Feminism, Patriarchal Society, Protest, Feminine Identity, Violation*

INTRODUCTION

Women are the injured party of the male subjugated stagnant society. Issues of women at a standstill remain unaddressed. A number of writers endeavor to spotlight on the icon of women in the course of literature. But, distinct to other women writers, the vocal message of literature unchains woman writers to hop above the hurdles and curtailments, endorsed by the male world. It is interesting to study, how these ceaseless uneven supremacy relations between men and women are protested, argued, revolted, changed and justified by women writers in their autobiographies. Amrita Pritam, Kamala Das, Mrinal Pande, Shobha De, and Taslima Nasrin, go in opposition to society to find their own independent existence who were rational, valor, debonair in their techniques of writing in their autobiographies. These women are victims of the tenets of patriarchal society, yet they fight their ways through it, to emerge as worthy individuals. The autobiographies from Sunity Devee's, 'The autobiography of Indian Princess', (1921) Mrinal Pande's 'Daughter's Daughter' (1993) and Taslima Nasrin's 'My Girlhood Days' express the inner search of women with women's

point of view. Until the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, women autobiographies lacked an authoritative voice to speak. They could speak only of family or religion. In the later part of the twentieth century, we find autobiographies of Amrita Pritam (*The Revenue Stamp*), Kamala Das (*My story*), and Shobha De (*Selective Memory*). As well as the other modern women, writers like Dilip Tiwana, Saranjeet Shan, Mrinal Pandey and Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin. They have boldly expressed the social inhibitions and cultural taboos laid down by the society. Their autobiographies have a tone of truth and fidelity. Women writers like Vijayalaxmi Pandit, Krishna Hutheesing and Nayantara Sahgal have written their autobiographies about the Indian struggle for freedom. Hence, their autobiographies have political learning's too. The autobiography depicts the hidden form of inwardness 'and the writer has to establish the portrait of the self in the public eye. One has to consider whether a woman reveals her unique self-indulges in self – exploration

The writer's attitudes to the entire problem of female self-hood are expressed implicitly or explicitly in the course of their text. These writers 'evolution of re-defining is such a wide-ranging one, focusing on the most major aspect of women's subsistence and are affianced in the imperative task of formulating a new awareness concerning women in our rapidly altering environment. Thus, one observes that the feminist concerns of these women writers have experienced a huge change and they have expressed a growing awareness of patriarchy and its demands on women and the desire to move from tradition to modernity. They have used varied autobiographical forms of expression to engage with hitherto unexplored questions of 'sexuality' and 'selfhood' which are relevant to women in contemporary times. At the same time, the tone of the writings of these women has changed from mild self-castigating introspective to the more overt and strident denouncement of the oppressive hegemonic tactics to subdue women. This change has in turn, helped them to emerge as progressive and enlightened thinkers, writers and feminists. Thus, these women writers through their very act of writings are constantly pushing the boundaries of autobiographical narration and are challenging the limitations imposed on them by tyrannical social structures.

As a study of modern-day fictional voices, the autobiographies by women are momentous for the assertion of the female mind, of the feminine individuality and its meticulous way of reaction and thoughts. Autobiography as a genre becomes an apparatus for these writers, as they have taken the initiative of autobiography writing to make a distinction of the 'self' in competition and the strength of mind to grasp on their motivating convictions and morality as they were in search of peace, solitude and tranquillity. They had the dignity, the grace, the refinement and poise in their writing the truth. Even though the five autobiographies have different dates of their publication, the experience these five women writers record is around twentieth century, amidst all the barriers they faced in their career and in their writings, they stand out from the rest of the other writers of India, who stormed into the male bastion to establish and consolidate their position in their bold writings.

The process of releasing and thereby providing relief from strong or repressed emotions is termed as 'Catharsis'. It is copied from the Greek word "catharsis" which connotes "decontamination" or "cleansing to wash out". It is the modification and purgation of emotions that mark in renewal and re-establishment of the psychological and the moving cadaver to please their thrust for self-distinctiveness, self-contention and self-display by script autobiography. Most of the time, all deepest hurts and pains are hidden in a secluded corner of one's heart, which no one is allowed to access. These memories never see the light of the day, some keep mounting and some are healed with time, with or without scars. Writing an autobiography gives an opportunity to relive the past. It could be a means to acknowledge, erase painful

memories and forgive all the people who were directly or indirectly responsible for it. It is like healing at the emotional level which no medical system or therapy has the capability to do. Women have always been and continue to remain at the receiving end, irrespective of caste, creed or economic status. In the recent past, women have started giving voice to their emotions. This works well for women writers who otherwise do not get a chance to vent out their feelings because of social or family pressure. Thus, writing an autobiography is about wearing one's past as an armor and a crown, acknowledging its role in being instrumental in shaping one's present self and also carrying it forward in the future as an eternal reminder of, where we belong. Autobiography has helped these authors to reveal themselves and uncover the truth of feminine dreams of love and fervor positively and transparently.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

It is healing at the emotional level which can provide better insights into life and transform it too. My study takes me to the conclusion that deeper in the rank of women's authors' autobiographies go through the incomprehensible secrets of their lives, deliberately or involuntarily their personal experiences that get mingled with the expression of their writings. They broke their silence and emerged out with all their inner feelings without thinking of their societal images. They expressed fully their poignant condition by taking the assistance of words. They portrayed the predicament of Indian women through their protagonists intentionally or unintentionally through their own perspective.

Progressing gradually towards a positive path, women started to achieve additional social rights and more freedom, due to which some significant changes can be witnessed in the last two centuries, pertaining to the woman's writings. In the First and Second Wave of Feminism, women fought to be treated with a democratic base compared to men's human rights. At present in the twenty-first century, the question of identity still remains uncertain. All the women writers who have been mentioned, show signs of keen supervision and brilliant vulnerability of responsive close by into subsistence, and put forward their rough points in writing their autobiographies. These writers from emotional viewpoint are extremely and considerably active and energetic to women's tight spot in a patriarchal communal instruct. Their autobiographies are creative exercises in self-exposure as they grip the array of subjects such as gender bias, premature wedding, and refutation of good schooling, matrimonial rape, and split-up, minor place in the culture. These writers have moved ahead of their times, which can be considered as a mammoth gift which helps in creating alertness for the existing women all over the globe. These writers decline gender stereotyping entirety and re-define them after total analysis. Challenging gender stereotypes through their writings, they lead the reader to re-think of the conventional illustration of feminine personality and individuality. These writers help in the vital assignment of deconstructing, re-defining the sexual category archetypes that her culture has created for centuries. Symbolizing varied forms of woman roles, female dilemma and women's subsistence, these writers are engaged in the task of formulating a new consciousness regarding women in our rapidly –changing environment.

CONCLUSIONS

Autobiography by its very nature brings to us an increasing awareness of the nature of our own selves and our share in the human condition. It appeals to us not only because of the excitement of recorded gossip, information, whispers but also because it helps to find an order and meaning in life that is not always to be found in the experience itself. A genuine autobiography is both an essay on truth and an experience in being, thus combining the most significant features' of philosophy, psychology and history. Many of the literary writers advocate activism as a part of their writing,

since they believe that writing has a social purpose, it is only through art and activism that a radical change can take place for the good of the society. Consequently, Amrita Pritam, Kamala Das, Mrinal Pande, Dilip Tiwana, Saranjeet Shan, Shobhaa De, Vijayalaxmi Pandit, Krishna Hutheesing and Nayantara Sahgal and Taslima Nasrin broke the gender stereotypes by writing bold and in an assertive manner. Thus we find that a deeper revision of women's autobiographies untangles the concealed recesses of feminine psyche and awareness of Indian and Bangladesh society.

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