

AUTOBIOGRAPHY, A PATHWAY TO NEW VISTAS OF KNOWLEDGE

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Received: 08 May 2018

Accepted: 17 May 2018

Published: 23 May 2018

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, Shobhaa 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*