

## INDIAN WOMEN WRITING IN ENGLISH

*M. Maheswaran<sup>1</sup> & Rajaambedhkar<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>*Research Scholar, Department of English, K L University, Andhra Pradesh, India*

<sup>2</sup>*Associate Professor, Department of English, K L University, Andhra Pradesh, India*

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### ABSTRACT

*Indian women writers both novelists and poets, based in the USA and Britain. Some like Jhabvala and Anita Desai are late immigrants while others, like Jhumpa Lahiri belongs to the second generation of Indians abroad. Most expatriate writers have a weak grasp of actual conditions in contemporary India. Writing about the lives of women, the most successful of the Indian women writers is Jhumpa Lahiri who created the difference among all the Indian women writers. However, Lahiri is honest and authentic to her experiences. Lahiri is an Indian by ancestry, British by birth, American by immigration. Anita Desai is the best known of the contemporary women writers. She has achieved tremendous amount of popularity through her writings. She depicts the Indian middle class mentality in all her novels. Her protagonist emerges from cultural rootedness in middle class Indian Society. Arundhati Roy is the luminary among the contemporary women writers. She is one of the women writers who wrote about the plights of the downtrodden and the suppression of women in a male dominated world. However, Bharati Mukherjee recaptures history in the most aesthetic sense. She continues writing about the immigrant experience in the most of her stories like in *The Middle Man and Other Stories*, a collection of short stories, which won her the National Book Critics Circle Award. Gita Mehta is also another woman writer who proclaimed about the problems of human life.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Expatriate, Realism, Crusade, Indisputably, Psychological, Haunting Exploration, Brutalization, Depicted, Perspective, Comprehensive, Predicaments*

### INTRODUCTION

There are many the USA and Britain based Indian women writers both novelists and poets. Some like Jhabvala and Anita Desai are late immigrants while others like Jhumpa Lahiri belongs to the second generation of Indians abroad. These expatriate writers does not have much grasp over the actual conditions of contemporary India. Indian immigrants like Sunithi Nam Joshi, Chitra Benerji, Divakarvas and Bharathi Mukherjee are the oldest, and naturally, the most productive. Many writers like Jumpha Lahari, Manju Kapoor, Kiran Desai, and Arundhathi Roy too have written novels of Magic Realism and Social Realism, and National and International award winning Regional fictions. They studied the human relationships, as the present problem is concerned with mind and heart and the campaign is against age-old established systems. In order to bring about some smooth and really meaningful changes, the women writers have taken this great task.

## Explanations

The most successful of the Indian women writers is Jhumpa Lahiri, who created the difference among all the Indian women writers. She writes about the lives of women and she is a brilliant storyteller and has a distinctive voice. Unlike other Indian writers she writes in English. Most the Indian fiction writers of the first generation are born and brought up in India. But Jhumpa Lahiri's connection with India is through her parents and grandparents. In her imagination India would appear sometimes full of wonders, sometimes full of beggars. The comments of the writers who live outside, on the economic, social and political scenario may very often be exaggerating. However, Lahiri is an honest and authentic by her experiences, her ancestors were Indians. But Lahiri was Born in Britain and then later migrated to America. She deliberately portrays the Indian American life to target the western audience. She also admits, "I learnt to observe things as an outsider and yet I knew that as how different Calcutta is from Rhode Island, I belonged there in some fundamental way, in the way, I didn't seem to belong in the U.S." (The Times of India, 13 April 2000). This sense of freedom is one of the greatest thrills of writing fiction for her and she discovered her authorial freedom when she published her debut book i.e. Interpreter of Maladies (1999) her debut anthology is collected stories that deal with the question of identity. One of her famous novel The Namesake (2003) is about the life in United States moreover it is a story of those Indian immigrants and their children in the United States. For instance, even though she is much more American she had inherited a sense of exile from her parents. And so she planned to write about her roots and origin after she completed her Ph.D. in Renaissance studies from Boston University. Anita Desai is the best known of all the contemporary women writers. She is certainly one of the most popular and powerful novelist among the contemporary novelists. She has made admirable contribution to the Indian English fiction. She is a novelist of urban environment and is a fine mixture of Indian European and American sensibilities. She is also a psychological novelist and claims that her novels are not reflection of Indian society or character. Unlike Mulk Raj Anand, she does not reflect on social issues in her works. She sees social realities from a psychological angle and does not look at them as a social friendly statement of the inner world of her characters. Most of her work is a weird self exploration. In 1988 she published her last novel Baumgartner's Bombay, was written at Griton College, Cambridge.. After that she has not published any novel as yet. Due to her double sensibility, her novels had an objective effect. Her experiences with different people and places have improved her writing.

Moreover, the same is true with Nayantara Sahgal, whose last novel, 'Plans for Departure' published at the turn of the decade got her the Sahitya Academy Award. The most famous feminist novelist, Shashi Desh Pande depicts the plight of a successful woman and the problems of being a woman. Her contributions are eight novels, six collections of short stories and four children's books. In her popular novel 'The Dark Holds No Terror' (1980) portrayed the life of a woman who is married to a doctor and becomes a victim of brutalization. She developed courage and perseverance within herself to break loose society's traditional norms to gain her individuality and freedom. Through her writings she gained tremendous amount of popularity. She depicts the Indian middle class mentality in all her novels.

Desh Pande generally has the heroine as the narrator and employs a kind of stream - of - consciousness technique. In another novel 'Roots & Shadows' (1983) the story revolves around another rebellious woman who refuses to live a traditional family life and escapes to the city to find a job for her. Later she marries a man of her choice. Her writings are women-oriented, she cannot be called a feminist, as she constantly rebates with the feminist identity. She simple portrays, in depth the meaning of being a woman in modern India. Shashi Desh Pande's novel 'That Long Silence' (1988) is considered as her popular novel through which she emerged as a major novelist, also this novel won her

the Sahitya Academy Award for 1990, this story is about an Indian housewife Jaya, an upper-middle class house wife who maintained her silence in Bombay throughout her life in the face of hardships. The lack of depth in a woman's life is clearly depicted in this novel. Manju Kapoor is also a famous writer who sets the sequence between tradition and modernity. Her first novel 'Difficult Daughters' (1998), it was awarded Commonwealth Writers.

In the same way, Bharathi Mukherjee is a famous Indian American writer of the recent times. Her novels 'Wife', 'Jasmine', 'The Holder of the World', 'Leave It to Me', and 'Desirable Daughters' are all bold attempts to rewrite the origin of America's history in the wake of wider American experience. For example, in her second novel 'Wife' (1975), she talks about a woman named Dimple, an ideal Bengali wife, who was suppressed by men, murders her husband out of fear and personal instability. Another best novel 'Jasmine' (1989) is a combination of east and west with a story of a young Hindu woman who leaves India for the U.S as an illegal immigrant, after her husband's murder. 'The Holder of the world' (1993), her fourth novel, attempts to simultaneously incorporate travelogue and ancient history. This novel portrays the theme of transformation and migration, with a difference. Her fifth novel 'Leave it to Me' (1997) is completely American. The only Indian touch is the curtain-raiser, which retells the mythological story of the goddess, who killed the Buffalo Demon. This book is about bloodshed and violence. Her sixth and last novel 'Desirable Daughters' (2002) which acts as a bridge between transformation and migration and piles up meticulous details.

However, Bharathi Mukherjee recaptures history in the most aesthetic sense. She writes about the immigrant experience in most of her stories like in "'The Middle Man' and 'Other Stories', a collection of short stories for which she won the National Book Critics Circle Award.

Gita Mehta is also a writer who proclaimed about the problems of the contemporary immigrant women with amazing standards. Her books 'Snakes and Ladders' and 'Glimpses of Modern India' written in the year 1997 was widely read particularly by those unfamiliar with India. She said that her intention was "to make modern India accessible to westerns and to a whole generation who have no idea what happened before they were born" (24) (An Interview with C.J.S. Wallia). Gita Mehta's first novel is 'Raj' (1989) which is a very powerful, enlightening and one of the great historical novels. This novel depicts the story of Maharani Jaya Singh and India's struggle for independence. However, Mehta's unique nature is to collect the richness of living and the exotic curiosity that gives her a smart ability to define her vision for India by her novels. Arundhati Roy is one of the most famous among the contemporary women writers. She brought to light the plight of the downtrodden and the suppression of women by the male dominated society and the influence of the marxism on the lives of the downtrodden through her novels. Arundhati Roy emerged as a guide to the Indian women writers, when the other women writers maintained their reservations in offering a critical assessment of Indian politics. Her novel 'The God of small things' (1997) got overwhelming reception which put her in the forefront of all the other writers. With this single publication she could gain a place equal to that of Salman Rushdie and others. Moreover, she has surpassed Vikram Seth's 'A Suitable Boy'. Her novel characters were all entirely imaginary, with no factual correspondence to real life. Arundhati Roy mentions about the Veteran Marxist E.M.S Namboodiripad by name and proceeds to invent fictions about him, which led to widespread protest in Kerala, the state where he headed the first elected communist Government. It is an in-depth protest novel, which clearly picturizes the atrocities against the helpless, children, women and untouchables. Arundhati Roy is the only novelist who constantly writes about social problems, although she being an activist. Her monograph, 'The Greater Common Good' (1999) reveals the truth about the

Narmada Project. The book also shows her talent as an essayist and social reformer. Her earlier essay 'The End of Imagination' (1998) which urged nuclear disarmament. She is the winner of Booker Prize.

## CONCLUSIONS

Indian women writers in English reflects the truth of Indian reality and bear numerous responsibilities in the world. Their major works have fetched them immense attention and popularity across the globe and also have invited a great amount of criticism especially on feminism. They have created a wide readership and a strong critical endorsement that reflect the attention of academicians and scholars. All the post-colonial and postmodern dilemmas are wrestled to demonstrate a high level of self-consciousness, which continue to interrogate the social, philosophical, cultural issues of rape and sexual harassment of innocent women in the Indian society. Their works have initiated the emergence of critique of feminism with nationalism. Their intellectual insights, conceptual, theoretical and textual experiments have engaged and interpreted the complex colonial and postcolonial situations.

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