

Patriarchy And Gender Bias In Indian English Literature

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Introduction:

For the survival of universe nature has created a woman. According to the ancient religious literature in India, man and woman are the child of Lord Brahma, the Creator of universe. God made man strong and defender while woman is made beautiful, delicate and tender. It means in creation of both men and women are distinguished on their capabilities. Even though in their role they are different from each other their importance is equal. We know Indian Goddesses Mahishasur Mardini, Goddess Durga killed demon like Mahishasur and Chand Munda respectively. While Lakshmi and Saraswati are Goddesses of wealth and knowledge. This shows in our mythology women are no more weaker than man. Still the question remains why women become the victim of exploitation, discrimination in the society.

In the course of time, the conditions are changed. Women become more weak. Their status in society undergone a big change. The Goddess of ancient times now became an object of exploitation by male dominated society. Though they are admired for their progress in various fields in the present era. We never missed to consider them inferior to man and treat them like slave or a servant our day to day life.

Gender discrimination: According to Wikipedia

Gender inequality acknowledges that [men](#) and [women](#) are not equal and that [gender](#) affects an individual's living experience. These differences arise from distinctions in biology, psychology, and cultural norms. Some of these distinctions are empirically grounded while others appear to be socially constructed. Studies show the different lived experience of genders across many domains including education, life expectancy, personality, interests, family life, careers, and political affiliations. Gender inequality is experienced differently across different cultures. Gender inequality is theorized to be necessary for the survival of the species. Gender inequality is caused by biological and psychological factors. Biological differences include [chromosomes](#) and [hormonal](#) differences. There is a natural difference also in the relative physical strengths of the sexes. Psychological factors is men are Men are significantly more likely to take risks than women. Men are also more likely than women to be aggressive, a trait influenced by prenatal and possibly current [androgen](#) exposure From birth males and females are raised differently and experienced different environments throughout their lives. In the eyes of society, gender has a huge role to play in many major milestones or characteristics in life; like personality. Males and females are led on different paths due to the influences of [gender role expectations](#) and [gender role stereotypes](#) before they are able to choose their own. The colour blue is most commonly associated with boys and they get toys like monster trucks or more sport

related things to play with from the time that they are babies. Girls are more commonly introduced to the colour pink, dolls, dresses, and playing house where they are taking care of the dolls as if they were children. The norm of blue is for boys and pink is for girls is cultural and has not always historically been around. These paths set by parents or other adult figures in the child's life set them on certain paths. This leads to a difference in personality, career paths, or relationships. Throughout life, males and females are seen as two very different species who have very different personalities and should stay on separate paths.

English Encyclopedia mentions gender is, "Social expectations about behaviour regarded as appropriate for the member of each sex. Gender does not refer to the physical attributes in terms of which men and women differ, but to socially formed traits of masculinity and femininity." In short, sex is natural characteristic of human being and gender is a man made concept. However when we go through various data available about gender equality and discrimination we will find that women are far behind than men in various fields of life. On the other hand women are exploited, degraded, violated and discriminated in their homes and outside world. Such discrimination is easily found in Indian society. There are some causes of gender discrimination. The main or root cause of gender inequality is patriarchal system deeply rooted in Indian society. Our religious beliefs have made this system a legal and valid one. In Hindu religion according to Manu law "Women are supposed to be in the restrictions of their father before the marriage, after marriage they are under the custody pressure of their husband and in old age or as widows they are under the control of their son and daughter in law. She is not allowed to enjoy freedom in any circumstances" This is the real status of women in India, no matter she is a Hindu, a Muslim or belong to any other religion. Poverty, lack of education, less nourishment to girls, lack of employments, lack of awareness, social attitude, social customs are some of the issues which kept women away from their freedom. The other aspects of inequality in division between woman and other male members in family are early marriages and divorce, physical harassment, dowry, extra-marital relationships etc.

Inequality in Indian English Literature:

After Independence Indian English Literature got identity in global scenario. Indian writers adopt English Language as a medium of expression. They attract the attention of readers of the world through their writing. Global people are introduced women's issues in Indian society. They took interest in reading of Indian English literature. Indian feminist writer made their special identity and space in English literature. Indian writers got nominations for renowned Noble Prize and Booker prizes. The women novelists have put an indelible mark in the literary world. The prominent Indian women writers writing in English highlighted the issues, problems and experiences of contemporary Indian society. They have focused their writing on women and their world and discussed about the deprivation and suffering inflicted upon women discriminately. These women writers include Kamla Markandaya, Ruth Prasad Jhabwala, Gita Mehta, Gita Hariharan, Namita Gokhale, Shobha De, Shashi Deshpande, Bharati Mukherjee,

Manju Kapur, Arundhati Roy etc. All these writers have depicted the struggle of female protagonists against patriarchal society. Anita Desai's Novel "Fasting Feasting" nominated for Booker Prize is the best example of patriarchal society. Mahesh Dattani's Dance Like Man, Arundhati Roy's God of Small things, Kamala Markandey's Nectar in a Sieve, Kiran Desai's Novel Inheritance of Loss, Vijay Tendulkar's play Kamala, are few examples of gender bias.

There are other women writers in Indian English literature like Kamala Das, Sudha Muthy, Shashi Deshpande, Jai Nimkar, Irawati Karve and many more who focused on repression, exploitations, sufferings of women in the domestic as well as social life.

Vijay Tendulkar's play 'Kamala' and 'Silence the Court is in Session' depicted the inferior position of women in society. No matter where so ever that women came from either upper, middle or lower class society, they are equal in patriarchal society. In the play 'Kamala' Sarita and Kamala both women are victimized of male dominated society. Sarita, a house wife of well known journalist, belongs to upper class society, living in posh locality in Delhi. She is well qualified woman. But she was not allowed to do the job because it was against status of her family. She was lonely daughter and was brought up affectionately. There was rule in her family that women are not allowed to go outside the home for any kind of work. They should have to work in the home only and take care of household. It is against their prestige that a woman from so called high-status family goes outside for the work when there are servants in the house. Even after the marriage Sarita was confined in the bungalow where all facilities were available. She has to take care of her husband and follow his order. If she fails to follow the duty she was reproached ruthlessly. Sarita was living a life of slavery in her own house. She was not happy and was not also complained against her husband because of the culture and prestige of her family. There was an assumption or a social rule that once a daughter gets married she is supposed to be dead for her family. So Sarita without complaining living the unbearable life. Another female character in the play i.e. Kamala. Her condition is not also different from Sarita, the only difference is that Kamala is a poor woman. For the sake of food she sells her body very day in flesh market. In short she was a prostitute. Sarita's husband, Jaysing Jadhav, a Journalist, has purchased her for two hundred rupees and brought her to his home to make a sensational news for his newspaper. Next day he present her in the press conference where she was asked shameful questions by so called highly educated newspaper reporters. Sarita opposed this things. Because a woman like Kamala who is poor, illiterate and innocent will be insulted and questioned disgracefully cannot reply properly. She will be afraid of this situation. Sarita was also worried about what would happen with Kamala after the press conference? Where will she live? So she insisted her husband to keep Kamala in their house as a servant. But Jaysing promises her that Kamala will be sent in women's hostel (rehabilitation centre) where she will start a new life. Tendulkar's another play "Silence the Court is in Session" Miss Benare a protagonist of the play was humiliated in the court before the judge by the Lawyers. She was asked shameful questions on her rape incidence. Benare was already victimized of rape and again she was verbally raped by lawyers in the court before the judge. In this way Vijay Tendulkar has

shown the woman either from upper class society or from lower class community both are treated equally by male dominated society.

In the novel *Fasting, Feasting* Anita Desai tried to show how women are repressed and deprived of freedom by the male dominated society. Uma, the protagonist of the novel, a young unmarried and ill-fated girl. She was repressed by her father and was not allowed to go outside the home. She was treated as servant of the house and was asked to look after her younger brother Arun. Because of Arun's education Uma was forced to leave the school. Uma's father wanted to send Arun to U.S.A. for Higher Education. Uma was not so good looking girl so her marriage was broken up three times. So Uma's father decided to leave the thought of her marriage. Uma remains in the home as servant and caretaker of her brother. Her life in the home is like a pigeon in the cage. She wants to go outside the home and mixed with the people in the society. Talks with them freely on any topics. She was always ready to go out whenever she got opportunity. When her aunty took her for pilgrimage for two months Uma become very happy. She wanders everywhere freely. She talks with the very curiously and tried to know about them. It was the most happy moments in her life. But such moments came in her life very rarely. Otherwise all the days she has to confined in the four walls of the home and follow the orders of her parents including her mother too. On the other hand Arun was very lucky and fond of every member in the family. Everyone took care him From his food to his health and education. He was the lonely son. Uma's father has lot of expectations from Arun So Arun was forced to do hard work to get fellowship to go to U.S.A. Any how Arun was successful in getting admission to U.S.A.. Where Arun remembers his sister's contribution in his life journey.

Sudha Murthy writes about women's struggle, problems and other feminine aspects. *Mahashweta* (2000) is a heart touching story about Anupama, a poor but beautiful girl. Dr. Anand falls in love with her and gets married to her. Suddenly she discovers a white patch on her foot and learns that she has leukoderma. Afterwards her life gets totally changed and she has to suffer a lot of problems in the course of time. *Dollar Bahu* (2003) tells the story of NRI marriages. It depicts the condition of Indian wife and NRI wife. The mother-in-law thinks that Indian daughter-in-law is not as good as NRI daughter-in-law. The novel highlights man woman relationship and various aspects related to women in male dominated society. *7 Gently Falls the Bakula* (2008) is a story of marriage that losses its ultimate aim and becomes a failure as a marriage. The novel tells us about Shrikant and Shrimati. Shrikant works relentlessly and achieves success in IT company. While Shrimati gives up her academic aspirations and becomes husband's shadow, only fulfilling her duties as a corporate leader's wife. In the process she losses her own identity. The novel *House of Cards* (2013) deals with the story of Mridula and Sanjay who settled in Bangalore after marriage. Sanjay is a doctor and in the course of time he earns a lot of money by corrupt practice. When Mridula comes to know about this truth, she has to face discontentment in married life despite a love marriage. This intricately woven novel explores human relationship and holds up a mirror to our society.

In this way Indian feminist writers explain the domestic discord in traditional Indian families and the suffering of women in a patriarchal world. In all critical situation it is the 'Woman' who has to suffer badly. This suffering is deeply rooted in various types of inequalities found between man and woman in our society.

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