

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND ENGLISH LITERATURE

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Abstract

In academic literature, the word empowerment first came onto the scene with regards to civil rights. The term really took off with literature discussing empowerment of marginalized peoples, such as women and the poor. For example, in 1983 the Women's Studies international forum discussed empowerment of women in "Power and Empowerment." From then until now, the literature has increasingly been focused on these issues. The key focus of the paper thus remains literature and empowerment.

Keywords: *women, empowerment, literature, English literature*

In 2010, articles were published entitled "Power and empowerment: Fostering effective collaboration in meeting the needs of orphans and vulnerable children" and "Women empowerment through the SHG approach" that demonstrate just a few ways how empowerment is being discussed in the academic community. So while we can see that the word empowerment as been used by many different groups. However, most of the definitions define empowerment in terms of agency, "an actor's or group's ability to make purposeful choices," and it is easy to see that these two terms are intricately linked. In fact, empowerment is simply as the expansion of agency. Another source that views empowerment in this way is the article entitled "Well being, agency and Freedom" from the journal of Philosophy.

Role of Literature in Women Empowerment

The author characterizes empowerment as a person's freedom to do and achieve the desired goals. This framework of empowerment focuses on the individual. Other authors take a slightly more narrowed approach, taking into consideration the institutional, social or political structures rules and norms within which the actors make and pursue their choices. Many writers like Margaret Atwood, Tony Morrison, Virginia Woolf and many more wrote on the empowerment and freedom of women's life and many writers supported this empowerment movement and suggested to society and tried to change their thoughts towards women. Many novels, short stories, satires and poems were written on the empowerment of women. All these authors demonstrate their definition of empowerment as the relationships between society and structure. First of all, empowerment is very multidimensional and it can be exercised on many different levels and domains. Empowerment can look different at the individual level versus the community level, and it can look different in the state versus the market. Women's empowerment is heavily concentrated on the household and individual level. Household is given the centrality to gender relations. As a concrete manner women's empowerment is more readily visible at household level rather than at large levels of aggregation. An information of the distinct ways in which empowerment has been conceptualized. Women and gender equality recognized as key element in all over the world. Study is shown the way of empowerment only for the women. Empowerment of women is the progress of country and all felt to equip the women with necessary skills with education and modern trade. Empowerment in

the context of women's development is a way of defining, challenging and overcoming barriers in a woman's life through which she increases her ability to shape her life and environment. It is an active, multi dimensional process, which should enable women to realize their full identity and power in all spheres of life. India envisions a future in which Indian women are independent and self reliant. It is unfortunate that because of centuries of inertia, ignorance and conservatism, the actual and potential role of women in the society has been ignored, preventing them from making their rightful contribution to social progress.

Role of Society

First, the phase of imitation is prolonged and the dominant tradition and the international roles have affected the social roles. Secondly, the phase of protest was established against the standards values of life which also includes demand for autonomy. Lastly, Self-discovery is a phase, where search for identity was the main aim of the writers to project in their writings, as they experienced freedom from self dependency. Thus the critic supplanted the traditional definition of feminism especially in literature by a new paradigm for manifesting the evolutionary aspect of woman's consciousness as reflected in literature specifically in the British novel through three stages of progression the feminine, the feminist and the female.

While the post colonial enigma gradually changed into a neo-colonial consciousness in India, the creative writers specially the woman factionalists resorted to examining the role of modern Indian women family and society differently and more positively. The second generation of Indian women novelists like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Bharati Mukherjee and Shobha De specially exhibits a steady progression in context of the three stages advocated by Elaine Showalter. Their female protagonists display a psychic transformation traversing and evolving gradually but firmly through the respective stages of imitation of tradition, protest and advocacy of rights, and eventually introspection leading to self-discovery which metamorphosezes them into strong, independent, expeditious women willing to encounter the onslaughts of life not merely as a minority group but with the cognizance of being powerful sustaining force for society as a whole.

Women Empowerment in India

In India, Women Empowerment was a challenging task and one needs to acknowledge that gender based discrimination and due to this social malice was prevalent for many years. The malice cannot be removed by adopting few laws or policies, as many of them though may be on paper, but are not implemented in actual terms. The power structural forces of the society never tried to uplift the status of women at different levels and the growth of the women was stunted. At this juncture of complexities related to the rights of women, the situation can only be improved, once the social attitude is revamped and the prevalent evil practices against the women should be banned. This can be brought in by women's access and control over the decision making. In India, women are marginalized at every level of the society whether in economic, social or political participation and gender disparity is crept in the life of people that. The rise of the novel in India was not purely a literary phenomenon. It was a social phenomenon as much, rather the fulfillment of a social need. It was associated with social, political and economic conditions which were

comparable to those which favored rise in England. The rise of novel and appearance of it in nineteenth century India as it did in eighteenth century England synchronized with the rise of individualism and with all the consequent political and social reorientations which followed.

Conclusion

Empowerment is related to the norms, values and beliefs of a society; therefore empowerment can be revealed differently in different societies. The term empowerment may have some general agreed upon qualities and definitions in the academic community, but now the word is used in organizations or among individuals may still vary. It is important to change the perception of the society, and then only the emancipation of women can be a success at different levels. The people in the society need to accept the truth that there is a discrepancy in the ideology and the practical implication of the same. To emphasize on the upliftment in the status of the women, the laws need to be strict and also implemented in judicious manner.

Women Empowerment can only be possible if the women come together and decide to self-empower themselves. A movement for women emancipation needs to gain momentum which makes a woman a strong being instead of being the others. Simone de Beauvoir has given a full length commentary on the plight of women today. It is worthwhile to quote the author on this subject: "The women of today are in a fair way to dethrone the myth of feminist, they are beginning to affirm their independence in concrete ways; but they do not easily succeed in living completely to lift of a human being. Reared by women, which still means practically subordination to man; for masculine prestige is far from extinction, resting still, economic and social foundation".

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