

MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT

Submitted to

UNIVERSITY GRANT COMISSION

By

ANITA NAIR

(Principal Investigator)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

AL-AMEEN COLLEGE, EDATHALA

(Affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University)

Acknowledgement

I would like to bow my head before the grace of God, the Almighty, for having blessed me with the completion of this project.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the authorities of the University Grants Commission, South Western Regional Office, Bangalore, for providing me this opportunity to do this Minor research project.

I am indebted to every person who was a source of encouragement in the fulfilment of this exercise. The College management and my colleagues have been supportive all the way. My family has also been a rock of support and I thank them from the bottom of my heart for their forbearance.

Anita Nair

Preface

Women writers of the present day are greatly concerned with the changing scenario of society and the role the female of the species plays in it. Women, both in India and abroad, face issues that bear connections to their familial and societal bonds. The place of relationships are highly valid in such settings especially when the woman protagonist is situated in a foreign land. Cultural aberrations render these characters in positions where they seek to find solace through a reevaluation of age old traditions and the new norms of life they are leading. Contemporary women writers of diaspora resolve this concern by finding a merger of both east and west in their second generation immigrants. Jaishree Misra, has characters moving from India to England and back, discovering differences that shape their lives in both nations. These women find their urban lives have just as many limitations as advantages. They are buffeted by the pressures of family and society and see their tormentors are more often women than men. It is the bond of sisterhood that enables them to escape their fate and create an existence that satisfy themselves more than others. The aspects of urbanism, feminism and the power strategies used by women are the primary concerns taken up by the author. Jaishree Misra's fiction is characterized by the way her characters evolve from a negative plane to one of empowerment. The study takes up the aspect of so-called 'privileged' women, who in reality, may have it harder on the emotional and personal level than her deprived sister. There is also a validation of hitherto taboo topics such as adultery, exploration of one's sexuality and motherhood that does not embrace but rather abandons. The contexts touched on by the author are part

and parcel of any society and particularly dashes the moral 'sati-savithri' image of the Indian woman to the ground. The author also advocates the female who dares to stand up for herself, not repudiating her bonds but making the best of them. Misra's works of fiction support a different kind of feminism that positively uplifts the women protagonists. This is reflected in the lives of these urbanites both in India and abroad. The works of Jaishree Misra thus complements the changed Indian woman who celebrates herself and seeks happiness in ways she can without submitting to subversive manipulations.

Significance of the Study

The project 'Woman to Woman.' The Politics of Relationships and Power in Jaishree Misra,' endeavours to bring forth a clarity in the contemporary definition of feminism as seen through the selected works of Jaishree Misra. It enables an examination of the relationships that exist in the society of today, both in India and abroad and how power strategies are rampant in present day society. The role of women in fostering these relationships is shown as a prime force. This study exemplifies the work of a contemporary women writer in English. These Indian authors have taken the genre of Indian writing in English literature to a new level by incorporating issues that beset the expatriate in foreign lands. The writer of diaspora tries to acclimatize and imbibe new trends by bridging the gap between their home land and the land of their exile. These writers have progressed to not just looking back with longing at their past to seeing how their second generation immigrant merges traits of the west to forge a new identity. A different picture of

life abroad as well as the changed attitude of the people is highlighted by all writers of diaspora. The female diaspora writer takes the universal issues of such as identity, home, culture, alienation marriage, motherhood, child rearing and parenting to present a current day picture of woman that finds associations with real life persons. The changing face of the urban woman, both in India and abroad is brought to the forefront in these works by Misra. The author puts forward an 'progressive' feminism that every urban female can relate to.

Statement of the Problem

The analysis of the three selected works of Jaishree Misra is reflective of the changing face of womanhood in Indian society today . Globalisation has seen a lot of jobs being procured by females, but the lot of such emancipated women are also to be understood. The author underlines the fact that even women who seem highly privileged are stuck in ruts that society has created for them and have no prospects of escaping easily. The author also portrays the image of the domineering mother, a figure that needs to be by-passed in order to survive. Feminism is a changing concept and Misra's brand of feminism does not require a militant stance from the woman concerned. This progressive woman accepts the limitations around her to forge a new identity for herself within their barriers. The expansion of urban areas and the lessening of traditional farming environments are evident of the changing face of society, a picture which is realistically represented

by Misra. The study attempts to point out these significant trends through an analysis of these works of Jaishree Misra.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are

1. To examine the cultural milestones of urban and foreign influenced freedom and through this the cultural reality of Indian feminisms
2. To analyze the particular space that Indian feminism holds through the fiction of Jaishree Misra
3. To evaluate the fluctuation of cultural norms and the major impact created on the female characters as well as the strategies of power they deal with.
4. An examination of the new dimensions of the Indian urban woman as seen in these selected novels of Jaishree Misra.

Methodology

A detailed analysis of the selected primary works of Jaishree Misra has been done. References have been obtained from secondary sources to substantiate the study.

Scope of the Study

The study has taken up the study of the Indian woman in an urban setting to show how feminism attains a new perspective in the contemporary dimension. The novels selected for detailed study examine the state of the woman expatriate who

as often as not follows her spouse or father to a new country where the cultural difference is considerable. The study points to a representation of the features defining the urban woman and the constraints she faces. The dilemma of the woman fending cultural disparities of the hitherto safe and known realm namely that of home and family is also depicted.

The study has analysed the relationships that exist between Misra's women characters. The relationships and power strata that exists on many levels of familial hierarchy and how it grows discriminative also becomes a topic of discussion here. Women are seen as both supportive and destructive, either boosting and bonding with each other or attempting to destroy each other.

A contemporary depiction of urban Indian feminism through a portrayal of the woman who overcomes the subversions in her life to become empowered in an existence she can be happy about represents the main focus of this study.

Limitations of the Study

The study has concentrated on selected works of one author.

A wider platform is required that concentrates on the urban woman and the changing face of Indian feminism.

Findings and Suggestions

This analysis of selected works of Jaishree Misra shows certain significant findings. The author has underlined a basic requirement of society through the

depiction of relationships that exist in the society of today, both in India and abroad. The influence of power strategies which are rampant in present day society is also taken up here. The project also may be helpful in bringing forth a clarity in the contemporary definition of feminism as seen through the role of women who foster these relationships. This study endeavours to exemplify the angle taken by contemporary women writers of diaspora in English, who attempt to acclimatize and imbibe new trends by bridging the gap between their home land and the land of their exile. These writers have moved forward to depict the merging of east and west in the lives, nature and behaviour of second generation immigrants. A different kind of feminism that positively uplifts the women protagonists can be seen in the lives of these urbanites both in India and abroad. The study can be expanded to include other contemporary Indian women authors who advocate a change in the lot of women in India and abroad.

Conclusion

Jaishree Misra is an author who wields a pen directly concerned with contemporary issues. She does not focus on widely debated topics but takes the commonplace but crucial issues relating to women who live in urban areas. The emotional boundaries they have to conquer are not evident to an outside observer that notes their affluent status of living. Misra has created a space for these women, discussing the state of urbanism, a new feminism and also the politics of power relationships. The setting of the novels which move from the east to west also aids in defining the women of this generation.

CONCLUSION

Women's issues are really business issues. Even more so when you operate a public transport system. Smart employers are becoming aware of the fact that they need the skills and perceptions women can bring to their businesses. In order to achieve both economic growth and social equity, businesses need men and women sharing in decision – making. As already stated, the industry holds great potential for women. Yes, it is an industry that is male dominated, but opportunities exist simply because we are under - represented.

Public transport service providers operating in today's competitive environment can no longer afford to ignore women under – utilised skills as employees. By incorporating more women in all areas of transport – provision, it will become easier to communicate the fundamental issues involved and operators will achieve the competitive edge they seek over business rivals. Similarly, it is important that a transport system provides for the whole community but operators can no longer afford to ignore the particular needs of their primary customers.

It is appropriate that women's needs are identified and considered within the overall framework of service delivery. It cannot be stressed sufficiently the importance of women – both as employees and customers of public transport – taking every opportunity to put their views forward, to express their opinion and to make sure that they get what they want and need to make public transport better and more workable for everyone.