

GENDER ISSUES AND GENDER INEQUALITY IN SELECT NOVELS OF ANITA DESAI, SHASHI DESHPANDE, NGUGI WA THIONG'O AND SUDHA MURTHY

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Introduction:

Gender refers to the social roles that men and women play and power relation between them. Gender is not based on sex or the biological differences between men and women. Gender is shaped by culture, social relations, and natural environment. Thus, depending on values, norms, customs and laws, men and women in different parts of the world have evolved different gender roles.

Gender issues throw light on various parameters where human beings are discriminated. Women are treated as a separate entity as a second sex rather than individual 'human being'. The history of human civilization obviously tells us that women are treated as inferior to men. Women are deprived of social, cultural, educational and artistic activities. That is why throughout the history of humanity, writers have comprehensively discussed women's issues. Aristotle in his book politics says that by nature male is superior and female is inferior. Naturally, the male can be ruler while the female can be ruled.

After independence in India one of the issues which has attracted the attention in the traditional society, the inequality between male and females existed to large extent. Women are looked down socially, economically and politically. She was brutally killed in the name of sati. The practice of child marriage, kanyasulkam, prostitution was taken it granted by society and women has no voice what so ever for centuries together.

The writers highlighted the issues, problems and experiences of contemporary society. They have focused their writing on women and their world and discussed about deprivation and suffering. These writers include Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Ngugi WA Thiong'o and Sudha Murthy.

Keywords: Gender, Inequality, Discrimination, Issues, Sex, Women

Gender Discrimination in India

1. Poverty

Women's poverty is directly related to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, lack of access to economic resources including credit, land ownership and inheritance, lack of access to education and support service and their minimal participation in the decision making process. Thus poverty stands at the root of gender discrimination in our patriarchal society and this economic dependence on the male counterpart is itself a cause of gender disparity.

2. Illiteracy:

Despite the notable efforts by the countries around the globe that have expanded for the basic education, there are approximately 960 million illiterate adults of whom two thirds are women. Educational backwardness of the girls has been resultant cause of gender discrimination.

3. Lack of Employment Facilities:

Women are not able to resolve the conflict between new economic and old domestic roles. In both rural and urban, women spend a large proportion of time on unpaid home sustaining work. Women are not able to respond to new opportunities and shift to new occupations because, their mobility trends to be low due to intra-house hold allocation of responsibility.