

Women's Voices for Privileges across the Globe

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Abstract

“Freedom cannot be achieved unless the women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression”---Nelson Mandela

Women around the world are in poverty just because they are women. Still Men dominate in every aspect of their lives. Even with the injustices, women have made a great strides everywhere in advancing their rights. Women are powerful forces for the change, amazingly determined and resourceful in their fight to achieve a better future. Women's History shows that there were many great women leaders in the past and they are doing many inspiring efforts even today.

The United States would not be the same country as it is today without the contributions of women of color. African American, Asian, American and Indian women have left an indelible mark on the nation's progress. They've broken racial and gender barriers and have fought for social justice. Feminists of color such as Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldua and Paula Gunn Allen have played pivotal roles to get women's privileges through their writing and activism. Notable black women such as Sojourner Truth, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison and Angela Davis have struggled a lot to eradicate inequality in race gender, slavery.

Many women activists have come forward to seek their rights as being citizens of the inhabitants. Young Pakistani girl Malala Yousafzai was shot by the Taliban. She has received the biggest European human rights prize called "**Sakharov**" which is one of the major prizes compared to esteemed personalities such as South Africa's Nelson Mandela and Aung San Suu Kyi from Burma.

The present article focuses on how women writers like Toni Morrison, Anita Desai and a young activist Malala Yousafzai have been trying to achieve Human Rights for women. They have been trying for a long time in different places in different ways to attain human privileges.

Keywords: Human Rights, Injustice, Inequality, Oppression, Human Privileges

Introduction

The present article concentrates on the problems and atrocities faced by women worldwide. Since long time, women have been facing many problems. Day by day the issues are becoming extremely critical so that women cannot find safe place in this globe. Society receives all these problems usually without any solution. The most important issues pertaining to women are marriage, dowry-related violence, abortion, crimes against women's inheritance. Other crimes like rape, kidnapping, eve teasing and indecent exposure can be grouped as misdeed against women. In many countries sexual assault by a husband on his wife is not considered to be a crime which is the biggest offense where most of the women have been undergoing for a long time.

Middleclass women are confined to home by taking care of their children. Their husbands do not work but they disappear during the day. These idle women are frail and sensitive. Though most of the women are illiterates, malnourished, exhausted or even ill are forced to work for long hours for a little reward. In some underdeveloped countries boys are favored over girls since their birth. Parents consider sons as a guarantee for their economic security in their old age. So boys are better fed, clothed, and educated than girls.

Today in this prominent place women are becoming more famous. Their popularity is increasing; but still has long-standing prejudice. They face an enormous pressure to follow social mores and traditional roles within their families. They have made greater strides in the corporate world in the last three decades by earning attractive profits even though they are still discouraged by their family members. Their careers are in the hands of their partners' who always depress them.

The present article focuses on some of the issues happening in and around the world which are brought forward by the women writers. Contemporary women writers like Anita Desai, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker focus on the women issues in their writings till date in different continents either in Asia or in America. Though these writers belong to different continents, the issues that they have brought out in their writings are related to women problems. Most of the women writers have been trying to change the attitude of men towards women by portraying the pitiable conditions of women in their writings.

Many Indian women novelists have explored female inequality in order to establish an identity which is imposed by a patriarchal society. Their novels depict the psychological suffering of the frustrated housewife, their horrible experiences, and the repressed and oppressed lives of lower class women.

The present paper is confined to a few women writers and other young activists whose works reflect on the above mentioned themes. One of them is Anita Desai, an Indian novelist, a short story writer who is especially noted for her sensitive portrayal of the inner life of her female characters. Most of her novels explore tensions between family members and the alienation of middle class women. She was born to a Bengali father and a German mother on June 24, 1931. She has grown up by imbibing both western and Indian cultures.

Anita Desai has presented an ideal image of modern 'New Woman'. Her novels reflect social realities from psychological perspective. She closely examines the emotional world of womankind. She deals with various thoughts, emotions and sensations of women. Most of her characters are members of the Anglicized Indian bourgeoisie; whose marital problems are in the forefront. Her works engage the complexities of modern Indian culture from a feminine perspective and highlights the women Indian predicament of maintaining self-identity as an individual woman. The fiction of Anita Desai is relevant to all times because she writes about the predicament of modern man. She digs into the man's inner psyche and goes beyond the skin and the flesh. Literature for her is not a means of escaping from reality but it is an exploration. She prefers the private to the public world and avoid from the traditional grooves of external reality and physical world. In fact, her real concern is the exploration of human psyche, inner climate, and she unravels the mystery of the inner life of her characters.

Thus, the most common themes in her novels are complex human relationships, particularly the man-woman relationship. She writes mostly about the miserable plight of women suffering under their insensitive and inconsiderate husbands, fathers and brothers. So, man-woman relationship brings characters into alienation, loneliness, isolation and less interaction. In most of her novels, the protagonists are alienated from the world, society, families, and parents and even from themselves because they are not average people but individuals. When these characters have to

face alienation, they become rebels. Tension, worries, depression, disappointment, anxiety and fear lose their commonsense sometimes.

Gender discrimination is one of the prominent themes in Indian Novel. Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* reveals how women have suffered both physically and mentally in a male dominated patriarchal framework.

Toni Morrison was born in Lorain Ohio. She is the most American recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature. In 1949 she entered Howard University, where she received her graduate. She earned a Master of Arts Degree in English from Cornell University in 1955. She became a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. She played a vital role in bringing Black Literature into the mainstream of her books. Other writers like Toni Cade Bambara, Angela Davis, Gayl Jones focus on slavery before the Civil War.

Her novel *The Bluest Eye* was published in 1970. It deals with violence, adolescent sexual exploration, and racial hatred and prostitution. Morrison describes incidental sex and the tragic effects imposed by white, middle class, American ideals of beauty on developing female identity of a young African American girl during the early 1940's is shown in her novel .

Alice walker is recognized as one of the leading voices among Black American women writers. Her writings portray the struggle of black people, the experiences of black women, and woman issues like female Circumcision. She has climbed the proverbial ladder of success. Her works clearly centered the struggles and spiritual development affecting the survival whole of women. She brought the renaissance of African women writers.

The color purple chronicles the life of the poor abused southern black women who eventually triumphs over oppression through affirming female relationship. It is an epistolary novel. The novel starts with Celie fourteen year old, vulnerable, abused black girl, who addresses her letters to "Dear God." She is abused and denied voice by her father and then by her husband. Her first letter to God shows that she has been raped by her father, Alfonso.

Her father Alfonso told her that, she must not tell anybody what happens to her except God. Celie falls pregnant twice and is taken out of school. Her father also kept his children for adoption. He causes an emotional damage to Celie despite showing respect towards his daughter as a human being.

Sussan Tahmasebi belongs to Iran. She wants to develop civil society to defend women's rights. She started one of the most influential and effective human rights campaigns. She is highly educated and popular women. She worked with activist groups and developed agendas for reform. The One Million Signatures Campaign brings together women from multiple generations and from various backgrounds. Iran's parliament should pass or change laws to allow equal rights in marriage, divorce, custody and inheritance. Its members pledged to approach ordinary Iranians in public places and to ask their fellow citizens to sign in the name of gender equality. They tried a wide array of people could join and to withstand with government pressures. The campaign was successful as it had some changes, such as a law allowing women to inherit land from their husbands, and the requirement that insurance companies offer injured men and women equal rates of compensation.

In Bangladesh, violence against women was started. Almost every day, numerous women in Bangladesh are subjected to different forms of violence including rape, murder, acid attack, trafficking, domestic abuse, forced marriage, tortures related to dowry, and abduction. Since 2001, there have been 184,422 reported cases of violence according to the police headquarters. In 2012 alone, there were 19,617 reported incidences of violence against women. The OBR campaign began as a call to action by V-Day. It was a call for people across the world to come together to express in defiance of the injustices of suffering women.

V-Day is a global activist movement which has started to end the violence against women (VAW) and girls. V-Day is a catalyst that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. It generates broader attention to stop violence against women and girls, including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM) and sex slavery. Activists around the world had raised awareness about the different forms of violence against women and girls prevalent across the different societies and nations.

The present article highlights about the young activist named MalalaYousafzai. She was born on July 12, 1997. She is a Pakistani girl and an education activist. She is known for her activism

especially for girls' and women's rights, to allow them to school. She was a victim of a gunshot attack in October 2012. On 9th October 2012, Malala Yousafzai was gun shot by Atta Ullah Khan, a Taliban gunman. She was given emergency treatment in Pakistan and then moved to England for more medical treatment. At the age of 16, she made a speech at headquarters of the United Nations, stressing on the right to education for all, human rights, peace and non-violence against terrorism and intolerance. She says that "the pen is mightier than a sword." The BBC published the translated writings about her life under Taliban rule.

She was nominated for the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize. She is the recipient of the Sakharov Prize. She was one of the winners of Glamour Magazine's Women of the Year. Malala Yousafzai was given the GG2 Hammer Award at the GG2 (Garavi Gujarat2) Leadership Awards 2013. In October 2013, she wrote her life *I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* was published. The book was banned in Pakistani private schools.

She gave a speech in the US assembly.

“Dear brothers and sisters, do remember one thing. Malala day is not my day. Today is the day of every woman, every boy and every girl who have raised their voice for their rights. There are hundreds of Human rights activists and social workers who are not only speaking for human rights, but who are struggling to achieve their goals of education, peace and equality. Thousands of people have been killed by the terrorists and millions have been injured. I am just one of them. So here I stand... one girl among many.

I speak – not for myself, but for all girls and boys.

I raise up my voice – not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard.

Those who have fought for their rights:

Their right to live in peace.

Their right to be treated with dignity.

Their right to equality of opportunity.

Their right to be educated.”

Violence against women is a universal problem so, it must be condemned universally. Yet, this problem continues to grow more and more without any proper solution. Since many years, women writers have been projecting many critical situations. The recent Delhi rape issue, Ayesha's issue and so many other horrible incidents are seen in newspapers. Sometimes it may happen with our friends, neighbors, relatives and in our families also. Most of the women suffer in silence but don't like to be exposed. To eradicate all these sort of problems, moral values, ethics, respecting towards elders and ladies are to be taught especially to boys since their childhood. It is responsibility of the parents as well as society ie., educational institutions.

Children learn from their parents and from their teachers. Parents have a major role in moulding their children. The child must be imparted ethics and religious knowledge strongly. The fundamental duty of us is to instill a strong set of principles since childhood. Parents who have strong values, integrity and positive attitude must inculcate to their children. A set of solid values like fairness, honesty, discipline, justice, integrity should be given right from their childhood. Parents also should educate their children about the acceptable attitudes and behaviors to be followed in the society. One has to realize that the proper upbringing of the child helps in building peaceful environment and good foundation.

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