

Journey of Powerful Women in India from Ancient Generation to New Generation

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Women in India occupy a significant place since time immemorial. In the field of wit and wisdom and literary activities women had made great debut. For cultivating and developing the culture of ancient India, women played an important role. They had immense influence in domestic as well as educational and political field. That is why the saying- "Yatra naryastu pujiyante ramante tatra devta" (Manusmriti 3-56) is remarkable. The women are portrayed in the Vedas from several perspectives. Various metaphors have been employed in the Vedas to denote the different levels of women such as:

- i. The transcendent women in the form of deities invoke
- ii. The extraordinary gifted women as seers and
- iii. The ordinary women as mother, daughter, wife and sister etc.

The triple rendering represents the totality of women. On taking closer look at the Vedic texts, we come across many more rich, refined and chiseled images of women in different shades as follows : physical charm, mental/ intellectual caliber, familiar roles, social status and spiritual strength.

Saunaka's Brihaddevata (2-82-84) mentions 27 lady seers or Brahnavadinis. Lopamudra, Vishvara, Sikta, Nivavari and Ghosa were renowned poetesses who composed Vedic hymns. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, which prescribes a special ritual by which a married couple might have a learned and loving daughter to them. The Kavya-mimamsa in which the celebrated poet, dramatist and rhetorician Rajasekhara records the following significant observation:

"Like men, women, too, can be poets. Genius inheres in self, irrespective of sex differences between men and women. It is heard that princesses, daughters of ministers, courtesans are possessed of extensive knowledge of the Shastras and poetic genius."

Jai Shankar Prasad ,who was famous for his strong portrayals of women became popular for famously glorifying women. A popular verse from one of his most widely read poems, 'Kamayani' reads-

"Nari tum Kewal Shraddha ho,
Vishwas-rajat-nag-pal –tal mein,
Piyush srot sib aha karo,
Jeevan ki sundar samtal mein."

Oh woman! You are honour personified, Under the silver mountain of faith, Flow you, like a river of ambrosia, On this beautiful earth.

Women's roles in literature have evolved throughout history and had led women to develop into strong independent roles. Modern literature has served as an outlet and sounding board for women's rights and feminist pioneers. Female writers have come to the fore from front and provided today's readers with a vast array of ethnic and cultural perspectives. The unique voice of female minorities is a common theme in many coming of age novels that allows each other to establish a separate identity for their characters and themselves. Women and literature are closely related to each other because it requires a lot of artistic creativity to be good at literature and women are too good when it comes to artistic creativity. Women novelists from India are the one to add a new dimension to the English literature of India. Obviously, the current Indian literature is due to the efforts of many prolific writers. The best part is that most of these writers are women. Common examples include Sarojni Naido, Nayantara Sehgal and Rama Mehta.

Suzanna Arundhati Roy is the luminary among the contemporary women writers. She is an Indian novelist, writer and activist. She is the first non-expatriate and the first Indian woman to have won the prestigious British Booker prize in 1997 for her debut novel. The novel talks about how small things in life can affect people. Set in a small town in Kerala, a state located in southwestern India, created on a linguistic basis. The God of Small Things is about a family, seen from the perspective of seven-year-old Rahel. She and her twin brother, Estha, live with their mother, Ammu, who was married to a Bengali, the children's Baba, but from whom she is divorced.

Ammu and, therefore, the twins seem to live on sufferance in the Ayemenem house with their grandmother, uncle, and grand-aunt Baby. The family owns a pickle factory that comes into conflict with the Communists. Kerala is famous for its sprawling backwaters and lush green vegetation. Kerala is generally referred to as a tropical paradise of waving palms and wide sandy beaches. But in the book, Kerala State in southern India is evoked through every sense; even a recipe for banana jam appears.

The writing is lush, occasionally to the point of overgrowth, but always inventive. The flow of words is both natural and startling: "Rahel's new teeth were waiting inside her gums, like words inside a pen." Roy's capacity for simile and metaphor seems boundless.

This highly stylized novel tells the story of one very fractured family from the southernmost tip of India. Here is an unhappy family unhappy in its own way, and through flashbacks and flash forwards The God of Small Things unfolds the secrets of these characters' unhappiness. First-time novelist Arundhati Roy twists and reshapes language to create an arresting,

startling sort of precision. The average reader of mainstream fiction may have a tough time working through Roy's prose, but those with a more literary bent to their usual fiction inclinations should find the initial struggle through the dense prose a worthy price for this lushly tragic tale. While the main story is set in 1969, Roy moves back and forth throughout the time focusing mainly on the young twins Estha and Rahel and the adults they become as a result of the novel.

Roy touches on post-colonialism, conflicts between Christianity and native beliefs, communism versus the status quo, and the caste system.

While the story is heartbreaking and sometimes brutal, Roy has a way with words and composes some very beautiful

sentences. Roy's novel is mesmerizing at times, and the story of the "two-egg twins", Estha and Rahel, is compelling and strange.

Arundhati Roy, through *The God of Small Things* has accomplished a very unique narrative on the cultural span of Kerala. Blending together innumerable themes along with the stylistic narration, the novel will ever be valued as one of the greatest works in English literature.

Her second novel, 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness' addresses some of the most devastating events in India's modern history. It has enjoyed a global release with enviable media hype, further demonstrating the remarkable progress in how women's writing is received by critics and the public.