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Changing and Emerging Trends of Indian Women Writers with Special Reference to Pinki Virani

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Abstract:

The subjects of Indian Women Writers have been experiencing drastic changes from time they choose to write. Starting from the poetry representing the themes of various aspects of contemporary society of respective periods, touching various literary genres like the major one 'Novel' presented the issues of Nationalism, Womanism, Culturalism, Racialism, Communalism etc. Twentieth century women writers are more activist writers and are in a position to question and fight for the aspects that encumber the society. Among the writers of this type like Shoba De, Arundhati Roy, Monica Das, Sagarika Ghosh and so on, Pinki Virani is a powerful and dynamic writer who can be a change of Indian social order. This paper attempts to give an account of the changing trends of Indian Women Writers with special reference to Pinki Virani as an activist writer, giving a few lines as an introduction to Indian Women writings as a whole.

Keywords: *Indian women writers, rape, child sexual abuse, journalism, societal issues of India*

The concept of woman in India is very diverse in nature and has been undergone many drastic changes from era to era, which is obvious through the writings of women. From decades, works of Indian woman writer's have been kept in a low esteem due to the assumptions of patriarchy about the superiority of male standards. It took many decades to women to realize and come out with their own sufferings, because it happened that the education for the women was not allowed and those who came up with their writings were elite educated class and their writings were cut off from the ground reality. Indian women writing i.e. the themes of their writings have been experienced many changes, is an evidence for the gradual transformation of their perceptions.

It is a widely known question that what made women to write? The answer is also widely known as 'The Women Subjugation'. Though the reason behind the women writing is identified as their suppression, the women writers of Pre-Independence period were varied regionally and linguistically, mostly written poetry and stressed on various themes. e.g. Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu are outstanding poetesses even today. Quest for Identity, loneliness and alienation are the major themes of their poems. Cornelia Sorabji's works like *India Calling* (1935) and *India Recalled* (1936) deal with the issues of colonialism and questions of identity arising from racial cultural hybridity. The emergence of new genre 'Novel' as a major literary genre, created a scope to the women writers of post Independence era to articulate their own experiences. Though they are regionally and linguistically different, they merge in their works on some common themes of nationalism and womanism e.g. Neera Desai's *Women in Modern India* (1957). In the third phase of women writing, rethinking, rewriting, retelling came out, which not only motivated but made the women to think critically. The writers like Gayatri Spivak outstretched themselves from national to global level on the aspects of Imperialism, Regional Imperialism, colonization, internal colonization, position of subaltern etc. Writers like Bama voice for the people, who are undergone, the discrimination on the grounds of caste. There comes Activist writers, make their writings weapons to fight against the unjust and always work for the cause. The trend is changing, the history has proved that women is capable of doing anything, she can also be a warrior. There has been a gradual transformation of themes of their works are palpable that shows ongoing transformation of their thought process. These have been travelling from psychology turmoil of self to the problems of women in broad sense and present day they are in a position to fight against the sensitive contemporary social issues of India. It is where the activist writers like Shoba De, Arundhati Roy, Pinki Virani, Sagarika Ghosh and many others women writers belong to. Especially the writers who came from the career of Journalism are always eager to convey something to the people through their investigation, therefore they use their writings as vehicles to reach the people, and to aware them about the issues they feel as necessary to the mankind.

Shoba De is one of this kind, who writes about the socialites and patriarchal hegemony. The erotic content of her novels led to many controversies. One can come across the scenes of child sexual abuse and its' aftermath in *The God Small Things* (1997) projected by Arundhati Roy. *Sex and Power: Defining History, Shaping Societies* (2008) by Rita Benerjee is result of five years historical study of sex and sexuality in India. Dr.Monica Das draws an attention to the issues of socio- economic impact of underage marriage, bigamy

and polygamy on the Human Development Index through her works *Her Story of So Far: Tales of the Girl Child in India* (2003) and *The Other Woman* (2014).

There is no doubt at all, in saying that women writers in India playing a prominent role in actively participating for cleaning up our nation as well as making a better place to live. But this is more evident in the case of Pinki Virani's controversial Non-Fiction is concerned. She is very bold enough to touch such aspects of insalubrious in her works. She has been extensively recognized and rewarded for her effort to bringing up a law of Passive Euthanasia and Child protection Law in India than as a mere writer, though those were possible only through her works. Her work *Aruna's Story* (1998) is a true account of a lady nurse of King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEM) of Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) who was sodomized and brutally strangled with dog chains by the ward boy of same hospital and left in a condition of half dead, half alive in 1973 Nov 27. Her second work *Once was Bombay* (1999) is about the city Bombay, once it was and it is now. Being a resident of Bombay she stressed on various anti social aspects prevailing present day in Bombay. Her third book *Bitter Chocolate* (2000) is about the Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in India. Her fourth work is *Deaf Heaven* is a modern perception of Indian history. Every work of her triggers directly towards the point to highlight some contemporary social issues of the day, through which she wants to create awareness among the masses.

Indian society is polluted in such a way that even very brutal issues became more common of the day. Police records of India showing increasing incidents of crime against women. The incidents like this were not recorded earlier because of social stigma attached to rape and molestation, as in the case of Aruna Shanbough. The problems of gender based violence getting worse today. It is the Delhi gang rape of paramedical student in the capital city of India in 2013 which is considered to be very brutal after Aruna's case in 1973. The statistics of National Crime Record Bureau shows that the crimes against women have increased 7.1 percent nationwide from 2010. It is the days' need to meet the point directly to reduce the adverse effects of problems like Rape, Molestation, CSA, and Female Infanticide and so on. Along with media many Indian writers are striving to create a deep sagacity about the problems of the nation. *The Sea of Innocence* by Kishwar Desai focuses on Sexual violence and Rape, she describe it with the term 'endemic'. Indian children are facing the problems of sexual abuse irrespective of their age and gender, which is the very sensitive issue that has to be shattered and many do not want to talk about it even in the Indian society. Virani is the first and foremost writer to initiate and discuss this issue in a lucid way in India to break the silence of CSA. The present state of Bombay is in a condition that needs a wide range of discussions and debates to take up recovery measures to the problems experiencing today. Bombay 'The City of Dreams' which once ruled by Mouryans, Satavahanas, Abhiras, Kalachuris, Vakatas, Rastrakutas and lightened its' own heights of glory, being a hub of trade and commerce, called as 'City of Seven Islands', being a holder of first modern institution of higher education which offered many opportunities to the learners, had a gradual change as a hub of terrorism, mafia, smugglers, communal riots and so on. Rajini Bakshi's *The Long Howl: The Bombay Textile Workers Strike*, Walter Benjamin's *One Way Street and Other Writings*, Sandeep Pendse's *Toil, Sweat and the City" in Bombay: Metaphor for Modern India*, Ranjani Majumdar and Shikha Jhingan's *The Journey from the Village to the City*, Jame's Donald's *Imagining the Modern City*. Many writers like this addressing these hassling issues of past and present Bombay in their works.

Every work of Pinki Virani is an authentic one since, all her works are built on properly recorded documents from different Government and non-governmental organisations, social workers, psychologists, mental health professionals, lawyers, personal experiences of many people and so on. Though the case of Aruna Ramachandra Shanbaugh happened in Bombay in 1973, much of the people not even know about Aruna until Virani touches it. She rewrote the reality, which dead long ago in one of the rooms of the KEM along with the semi comatosed condition of Aruna, the protagonist of her major work *Aruna Story*. It has been forty one years now that Aruna is in the condition of 'brain dead for sight, speech and movements and hopelessly alive for hunger, pain and terror'. Her investigation also disclosed many aspects related to this case like the perpetrator was punished only seven years for his deed for robbery and attempt to murder but not for the wild rape. KEM was not allowed to have her medical reports saying that it might worsen her name as 'raped', though they know that she cannot be normalise in anyways. Then what made them to hide? Is it to not to get any bad reputation to hospital or is it to make the other lady staff not to afraid of this issue which might happen even to them? And this thing is more regrettable that according to Indian legal sections, sodomy is not considered as rape, even though it is brutal than a rape. The saddest part of Aruna lies between her unending punishment for the mistake she undone and six years retribution to the perpetrator for his deed.

This is the story of Aruna Shanbaugh moved Virani further more from a book to the outstanding law of Passive Euthanasia (Mercy killing) to Aruna, who was forced to live her life stripped off her basic dignity. Her continuous campaign though resulted in allowing the Law of Passive Euthanasia in India by the supreme court of India; it did not allow for Aruna Shanbough giving a reason that KEM is her next friend to file a plea but not Pinki Virani. But this law will be very useful to many others, those who struggle with similar kind of problems like Aruna Shanbaugh in future.

In her second work *Once was Bombay*, she started with a preface "Who killed Bombay? We did; took positions to maintain personal privileges, purses and prejudices" shows Virani's apocalyptic view of the Bombay and its' elusive social structure, which also emphasises her sturdy resolution to preserve sanity of the city. She loses faith in collectivity that the citizens permitted the city to collapse. Uncanny fear, conspiracy and collusion among the citizens allowed escalating the base of criminal world. She touched various issues like communalism and claustrophobia of citizens both among the middle and upper classes. She showed this phobia among the film stars even like Shah Rukh Khan. She also mentioned about the extensive mayhem like textile mill workers strike that occurred in eighties, which created idleness among many migrated workers. Beside these Virani tries to illustrate, how an enormous unemployment and inability of men can also create a ground to augment the crime. Through her work she is expecting Bombayites to be conscious of ruination of the city.

“*Child Sexual Abuse* is a complex life experience, not a diagnosis or disorder. An array of sexual activities is covered by the term Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)” (RUR)

Bitter Chocolate intends to focus on intensity and enormity of crimes against the minor children in India witnessed in the form of incest and other types of sexual abuse. Being a victim of CSA Pinki Virani herself is been bold enough to start the book with her own experience of incest during her childhood. Sexual abuse of children is very unpleasant topic to converse. It is not only widespread but is increasing day by day in the middle and upper class families over the years. Her aim is to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomenon of child sexual abuse by creating required knowledge for the prevention of the problem as a whole than cure. This book divided into three parts where the first phase described many instances of CSA from across the country, the age and gender of the child, age and gender of the perpetrator and the number, duration, and frequency of the sexual experience of the victim all ensures the outcome together. Even the homes are not the safest places to the children. The perpetrator can be anyone; the worst thing is sometimes it happens to be a father. In the second phase she inferred the consequences of CSA to be occur at adulthood. The third phase of the book is essential as it is a record of quite a lot of guidelines, help lines and list of psychiatrists in major cities and towns who dealt with CSA issues. This book is a first of this kind in Indian subcontinent which also given a detailed description of Indian legal systems.

Her fourth work *Deaf Heaven* (2009) is hers' first fictional work, which is also a first Literary Cell- Novel and Adult Audio-Mobile book in Indian subcontinent. It is about the history of India in a modern perception. Indian history has not been explained in such a broad manner ever before in Indian English or in any other fiction as Virani did today. Though the novel is a fictional work, it is a representation of contemporary history of India, 'internal terrorism, superficial contemporary politics that pushing the nation towards the modern day fascism'. She tried a new style of writing as an oral presentation of history through the characters like Saraswathi. She gave a elucidate account of details about the negative aspects of India and referred to 'Authentic Indian' at the end as a solution finder. Through this she highlighted the responsibility of everyone as an Indian. She referred to child sexual abuse even in this book, which can be understood as she wants to get more attention from the readers on this issue.

We must become the change we seek in this world- Mahatma Gandhi

It is here where Pinki Virani has taken an initiation to be a change of social order. She is the voice of voice less. Her works are blend of journalistic and writing skills. Being a journalist, she has been having that spirit and passion in dealing issues, she finds as injustice done to the vulnerable. This is the passion and emotional outrage made her to be an author of four books and one among the international writers. She never diverts herself and remains untiring and ferocious throughout her writing. Her books are more veracious than mere books. The work of national award winning author has been recognised by government of India recently, had included four of her suggestions from *Bitter Chocolate* to the law of Child Protection in 2012, which is a result of her unremitting crusade. She won a national award for her work *Once was Bombay* and this is the book on which Atal Bihari Vajpayee stressed on in one of his speeches. Her work *Deaf Heaven* listed one among the international contenders for the Impac Dublin Literary Prize. All of her arguments point directly towards which, are to be deserved to get attention by everyone for the overall sustainable development of dirt-free and uncontaminated society.

Is there any other writer who is so powerful and bold enough to bring to the light such kind of sensible, contentious and controversial issues that need to be recognised like her in India?

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