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CULTURE, GENDER, LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE: A PARALLEL OBSERVATION IN THE INDIAN LITERATURE AND BRITISH

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, culture gender, language and literature is presented in the socio-linguistic point of view and analyzed in the complex relationship with gender perspective. Whether knowingly or unknowingly the gender aspects may enter into literature or culture and passed from one generation to another and be stabilized as identities. These identities may corrupt the minds of people especially children. When they learn things in their tender ages, they unknowingly learn gender differentiation. This gender discrimination is imprinted in their minds perpetually. Society should take care in establishing future generations with utmost care. When the perspective is failed the gender discrimination unknowingly will continue for generations.

KEYWORDS: *Language, Culture, Gender, Discrimination, and Socio-Linguistics*

The relationship between culture and language is always fascinating and continues to be fascinating as it shows the evolution of culture. One must observe the culture in order to find out the curious aspects of language. In this paper I mention culture as a synonym of acquired knowledge of society, functional aspect of society, a member of a broad group and categorizing the world around us. The high culture of society delineates the appreciation of language and literature. The coastal people of India express various names to express the coast. The rice rich states cherish various nouns to express paddy. English people have various expressions for snow where no such type of words can be found in the lexicon of Equatorial regions. Different people speak differently, as they think different and their experiences in life are different.

Socio-linguists will observe language in the perspective of biological models. 'She' and 'her' are indicative of females. 'He' and 'His' are for masculinity. 'It' and 'its' are for neuter. In English agreement with subject is based on noun but not with gender, whereas in Indian languages it is based on gender. The inflections end particularly with gender. For the task performed (Feminine Gender in Telugu: Ame thana pani chesindi), (Masculine: Athanu thana pani chesadu). This type of variations can be observed in English language also like a person can be addressed as 'Mr' for unmarried and married senses, whereas in the case of women, the same address changes as "Mrs" for married and 'Miss' for unmarried. Recently the discrimination is changed as 'Ms' for both married and unmarried woman. In mythology, women are depicted as devoid of any heroic proportions, either malicious or innocent for instance in Hebrew Bible, Greek Philosophical writings and in Indian Puranas; children's writings like Alice in Wonderland, and The Sleeping Beauty, etc., The female is referred as Second Sex, as the other man, or no-man, as it is imagined that 'she' lacks the male power and character. Thus, female is the negative binary of male. In such acculturation and conditioning, the brain of women is innately modified and the patriarchal ideology prevailed in the society. Male is depicted as active in society as well as in writing and shown adventurous, dominant and rationale whereas women are described in the negative portrait or quite opposite to these features like passive, egoist, timid, conventional, and emotional. Throughout history, women were denied objective status; she is shown as 'others'. In the words of Simon De Be Beauvoir's existentialist terms, *"Patriarchal ideology presents women as immanence, men as transcendence. Women internalize this vision and live in a state of inauthentic identity. To quote Beauvoir, —One is not born a woman; rather, one becomes a woman" (quoted. in Barry 130).*

Many words in English language are directly derived out of male words like and many male words are not equal to female words like a mistress is not equal to master, governess is not equal to governor. Until recent times career is reserved for men only for women career is added before them if they pursue. Again society

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talks about unmarried women but not about unmarried men. Recently many male dominated words are phased out of lexical world like police-men, and fire-fighters etc. The militia includes men and women but sisterhood does not include males. Many times unpleasant aspects are associated with women like Black-widow spider, Venus fly trap. This aspect made girl child consciously or unconsciously to accept masculine superiority and condition their mind to consider as inferior. This bad consciousness is the primary foundation stone for a male ruling. According to French feminists, this Andro-centric view influenced language. French feminists opined that male chauvinism made language as Phallogocentric. Lacan, in terms of Freud's theory of psyche and gender and, applies it to the dimension of language. According to psychoanalytical theories, the child is born as a sexless, neutral dimension. It does not realize its sex. The oedipal stage is important in Lacan's theory, as the male identifies himself with his/her father and girls with her mother as the family representative of the culture. The language that is promoted by its culture reflects the binary aspect like father/mother, masculine/feminine, active/passive, sun/moon, head/heart, intelligent/sensitive, emotional/reason, etc., The dominant features are attributed to masculine and sensitive features are attributed to feminine. Therefore, French feminists culminate language as Phallogocentric and the values attributed to language are also masculine in nature.

The use of written language is shaped and socialized into behavioural aspects through culture. The use of appropriate expressions, the social attitudes, beliefs, and values in the literature conveys the aspects of past, present and to some extent future aspects. In the Sanskrit dramas the higher caste people used Sanskrit, the lower castes and women use the language of Prakrit. In many prominent epics, women are described as sensuous, malice and epicure. Women are depicted as figurative. In the eyes of gender, the male populace always dominates females by quoting the unknown figures in the history. For ex: in a patriarchal society like India, always people utter the names of Sita, Savitri, and Ahalya to subdue their identity and feelings. The name becomes watchwords in popular language. Many elders also try to subvert the ideal aspects in the myths of India in a wrong manner. Subduing to the aspirations of male women is put under subordinate position. In many Indian epics the true meaning was always hidden and interpreted according to the whims and fancy of the male chauvinism. R.K. Narayanan touched the bottoms of the society in his writings. He echoed the voice of women in his 'The Dark Room' and the problems of women in their lives. Bunch of women writers added another dimension to

Indian Writing in English, They explored the area of female subjectivity in male patriarchal society. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala is the foremost among female novelists. She used comedy of manners of westerners in her novels and also she used Bildungsroman i.e. literary genre that focuses on the psychological and moral growth of the protagonist from youth to adulthood i.e. shift of character. 'Esmond in India', 'The Householder', 'Get Ready for Battle,''Head and Dust' are her famous novels. The House Holder was filed my Merchant D Ivory under the screenplay of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala.

Kamala Markandaya's 'Nectar in Sieve' and 'Some Inner Fury' is known for culture clash between Indian urban and rural societies. Rukmani in 'The Nectar in Sieve' represents the attitude of middle class women. Even though her situation worsens every time, she endures it with patience and hopes things will be better soon. Her other novels include 'Some Inner Fury', 'A Silence of Desire', 'Two Virgins', and 'Pleasure City.' Nayantara Sahgal's 'A Time to Be Happy', 'This Time of Morning', 'Storm in Chandigarh', 'The Day in Shadow', 'A Situation in New Delhi', 'Rich Like Us', and 'Plans for Departure' deals with the politics, and economic issues during the reign of Nehru and the crisis after his death.

William Butler deals with rapid industrialization and problems in Victorian Era in his works. Butler in his 'Leda and Swan' depicts the incident of Rape of Leda by Zeus and in consequence the birth of Helen, who causes the destruction for Trojans. This story proves that rape, abuse and power may cause the destruction of society. The same was also mentioned in the epic Mahabharatha through the character of Draupadi.

Another prominent Oscar Wilde, who heralded the Aesthetic Movement and supported the idea 'Art for Art's sake', depicted good verses bad, gender differences, German legend of Faust and Freudian trilogy 'id', 'ego' and 'superego.' 'In the Fisherman and his Soul', Oscar Wilde personified various types of women in his writings. The Mermaid is innocent, blonde, whereas the Witch is red haired, insincere and evil. The influence of the First World War, the concepts like racism, feminism, power, money mother and son relationship came into emergence. D.H. Lawrence, in his 'The Rocking Horse Winner' depicted a character called Hester an evil woman that ever can be described in the literature. Regarding Greek and Roman mythology are highly sexist. Abusive characters like Zeus and jealous characters like Hera are personified. Men are supposed to exploit women and their subordination where as women are born to undergo torments. Sky, heaven, and God are masculine whereas Earth is personified as woman. In many mythologies also women are personified as seductive, causing disturbance and immoral. Studies reveal that gendered language indicate derogatory with no pejorative implications but gradually gain them in society. Literature, language and society should carefully choose the words which may indicate the discriminating attitudes and hinder them enter into currency. Language is one of the agents of mankind that can be passed from one generation to another.

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