

# Issue of Gender Equality in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Contemporary World

Renu Kumari<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Richa Arora<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of English, Manipal University Jaipur

E-mail: <sup>1</sup>renujhahria3@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>richa.arora@jaipur.manipal.edu

<sup>2</sup>Head, Department of Arts, Manipal University Jaipur

---

**Abstract**—Gender equality is discussed worldwide and explored throughout either developing or developed countries in 21<sup>st</sup> century, identified as necessity whereas to some extent misused as well. Additionally it cannot be denied that the terms feminism and gender equality do not even seem to exist at few places.

It is incredible natural phenomenon to divide beings according to gender as male and female, so intricate at the same time simply created harmonious balance. Where both play incredible role to sustain the human existence very beautifully. One of the most triggered issue and challenge in 21<sup>st</sup> century of contemporary world is gender discrimination or gender equality. This paper is an attempt to unfold how contemporary novelists voice themselves and emphasizes the quest for meaning of life, identity and unfilled emotional life of the characters through the writing of Khushwant Singh and Shobha De based on their autobiographical work. Plethora of literature can be observed witnessing abundant research work done on feminism.

Reading two individuals in the light of their domestic and socio-cultural backgrounds presents vital reality of the sensitive aspects of human life and human association delicately. Both shows great understanding of the depth of the psyche of urban world. They tried to organize moral institutional orthodoxy of the Indian society, searching their identity in their own way.

**Keywords:** Experience, humanity, Journey, Literature, Emotions, Autobiography, Gender Equality.

## Introduction

Lives of an individual have substantial environmental influence as soon as by birth. The journey can't remain unaffected by the surrounding familial conditions in which a person lives and also society as well plays a major role. Life writer here assigns meaning to events, behaviour and physiological process which varies over the time, place, credence and prestige. Although, some people may describe their life as being ordinary while others may commit in a possession of an extraordinary life. Human life can be depicted cumulatively as a pilgrimage odyssey in a spiritual sense and progression towards senescence physically. It is applicable to everyone throughout life and includes equally to both the genders. Gender can be defined as a personal trade and

position in society. Gender identity is self-identified in nearly all instances, it is a combination of inherent and environmental factors. One gender is defined or influenced through social means "upbringing of an individual or effect of society" to an extent or capacity which can have an effect on character. Whereas gender role is manifested within society by observable factors such as behaviour and appearance. Society is a process rather than a thing or a motion rather than structure where group or organisation of people who share a common cultural and social background.

The idea of gender identity occurs through developmental factors of one's life. A life where emotions or behaviour have an impact by factors such as physical development, familial dynamics, cultural and social factors, which plays major part in self-identification. It is well known and accepted fact that life with achievements and having a successful carrier throughout is always witness various obstacles, hindrances and challenges. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied it is always backed by glory, satisfaction, perseverance and a role model for others. Autobiographies and literature by Khushwant Singh and Shobha De contain and provides a plenty of extremely important events of life, how they handle various experiences and also how they overcome challenges, it can both eliminating and rewarding, motivating and inspiring for the readers. Literature represents gender equally and shows nature comprises male and female as essential components of society and they complement each other essentially. Therefore, this writing comprises various issues of gender equality taken up from the journey of two Indian contemporary writers of different genders i.e. *Khushwant Singh and Shobha De*.

**Khushwant Singh** born on 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 1915 in a well to do and prosperous Sikh family. He spent his childhood in a rural village Hadali (Now in Pakistan) and Delhi, India and later moved to various places across the world like Canada, United Kingdom and France for professional reasons and educational purpose. Having a vast professional carrier he achieved various credentials on his name as Indian author, Lawyer, Diplomat, Journalist and politician. Although initial 40 years of his life he spent mostly wondering in search of his real

interest. Then he started his career as professional lawyer, later joined the India foreign services, and also worked as journalist in all India radio, eventually he moved to Paris and settled working in department of mass communication in UNESCO and writing.

Having lived both urban and rural life and exploring round the world Khushwant Singh writing covers the broad and varied minded people, he himself portrays the real picture of human relationships and focus sensibly the strength of females. For instance, he expressed genuinely that female is a gender with strength provided the role of society played well in providing positive and encouraging environment. In later part of his life he eventually started Indian journalism as editor and developed inclination towards novel writing. Writing was one of his best interests he explored in himself and then it was his Novel writings made him renowned all over the world. His relevant literature expresses purposeful character Bharati "Burial at Sea" witness women empowering. This novel narrated how a female prognostic character managed to break the deep rooted patriarchy and stood strong, self-independent and self-willed. Here the father of girl encourages her to dream big and think beyond, literature provides a new explanation to women empowerment and discourages gender inequality. He has written almost all possible and purposeful topics and events. He was a sensitive artist, used realism to present is humanistic eyesight and explore the realities of life. His priority as a person was to witness the truth. He has successfully depicted or portrayed the true picture of the modern day women, demonstrated that the social, political and spiritual behaviour of the Individuals can be so meaningful, if nurtured well and not very relevant to any specific gender. Khushwant Singh writing comprises vast variety of subjects including religion politics, Nature, Man-Woman relationship, jokes, and terrible tragedy of riots, about famous Indian personalities and so on. He was always honest and comfortable to share and present all the aspects of life beautifully and the writing is much enriched in autobiographical content and also his personal views and details of his life.

**Shobha de** is a former model, Copywriter, a journalist, a socialite, a script writer a novelist, most of her writing focused on different aspects of urban India. She is very well known for speak my mind attitude. She graduated in psychology from St. Xavier College Mumbai. She went on to pursue a career in modelling and made quite a fame for herself. She then got inclined towards writing and gained significant experience in print media. She headed top magazines like stardust, society and celebrity. Her major writings focus on politics, economics, society whereas relationships matters can be found frequently in her writings. She as a female writer focus mainly the lives of urban contemporary world. Her character as women have a strong sense of individuality and she commonly brings forth the social settings in which the women protagonists act and fight for their self-identity and assertion. She expresses the inner psyche of women in her novels and also presents their

fundamental problems and unique experiences. This notion of her writing is quite strongly visible in character of karuna where the character breaks the shekels of a conservative community. Karuna a prominent Bombay socialite is trying to flee the nightmare of the present by escaping into the past. An unhappy divorce and a succession of sordid affairs have left her bruised and battered and in an effort to forget, karuna begins writing her memoirs. As the story of her life unfolds we see how the gauche middle class girl metamorphoses into a star.

### Conclusion

Higher education and intellectual development has sharpened the observation of life and imparted a psychological depth of the humanity and equal empowerment of both the genders. Gender equality provides strength and courage to nurture harmony and success among the society. Gender equality would not only provide the freedom to live and to express but also equally contribute to prosperous society. Ultimately a sustainable future can be a major outcome expected. Literature has a major role to play in this balance of the society. Literature reflects the current state of the society and inspires the readers and the writers equally to imagine a society standing on the pillars of men and women, strengthened and prospered. Literature thus holds the power and responsibility to reflect a society that is gender neutral and provide a landscape for humanity to imaging a mixed society where everyone have equal opportunity whether men or women. India had seen many prominent women English writers in the contemporary world and loved there writings, and there are great writings many male writers which reflects women's perspective in a very positive way.

### References:

- [1]. De, Shobha. Selective Memory, Stories of My Life, Penguin Books. 1998.
- [2]. De, Shobha. Socialite Evenings, New Delhi., Penguin Books. India 1989.
- [3]. Singh, Khushwant. Burial at Sea. New Delhi: Penguin Books. India. 2005.
- [4]. Singh, Khushwant. Truth, Love and a Little Malice: An Autobiography. Ravi Dayal Publishers and Penguin Books India. 2002.
- [5]. Tripathi, JP. Humanistic Trends in Contemporary India English Fiction: A Critical Study. Ed KA Agarwal. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors. 2003.