

## CONTRIBUTION OF FEMINIST WRITERS IN ELIMINATING GENDER INEQUALITY WITH REFERENCE TO VIRGINIA WOOLF

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### Abstract

Gender inequality is discrimination based on sex or gender causing one sex or gender to be routinely privileged or prioritized over another

gender-based discrimination Gender disparity starts in childhood and is right now limiting the lifelong potential of children around the world disproportionately affecting girls

Around the world, while contexts and gender roles vary from place to place we can see that gender inequalities occur everywhere and at every stage of life beginning with childhood or even before birth

### INTRODUCTION

Gender differentiated societal constructs have been deeply entrenched within public life for centuries Throughout history women has always been suppressed to an extent be it in the lack of equal education or in her expected subservience Before the early twentieth century women had no right to education fundamental rights that were only given to them in the books Literature however reflects human experiences People who record these human experiences certainly try to bring change in the attitudes of the society with their new ideas and thinking, Gender and feminism correspondingly plays an important role in the twentieth century ,With the evolution of feminist theory the attitudes began to change in spheres such as university education were opened to women.

Feminist theory came as an answer that is a type of conflict theory that examines inequalities in gender-related issues, It uses the conflict approach to examine the maintenance of gender roles and inequalities.

It is a social and political investment that advocates the rights of women on the grounds of equality of sexes, It does not deny the biological differences between the sexes but demands equality in opportunities ,It loves everything from social and political to economical arenas, In fact feminist campaigns have been a crucial part of history bin women empowerment The feminist campaigns of the twentieth century made the right to vote public property work and education possible.

Feminism is not just important for women but for every sex gender caste creed and more, It empowers the people and the society as a whole. A very common misconception is

that only women can be feminist It is absolutely wrong But feminism does not just benefits women It strives for the equality of sex not the superiority of it.

Feminism takes the gender role which have been around for many years and tries to deconstruct them This allows people to live freely and empowers lives without getting tied them down by traditional restrictions In other words it benefits women as well as men for instance while it also advocates that why should men be the sole bread winner of the family It tries to give freedom to all.

Most importantly it is essential for young people to get involved in the feminist movement This way we can achieve faster. It is not less than a dream to live in a world of equality Thus we must all look at our cultures and communities for making this dream a reality

Virginia Woolf 25 Jan 28 march 1941 was an English writer considered one of the most important modernist twentieth century author and a pioneer in the use of stream of consciousness as a narrative device, Woolf encouraged by her father began to write professionally in the 1900, During the ikter war period Woolf was an important part of London literary and artistic society. Her first novel was published in 1915. The voyage is set Her best known works include the novel Mrs Dalloway [1925] was published.

Woolf became one of the central subjects of the 1970s movement of feminist criticism and her works have since attracted much attention and widespread commentary for inspiring feminism ,Talking about feminism we cannot go further without discussing Virginia Woolf ,Virginia Woolf through her work shows women's desire for freedom and independence ,Due to Woolf's discovery as a feminist author and ardent supporter of women's right during the so called wave of emancipation in the 1970s she became one of the major characters if the women's movement.

Fortunate to be born in a wealthy family in London ,Virginia was taught at home with her sister while her brothers were students at Cambridge university ,Fortunate to have an access to her fathers enormous library she read countless books ,Broadly encouraged by her father at a time when women are a disgrace in society, Later attending kings college in London she became aware of Women's education and their rights in society which inspired a lot of her works later ,A woman with a magnificent intellect married a political theorist Leonard Woolf who could be considered a feminist and gave Virginia her own space and independence to write and publish her great works, Leonard owning the Hogarth Press has published many of Virginians works.

Talking about her feminist writings. Her first feminist essay A room of ones own [1929]is considered as a milestone in the history of Feminism In the essay she quotes that A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction. Apprise the value of independence and freedom for a woman She looked into the lives and places of women the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as well as the barriers that prevented them from expressing themselves to critique the closed Oxford system that treated women like second class citizens She ends by encouraging all women to write and share their stories to be heard She wants woman to be free and independent and must be treated equally in the society Not to mistake

herher asmisandrist as she does not argue that women are better than men but equally important in her view a mind that could have both feminine and masculine parts is the most creative.

Her most famous novel Mrs Dalloway[1925] was structurally inspired by James Joyce's ULYSSES which Woolf praised and declared a masterpiece. The themes of female independence, Madness, Lesbianism, Isolation and Existential issues. It is said to be Virginia Woolf's most personal work since it reflects her own emotions. The work is an example of Stream of consciousness storytelling, the use of interior monologues and soliloquies.

Centralizing the protagonist of the novel is a 51 year old London resident Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway, wife of Richard Dalloway, conservative member of Parliament, mother of 17 years old daughter Elizabeth, is the heroine of the novel. Self-conscious about her role in high society, the story opens with Clarissa making arrangements for the party she is hosting that evening. Clarissa desires to bring people together and have a good time. The contrast is shown between the two genders where men are engaged in the discussion of the states and countries and the struggles of power and money. Whereas women thrive in establishing love and friendship and other relationships. This tells a lot about Clarissa 'society and her time'. Here women are shown to be concerned with the emotional aspect rather than being materialistic; Woolf has shown that unlike men, women fight against bigger forces of nature.

Knowing that her former suitor Peter Walsh is back from India, Clarissa was more attracted to Peter than her husband Richard, but marrying Richard has given her independence which was not possible with Peter; As she feels that, "In marriage little license, a little independence, there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house which Richard gave her and she him"; Peter's action of playing with a pocketknife expresses a lot about his personality which reflects a masculine threat to Clarissa in contrast with Richard who gave her honour and space, They both sleep in separate rooms and ask nothing from each other. Maintaining each other's independence, spending life instead of Peter, Clarissa chooses her freedom.

When it comes to loving a person; she was passionately in love with Sally Seton, she cherishes the kiss with her; Sally Seton is an independent woman with bold unladylike actions and statements of smoking cigars, bicycling around and once running in the corridor naked. Later when Clarissa met Sally at the party, she turned out to be a perfect housewife and a mother of five sons; A contrast to what she was. The Prime Minister in Clarissa's party is to show the symbol of male authority in upper class London society in contrast with Clarissa's feminine powers; The materialistic power of the Prime Minister with status, cars and clothes where Clarissa is capable of kindling people together with love, This shows Woolf's feminism where "Women sew, weave, kindle, create possibilities of emergence; possibilities of love; possibilities of seeing 'Life' as it is; moments of vision which they as women can offer to a world in which everything seems in a state of disintegration"; Far more admirable gender role for society.

The suicide of a shell-shocked World War 1 soldier Septimus Warren Smith reflects a sole apparent connection with Clarissa; Septimus escaped the horrors of life by killing himself and Clarissa was tempted as she too finds life empty and wants her soul to be set free like Septimus.

but her husband and daughter give her protection and reason for living which Septimus could not get from his wife, Lucrezia.

Talking of Sir Bradshaw who brings out the news of suicide to Clarissa is said to be ‘A good doctor yet to her obscurely evil without sex or lust extremely polite to women’; Clarissa can well imagine how such a man could grieve a man to madness and death.

Through the character of Mrs Clarissa Dalloway, Virginia Woolf makes powerful statement against the brutality that the male culture does; Strong resistance to the exercise of authority in human affairs is shown by this; It illustrates how women sustain a civilization males almost wholly destroy it.

## OBJECTIVE

1. To learn about Virginia Woolf;s Feminism through her writing “Mrs Dalloway.
2. To learn about the societies of Victorian age.
3. to learn about about the woman through the character Mrs Dalloway

## Data and Methodology

Data is collected from already published texts in the public domain .Literature sources can include textbooks ,government and private companies, reports, online papers and articles

Methodology-Literary research is used

## Review of Literature

1. Contribution of Indian women to English literature

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## Findings

1. It is concluded that literature not only portrays reality but also contributes to it via depictions of the thinking patterns and social standards common in society
2. The modern woman understands the complexity of human nature and are also aware that a person’s outward appearance does not reveal all about them
3. However the vast oral heritage of myths ,stories ,songs and fables was mostly preserved by women and as literacy spread poetry and plays were developed from these tales

4. The past two decades have shown a remarkable proliferation of female Indian authors working in English, with works seen widespread publication in India and beyond .
5. Most of them are from middle -class white women educated in the west,express their frustration with the oppression of traditional Hindu women of higher castes and classes through their works
6. Much value is placed to women’s writings as men and in terms of quality and selection it has entered modern era
7. As a result they deserve much of praise and recognition because they explore a wide range of topics and approaches including question of social class and personal history and identity
8. Indian women authors have made significant strides in the field of Indian novel written in English.

### **Brief Analysis of Feminist Literary Criticism**

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#### Findings

1. It is concluded that all delicacy ,vulnerable ,sensitiveness ,tolerance and considerateness ,etc are the products of society and culture ,are formed by male based on their needs but not the results of female’s specific physical structure
2. As a result ,Simon De Beauvoir suggested to use ‘‘the second sex ‘to substitute the term ‘female’
3. She believed that this substitution may probably weaken various prejudice and discrimination which are forced on women by traditional ideology and finally achieve the goal of gender equality.
4. Feminist Sensibilities in the post -Independence Indian English Fiction

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## Findings

1. Post Independence feminists began to redefine the extent to which women were allowed to engage in the work force
2. Before independence most feminists accepted the sexual divide within the labour force. However, feminists in the 1970's challenged the inequalities that had been established and fought to reverse them.

## CONCLUSION

The feminist writer Virginia Woolf through her character Mrs Dalloway depicts the condition of women in the Victorian age. All the characters are the result of the political atmosphere in Britain during the 1920's. The character Clarissa Dalloway portrays disillusionment where Clarissa belongs to a high class society who is interested in giving parties. She seems to be totally disillusioned with the reality and tries to keep herself concerned only with the surfaces of things. When the news of Septimus's death reaches her she tries to keep her calm which shows her coping mechanism. She also tries to ignore uncomfortable relatives of her surroundings, the residual horrors of World War 1, her own implied mental illness but instead engages herself at the superficial level of societal rules and expectations,

Septimus, on the other hand represents the breakdown of such a society, unable to live with the confinement and jumps to death. Clarissa does not face the same sort of confinement but her freedom is shown at times to be illusion.

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