

Minor Research Project- Summary

TOWARDS EMANCIPATION: SELF AND THE WORLD IN SELECT WOMEN AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

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Marginalised women and their stories form an important counter discourse within the predominant literary discourse of Indian Literature. The memoirs chosen for analysis in this paper are narratives of women whose reality places them in an unenviable position where they have to struggle against their own families and community as well as the larger society in order to create their own identities. The autobiographies under consideration are by women belonging to the margins of society. They are the twice marginalized, the gendered subaltern who boldly attempt to break the silence imposed on them, an attempt that clearly needs mention. There is an attempt to construct a new identity and voice for themselves and their community. They move from the position of mere ciphers who dumbly play as puppets to patriarchal society. The thesis explores the texts as bold specimens of cultural resistance. These subaltern voices, however, undergo the complex web of interventions and arbitrations ultimately problematizing the very essence of their existence. These autobiographies are not mere record of live events and personal things, instead, these could be treated as a representation of the lives of many such people, especially women, who were again subjected to

marginalisation even at the margins. The project is presented in five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 is the introduction chapter and it deals with the objectives and significance of the study.

Chapter 2 is a study of A Revathi's autobiography. The chapter is titled as "Trapped in a male body- A reading of *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*". This chapter tries to analyse Revathi as a representative and a mouth piece of the transgenders who still remain voiceless.

Chapter 3 analyses Nalini Jameela's autobiography, *The Autobiography Of A SexWorker*. The experiences of a sex worker is portrayed by Nalini Jameela and she questions the prostitute stereotype as portrayed by the male chauvinist society.

Chapter 4 is a study of C K Janu's autobiography, *The Mother Forest*. She represents the experiences of the adivasi community as a whole.

Chapter 5 concludes the project and gives a summary of the same.

The autobiographies of Nalini Jameela, A Revathi, and C K Janu become relevant as these are different kinds of first hand experiences. They are real women facing and reacting to resistance from the society. They did not plead for pity, rather they celebrated themselves. There was a kind of bonding between these women and the women who belonged to their respective communities or rather the communities which they represent- a kind of sisterhood or woman bonding. They did not celebrate their victimization, but overcame hazards and helped and motivated their fellow beings to do the same. These women mentioned in the study does not keep

themselves away from the mainstream. But the mainstream women or the so called elite class push these women to the margins. They are not single persons, rather they represent a community. They represent the whole women community, the women collective in general and at the same time they represent their own community in particular. They are marginalised within the women community because of their colour, class and creed. And they are marginalised and tortured within their community because of their gender. Articulation, to voice out protest, to speak out to celebrate is an easy task if the circumstances are in rapport. But for a woman who is subject to numerous kinds of tortures and marginalisation and oppressions, the act of articulation needs some kind of boldness, an inner strength and courage. These women are twice marginalised, gendered subaltern. They boldly attempts to break the silence imposed upon them, to create a new identity and voice for themselves and their community. They refuse to be mere puppets at the hands of patriarchal society. The process of self-actualization is fought with difficulty . Exploring selfhood by transcending the roles prescribed by the society is not an easy task for these individuals. These texts convey the lack of compromise of their narrators in assertions. They posit disturbing questions regarding the significations of the self. These are not merely retrospective summation of past events and experiences. These women genuinely wish for and tries for changing the state of affairs in the community in which they belong to. They wish to position themselves in a more liberated future, not only for their own individual benefit but for the welfare of their community as a whole.