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Speaking Beyond Borders: A Study of Select Women Writings Bridging Global Experiences of Womanhood



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Abstract

The present paper explores the select women writings and builds on the possibility of reading literature beyond national boundaries, specifically re-reading with a globalectical imagination inherent in these literary writings. By foregrounding the voices of women writers, the present paper brings the scope of global reading that allows possibilities to re-read terms like patriarchy, inequality, politics of gender, domestic violence to affect diverse readers. The research highlights how these writings break national boundaries and transcend local contexts in which they are set to offer scope to re-read text/s with an approach that can positively impact policy change in women empowerment and gender studies at a global level. While staying anchored with this approach, the work largely contributes to academic scholarship on women writings to foster cross-cultural connections and to question narratives that bolsters a condition/s for women to live under a patriarchal yoke. Where then the act of writing serves as textual therapy to usher a perspective, that calls for social change and start of conversations/dialogue around the question of women empowerment and gender based violence to readers all across the world.

Key Words :- women writings, globalectics, patriarchy, social change, politics of gender.

Introduction

The articulation of intersectionality between globalectical imagination and politics of gender largely brings in the intricacies of how society conditions and designs power equation between men and women to perform specific roles in the society. While recognizing the need to question and critique this equation, politics of gender when read with globalectical imagination brings to surface the role this complex matrix of power dichotomy plays in unbalancing these power equations between men and women. Keeping this power dichotomy at its center, we see how historically these unjust power relations have poisoned the contentment of women all across the world. Statistically speaking there is a lot of data regarding how women all across the world are/ have suffered through boorish partners, as a result of social conditioning that promotes sexual division of labor and gender based violence in various patriarchal societies all around the world. Delineating on the real functioning of how sexist beliefs and sexist division of labor operates. The chapter titled 'the basis of gendered power' by Felicia Pratto and Angela Walker, in a book *The Psychology of Gender* by Alice H. Eagly, Anne E. Beall and et. all. collectively discuss the way psychology operates to dominate women and create hegemonic binaries. Irrespective of the location and culture in which perpetrator of violence unleashes violence on the victim. While going deep down into the inner layers of understanding the violence and politics of power that operates while patriarchy navigates power dynamics with women. In such a context, one thing that comes out is how conditioning and the role of social institutions go a long way to design and school mental geographies of men that plays a striking influence on how they navigate future gender roles in the society. Building on that, Felicia Pratto and Angela Walker pull to surface the real reasons through which power is navigated by men by bringing in this role of conditioning and formative schooling men receive where they don't have much autonomy, but they continue to internalize these behaviors and make it part of navigating future gender role in the society. While building on this argument they write "When men are violent to women

with whom they live, they may be trying to regain power that sexist beliefs prescribe” (Eagly 247). Deconstructing these power binaries and power equation that operate here, globalectical reading with Politics of gender becomes an important tool that critiques these patriarchal structures in promoting rethinking and equity when it comes to power relations between men and women. It is here we see how select women writers of Kashmir, both by pandit and muslim women writers, paint their inner world and life they experienced in various parts of the world. We as scholars and literary surgeons look deep into the text to see how literature becomes a textual therapy to promote equity and egalitarianism in a world that needs literature to speak beyond borders. Thus born out of deep reflection and recollection of memories and lived experiences of these select women writers, comes out a literature that speaks powerfully against social construction of gender and the way patriarchy functions itself in various parts of the world. These writings though written from various frames of reference and various vantage points share strong points of convergence and divergence when it comes to offer a perspective that gives space to women’s voices that are often caught in spaces of margins. While writing from a local perspective yet at the same time keeping latent globalectical imagination at the center of writing about their experiences then becomes a tool to disrupt the way patriarchal structures function all over the world. One of the remarkable aspects of bringing in this question is the way these writings blend writing as a form of textual activism to usher a perspective that calls for social change and start conversations/ dialogue around the question of women empowerment to readers all across the world. These writings serve as textual therapies that go a long way to speak against the way power operates in gender relations and goes deep into pulling out many layers of this discourse. It is here one reads the functionality of these literary voices to help us imagine the way the world is seen and experienced by women for pushing forwards an egalitarian society where literature becomes a critical tool to plant empathy towards issues of women empowerment and gender equality all across the world.

Of Intersectionality and Globalectical Imagination

The question of intersectionality and power of building a discourse brings in the idea of how literature written from various vantage points builds fictive possibilities of creating global experiences that affect readers from all over the world. The

possibility of reading literature beyond national boundaries is what marks the impact of globalectical imagination inherent in the literary imagination of these women writers. The term is artistically derived from Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o book titled *Globalectics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing* that opens the scope to read literature from a global perspective, keeping in mind how literature affects emotions and human psychology from all over the world (2012). In such a context, the question of interconnectedness/ intersectionality remains at the core of inquiry into convergences and divergences of women writers who come from various socio, political, and cultural backgrounds. This intersectionality becomes a critical lens through understanding of womanhood achieves some sort of sublimity when seen from a perspective where reader response intervention pulls out various layers that helps to articulate the question of politics of gender and various experiences that shape this discourse. Reading it along with the Nugian notion of globalectics offers new critical ways to look at how these writings though written from local perspectives offers scope for global reception and relatability for fictive global readers to use these writings as literary therapies to solidify their understanding of how politics of gender works in this part of the world and how convergent points and possibilities of mapping convergent experiential points can add scope to work on relatability of women’s experiences residing in various parts of the world. While delineating on this, one is reminded of the complex historicity around the question of how women have historically bargained for their agency and rights across various socio, political, and cultural realities surrounding them. History then in such context becomes a strong testimony to the fact that various writers cutting across various socio political and national boundaries greatly contribute to building a powerful womanistic discourse that initiates new conversations around the question of womanhood located in multiple experiential convergent and divergent points. One then reads the diversity of scope such perspectives offer to locate and reread how universal themes of love, trauma and human experiences and emotions connect us at the human level. One also finds how such stories, though located in strict national boundaries, have a greater impact beyond national boundaries that narrating such stories becomes a form of global solidarity for ensuring human dignity in each and every corner of this planet. This global relativity gives a new chance to usher policy changes across various parts of the world where one expects serious poli-

cy revisions in the broader research areas of gender and women's studies. Thus this form of sharedness becomes somewhat sacred when one feels how one feels these writers come together to tell a heart touching human story that attaches intersectionality to a value to be articulated.

In such a context, *Future Tense* by Nitasha Kaul builds a powerful story around Shireen who we are given to understand that she unhesitatingly faces her uncle who had not facilitated any contact with her grandmother and together with wife (Shireen's aunt) they had kept her grandmother in a neglected state where she had died. Building on this memory, she writes that she could see that "her uncle strung together several contradictory sentences in a fumbling awkward manner" (Kaul 83). And after continuously arguing with her uncle she boldly says to her uncle that "I do know that you all have been unkind to her. She was not mad" (Kaul 84). With this in context, Kaul brings a question of resistance that Shireen demonstrates towards her uncle as a story that disrupts the power and hegemony of the male figure that is being questioned to a women who are largely silenced when it comes to major decisions of the family in all patriarchal societies around the world. Her strength is located in filtering out fault lines in her uncle's narrative and makes him accountable to injustice and lack of care that he has demonstrated towards Shireen's grandmother. The context also brings in the question of age and lack of care, marginalization and exclusion that elderly people face, it brings the context of reading them as unproductive and undesired people creating a debate around politics of care, ethics of relationship and morality and human values that govern humanness. Shedding light on these personal issues also brings in the question of politics of care and elderly care from a global perspective. Here in this textual act Kaul uses memory to reflect on this story that uses remembering against the natural human amnesia to raise voice against a human rights issues with male member of her family speaks volumes about Kaul's creation of a woman character that asserts her agency to speak about issues that are located in a national context but at the same time they have a human touch and feel that may connect readers from all over the world to empathize with the Shireen and her resistance to call out her uncle for being careless with an elderly women. Besides, she also questions his statement that her grandmother was mad. This questioning the system where patriarchal injections and conditioning often dismisses and labels like she is mad to silence and

muzzle the voices of women. She recalls her grandmother's narrative and becomes her voice to speak out to injustice that she had faced from toxic and inhuman collaboration of husband and wife to create an ambiance that suffocated Shireen's grandmother. Through this resistance and speaking against the violence done to human life Kaul brings in the context of reclaiming and asserting her agency when she strictly fights for accompanying them to Haridwar to do religious ritual for her grandmother. She resists her uncle's gatekeeping and her patriarchal mindset that had created friction in her life to freely express herself. One sees how faith intersects to heal Shireen by revisiting her grandmother's memory and one also sees how these sacred religious places have a strong function to heal and calm people when it comes to facing a situation of adversity. But one of the remarkable aspects here is how a narrative set in a local context, exposes the universality of experiences that goes a long way in promoting literature as a source of opening dialogue and conversation around issues that women face all across the world. It is here one finds how gynocritical imagination with which these narratives are written intersects with globalecological imagination to give voices to issues that are global in nature.

Of Identity, Womanhood, and Speaking Beyond Borders

While building on the idea of womanhood and intersectionality of globalecological imagination inherent in these texts. We see how Sudha Kaul's *The Tiger Ladies* brings the interconnectedness of human experiences by bringing in a woman's perspective on the idea of displacement and migration and meaning of loss that she feels for the pandit community in Kashmir valley who had to face lot of hardships as they were pushed to leave their homes in Kashmir in trying 90's in Kashmir. While reflecting on these memories she writes that "Do we come from a community that no longer exists except in the minds of its people?" (Kaul 214). One notes how the idea of home exists in the fluid state that the reader feels the connection that the idea of home has with the larger debate around the question of identity and question of memory. It is here one begins to articulate how the question of fractured sense of belongingness is reflected that largely talks about the identity of the pandit community who feel anchorless when it comes to their roots and identity that they have lost amidst chaos that engulfed the valley. The presence of nostalgia in such a context seems to be an active aspect of this displacement that largely solidifies the impact

this cultural erasure and feeling of disconnectedness with their culture brings in the pain and trauma that is associated with this displacement and loss of home. It is here that writing then in such a context serves two functions. One is that it serves as the tool of catharsis that brings in the release of emotions and on the other hand, it brings the context of writing taking the role of resistance towards forces that led to the displacement of Kashmiri pandits from their homeland and writing in such context becomes the tool to act as antidote to natural process of amnesia. While reading these experiential points from a globaleclectical frames of reference, one reads the interconnectivity of these narratives that powerfully brings out the fragmentation and strong sense of fractured identity that largely remains an interconnected experience as it moves beyond the national boundaries and assimilates the question of home, exile, homelessness that are global issues and countless people from all over the world feel the emotionality and life experiences associated with these actual realities. It is here one finds the globality of such experiences as these experiences are global in nature and they have a potential to touch the global readership to rethink ways these issues might find relatability in these imagined global readers. Here one finds the close resonance with what Rabindranath Tagore had to say about how we should read and consume literature. He writes "All I have wanted to say is that just as the world is not merely the sum of your plough field, plus my plough field, plus his plough field—because to know the world that way is only to know it with a yokel-like parochialism—similarly world literature is not merely the sum of your writings, plus my writing, plus his writings. We generally see literature in this limited, provincial manner. To free oneself of that regional narrowness and resolve to see the universal being in world literature, to apprehend such totality in every writer's work, and to see its interconnectedness with every man's attempt at self-expression—that is the objective we need to pledge ourselves to" (Banerji 288). Thus in order to problematize and understand the rich tapestry of globaleclectical imagination or global reading of such perspectives by women writers. One can imaginatively understand the impact of these writings by visualizing a convex mirror that offers a powerful perspective to articulate how convergence and intersectionality becomes a powerful textual act. Visualizing ourselves as literary surgeons we can then imagine these literary writings as convex lens and latest thematics/issues inherent in the text as light rays that pass through the lens. Since one is given to

understand how a convex lens refracts the light rays and pulls them together at a unified point. One in such context reads literature as a lens, that pulls various socio, political, and cultural experiences shared by the writers and bolsters a situation where interconnected meaning and convergence of experiences cooks a global perspective that refuses to paint literature from a local perspective and thereby offering wide range of possibilities of reading the convergent points that enrich our reading of literature with more sharedness and deep human connection. By throwing divergent points away, such reading not only adds to the intensive reading of these texts, but it also nurtures empathy and interconnectedness that encourages cross conversation and inclusivity on issues at a global level.

Delineating further on this discourse, there seems to be somewhat striking perspective that Koul shares at the end of her memoir which largely bring in the context of experiences that primary seem to drawn and inspired by the local/national experiences but at the same time they transcend these boundaries and become successful to give voice to global issues like politics of gender, question of power, and greater idea of identity that affects larger and diverse communities across the world. It is this intersectionality that becomes important in the context of problematics in systems and structures that fuel inequalities and marginalization. What stamps this analysis is when Koul writes that "Not everyone will benefit from peace, I think to myself " (218). Koul thus brings in the structural inequalities that go a long way in bolstering situations and ambiance that manufactures possibilities of violence. While reading these lines with a global frame of reference, we get to the context of how peace will not serve the interests of everyone. It brings the question of capitalism that benefits from the situations of unfreedom from all across the world. If one takes the experiential load and context of this statement out, we get to the point where we read this statement in context of politics of gender that helps us envision the various factors that are rooted in class, gender, caste, region and other systems and structures that prevent women to live life of dignity, honor and utmost freedom. That prevents women from any form of violence that is unleashed towards them. Because peace, equality and women's equity and gender equality will not suit the interests of everyone. Building argument around the same thought leads to the prognostication of the idea that peace, if then read from a gender perspective, brings in

the complex web of intersectionality of power imbalances in patriarchal societies. When women live in patriarchal societies they experience very little opportunities of peace and the result is that an unequal power equation continues to operate in the family where women are denied agency when it comes to taking major decisions in the family. Besides, if one looks at the global workforce and participation in the public sphere, we get to see that there is still dominance of masculine imagination that dominates these structures and how would peace in such a context serve women where the majority of attention and space is controlled by patriarchy.

When Text/s Speaks to Patriarchy and Power

The act of writing even though emanating from localized and lived experiences of writers becomes very significant. As it brings some sort of textual resistance that becomes an active part of textual strategy to respond to power structures that muzzle and carpet voices and issues of women all across the world. While delineating this textual resistance we see how this resistance unfolds in a different manner when we read it through the poetic expression of Naseem Shafaie. Naseem Shafaie gives a poetic touch to the idea of displacement and trauma that operates at multiple levels. Through her poem titled "Admonition" in poetry collection titled *Neither A Shadow Nor a Reflection* Shafaie writes that

"Don't send a letter to me

Don't send

the address you wrote it on is no longer mine".

There seems to be the somewhat rejection of the past that brings in the question of trauma that has not been addressed. Somehow the reader's response intervention brings in the association of home with the idea of security, stability and larger identity that women have with the world. One is given to understand some traumatic situation, which the reader presumes to be her breaking off with her partner, or a special case of women in a dysfunctional and toxic relationship and her refusal to stay with him. Thus in such a context, one reads some sort of resistance to reject the unequal power relationship she had with her partner. Feminist scholarship somewhat celebrates this step towards reclaiming and taking her autonomy. And it largely builds a space for women to resist abuse in any form. Therefore, there seems to be somewhat emotional autonomy that the speaker feels when she says to her partner that he should not

send me any letter and as she does not have it. She refuses this tactic on the part of her toxic partner to control her life, but she is very clear about not getting deluded with the intention of him reaching out. The refusal to give him an address speaks volumes about her desire to reclaim her autonomy. There seems to be the use of deliberate silence that she prefers, and it seems to stay away from any form of toxicity that would have been invited from her toxic partner. One of the remarkable points that operates here is how society always pushes women to forgive and forget trauma and then we see how she does not accept this decision from her partner speaks volumes about the level of heightened awareness that asserts her self-confidence. Thus we see how patience and endurance is rejected at the cost of bolstering a condition that was critical for her emancipation and her self-awareness. If one reads another part of a poem and forgets the context above, we also get the imaginative and reader response possibility to read these lines from particular to general level. Where one finds these lines quite interesting when read from a global perspective.

"My address not yet restored.

Just one identification

with me, the only one I have In high waters I am
Shattered by the storm living in water

Dying every second with water.

The stone I was tied to is also drowned in the deluge.

I have no address don't send me a letter" (Shafaie 68).

The loss of somewhat stable identity seems to be the primary experiential reality that is shared, as these lines are filled with vulnerability that has been kicked as the speaker navigates different identity after she resists any possibility to reconnect with the oppressor. The strength to come out directly and say that the speaker has no address refers to an emancipatory situation where women caught in traumatic situations break free from the chaotic life and refuse to adhere to the patriarchal structure. Since water is largely a symbol that is connected to life, we get an idea that her engagement with water is an act of rebirth of her spirit, so that she comes out as powerful with an address of her own. With a space of her own. Presently the reader presumes that she had been living with the partner and she doesn't want to be associated with that address any more. The experience that can be read through the lines like "I am Shattered by the

storm” and “Dying every second with water” are largely experiences that can be rooted with womanhood navigated in situation where there are deep inequalities, and a system to muzzle and carpet voices of women who face these situations. Reading these lines from a global and comparative perspective one finds how such experiences are given voice and space through poetic expression that bring out global realities of women who navigate their life under different traumatic situations. And one finds how silence is used as a weapon to regain autonomy and control over her life and this certainty, inner calling and sense of heightened sense of self-awareness reflects the deep desire and call to stay away from the tormentor and craft a new life for herself where she will have designed a new life herself that will have nothing to do with the memories of the tormentor. Thus one finds how such narratives, though rooted in personal memories and individual experiences, go a long way in demonstrating some form of textual resistance to structures that muzzle and carpet the voices and issues of women. Yet at the same time one sees how the presence of intersectionality becomes powerful when such narratives enter into some sort of imagined conversation with each other and therefore offers scope of relativity to the global reader to relate to the mentioned experiences from their own positionality.

Building further on this idea, *Lost in Terror* by Nayeema Mahjoor brings in textually that rewrites the female body with gynocritical imagination blend with a sense of resistance to question the relationship that the main woman character had with her husband named Asad. She writes about the toxic masculinity and aggression that brings in the way masculinity is used to control women and hijack their agency. The question of Asad’s control over her asserts the idea of her aggressive behavior to control an unequal power relationship that privileges male over female in the relationship they had. The exposition becomes a powerful tool to write her traumatic memories that have been silencing her so that she does not resist the abuse she faced from her husband. Mahjoor while writing about this toxic and traumatic relationship with Asad depicts the story with graphical and pictographic and photographic memory, clearly documenting and mentioning every single detail that she remembered. Reflecting on one such incident, she writes of breathlessness when Asad tried to impose on her forcefully while Asad found her behavior as insulting to his masculinity. While documenting the aftermath of one of the traumatic

and insulting relationship with Asad and bringing those memories alive with fire that reader feels while getting absorbed with such painful memories, she writes that “ I went numb and silent, I wanted to vomit all over the wooden floor, on the blanket, his clothes and on the book on successful marriage that had been a part of my trousseau” (Mahjoor 40). While delineating on the violence that women character experiences in this narrative, one is pulled towards articulating a powerful intersection of masculinity and perpetuation of violence that operates here. Therefore, In a significant work on how traditional patriarchy works to marginalize and oppress women, Vladislav Krivoshechekov, Olga Gulevich, and Ilia Blagov in their paper titled ‘Traditional Masculinity and Male Violence Against Women: A Meta-Analytic Examination’ delineates on various layers of understanding the origins and motivations behind the perpetuation of violence by men towards women. While treating this issue with a global perspective keeping in mind that violence that is unleashed against women remains largely a global problem and traditional masculinity becomes a great contributor to the way this violence is faced by women all across the world. While delineating on this issue towards the discussion /conclusion section of their paper, Vladislav writes that “ traditional masculinity does not distinguish between close and distant women. Men with a high level of traditional masculinity may view any woman either as an object for potential sexual relations... or as a person who occupies low levels of the social hierarchy” (Krivoshechekov 02). Thus with the act of writing her personal experiences and sharing it with such tonality and assertion. Mahjoor rewrites female experience that largely gets carpeted because of patriarchal pressure that women have to perform according to set rules and principles dictated by toxic masculinity that ignores women’s suffering and considers women in a lower category of power triangle in the society. One also reads how she as a writer pushes forward the critique of marriage that exists within the ambit of toxic masculinity and patriarchy that forces men to entrap women and complicate their life both physically and emotionally. Therefore pushing forward the need to bring empathy and equity in relationships so that they are free from violence. However, resistance to patriarchal control and rewriting women’s lives under the condition of physical male dominance demonstrated through the character Asad serves as a weapon to question and critique traditional masculine behavior that provokes men to emotionally manipulate and violate women’s

right to live with dignity enshrined in human ethics. The shedding light on such violence serves the purpose of speaking back to patriarchal phantasmagoria where anger is used as a tool to suppress women and muzzle voices of women. It is also here that one reads the silent assertion that calls for the need of empathic men who use love as a strategy rather than violence to control their women by imposing stereotypical behaviors that patriarchal has conditioned them to force on others. Thus, one clearly reads how gender roles are designed by the process of socialization and how women writers do a great service to discourse of egalitarianism by bringing in the need for more equity in the way gender roles are received in the society. Therefore, reaffirming the importance and significance of female literary scholarship brings in questioning the hidden fault lines in institutions where such writings serve the functionality of literary therapies to usher change in the society and influence global readers on the importance of love and understanding in building human relationships. Then in such context, one reads the greater scope and significance these writings have when it comes to sharing stories of women all across the world and how such stories need to reach global readers and policy makers who are working in the area of gender studies and women's studies to bolster space for more equity and egalitarianism in the world. This globaleclectical approach brings to focus and limelight the humanness and convergent experiential points that can go a long way in promoting egalitarianism and gender equality all across the world.

Conclusion :-

Thus to conclude it can be said that these select writings deal with the idea of politics of gender by bringing in a variety of experiential points that go a long way in creating a distinguished discourse around how these writers write about the condition of womanhood located in various socio, political and cultural settings. Womanhood navigated under various social, cultural, and political conditions takes a central attention when it comes to documenting their personal narratives where writing achieves some form of resistance to free women from the brutality of toxicity that patriarchy promotes to hack the agency of women. Moreover, the narratives written by these writers also help readers visualize what different women do in various social and cultural conditions and navigate their daily lives. To be specific here, one could say how these texts become expository to bring to surface the layers and intensity of violence women go

through. It is here one finds how these texts add to the visibility of women's issues across different parts of the world. It is here one also recognizes how such writings also build and contribute to strengthening the tradition of female writing when the historical marginalization and invisibilization of women is kept in context. Thus delineating on the question of how these writings build a powerful and weighty discourse that usher's new ways of visualizing how women issues need to be navigated, both in policy and in practical life. We are pushed to critically read these writings with globaleclectical imagination that offers the possibility to read these texts with a global perspective. It is here one finds how such writings even though set in local contexts offers scope to read these writings as global texts that offers a fictive possibilities to comment on the universal experiences of issues that women across all over the world might be able to relate. This global reading allows possibilities to re-read terms like patriarchy, inequality, migration, politics of gender, domestic violence etc to affect diverse audiences. It is here one reads how these writings break national boundaries and transcend local contexts in which they are set to offer scope to work on women empowerment and gender studies at a global level. It is here one reads how these texts offer a scope to a more egalitarian world when it comes to women who suffer under the patriarchal yoke. One finds how such writings have a transforming and empowering potential to bolster change at the global level.

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