

Societal Framework- Equalized Gender Concern in The Selected Novels

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Abstract

The history of gender concern in literature has come a long way to bring a change in the understanding of equality and the differentiation of sex and gender. Sex is the variation in the biological and gender which is important and associated with identities and socially constructed roles. Depending on time, women have developed their demands to attend equality and have developed many platforms that help women to attain their basic rights as human beings. Women have always been viewed as the weaker sex and inferior to that men. Any movements that help women to achieve their equal rights and helps them to understand their individuality, ambitions, and dream are important and their place in society matters as much as men, and these fall under Feminist movements. Throughout history, works in literature have paved the way to bring out how society has placed women and the different roles played by them and how it impacts society. The types of waves in the feminist movement have traced down the history of the growth of women in different stages. Gender concerns in literature have given different insights and knowledge about how women have lacked their basic rights, and have shown the different dimensions of living life on their terms just like men.

Keywords: Individuality, Feminist, Sex, Gender Concern.

Jhumpa Lahiri is a prolific writer born in London and raised in Rhode Island. The author has penned down the characters in the novel *The Lowland* in such a way that helps us to visualize the narratives in our minds to experience the emotion and the trauma faced by both the male and the female characters. The novel *The Lowland* emphasizes mainly the female character and how life takes its turns for the decision made by the female character Gauri Mitra. Analysing the novel having gender concerns in mind the main focus will fall on only the female character but in this novel, the concern falls equally on both male and female characters. Jhumpa Lahiri a prominent and leading author during her time talked about identity issues, loyalty, freedom, and equality through her works.

The Lowland, the title represents the two ponds in Calcutta the place where the male character Subash and Udayan the two brothers grow up. The brothers have different personalities they care for and respect each other for the decision they make in life. Udayan who is more conservative stays back in his hometown and joins the Naxalite movement and is killed by the police for his radical stand. Subash who is much concerned about his future chooses his academics and moves to America and continue his study with a scholarship. He returns when he receives the news about the dismissal of her brother. Gauri who is the wife of Udayan, who has made choices to marry him despite the family concern, and who had more dreams

for her future is left alone as a pregnant woman and as a widow. The author here brings in the ideology of a woman having no life once her husband dies, that one should shut her life to darkness and live the rest of her days without any hope for a better life. But through the younger brother's character, we could see how he tries to take Gauri out of the place where she is not respected by his parents, and for how she is being ill-treated. The trauma she undergoes after the death of her husband, and how she is treated, and who is not given any basic rights to live a normal life is the reality in disguise. She then leaves to abroad with Subash and agrees to marry him for her betterment. Her needs and priority change once she gives birth to her daughter Bela. We could see that the narrative of a female character has taken a drastic change in this novel, once the baby is born it is the female who has to sacrifice their carrier and their ambition. Looking at the narratives the author used to outline the female and the male character identically undergoes the trauma. The perspective of the novel can be changed, but the ideology that we understand is how the men and women take their circumstance under control and works equally towards the betterment of their life. Subash is the one who raises her daughter, Bela despite him having an affair with Holly he only makes decisions according to his priority. Gauri is a mother and desires to study further about philosophy and that takes a turn and distances herself from her daughter. And later we could see that she leaves her daughter and moved to California. Bella is living with the fact that her stepfather is her uncle and her mother has left her behind. This affects her life in many ways, and later she gives birth to a baby girl and will promise not to get back to her mother but later she changes her mind and ask her to meet her daughter Meghna. Subash who needs a companion to spend his life decides to marry Elise in the later part of the novel.

The interrelationship of men and women can be analysed by the understanding of feminist theory, which importantly focuses on women. Absolute knowledge is derived from the experiences we have in our life. And the experience is frame worked either by society, culture, or the family. And the constant understanding of men equally contributes to the circumstance and also faces the consequences for the decisions they make. The feminist theory tries to understand and establish a certain perspective that is women-centered. Analysing this novel, the understanding of men and women have a distinct role to be played in society and family. We could see through the character of Subash that he prioritizes his family and marries Gauri, and she has her priorities and decides to leave her daughter and move to California for her studies. The men and women have impartially withstood the trauma of their gender. In both the character the author experiment with the decision that it can be taken only by men and not by women, as it is unusual for a woman, a mother, or a widow to leave her daughter for her own sake, and it was not a compulsion for Subash, the stepfather to take care of his brother's daughter. Circumstance, society, and once norm plays a very important role in the decisions one makes in life. This theory brings the difference between men and women, which are made by the social institution. The gender inequality, we witness is constructed by society which is taken its differences between men and women equally. Exploring the theory of gender inequality, and gender concern are more focused on equality in general having the novel characters in concern. It helps in understanding the perspective of male and female, the position and the experience they endure in life. Some approaches come under this theory to trace down the difference and the changes that take place when it is women and not men and vice versa. The biological, sociological, and existential difference takes a long stand in placing men and women in an institution where they take charge of life according. We can compare the well-being of Gauri, Udyan, and Subash in the novel. Where the women bear the child before marriage and also without getting married, whereas Gauri's daughter is

conceived without getting married and leaves the person and decides to keep the child. Where the choice is made by the person herself and not by anyone else, likewise knowing the reality and the respect he has for his brother, Subash decides to marry his wife and accept the consequences that come along with the decision he made. This explores gender inequality that has come a long way in accepting and knowing the fact inequality is for both male and female, it is more of equality for both. The trauma that the characters undergo in this novel brings out the fact of the equal idea of understanding reality. Through the characters in the novel, we could get the essence of the different emotions they go through to achieve what they wanted to do in life.

Contemporary writer Amulya Malladi portrayed different shades of characteristic in the novel *A House for Happy mother*. The novel is analysed in a gender concern perspective. In the following paragraph the characters and the decision they make for giving equal important for both the gender roles in the novel. The characters in this novel are constructed in such a way to bring in the detailed social construction that makes the characters to behave in certain way according to their life expectation. The two main characters that constrained to have the choices according to their life, one of the main male character Madhu who made a choice to live a life without having baby, and his wife Priya who wanted to have the baby through surrogacy. Through these two characters we could understand the deep constrained societal concern with the couple for having a child after marriage and they are not a happy couple when they choose not to have kids in their entire life. The choice in their life should be mainly valued for the purpose for their wellbeing in life. Both the character has the freedom to choose and expect their need in life to make an impact only on them and not by the influence of society. The novel takes the reader through the process of being an Intended parents and Asha who choose to be the surrogate for the couple. The freedom to make choice in life is the most important aspect for both the gender. When it is concerned with motherhood, it should be the women to make the choice for her body but not forced to the societal concern for the women in the family. Gender concern are equal when it comes to life decision, from both the genders. The societal gender structure are organised in such a way to benefit for one, but analysing characters through the gender concern that narrative have changed for the constructed perspective of the gender concerns.

The authors use major human emotions like death, love, betrayal, and marriage to give the idea about how one's decision matters in life no matter their gender, and how both genders will equally share the benefits and importance of the choices that they make to fulfil their needs. The patriarchal concerns are man-made and how they have constrained both genders in such a way as to stop them from attaining their needs and their decision will only be based on it. It focuses mainly on the fundamental qualities which affect sexual differences, and cultural and historical differences. Depicting the work, *The Lowland* and *A House for Happy Mothers* that regularizes both male and female concern in the novel and tries to equally share the consequence that is faced by the characters for the choices they make in the novel.

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