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Feminism in the Selected Novels of Anita Desai

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Abstract:

This paper aims to critically analyse the selected novels of Anita Desai (*Cry, the Peacock, Fire on the Mountain, Fasting, Feasting, and The Zigzag Way*) from a feminist perspective. Desai is a noteworthy writer of Indian origin who captures the development of feminism in society in her novels. She addresses the economic, social and psychological implications of objectionable patriarchal norms and suppressed femininity via the thought process and action of her characters. This article strives to trace the gradual development of feminism and the consciousness it generated in society towards the issues of suppressed femininity. Through Anita Desai's novels, we can progressively determine the noticeable changes in society from a feminist point of view. Desai captures the inner turmoil an individual endures due to suppression of self-expression and marks the changes in their psyche in her writing. The importance of self-identity is prominent in each of her novels.

Keywords- Femininity, Patriarchal norms, Patriarchy, Feminist perspective, Social expectations

Feminism, originally, was just about getting women equal rights as men but, in due course, it was realised that both men and women needed liberation from their respective gender-based restrictions. Feminism is a belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. The Merriam-Webster dictionary puts it as the theory of political, economic and social equality of the sexes. The term was originally "*feminisme*" as coined by the French philosopher Charles Fourier, in 1837. Since then, it has undergone a considerable amount of change at the hands of various thinkers all over the world to be known today as Feminism. Feminism, as understood today has developed significantly from what it used to represent back when the concept of feminism was conceived, though the core concept remains the same-equality. From the beginning, it has primarily been a literary concept. It has always been a theory that was born out of social causes. Publicised via literary texts, it took life in physical changes it brought in society.

Anita Desai's novels show their characters particularly women as facing conflict due to unresolved issues arising out of a lack of understanding regarding 'the female'. A female as a person worthy of being taken seriously has always been questioned in patriarchal society. We see in her novels a lack of outlet for self-expression and understanding that women are subjected to, which leads to their devaluation and degradation. However, what's noteworthy, regarding capturing the spirit of feminism in Desai's work is her impartial portrayal of society. She includes various instances of men being victimised by patriarchal norms as well. In her novel, we see families following the patriarchal rule without question to the extent where it dictates that a male child be provided milk, fruits, sweets and fine dining, while a female child is instructed to live without such luxuries. A male child is specifically pressurised to become the breadwinner of the family and be responsible for the financial condition of his family whereas a female child faces no such pressure but is forced to remain minimally educated since, as females their existence matter only in their alms of cooking, child rearing and taking care of the elderly. The unrest and struggle rising in women and men due to the unjust practices in patriarchy are precisely what is captured in Desai's writings.

It needs to be realised that feminism is not against men, boys, masculinity or manhood. But, what it is against is male glorification at the hands of female deprecation; male independence at the hands of female subjugation. Feminism stands for equal rights to study, have career and travel safely without judgment. It stands for equal pay for equal work, equal treatment for equal skills, and equal respect for equal position. Feminism strives to remove all the political, social and economic reasons that confine women and men to preconceived boundaries and restricts them to gender-specific expectations. Another issue that needs to be understood is the naming of the theory as "Feminism" and not "Equalism" or any such equivalent. The reason firstly is that historically women have faced suppression at the hands of patriarchy and male views and expectations to a much greater and varied degree than what men have faced due to patriarchy, making women the suppressed gender at large. Secondly, since the movement is about uplifting the deprived and suppressed in the gender sphere, it will not be distinct that females are the repressed ones if it is named Equalism or any such equivalent. Yet another aspect of feminism that has gained importance is the recent development in feminism where it seeks to create an environment where a woman as well as a man may work successfully in sectors that are perceived as a feminine or a masculine line of work without any gender-based distinction and have no qualms about it. It needs to be understood that male and female are like the two sides of a coin wherein one side cannot be kept standing while the other is pushed down. This article aims to critically analyse Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock*, *Fire on the Mountain*, *Fasting, Feasting*, and *The Zigzag Way* from a feminist perspective and highlights the struggles that women face in order to have the same recognition as men.

The novel *Cry, the Peacock* (1963) came out at a time when feminism was in the "female" phase. The Female Phase is a period of time in the history of feminism which is marked by women writers rejecting both imitation of the male writing style and protest against wronged

womanhood via the use of dramatisation and took to describing female experiences as a valid form of autonomous art and developed their own form, style, and diction. This novel revolves around a young impressionable woman, Maya. It portrays her struggles as a woman and traces her gradual degradation. In this novel, Maya the protagonist struggles with three major problems- Electra complex, her obsession with a dark prophecy she received as a child which stated that fourth year into her marriage either she or her husband would die, and the consequences of being married to a guy who in addition to being much older than her ignored her existence, disregarded her opinions, didn't take her as his wife, and called her ideas flimsy and nonsensical. Her marriage with Gautama was more of a financial arrangement than an actual marriage. Gautama took care of Maya by getting married to her and giving her the socially respected status of a wife, and Maya's father kept funding Gautama's mother's social service activities. Even though Maya's father loved her and spoilt her with affection, she was treated like a responsibility that needed to be transferred to a husband, rather than an individual with thoughts in her own right. This is one issue that feminists strive to highlight and change. It points out how the injustice woman receive gets drilled in from such a tender age that when they grow up they are not even fully aware of the folly in their social beliefs and in the treatment they receive because they know no other way. It shows how parents who are entrusted with the responsibility of nurturing a healthy responsible citizen treat their female child as delicate decorative possession rather than as strong individuals who can have successful careers.

Gautama married Maya because his mother got financial help from Maya's father and Gautama himself had gained fame due to having worked under Maya's father, who was an influential lawyer. He couldn't refuse the proposal of marrying Maya in light of the benefits he had received from Maya's father, and due to a sense of an obligation he felt towards his mentor. While Maya, who was suffering from Electra complex married Gautama under the influence of her psychological state of mind. Maya wanted Gautama to take as much interest in her as her father did, she wanted to be loved and accepted by him, but he saw her as nothing more than an unreasonable inferior human, being a woman, who kept demanding attention like a spoilt child. She wanted an emotional and physical consummation of their marriage, but she was denied attention. The only time he would engage with her was when they had their tea and meals. This made her lonely and her neurosis developed.

His coldness and incessant talk of cups of tea and philosophy in order to not to hear me talk, and talking reveal myself. It is that – my loneliness in this house.
(14).

Gautama cared for her only as one would a spoilt stubborn child. He had no attachment to her as a husband. He remained oblivious to the injustice he had done to her by marrying her and rejecting her as a wife and in not giving her the company she deserved. Their lack of communication and her being childless deepened her loneliness in their marriage. She grew neurotic as a result of excessive negligence. As she gradually remembered the prophecy she had received as a child, she grew frantic and obsessed with it. She could not share her dilemma with

Gautama since he rejected all her emotions as nonsensical and never let her express herself. Thus, having ignored Maya in all their years as a married couple, Gautama remained immersed in his career and was oblivious to her illness and her mental torture. This aspect in the novel shows how men subject women to loneliness in marriage, and how damaging that can be to a woman's mental health. Maya subconsciously following the unstated rule of patriarchy stayed and tried to deal with her issues alone. In the final chapters, however, it is learned that Maya completely lost her sanity and pushed her unaware husband in a frustrated attempt to be understood, killing him in the process without intent, for he fell off the parapet of their roof. She goes down to check how Gautama was but finding him immobile and dead she still doesn't comprehend her act.

In an ironic turn of events, she becomes like Gautama in the sense that Gautama always admonished her about being too sensitive, but here she was, not affected by his death at all. Desai here shows the utmost longing that Maya has to remain strong and understand her husband and be understood by him. Her anguish at Gautama's rejection and her persistence to still seek his affections how both a feminist yearning of being accepted for who she is and a subconscious fear, induced by the patriarchal values she was brought up with, of living without a man in her life. It goes on to uncover how the image of women as unreasonable and illogical beings can suppress an actual mental issue and lead to disastrous outcomes. Through Maya's struggles, Desai tries to bring to the fore the desperate attempts of women to be understood in their own right.

In Desai's *Fire on the Mountain*(1977) we see three main female figures who represent the different ways a female suffers in a society that practices archaic patriarchal norms such as providing higher education only to the male child, only making males child heir of the family possessions, treating women as decorative possessions who needed to be transferred from the father's house to the husband's house, and expecting the female child to learn to be responsible for upholding the honour of the family and taking care of household works. This novel dramatises wronged womanhood, but here the women folk are aware of the folly in their upbringing. This novel portrays the female protagonists as awakened feminists. It explores their life & struggles and highlights their way of dealing with the injustice that patriarchal culture does to them. It is however seen that two of the older protagonists begin with a sense of faith in the socially accepted set of patriarchal values but, they gradually realise the more they try to involve in society and become active members of it, the more they are rejected and done injustice by. They discover the undisclosed underbelly of the society that they are a part of.

Nanda Kaul, the first protagonist in order of appearance, is an old lady of high social standing by birth. She gets married to the Vice-Chancellor of a university in Punjab and dedicates her life to being a loyal wife and a caregiver. But her married life is stained with the infidelity of her husband. It is this infidelity that makes her want to move away from him and all his relations. Her husband's extramarital transgressions pushed her into realising how much of her existence mattered only in relation to her husband. She bore the injustice silently as long as her husband

was alive for she was still a mother who had to ensure that her children were taken care of and also because she had no other source of income to ensure her own survival if she left him. She realises how crippled she was financially without her husband's support. It opens her eyes to the injustice of her upbringing. She realises how much their marriage rested on her shoulders while her husband indulged in adultery and was free of all familial responsibilities towards their family. She sees the role patriarchy played in crippling her financially and emotionally. Seeing as she was born in a well to do family, she could easily have had a career if she were educated with that intent. She is a woman who tolerated a lot in the name of societal prestige but refused to continue the charade anymore after the death of her husband. As she grew older, she could see the meaninglessness of a life lived in pretence, and gradually finds the courage to give up the false facade of airs and prosperity and leaves all relations and ties behind to spend her grey days in a solitary existence in Kasauli. Desai here constructs an atmosphere of hard earned tranquillity via the struggles Nanda Kaul faces. Nanda Kaul's rejection of socially appropriate behaviour of a widow of her social standing in favour of her own values and interests in her late years shows a feminist yearning for freedom from extraneously imposed values that suffocated her self-identity.

The second protagonist Raka, a child, Nanda Kaul's great granddaughter arrives at Nanda Kaul's doorsteps at Carignano in Kasauli, more disinclined to socialise than Nanda herself. Her natural inclination to shun all interaction contrasted dramatically with Nanda Kaul's forced solitude and took Nanda by surprise. Nanda had dreaded having to entertain an over energetic pre-teen girl, but Raka, as she notices, turns out to be the embodiment of reckless neglect and disinterest due to having witnessed violent brutality at her own home.

If Nanda Kaul was a recluse out of vengeance for a long life of duty and obligations, her great-granddaughter was a recluse by nature, by instinct. She had not arrived at this condition by a long rout of rejection and sacrifice- she was born to it, simply.(52-53).

It dawned upon Nanda how similar they were, and she tries to form a bond with Raka, but Raka seems to be incapable of forming any meaningful relationship with humans. The irony of her name 'Raka' exudes the core of feminism in *Fire in the Mountain*. The silently suffering child, Raka did not embody the tranquillity that is associated with her name which stands for 'moon' in the Indian language Bengali. Instead, she was full of angst and pain.

She looked like one of those dark crickets that leap up in fright but do not sing, or a mosquito, minute and fine, on thin, precarious legs. (43).

She had witnessed her mother being assaulted and beaten to a pulp on the ground by her raging drunk father on numerous occasions and had lain there terrified and frozen in her bed crumpled in a heap, in her own pee. Ironically, the only way her name suited her was in the loneliness associated with the moon. She had the abstract quality of being different amongst her peers. She had strangely discovered sadness beyond her age and could see the world without any protective

bubble that parents create for their child. In this novel, it appears, that in a world full of people whose unique individual shine has been dulled by the expectations piled on them Raka stood out. She refuses to carry the burden of an unjust expectation and chooses the harsher lonelier misunderstood life instead. Raka represents the impact patriarchy has on females and the choices they are left with if they choose self-respect. At the end of the novel Raka witnesses the assault of Ila Das, her great grandmother's disabled friend. Outraged by the assault and desperate for justice, she sets the forest where she was hiding, on fire. The fire that metaphorically smoulders in all the characters in the novel takes physical form in Raka's action.

Ila Das, the third protagonist in the novel, moves precariously throughout the novel. She is a dwarfish woman of shrill voice. Born in high society, she wasn't educated to find financial independence. She never gets married due to her deformity and is subjected to ridicule and suffering for no fault of her own. After the squandering of all their family wealth by her maleficent brothers who spent it in drinking and gambling instead of pursuing their educational goals, Ila Das is forced to find work.

The family fortune, divided amongst three drunken, dissolute sons as in a story, and not a penny of it to either of the two clever, thrifty, hardworking daughters, Ila and Rima, was then quickly becoming a thing of the past, no longer retrievable, barely believable. The sons had been sent to foreign universities- to Heidelberg, Cambridge, Harvard- and wherever they were, each contrived not to attend a single lecture, to drink themselves ill, to find the nearest racecourse and squander their allowances on horses that never won... They pestered their mother and two sisters then, for the last of the jewellery, and soon had them driven out into rented rooms and boarding houses, finally to whatever roof charity would hold over them.(135).

The above passage quoted at length depicts Ila Das's brothers as the epitome of irresponsibility. They leech off their parents and sisters as long as they could and yet, they were given the chance to go abroad and study so they could have successful careers. Whereas Ila and her sister Rima, simply because they are girls were home schooled and not given a chance at proper education for building a career. Ila Das survives her initial years as a home science teacher. A post she got due to the influence of her friend Nanda Kaul who was married to the then Vice-Chancellor of a university in Punjab. The new Vice-Chancellor had no such connection with Ila Das. He promoted someone much younger than Ila Das to the head of home science department. Unable to tolerate the injustice and as a sign of protest Ila Das resigned, but hunger and terrible living conditions forced her to find work again. In her greyyears, she joins a short social service course and soon finds a job with a modest salary. She lived a hard life even at her advanced age yet she had the ever ready enthusiasm to work for the common good. Her only companion her own age was Nanda Kaul, who when Ila Das learns resides in Kasauli, she was eager to meet and share the story of her life with. Ila Das reflects on the absurdity of their upbringing with Nanda Kaul as they converse.

'Isn't it absurd', she rattled on, 'how helpless our upbringing made us, Nanda. We thought we were being equipped with the very best- French lessons, Piano lessons, English governesses- my, all that only to find it left us helpless, positively handicapped.' (139).

Ila and her sister struggle with the social and economic injustice they face, and since they weren't tall, slender and beautiful they find themselves unmarriageable by society's standards. Ila Das is the strongest feminist in the novel with the weakest of structures to survive. Her deformity and the society she lived in constantly try to drag her down. Yet, she faces all hardship with an optimistic attitude to make ends meet. For all her courage and hard work though, her efforts are repaid with a tragic death at the hands of a macabre villager who raped her, an elderly disabled lady, and then killed her simply because she tried to stop him from selling off his daughter for a piece of land. This incident in the novel shows the desperate feminist attempts Ila Das makes to survive despite having crossed the age of retirement, and how she is cruelly crushed for trying to escape the social norm. It highlights the redundant and horrific hold patriarchal culture has over women. It represents the way attempts by a woman to have an identity is met. Here Desai has expertly showcased the flaws in a staunchly patriarchal society. A male feels no qualms about his horrendous acts because they are conditioned to not be responsible for upholding anyone's honour, they are responsible only for protecting their own interests. The only thing the rapist felt was rage because Ila Das, a woman, tries to teach him, a man, right from wrong. So he punishes the old and disabled lady, to get her out of his way of making money by selling his daughter.

The novel *Fasting, Feasting* (1999) intertwines the lives of Uma, Arun, Aruna, and Anamika to reflect the societal values and the effects it has. This novel takes two world views of patriarchy and social expectations. The focus is the stigma each causes to its members. Uma, the eldest daughter of Mama Papa, represents the fasting in the novel, being deprived of things she wanted. She struggles to educate herself since she love dreading and writing but she did not have the gift of learning and kept failing in the fifth standard. She miserably fails at marriage due to not being coquettish and due to being a simpleton. She is forced to stay at home with her parents. Despite her three failed marriages she strives to become financially independent which shows her feminist yearning to be self-reliant and not a burden on her parents. She manages to get an opportunity to work as a nurse in a medical facility, but her parents stop her from doing it because of the social implications that would have on the family. This incidence throws light on the influence of social pressure on the parents. They preferred to keep their child hidden, lonely and miserable to letting her have a job and go out and work. Since, if that happened, the world would learn about Uma's failed marital status which would bring the implication that the parents failed at parenting. Uma and Mama Papa would be pitied at since patriarchy dictates that Uma's life accomplishments, being a female, are to be measured by her success at procuring a husband and managing her family, and the family's accomplishments are to be measured by their ability to marry off their daughters and have their son successfully placed in a good job. Therefore, her parents, the supreme authority of the family, force her to become invisible to society and remain

at home acting as caretaker of their house to prevent her from bringing dishonour to the family. Desai here deals with the consciousness that being a feminist brings to a female. They become painfully aware of the ways in which they are suppressed in a patriarchal culture.

Arun is the youngest in the family who was born a happy and notorious child with a zest for life. But the expectations piled on him to become financially independent turn him into a lifeless puppet who did as he was told. He represents feasting in the novel, forced to feed the concept of financial responsibility. He is one of Desai's male feminists who detests the expectations patriarchal norms force him to meet. He feels the burden of becoming a breadwinner. While his father is extremely proud of having sent him abroad to study, Arun is left depressed and yearning for equality in expectation which does not materialise. On the other side of the world, he experiences a strangely different world view of social expectations. His host family- the Pattons have two children- Rod and Melanie. Rod is immersed in a rigorous exercise routine trying to get muscular and 'manly' before his college starts, he wasn't overly stressed over his grades as Arun was. While Melanie is willingly starving herself surviving only on candy bars to get a desirable 'feminine' figure whereas back at home, in India, his sister Uma and other girls weren't given that choice at all. Since candy being a luxury was reserved only for the male children. Mrs Patton never does any real cooking like his mother back at home. She is forever buying canned goods, and Mr Patton seems to always be barbecuing huge chunks of meat, unlike his father who did no cooking at all. Arun sees the difference in the things expected out of a male and a female there in America and back at home in India, and is left torn between deciding which was the right way of living and if either was right in any way.

Aruna, the middle child of the family, appears to be a success to their parents and someone enviable to Uma having managed to procure a husband who had a good earning. The patriarchal social values indicate happiness in her life in such a situation but, Aruna remains frustrated and displeased. It appears that she played her cards well in life but failed to enjoy its fruition for she did not see marriage as a symbol of success. Her ambitious nature makes her want to succeed in life as an individual but, that desire remains unfulfilled. She unknowingly yearns for a freedom of self-expression. She doesn't understand why her successful marriage felt restrictive to her when society saw her as a successful woman. Her character reflects the way patriarchal culture fails women by stifling all their interests which result in an unrealised quest for self-identity. Aruna here doesn't know what might make her feel like a success because she had accepted the patriarchal culture as a way of life. Hence, the restrictions she faced felt oddly normal and frustrating at the same time because it offered her no outlet for self-expression.

Desai goes on to show through Anamika that even if patriarchal values are applied to someone who isn't as ambitious as Aruna but rather is docile, beautiful and educated, she will still be subjected to unhappiness at the hands of those who achieve less and envy her beauty, education and lack of want. An educated intellectual woman, Anamika, gets a selection letter to Oxford but is not allowed to join higher education and is married off to a man who marries her solely on the basis of her achievements and never develops any companionship with her. She remains locked

up in her husband's house and ends up getting beaten every day and ultimately is burnt alive. The cause of her death remains shrouded in mystery. But, it is hinted that her husband and mother-in-law burnt her alive in a fit of envy and claimed it as suicide. The juxtaposition of Fasting and Feasting brings to attention the crux of patriarchal culture. Patriarchy says, the birth of a male child is a happy occasion and calls for a feasting because a boy child represents an heir. Whereas, the birth of a female child is not a happy occasion since it signifies additional cost to the family such as dowry and so it calls for a fasting. Through this novel, Desai gives us a tour of the various implications patriarchy has. It generates yearnings for a balanced existence from both men and women which force one to see the injustice of suppressing femininity. In this novel, everyone is a victim of their circumstances which are born out of patriarchy.

The novel *The Zigzag Way* (2004) from a feminist perspective traces Dona Vera's misadventures and her success in having broken free from the bonds of dependency. It is through contact with her that the main protagonist of the novel, Eric Rowse, finds the roots of his parental history that he sets out to discover. This novel features Dona Vera as the ultimate feminist who manages to break all restrictive patriarchal rules and leads a satisfactory life alone. In this story, we find a mysterious woman who under grave situations manages to achieve a career and reputation as the most knowledgeable women in Huichol Indian Cultural Studies. She has scholars come to her from all over the world to learn about the Huichol Indian culture and its mysterious tales. She represents the feministic ideals of independence and strength. She began as a popular bar and theatre dancer who had very little to survive by, a condition most women in her position would not have been able to escape. However, Dona Vera, at the breakout of the Second World War, leaves Sierra with a rich businessman named Don Roderigo to escape the monstrosities of war and gains the much needed financial aid. As they spent more time together, she becomes dissatisfied with the differences between herself and her husband. Roderigo's lack of interest in academics and adventure leaves a gaping incompatibility between them. It makes her decide to take control of her life and escape the dull pangs of incompatibility. The knowledge thirsty and adventurous Dona Vera could not face living her life with Don Roderigo simply for his wealth and the comfortable living situation he provided. She escapes one night to return to her hometown Sierra and stays at Hacienda de la Soledad- a private guest house.

Gradually, she builds a reputation as "Queen of the Sierra" due to her interest in the Huichol Indian culture. Her interest in Huichol culture is generated after she falls in love with a young Huichol boy Ramon. Although her love remains unrequited as the boy dies mysteriously, it doesn't break down her spirit. She doesn't lose her way mourning the loss of the boy she loved. Instead, she finds a way to honour the memory of Ramon. She represents the strength a woman finds when she is free from expectations and is confident about her approach to life as a single woman. She invites Huichol people to hear their tales and learn from them about the Huichol culture, and the history behind the tales of the mysterious Cactus Peyote. Subsequently, scholars came to the Hacienda to learn about the Huichol culture and began regarding her as the most knowledgeable on the subject. She helps travellers find a safe place to rest and learn about the

Huichol culture. She does it to remain close to her memories of Ramon, the gipsy Huichol boy who had sparked her interest in the culture. This spreading of knowledge about the culture Ramon belonged to was her way of remembering Ramon and keeping him alive. This novel shows the strength with which Dona Vera tackles the challenges she faces in her life and makes her love immortal by lending the Huichol Indian culture a scholarly interest. In a patriarchal culture where female are expected to remain impassioned and cold, yet coquettish and clever in procuring a husband, and are looked upon as mindless housekeepers, it is often a male who is remembered for their undying affection and efforts to gain the affection of their beloved. Dona Vera with her perseverance and strength of character gives womankind a place in literature in the category of devoted lovers even though her love was never returned.

Conclusion

Anita Desai through her novels traces the various stages of feminism with reference to the Indian and western context and brings out the struggles, the issues, and the obstacles females face in a society that worships male as ideal and female as the expendable and secondary. In each one of her novels, we see a progressive growth in society towards gender equality keeping in touch with reality. Maya in *Cry, the Peacock*(1963) could not even imagine an alternative existence as a career woman who didn't need to depend on a man to provide for her or to get separated from a man who didn't look at her as his wife. Even though she is painfully aware of the neglect her husband subjects her to. Ila Das in *Fire on the Mountain*(1977) complains about the futility of the education they received as girls because she sees the fault in their upbringing. She realises how she has been handicapped financially by her loving parents. She educates herself and works tirelessly to earn a living as a social worker. She breaks the rule of depending on a male and finds financial independence though at a great cost. Arun in *Fasting, Feasting*(1999) experiences the burden patriarchal values puts on a man when he is forced to grind all day at his study desk to get accepted in a prestigious educational institute in America. He feels no joy when he gets accepted. He simply feels the burden of becoming the provider. He sees the injustice it does to women in the struggles his sisters face. Here, both male and female are seen as aware of the inequality in expectations and facilities provided to them. They are seen as craving equality. In *The Zigzag Way* (2004) Dona Vera escapes the prison of docile femininity. She escapes a life of comfortable but idle days with an unadventurous but rich husband to go back to her hometown where she established herself as Queen of Sierra and a hostess in a rest house for scholars who came to study the Huichol culture. In these novels, we can trace the growth of feminism and the different angles it takes as time progresses and society changes. Thus, while tracing feminism in the selected novels of Anita Desai, we conclude that she focuses her creative abilities on social issues that affect people and bridges the gap between male and female ideologies.

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