



***Gender representation in Children literature:
Anita Desai's The Village by the Sea***

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the status of women's empowerment in India through the works of women authors for children; focusing on key aspects such as freedom of movement, political participation, gender inequality, sexual harassment, autonomy, and decision-making. Women's empowerment refers to granting women authority and control over decision-making, whether at a personal or global level. The independence of women since childhood is essential for advancing the political, social, and economic development of a country.

For centuries, women have been deprived of their rights, but now is the time to bring about change. After India's independence, the framers of the Constitution and prominent leaders recognized women's equal social standing with men. Literature and society are deeply interconnected, influencing and shaping each other. Indian female authors have made significant efforts to establish their presence in a traditionally male-dominated literary landscape.

Women novelists from India have introduced a new dimension to Indian English literature. The journey began with

Krupabai Sathianadhan, the first Indian woman to write an English novel. Her work Saguna, an autobiographical novel, explores the struggles of women through themes of religion, cultural identity, and feminism during the colonial era.

Modern Indian women writers such as Anita Desai, Manorama Jaffa, Suniti Namjoshi, Sigrun Shrivastava and Sandhya Rao have played a crucial role in highlighting the challenges faced by women in contemporary male-dominated society. Their works address issues of gender discrimination, societal expectations, and female empowerment. This paper provides a brief discussion on the contributions of Indian women writers in promoting and advocating for women's empowerment through children literature.

Key words: *freedom of movement, political participation, gender inequality, sexual harassment, autonomy, and decision-making*

