



A Feminist Analysis of Women's Trauma in Anita Desai's *Fasting Feasting*

*Komal and **Devendra Kumar Sharma

Article Information

Article History:

Received: 16-05-2024

Accepted: 10-07-2024

Published: 20-7-2024

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license



This article is published with open access at
<http://theachieversjournal.com>

Abstract

Anita Desai's Fasting Feasting presents many issues surrounding 'being a woman' in India. It particularly deals with the trauma of three women and presents their sorrows. Uma and Aruna are two sisters, and Anamika is their cousin. Uma is forced to leave school to take care of her parents and younger brother's household chores. Aruna is married to a wealthy man, but her lifestyle is unacceptable to her old-fashioned parents. Anamika is a brilliant student who secures a prestigious fellowship at Oxford but cannot avail of it because she is a woman. She ends up in a toxic marriage and suffers from domestic violence, which ultimately leads to her death. These instances depict the subjugation of women in a male-dominated Indian society. The presents study explores the traumatic instances of women in a male-dominated society in India. Furthermore, it also presents the genesis of trauma of a woman. One major reason behind the trauma of women is the patriarchal mind-set of Indian society. Sometimes, even parents do not support their daughters due to their conserved mind-set and societal pressure. Although the novel presents trauma through three protagonists, Indian women continue to face similar issues in their lives even today.

Keywords: Fasting Feasting, Indian Feminism, patriarchy, trauma, women oppression

The Achievers Journal: Journal of English Language, Literature, and Culture (2024), 10(2), 1-11

Copyright © 2024, Komal and Devendra Kumar Sharma

* Komal' Research Scholar, Department of English and Modern European Languages, Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan, India
Email: komal.jkut@gmail.com

**Devendra Kumar Sharma, Assistant Professor, Department of English and Modern European Languages, Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan, India
Email: devendra999iitr@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Once a woman is self-sufficient and ceases to be a parasite, the system based on her dependence crumbles; between her and the universe there is no longer any need for a masculine mediator.

(Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 1949: 689)

From historical times till now, women continue to get secondary treatment, and they have always been treated as others. It may be any sphere, home or the outside world, women are not treated dignifiedly. They may achieve any position in society but will always remain at the margin. Women have never found a place in the mainstream spaces; even if they have earned any position, they have always been considered secondary. From a family to society or workplace, women have been subordinated to men's authority. Despite achieving honourable positions, women are expected to do the household work. This has been a serious issue in the patriarchal societies even today. As a response to this historic subjugation, strong women-centred voices have come up, leading to feminist movements worldwide. It is a movement that seeks to achieve equal rights for women. Feminists strongly advocate that women must be allowed to live on their own terms. They believe that books by most male authors have depicted female characters as subservient to male characters. The Indian Constitution provides gender equality that has enhanced the position of women. Women in India facing the dual challenge of tradition and modernity are the essence of feminism in Indian literature. Unlike men, women subject themselves to drudgery at home, which is not acknowledged by society. It is primarily a movement that strives to achieve equal political, economic, cultural, personal, and social rights for women. Historically, pre

and modern societies have witnessed events in which women have made massive contributions. Women throughout the centuries have been subjected to physical and mental cruelties. They have not been allowed to exercise their autonomy over their bodies. They fought for centuries and are still fighting for their rights. Mary Wollstonecraft, the first feminist critic, supports the idea of equality between partners. Virginia Woolf, the famous feminist writer, also expresses a similar opinion that women should be free to write. In her famous quotation, Beauvoir says, "One is not born, but becomes a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society: it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, feminine" (249). Kate Millet in *Sexual Politics* (1970) shows how patriarchy puts a limit on women in all spheres of life. In addition to this, Jannet Richards in *Women Writer's Talking* (1981) says:

The essence of feminism has a strong fundamental case intended to mean only that there are excellent reasons for thinking that woman suffer from systematic social injustice because of their sex, the proposition is to be regarded as constituting feminism (3).

Sonia Kruks, in "Gender and subjectivity: Simone de Beauvoir and Contemporary Feminism" (1992), articulates that "being a woman is a socially constructed experience; it is to live a social situation that men have, for their advantage, attempted to impose on women" (101). A woman always suffers, she has to face a lot of discrimination in her path to success. Although few women have broken glass ceilings, the majority of the women suffer because of the patriarchal framework of society, and they have to lead a traumatic life.

Suzanne Egan, in “Trauma as Feminist Practice” (2020), asserts that until the late nineteenth century, trauma was considered purely a physical concept due to physical injuries. Later, it was investigated that fear and psychological shocks can also affect the nervous system regardless of the physical injury. Similar findings were also observed among the soldiers who suffered from neurosis during their military campaigns in the same period. After the Vietnam War, there were several studies on this subject, and there was large-scale support for the veterans of the war for their treatments. In 1980, all these developments further led to the inclusion of trauma as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (1952) published by the American Psychiatric Association. Since then, trauma has been investigated across various disciplines, including literature. There has been a mushrooming of many research centres, academic journals and books on trauma across disciplines. Webster and Dunn in *Feminist Perspectives on Trauma* (2005) illustrate that women across the globe have been subjected to various types of discrimination, including child abuse, rape, violence, neglect in the family, mistreatment and lack of equal work opportunities. They have greatly suffered across cultures and nations. Even within the families, women have suffered and faced discrimination from their parents. All these different sufferings have a long-lasting impact on a woman's mind.

Article one of the United Nations “Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women” (1993) defines ‘violence against women’ as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (2). World Health Organization (WHO) in

“Violence against Women” (2021) encapsulates that all these forms of violence against women “may lead to depression, post-traumatic stress and other anxiety disorders, sleep difficulties, eating disorders, and suicide attempts”. The research surrounding the issues of women, their redressal, and holding perpetrators of violence against women accountable for their crimes fall within the purview of feminist studies. Several scholars across disciplines have investigated the issues of women from various perspectives. Feminist scholars have particularly contributed a lot to understanding issues surrounding women in various parts of the world.

This notion of trauma leads to the basic framework of the dominant literary trauma theory best articulated by Cathy Caruth in *Unclaimed Experience* (1996) when she says, “The historical power of trauma is not just that the experience repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forget that it is first experienced at all” (17). A traumatic experience is perceived as an endless photographic negative that is forgettable, retains the capacity to disturb consciousness and maintains the ability to seek help from those who don't suffer from trauma. Moreover, this notion of agony conceives responses as fundamentally pathologic and prioritises the act of speaking narration as the primary source of recovery.

The trauma of various violence against women, such as rape, has been investigated from the psychoanalytical and feminist perspectives. However, the trauma of discrimination at home, deprivation of liberty and coercion are not much discussed. In *Fasting Feasting* (1999), Anita Desai presents a picture of the trauma of ‘being a woman’ in India through protagonists such as Uma and Anamika. In the novel, Uma and Anamika are shown as the victims of a patriarchal

society. Andrew Edger and Peter Sedgwick in *Cultural Theory: The Key Concept* (1999) defines patriarchy as:

The way in which societies are structured through male domination over and oppression of women. Patriarchy therefore refers to the ways in which material and symbolic resources (including income, wealth, and power) are unequally distributed between men and women, through such social institution as the family, sexuality, the state, the economy, culture and language. (269)

Similarly, Jane Pilcher and Imelda Whelehan in *Fifty Key Concepts in Gender Studies* (2004) define patriarchy as the social system of masculine domination over women.

2. Feminist analysis of trauma in *Fasting Feasting*

This article will employ some basic ideas, thoughts and philosophies concerning Feminism, Psychoanalysis, Trauma and Diaspora. It investigates very important issues that a woman faces in India. This paper covers three important topics, viz. the trauma of being a woman in India, patriarchy, the role of women in preserving the institution of patriarchy in India, dowry and domestic violence, which eventually leads to death. Some important questions are: What does being a woman in India in a patriarchal family mean? How can a family be oppressive against women in India? What is the role of a family, including women, in perpetuating the institution of patriarchy in India? and how does a family act as perpetrator of acts of violence against women?

2.1 Trauma of “being a woman” in India

Anita Desai has published several novels on various themes. Her novel *Fasting Feasting* was shortlisted for the Booker Prize. In this novel, she presents many issues, majorly surrounding “being a

woman” in India. In this novel, through various protagonists, she presents the agony and sorrows of being a woman. The title of *Fasting Feasting* is itself contradictory with its binary overtones. The birth of a boy is to be feasted, whereas the birth of a girl is perceived to be a bad sign and trouble as she is supposed to be married off with a dowry for which the family spends a huge amount of money, implying fasting nature according to the title of the novel.

In this novel, Desai particularly emphasises what it means to be the eldest daughter in a family and how she is supposed to take care of her male sibling. Uma has to serve her parents. Domestic help and cooks are always under her watch. Mama and Papa always feel insecure; they get alert due to little noise. She has to look after the house, as revealed in the following lines: “Everybody is sleeping. Only I stay awake to see what is happening in this house. Thieves attack us—everyone comes and takes what they like because you are all sleeping” (84). Mama doesn’t do any household work. The character of Papa is more authoritative than that of a loving father who always orders in the house and behaves differently with his children and wife. Uma’s agony begins when her younger brother, Arun, is born and she is forced to leave the school to take care of her brother. However, Uma also desires to study, but he has to drop out of school. Mama articulates, “But we are not sending you to Mother Agnes—or to school—again” (18). It is paradoxical that her parents, themselves being educated, do not value their daughter’s education. She is not able to find a match for herself. Her parents find a match for her through a matrimonial advertisement in a newspaper. They are duped by the groom's family by taking dowry and later refuse to marry her. When she finally gets married to a man who is twice her age, and already married to another woman, and when her father comes to know about it, he decides to end

this marriage despite giving a huge dowry. Papa loses control of himself, “he beat his head with his fists, and moaned aloud about the dowry and the wedding expenses” (96). The family considers her unlucky, and further, no attempts are made for her marriage. Consequently, she remains unmarried throughout her life. Kumkum Sangari, in her “Consent, Agency and Rhetorics of Incitement” (1993), observes that “The politics of the household seem to be structured according to the degree of access women have to patriarchal power, in the form of some control over the redivision of household labour among women” (871). Mama Papa makes Uma’s life hell. In every phase of her life, she has to make sacrifices to satisfy her parents, and her life becomes traumatic.

A woman has to marry at a very young age because of societal pressure. Aruna’s marriage also happens at an early age. She prioritises domestic responsibilities over her economic independence. Mama and Papa are not bitter towards Aruna, unlike Uma. This shows the double standard of our society. Parents also treat their children differently based on their achievements. Aruna is beautiful and lucky to have a rich husband. She has a lavish marriage ceremony and leads a good life. Despite living this happy life, she keeps on whining about things. Because of her perception of the perfect world, she instructs her parents and husband to behave in a particular manner, which leads her to trauma. In the context of aforesaid observations, the following lines are pertinent from the novel, “Clearly Aruna had a vision of a perfect world in which all of them- her own family as well as Arvind’s- were flaws she was constantly uncovering and correcting in her quest for perfection. It made for a very uncomfortable household, but it was, in a way, touching” (112). After getting all the luxury, she could not find peace in her life, which led her to trauma to a certain extent.

Now, we refer to another character called Anamika, Uma’s cousin. Being bright in academics, she secured a fellowship at Oxford University. Unfortunately, she is not allowed to enrol at Oxford; her parents married her to a rich man. Post-marriage, her life becomes traumatic. She is not allowed to step out of the house alone. She is subjected to domestic violence. We can assess her pain through this line from the novel, “Anamika was beaten regularly by her mother-in-law while her husband stood by and approved- or, at least, did not object. Anamika spent her entire time in the kitchen, cooking for his large family so that meals were eaten in shifts- first the men, then the children, finally the women” (71). Later on, she suffers from a miscarriage, and hence, she cannot become a mother in her life. She is burnt alive by her in-laws, although they try to cover up their crime by saying that it is a suicide. It is very painful to see how Anamika lives her traumatic married life and ends up dying.

In this novel, Desai highlights another convention of preference for a male child. Uma’s mother has to go through a late pregnancy only to give birth to a son despite her ill health. In Indian society, a woman is expected to give birth to a boy to solidify her unity with her husband. According to Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949), women’s exploitation is linked to the desire to sustain the family and keep the patrimony unchallenged. She observes that marriage causes more misery to women than to men. People also believe a son will care for his parents in old age and extend their family lineage.

Another aspect that the author depicts is the parents’ preference for sons’ education over daughters’. As seen in the novel, when Arun secures admission to an American University, his parents’ reaction is completely different from Uma’s when she gets a job offer from Dr Dut. Mama articulates in the novel, “Our daughter

does not need to go out to work, Dr Dutt. As long as we are here to provide for her, she will never need to go to work” (146). Their diabolical approach towards two offspring is quite different. On the one hand, they celebrate their son's success; conversely, they don't allow Uma to get a job. Uma is not even allowed to meet her cousin Ramu and her convent friends. Bhuvana Ramachandran, in “Marginalized Women in Anita Desai’s *Fasting, Feasting*” (2015), summarises the male preference and female discrimination as:

It is a general experience that where a boy’s birth is supposed to bring happiness, a girl’s birth is a bane. The woman in India takes a subordinate position from her birth. The middle class Indian woman hardly has any choice but to live on the physical and emotional leftovers of her brothers. The parents would gladly spend a fortune in nurturing and ensuring a coveted education for their sons, while the girl is expected to live with the limited resources. (1)

2.2 Women as guardian of patriarchy

In this novel, Desai also presents another deep-rooted issue in Indian society. It is generally said that a woman is the guardian of patriarchy, and this saying holds true in the novel. Through the character of Uma’s mother and Anamika’s mother-in-law, Desai depicts this issue of women as preservers of patriarchy in Indian society. Desai first presents the conditioning of patriarchy in the mind of Mama as a daughter. Mama recollects, “In my days girls in the family were not given sweets, nuts, good things to eat. If something special had been bought in the market, like sweets or nuts, it was given to the boys in the family” (5). All good things were meant for the male child. Even Mama was not allowed to attend school when she was a child. She was born and brought up

in a narrow-minded ambience. Therefore, she had a very narrow worldview. She was taught that daughters are meant to be married and housewives. Their sole responsibility is to take care of the household chores. In the novel, Mama is depicted as a submissive and obedient housewife. Elizabeth Jackson, in “Responding to Patriarchy in India: Resistance and Complicity in Samina Ali’s *Madras on Rainy Days* and Anita Desai’s *Fasting, Feasting*” (2018), portrays “India as a place in which women are relentlessly oppressed—not only by men but by other women as well” (168).

The patriarchal elements are further decoded through the demands of Papa and the obligations of Mama and Uma to meet those demands. When Papa orders something to be presented to him, Mama and Uma cannot ignore but heed. For example, when Papa asks for oranges, Mother nudges Uma, and she is asked to present him with oranges. So, Papa is shown on top of the patriarchal hierarchy, followed by Mama and the servants. When presented with the best orange in a bowl, Papa peels it, eats it, and leaves the peels, piths, and threads on the plate. Ludmila Volná, in “Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* and the Condition of Women” (2005), summarises this plight of women in India:

The mother represents here the instrument of the patriarchal power, she is thus a part of the patriarchal structures, nevertheless just as an inferior agent; she is proud that at least pith, pips, and peels rest on her plate (whereas all the juicy parts have been absorbed by the father). Hence the circular structure of the family's patriarchy: PapaMama, MamaPapa. Everything departs from and comes back to Papa. (4)

The patriarchal mindset is further depicted in the novel by Desai when Mama wants

to terminate her pregnancy, but she is forced not to do so as she conceived a son, Arun. Mama thinks that her worth as a woman will be only proved when she gives birth to a son. As the novel encodes, “Mama was frantic to have it terminated. She had never been more ill, and would go through hellfire, she wept, just to stop the nausea that tormented her. But Papa set his jaws” (16). Mama's patriarchal mindset is further depicted through her motherhood. Being a mother of two daughters and a son, she is more inclined towards her son and daughters are not given much importance. When Papa is about to admit Uma and Aruna to a convent school, Mama disapproves of it and does not allow Papa to send daughters to school. In the novel, Mama articulates, “What ideas they fill in the girls’ head! I always said don’t send them to a convent school. Keep them at home, I said—but who listened?” (29). Mama thinks that her daughters should not attend school like she did not attend. She is unaware of the importance of girl education because she was exposed to a narrow family ambience.

Desai has depicted patriarchy through differential treatment between a son and daughters as contextualised through various examples, for example, preference for a son in the family. In a patriarchal society, more attention is given to the son, Arun. He is treated well, provided with the best education, and even allowed to immigrate to the U.S. for his studies. In the novel, we can witness this from the following lines, “if there was one thing Papa insisted on in the realm of home and family, then it was education for his son: the best, the most, the highest” (121). In Indian society, sons are generally preferred over daughters because they are considered perpetrators of the family lineage. At the time of the marriage of a son, the family doesn’t have to pay a dowry. The patriarchy is further reflected in terms of food. Although Arun is vegetarian, Mama provides him with

nutritious food. He is given the best and most nutritious food, but his daughters are not treated on par with their sons. The choice of food cooked in a patriarchal family depends upon male preferences. Mama thinks she must satisfy the appetite of the men in the family. Food discrimination towards women is further depicted while walking in the streets when Uma wants to buy roasted nuts, “Uma finds saliva gathering at the corners of her mouth at the smell of the spiced, roasted gram but decides to say nothing” (12). She is told to reach home and prepare lemonade for Papa. The burden of household chores is solely on the daughters in a patriarchal society. Because of this notion of society, they have to face trauma.

The educational opportunities are denied to female children in the patriarchal society. The daughters are considered ‘*paraaya-dhan*’ (who leave the house of their parents when married). The same is depicted in the novel. Uma and Aruna are both considered as *paraaya dhan* in the novel. Therefore, their education is not considered important. Their sole responsibility is caring for their husbands and family after marriage. Uma was not provided with a good education when Arun was born. She is forced to leave school to take care of her sibling. On this matter, Ramandeep Kaur, in “Low Female Literacy Rate and Its Impact on Our Society” (2013), proposes:

In most of the families, boys at home are given priority in terms of education but girls are not treated in the same way. Right from the beginning, parents do not consider girls as earning members of their family, as after marriage they have to leave their parents home. So their education is just considered as a wastage of money as well as time. For this reason, parents prefer to send boys to schools but not

girls.

2.3 Dowry, domestic violence and death

Anita Desai also introduces us to the character of Anamika, who is a brilliant student and got a scholarship to Oxford University, “This scholarship was one of the qualifications they were able to offer when they started searching for a husband for her, and it was what won her a husband who was considered an equal to this price of the family” (70). Anamika’s parents don’t allow her to go to Oxford, instead marry her to a very rich family. The trauma of Anamika unfolded later when she faced domestic violence from her husband and mother-in-law and ended her life. It is seen in the novel that both Uma and Anamika are the victims of a patriarchal society, and they sacrifice everything to save the patriarchal mindset of the society. The story of Uma and her cousin Anamika depicted in the novel is not only about them, the situation is still prevalent in many parts of India. Pamela S. Johnson and Jennifer A. Johnson, in “The Oppression on Women in India”, stated about the real practice of patriarchy:

India is a society governed by a system where males hold the power include feticide, the disproportionate gender ratio, the fact that most women are not allowed to be employed, and the belief that from birth until death a woman’s role is to serve men. It is recognized that the control and dominance of women by men have significant roles to play in the violence perpetrated against women. (1053)

Bhuvana Ramachandran, in “Marginalized Women in Anita Desai’s *Fasting, Feasting*” (2015), outlines that Mama not only surrenders her individuality but that of her daughter too. It is not always the physical violence that women suffer in India, but the silence of women’s

ignorance of their own identity is also responsible for the suffering of women in India. Anamika, who is a victim of domestic violence, suffers for 25 years and ends her life. This is an example of tolerance and the trauma against continuous domestic abuse till she is burnt alive by her in-laws. Bhuvana Ramachandran further summarises the plight of women as:

Indian women have carried the burden of the family. She has slaved, for her husband, for her children and for her family. Indian women take pride in suffering and live with the idea of subjugation entrusted to them for years in inculcation about the necessity to accept and abide by the rules assigned to them by patriarchy that runs through their blood. (4)

This depiction of the burning alive of Anamika is not entirely fictitious, one can still see several such stories where in-laws have killed their daughters-in-law, sometimes within the information of the husband too. The women may be killed for demanding dowry or for other reasons, including miscarriage or abortions. Anamika, too, had a miscarriage, as the novel encodes, “She had had a miscarriage at home, it was said, after a beating. It was said she could not bear more children” (72). Such stories are heard even today. Daughters suffer and never complain to their parents. The daughters think that if they tell their plight to their parents, they will get depressed and ultimately choose to commit suicide or die at the hands of in-laws. This shows not only the suffering of women and the trauma they undergo while they are alive in their husband’s homes but also the story of the parents. It is said that once married, women should stay with their in-laws no matter what. This thinking is further deeply rooted in Indian traditions and the patriarchal mindset. Even if a woman suffers from her husband and in-

laws, and if she complains, society will only question her and her parents and not the family of the husband. This situation still prevails in India, and women continue to suffer from a traumatic life. Parents are not supportive at times, and they think if their daughter returns home, it is a disgrace to their social stature and their image is tarnished. Mohammad Mozammel Haque, in “Anita Desai’s Fasting Feasting: A Picturesque Reflection of Male-Chauvinistic Indian Society” (2019), succinctly captures the situation of women in India:

Desai has picturesquely portrayed what she observes with her own eyes to happen in the society she lives in. The story of Anamika’s death tragically symbolizes the final loss of female freedom. This kind of fate is common for almost all the unlucky and unfortunate wives of the so-called ‘aristocratic’ husbands. Desai’s only aim to let us know these pathetic stories is to ask us to sympathize with them and bring about a procession in favour of women’s liberty. (12)

The death of Anamika not only shows the cruel minds of in-laws and husbands but also shows the mindset of parents who do not support their girls because of social pressure. As per the in-laws of Anamika, she committed suicide, but according to neighbours, she was dragged by her mother-in-law and was burnt alive by spreading kerosine oil. One cannot deny that her husband and in-laws were solely responsible, but her parents are equally responsible. After knowing the fact that she is being mistreated by her in-laws, they pushed her to hellfire to suffer despite being supportive only because of societal pressure. Indian parents have to change and understand that marriages may fail at times. There may be multiple reasons for a failed marriage, including the abusive nature of the husband, in-laws, or demand

for dowry. Parents must understand that there is much more beyond a toxic marriage. They must encourage their daughters to speak up to avoid such gruesome and heinous crimes in our society. The lives of such females get worse after battling so many things in life, they have to suffer in one or the other way and have to lead a traumatic life.

3. Conclusion

Being a woman in India is challenging. Women face various issues right from their birth till death. They have been subjected to discrimination and humiliation at home, in schools and workplaces and are one of the most vulnerable and marginalised sections of society. In *Fasting Feasting*, Anita Desai has rightly demonstrated the double standards of Indian society in the form of Mama Papa. She aptly contrasts celebrating (fasting) the birth of a son and a sad state of affairs (fasting) when a daughter is born. Son is celebrated at the expense career and life of his daughter, Uma. She is forced to leave school, not allowed to attend school, secure a job or even go out with friends or relatives. She must stay inside the home and serve the elderly parents and son. In the course of all this, she cannot even marry. All these discriminations constitute acts of violence against women, and she suffers from trauma as well. It presents a realistic picture of women’s plight. Their ambitions are sacrificed at the altar of patriarchy. Uma and Anamika are ill-fated. Desai has stressed the fact that it is the need of the hour that parents should provide better education to their daughters so that they get empowered.

Works Cited

Balaev, Michelle. “Trends in Literary Trauma Theory.” *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2008, pp. 149–66. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44029500>.

- Beauvoir, Simone De. *The Second Sex*. (Le Deuxième Sexe, 1949) Paris, Trans. Ed. H.M. Parshley. London: Picador, 1988.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Desai, Anita. *Fasting, Feasting*. Chatto & Windus, 1999.
- Edgar, Andrew, and Peter R. Sedgwick, editors. *Cultural Theory: The Key Concepts*. 2. ed., Reprint, Routledge, 2010.
- Egan, Suzanne. "Trauma as Feminist Practice." *Putting Feminism to Work*, by Suzanne Egan, Springer International Publishing, 2020, pp. 135–58. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-22109-6_5.
- Haque, Mohammad Mozammel. "Anita Desai's Fasting Feasting: A Picturesque Reflection of Male-Chauvinistic Indian Society." *World Journal of English Language*, vol. 10, no. 1, Nov. 2019, p. 1. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v10n1p1>.
- Jackson, Elizabeth. "Responding to Patriarchy in India: Resistance and Complicity in Samina Ali's Madras on Rainy Days and Anita Desai's Fasting, Feasting." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2018, pp. 157–71. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.1353/tsw.2018.0007>.
- Richard, Jannet. *Women Writer's Talking*. Cambridge, 1981.
- Johnson, Pamela S., and Jennifer A. Johnson. "The Oppression of Women in India." *Violence Against Women*, vol. 7, no. 9, Sept. 2001, pp. 1051–68. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778010122182893>.
- Kaur, Ramandeep. "Low Female Literacy Rate and Its Impact on Our Society." *Maps of India*, 2013, <https://www.mapsofindia.com/my-india/society/low-female-literacy-rate-and-its-impact-on-our-society>.
- Kruks, Sonia. "Gender and Subjectivity: Simone de Beauvoir and Contemporary Feminism." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 18, no. 1, Oct. 1992, pp. 89–110. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.1086/494780>.
- Millet, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. Abacus: Sphere Books London, 1972.
- Pilcher, Jane, and Imelda Whelehan. *Fifty Key Concepts in Gender Studies*. SAGE Publications, 2004.
- Ramachandran, Bhuvana. "Marginalized Women in Anita Desai's Fasting, Feasting." *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2015, pp. 1–5.
- Ruchi Panday and Prof. Gunjan Sushil. "Patriarchy and Resistance in Anita Desai's Fasting, Feasting." *The Creative Launcher*, vol. 7, no. 6, Dec. 2022, pp. 158–64. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.53032/tcl.2022.7.6.17>.
- Sangari, Kumkum. "Consent, Agency and Rhetorics of Incitement." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 28, no. 18, 1993, pp. 867–82. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4399675>.

- UN. “Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.” *OHCHR*, United Nations, 1993, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-elimination-violence-against-women>.
- Volná, Ludmila. “Anita Desai’s Fasting, Feasting and the Condition of Women.” *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, vol. 7, no. 3, Sept. 2005. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, <https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.1272>.
- Webster, Denise C., and Erin C. Dunn. “Feminist Perspectives on Trauma.” *Women & Therapy*, vol. 28, no. 3–4, Sept. 2005, pp. 111–42. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, https://doi.org/10.1300/J015v28n03_06.
- WHO. *Violence against Women*. World Health Organisation, 2021, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>.