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Submission title: Caged Flesh: Reading Female Body Politics in Contemporary ...
File name: slated_Assamese,_Bengali,_and_Odia_Fiction_by_Women_Wri...
File size: 185.54K
Page count: 135
Word count: 57,154
Character count: 299,817
Submission date: 28-Jun-2024 03:30PM (UTC+0530)
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Abstract

The female body has been a site of dominance and resistance across many oppressive cultural regimes. Historically women's bodies are treated as passive sites for patriarchal models of power exploitation. In the realm of everyday, female body is constantly shaped according to changing political and cultural ideals. It has been widely represented as a mute responder to regulatory social impositions. It has been recurrently located in utilitarian environments where it is objectified under the male gaze in a multitude of contexts. However, despite this dominant narrative of passivity associated with female embodiment, even with all the systematic silencing of its trauma, the female body serves as a tangible archive of gendered oppression. The female body is so deeply entangled with its cultural surroundings, that it is practically impossible to study it in a homogeneous sense. Since the body is so visibly marked with class, race, caste, ethnicity, and other such vectors of socio-cultural identity, it is imperative to read the body in its cultural location. Thus, this research looks at the embodied realities of women's bodies in three Eastern Indian states such as Assam, Odisha, and West Bengal. Since there is undeniably a lot of cultural diversity even within these three states, this research specifically takes up fiction written by women writers of these three regional linguistic traditions as its focal point of analysis. To conduct a comparative analysis of how the female body is represented in these socio-literary women's fiction, this research takes up their English translations as its primary resources.

Any research on female body can take multiple paths owing to the multiplicity of the modes of gendered violence it endures and so it is important to draw a specific line of queries that would define the aims and objectives of this research. In this study, there are three core chapters, broadly exploring three major strands of oppression: the political, the cultural, and the social. Firstly, the research aims to understand how the female body becomes a tool of expressing political dissent during wars or communal riots. In this investigation of how women's bodies are exploited for political gains or to make political statements, this research studies the displaced female body, especially when displaced forcefully in response to a political turmoil. It focuses on literary representations of wars, communal riots, ethnic riots, or partition-based mass migrations in the selected Eastern Indian regions to interpret the state-sanctioned strategic modes of inflicting corporeal trauma upon the racially undesirable female body. For instance, it looks at how the Assamese-Chinese pregnant women were

Caged Flesh: Reading Female Body Politics in Contemporary Translated Assamese, Bengali, and Odia Fiction by Women Writers

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