

# Development Based On Social Culture in The Works of Dalip Kaur Tiwana, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Amrita Pritam

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## **Abstract**

Social development is directly associated with the culture of that society. Certain values and beliefs are inculcated through the culture in which human beings live. The social institutions like family and religion play a vital role in social development. Family is the foundation of social institution which shapes values, beliefs and behavior of human beings. Similarly religious values, practices deeply affect moral and ethical behavior. It shapes not only spiritual beliefs but also social structures. As a cultural institution, religion fosters community cohesion, hopefulness and strength. The aid/help provided by religious communities during the natural disasters and social upheavals leads towards social development. Education system, Political and legal systems are also deeply connected to the culture.

Social development based on social culture is deeply related with feminism, as both are deeply concerned with the roles, rights and power dynamics of different genders within society. Feminism aims at deconstruction of Gender Norms prevalent in society. It emphasizes the importance of education for all the genders, particularly for women, who have historically been excluded from formal education in many societies. It also challenges patriarchal set-up of society which gives primary place to men. Feminism challenges existing cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality advocating from changes in laws, cultural practices and social structures that facilitate gender equality. This push for change has a direct impact on social development as it leads to dismantling of discriminatory systems. Social development based on social culture is one of the key themes in the works of Dalip kaur Tiwana, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai and Amrita Pritam. All these four writers have presented the contribution of culture in the lives of the female characters.

**Key Words:** Social Development, Culture, Gender roles, Inequality.

## **1. Introduction**

Social development is deeply influenced by the culture of a society, as culture shapes the values, norms, behaviors and institutions that govern social interactions. Social development is tied to social culture in the following forms:

## Values and Beliefs

Social culture instills certain values, such as individualism or collectivism which directly affect how individuals perceive their roles in society. In cultures that value community, social development might prioritize collective well-being, education and social safety nets. In contrast, cultures that emphasize individualism focus more on personal achievements, entrepreneurship and self-reliance.

## Social Norms and Behaviour

Culture sets the framework for acceptable behaviours, shaping social interactions, gender roles and family structures. In a culture that values gender equality, social development aims at reducing gender disparities in the fields of education and employment. In contrast, cultures with traditional gender roles might see more gradual or different paths to social change.

## Education and Knowledge

The importance a culture gives to education and intellectual growth can influence a society's approach to social development. In cultures where education is highly valued, significant investments are made in schools, Universities and Research field which leads to broader social development by improving literacy rates and fostering innovation.

## Economic Systems and Practices

Culture also plays a role in shaping economic practices and systems such as how wealth is distributed, the role of the state in welfare and the importance of work ethics. Social development is often closely linked to economic development which in turn reflects cultural priorities.

## Social Institutions

Social institutions such as family and religion are basically shaped by cultural norms and values of a society. A vital role is played by these institutions by guiding social behaviour and creating the structure for social development. The relationship between culture, social institutions and development is dynamic, as culture influences the structure and function of social institutions, while these social institutions, in turn, guide and shape the social, economic and political development of a society. Here's how culture shapes our society:

**(a) Family as a cultural institution** The family is the foundational social institution that is heavily influenced by culture. Family dynamics shape values, beliefs and behaviors and it is within the family that individuals first learn about societal expectations. Children learn language, norms and behavior from their families which directly influences their integration into society. A stable family environment promotes mental and emotional well-being which leads to positive social outcomes. Cultural values influence family roles and relationships including gender expectations which has a profound effect on gender equality and the roles that individuals adopt in society. While families adapt to changing cultural expectations e.g. shifting gender roles, this contributes to broader social

development. The emotional and social support provided by the family helps individuals thrive in wider society. The support of family in disease, in educational pursuits and in career advancement contributes to overall societal progress.

## **(b) Religion as a Cultural Institution**

Religion plays a dual role in shaping both individual behavior and societal norms. Religious institutions, values and practices deeply influence moral codes, ethical behavior and communal life. Religious values often promote social cohesion by encouraging ethical behavior and social justice. Such principles help in fostering trust among community members and promote social harmony. Many religions emphasize charity and welfare leading to social initiatives such as food banks, healthcare for the needy. These religion- based initiatives help bridge social gaps and reduce poverty leading towards development. Religious institutions such as churches, mosques, temples, gurudwaras and other places of worship serve as central gathering points for individuals. These religious practices and beliefs help to form collective identities, strengthening the bonds within a community and fostering a sense of unity and strength. These religions also provide a set of moral principles- such as honesty, compassion and respect for others that help to establish norms for acceptable behavior leading to greater social order. Religion often encourages individuals to refrain from harmful behaviors such as violence, theft and dishonesty fostering a more peaceful and harmonious society. The doctrine of non-violence emphasized by the religions leads to peaceful co-existence. Religion often serves as a powerful voice for the marginalized, advocating for social justice and equality. Religious beliefs offer individuals hope and comfort during difficult times such as illness ,loss or social upheaval. During difficult times of natural disasters, economic crisis the religious communities often serve as pillars of support providing not only spiritual solace but also material aid. The best example can be given of RSSB- The famous religious institution whose distribution of food during Covid-19 helped a lot in handling such pandemic peacefully. Thus, religion as a cultural institution is a powerful force for social development. Its ability to offer moral guidance, emotional support and collective action makes it an enduring and essential part of the social fabric in many cultures around the world.

## **(c) Education as a Cultural Institution**

Education systems are deeply embedded in cultural contents, schools and universities are not only places for Academic Learning but also for socializing young people into the norms and values of their culture. Culturally influenced educational systems foster critical thinking, creativity and problem solving. Societies that value intellectual inquiry often see higher rates of innovation which contributes to economic and social progress.

## **(d) Legal and Political Institutions**

Cultural values influence legal and political systems which are key factors in structuring the economic, social and political life of a society. These institutions create laws, policies and systems of governance that uphold social order and protect individual rights. When political and legal systems

are based on inclusive cultural values, they contribute to more just societies. In multicultural societies, these institutions are vital in ensuring that rights of minority groups are protected while maintaining social harmony.

In addition to all the above, economic institutions like business, labour markets are also culturally influenced. Cultural values surrounding fairness and equity in the workplace affect labour rights and working conditions. Cultural based social institutions are not just the foundations of the structure of a society; they are essential catalysts for social development. By promoting shared values, social cohesion, innovation and justice, these institutions foster environments where individuals and communities can thrive.

## **CORRELATION WITH FEMINISM**

Social development, particularly in terms of gender equality has long been influenced by the interplay of social culture and feminist movements. Social culture refers to the shared values, norms, practices and traditions within a society which shape the roles of individuals including gender expectations. Feminism, as a movement and ideology challenges these norms advocating for the rights, equality and social infuses of women and other marginalized genders. The connection between social culture, social development and feminism is deeper. As feminism continues to influence social development, it reshapes cultural attitudes, policies and institutions driving societies towards greater gender equality and social justice.

There are certain aspects of their interplay:

### **Cultural Norms and Gender Expectations**

Social culture is the bedrock upon which gender expectations are formed. In many societies, gender roles have historically been rigid and strictly defined. Such cultural prescription often sees men as dominant figures in public spheres and women as caretakers often confined to the domestic walls. These roles are reinforced since beginning at a young age through family, education and religion. For example, children in many cultures are taught gender roles through toys, colors and the division of labor within the household. Women are encouraged to be nurturing and passive while men are encouraged to be assertive and active. These roles are deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric and become entrenched over generations, perpetuating gender inequality.

### **Feminism as a catalyst for change in Social Culture**

Feminism is not a monolithic movement but is instead diverse, shaped by varying ideologies, cultural contexts and historical moments. Its core premise is the pursuit of equality by challenging gender hierarchies. Feminism pushes against traditional cultural expectations by:

#### **a) Questioning and Deconstructing Gender Norms**

Traditional gender norms are deeply ingrained into social expectations that dictate the individuals to dress up, behave and interact according to their assigned gender at birth. These norms are typically binary- defining men and women in the opposite terms- often linking masculinity to strength, dominance and rationality and femininity to nurturing, and submission. Feminism, through its more

recent waves has directly challenged these expectations offering new ways to understand gender as a socially constructed phenomenon. The historical context of these gender norms is rooted in biological essentialism- the belief that one's gender is inherently tied to one's biological sex. In many cultures, this binary structure has governed. Men were traditionally positioned as public figures, breadwinners and leaders while women were confined to private spheres- primarily in roles of care giving, reproduction and domestic labour. Feminism has consistently questioned the limitations these norms impose particularly as they relate to power, autonomy and equality. The recognition that these norms are not biologically predetermined but socially constructed has opened the door for deconstructing them. Ultimately, by questioning and deconstructing gender norms feminism is working to create a more inclusive and just world where everyone, regardless of gender has the freedom to live.

## **b) Challenging Gendered Expectations in Everyday Life**

Feminism also addresses how gender norms manifest in everyday life, from the way we are socialized as children to how we perform in public and private spaces. For example:

### **Clothing and Appearance**

From a young age, people are encouraged to dress and present themselves in the ways that conform to gender expectations. Feminists challenge these norms by advocating for more freedom in personal expression. The modern feminist movement has supported women who choose to wear dresses, helping break down the idea that clothing and appearance should be governed by gender rules.

### **Emotional Expression**

Traditional gender norms often dictate how individuals should express emotions. Men are often specialized to suppress their emotions except for anger. They are not expected to cry while women are encouraged to express emotions freely. They are expected to cry and weep since it's a symbol of weakness. Feminists argue that this emotional repression of men and the stereotypical 'over-emotional' labeling of women leads to harmful psychological effects. Deconstructing these norms allows for a broader, more human expression of emotion for everyone.

### **Behavioral Expectations**

Feminism challenges traditional views on how men and women should behave. e.g. women have been historically expected to be passive and weak while men were expected to be strong, and dominant. Feminist movements emphasize that all the individuals regardless of gender should be free to engage in behaviours that align with their personal feelings and traits rather than societal expectations.

## **c) Gender as a Social Construct**

Feminism has played a vital role in highlighting that gender is not a biological destiny but a social construct that is learned and reinforced through socialization. While sex-referring to the biological attributes of male and female-may have some basis in physical characteristics, gender refers to the roles, behaviors and attributes that societies expect individuals to perform based on their assigned sex

at birth. The famous feminist Simone de Beauvoir writes, “One is not born but rather becomes a woman” emphasizing that gender is not innate but a result of socialization processes. The other famous feminist

Judith Butler’s Theory of performativity is one of the most transformative ideas in Feminist Theory .According to Butler, gender is not something one ‘ Is’ but something one ‘does’- an ongoing series of actions, speech acts and behaviors that align with societal expectations. The idea of performativity opens up space for individuals to create their gender identity rather than passively confirm to pre-existing roles. However, the concept of gender as a social construct arose as scholars and activists began to understand that these were not biologically fixed but rather the result of social, cultural and institutional forces.

## **d) Redefining Power Structures**

Feminism plays a critical role in challenging traditional power structures that are often patriarchal and exclusionary. These power structures are embedded in cultural norms institutions and practices that have historically sidelined women. Feminism works to deconstruct the gender stereotypes by advocating for individual agency and the right for all people regardless of gender. The challenge here is cultural, aiming to shift deep-rooted beliefs about what men and women should do, and instead promote a more fluid and inclusive understanding of gender. In patriarchal systems, women and gender minorities often face barriers in achieving leadership roles or positions of influence resulting in what’s commonly called the “glass ceiling.” This invisible barrier limits women’s advancement in the workplace, especially in politics, business and other high stately professions. Feminism directly challenges this by advocating for policies such as gender quotas, equal pay and affirmative action and helps in breaking the “Glass Ceiling”. These efforts not only empower women but also improve governance by incorporating diverse viewpoints leading to more representative and inclusive policies that address issues like healthcare, education and poverty reduction.

## **ROLE OF FEMINISM IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Feminism plays a significant role in social development particularly in how it challenges and reshapes cultural norms that have historically perpetuated gender inequality. Here’s how feminism contributes to social development based on social culture:

### **1) Promoting Gender Equality**

Feminism advocated for equal rights, opportunities and treatment for all genders. By challenging patriarchal norms, it encourages societies to reconsider traditional gender roles generating gender equality which leads to more fairer social structures. As men and women as well as people of all gender identities are given equal opportunities, it fosters cooperation and social harmony. This reduces social tension and conflicts based on gender discrimination. Gender equality contributes to higher productivity and innovation hence higher economic growth. When women are given equal access to education, jobs and leadership positions, the entire economy benefits from a more diverse

and talented workforce. Gender equality also impacts public health. In societies where women have access to education healthcare and decision making roles, there are often improved health outcomes for families and communities since such women can better care for themselves and their children, leading to healthier population. In a society, that values gender equality, both men and women share responsibility for domestic work, child-rearing and care giving. This leads to more balanced family structures where both the parents have equal division of work at workplace as well as at home. Gender equality also promotes political empowerment of women which leads to more diverse leadership leading the societies towards development and growth. So, promoting gender equality not only improves the lives of individuals but also catalyzes broader social development by fostering more resilient, diverse and sustainable societies. The benefits of gender equality extend beyond individual empowerment, creating a ripple effect that positively influences all aspects of culture and economy.

## 2) **Changing Cultural Norms**

Feminist movements often challenge the existing cultural norms that are harmful for the personal growth such as those about women being confined to the four walls of domesticity or men being limited to the role of ruling and dominance. The change in cultural rules encourages societies to adopt more flexible and progressive views on gender roles allowing for greater personal freedom and expression. Since every human being is endowed with different kind of abilities. Division on the basis of mere sex does not do justice with the talent of a human being e.g. if a woman having greater administrative qualities is confined to home only, the society can lose a good administrative structure which hinders in the social development. Feminism encourages people to understand that gender does not determine one's abilities or ambitions. This shift allows individuals to pursue careers, hobbies and life choices based on their interests and talents rather than societal expectations. Feminism challenges that women alone should handle household and childcare. This cultural shift allows women to pursue careers and educational opportunities.

Feminism also works to validate qualities traditionally associated with femininity such as empathy, nurturing and emotional nature, which have often been undervalued or seen as weaknesses. By promoting the value of these traits in all genders, feminism helps shift the cultural understanding of what constitutes strength and leadership.

## 3) **Combating Gender-Based Violence and Harassment**

Feminism challenges cultural norms that ignore gender based violence and harassment. By raising awareness about these issues and demanding accountability, feminism shifts public attitudes towards zero tolerance for such behaviours. This cultural transformation creates safer spaces for women. Gender based violence refers to any harmful act directed at any individual based on their gender, with women and gender minorities often being the most affected. Feminism plays a central role in challenging the cultural, social and structural factors that allow such violence to persist. Feminist advocacy has been instrumental in pushing for legal reforms to protect individuals from this violence. Laws addressing domestic violence, sexual harassment, human trafficking and violence at

workplace have all been influenced by feminist movements. The advanced legal reforms and laws against such violence reflect and reinforce changes in societal attitudes not only benefitting the women but fostering a broader social structure. The primary focus of feminism in context of violence is to empower survivors by ensuring they have access to support services such as counselling, shelters and legal assistance. Feminist movements give survivors a voice, helping them reclaim their autonomy and pursue justice. This empowerment helps them to regain their confidence and control over their lives. Certain networks are created by feminists that create spaces where the victims feel heard, validated and supported.

#### 4) **Promoting Sexual Autonomy and Reproductive Rights**

Feminism challenges traditional norms that restrict women's control over their own bodies, such as laws or cultural practices that limit reproductive choices.

By advocating for women's sexual autonomy and reproductive rights, feminism empowers individuals to take decisions about their bodies without societal interference. This leads to improvement in health outcomes. The empowerment gained because of control over unwanted or forced motherhood, leads towards the full participation of individuals in society- economically as well as socially. Access to reproductive rights allows individuals to better plan their families and careers. The freedom to have children according to work management can enable women to greater economic participation and a more productive labor force. Moreover, by providing access to family planning and reproductive health services, individuals can better plan their families and break the cycle of poverty. When women can decide when to have children and how many to have, they are more likely to have the financial resources to support themselves and their families leading to long-term economic stability. This access to family planning also challenges patriarchy. Historically, decisions regarding reproduction have been influenced by male-dominated social and political structures which have often denied women the ability to make choices about their bodies. When reproduction rights are fully recognized and accessible individuals, families and communities can reach their potential-leading to a more just, equitable and prosperous social setup.

#### 5) **Addressing Intersectionality**

Feminism today often focuses in intersectionality which looks at how gender, race, class, sexual orientation and other factors intersect to affect people's experience of inequality. Addressing intersectionality leads to more holistic and effective social development by ensuring that all individuals regardless of their identities are included in efforts to promote justice, equality and opportunity. When intersectionality is embraced, it creates a society where people are not left behind due to compounded forms of oppression. By recognizing the complexity of people's live experiences and addressing systematic inequalities, intersectional feminism helps in building a more equitable world when everyone has the opportunity to thrive. This leads to greater social stability, economic prosperity and collective well-being-creating a society that is stronger, more resilient and more diverse.

## **Development based on social culture in the works of Dalip Kaur Tiwana, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Amrita Pritam.**

Social development based on social culture especially in the context of feminism is a central theme in the works of Dalip Kaur Tiwana, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Amrita Pritam, particularly when it comes to examining how women's lives are shaped by the socio-cultural frameworks they inhabit. These authors explore the intersection of cultural norms, gender roles and personal identity particularly through the lens of women's experiences in post-independence Indian Society. The characters in their works not only confront personal struggles but also reflect the social development (or lack thereof) in their communities, offering insights into how culture can either hinder or enable progress for women. The works of these writers provide profound insights into the social development of women and highlight how deeply social and cultural structures influence the lives of women.

**Dalip kaur Tiwana :** Dalip Kaur Tiwana's work primarily written in Punjabi, forms on internal struggles of women in a patriarchal society. Her novel *And Such is her fate* examines how women's roles are shaped and often constrained by traditional norms.

Tiwana's protagonists are often seen struggling for their own identity within the context of family and society. Feminism in her works is a response to social culture that limits a woman's autonomy. Tiwana portrays women as individuals caught between the demands of tradition and the desire for personal freedom often showing the social development of women as a gradual and painful struggle against these ingrained societal structures. Her writings are set against the backdrop of traditional punjabi society where the concept of honor is tightly interwoven with the role of women who are expected to uphold family and cultural values often at the expense of their personal desires and dreams.

### **Anita Desai**

Anita Desai's novel *Fasting, feasting and Cry, the Peacock*, delve into the depth of women psyche where they feel suffocated by the cultural and familial expectations imposed upon them. Desai examines the complex interplay between women's personal desires and the cultural constraints they face within the family and society. She explores themes of isolation, self-identity and emotional repression often placing her female characters in environments that stifle their desires and aspirations. Social development in her works is a continuous negotiation between internal desires and external societal pressures where the capacity for personal growth is often limited by rigid social structures.. She critiques the cultural norms that suppress the female autonomy, portraying the consequences of such repression, both on a personal and societal level.

### **Shashi Deshpande**

Shashi Deshpande's in her works like *That long Silence* and *The Dark holds no terrors*, delves into the tension between the expectations of society and the inner lives of her female characters. She highlights the complex negotiation of Identity that women face in a culture steeped in the patriarchy. Deshpande's protagonists often confront societal expectations in the realms of marriage, motherhood and career. She explores the impact of societal expectation on women's identities. She critiques traditional roles assigned to women, showing how such norms limit personal growth and self expression. Her exploration of female consciousness, social norms and individual agency highlights how social development is

influenced by cultural perceptions of women. Women's Social development in her works is depicted as a journey towards self awareness and emotional independence. Women's social development in her works is thus characterized by their inner transformation where they reclaim their voice and assert their right to lead fulfilled independent lives outside the limitations imposed by traditional social structures.

## **Amrita Pritam**

Amrita Pritam, the famous poetess and fiction writer, is known for her bold feminist themes, particularly in her novel *Pinjar*. This work of Pritam deals with the intersection of gender culture and historical trauma often highlighting the resilience of women in the face of intense societal and political upheavals. *Pinjar* is set during the partition of India and Pakistan which focuses on the experiences of women as victims of war. Amrita Pritam addresses the deep social scars left by the partition of India which disproportionately affected women. yet . Amrita Pritam's feminism is deeply intertwined with a critique of social culture that oppresses women. Social development in her works is radical ; she calls for a revolution of consciousness where women reclaim their voices and lives from a cultural system that perpetuates oppression. For her social development is linked to the breaking of cultural chains that bind women. Her works advocate for women's liberation not only from external patriarchal forces but also from the internalized cultural constraints that limit their sense of self. :

## **Conclusion**

All the four writers address issues related to social development through their exploration of culture and gender. They critique the traditional roles assigned to women and emphasize the need for individual freedom. The social culture depicted in their works often reflects deeply ingrained patriarchal structures but their narratives suggest that social development is a process of questioning and reshaping these very structures. Through their complex, multidimensional female characters, these feminist writers contribute to a deeper understanding of how social culture can both hinder and promote personal and social development because their protagonists reclaim their voices in different ways. Whether it's Tiwana's characters asserting their individualism, Desai's protagonists seeking emotional liberation, Deshpande's women finding strength in their autonomy or Pritam's characters challenging the boundaries of history and tradition, all these writers foreground women's resistance to the cultural constraints placed upon them. To conclude, it can be said that fiction of Dalip Kaur Tiwana, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai and Amrita Pritam offers a rich exploration of the intersections of feminism and social culture. Their works reflect the complex dynamics of gender, identity and tradition in Indian Society and contribute significantly to the discourse on social development through a feminist lens. In conclusion, social development based on social culture in the works of Dalip Kaur Tiwana, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Amrita Pritam is a multifaceted theme dealing with personal growth, emotional independence and the resistance against cultural norms. These authors collectively argue that true social development can only be realized when the deeply ingrained cultural expectations that limit women's agency and identity are critically examined and reformed.

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