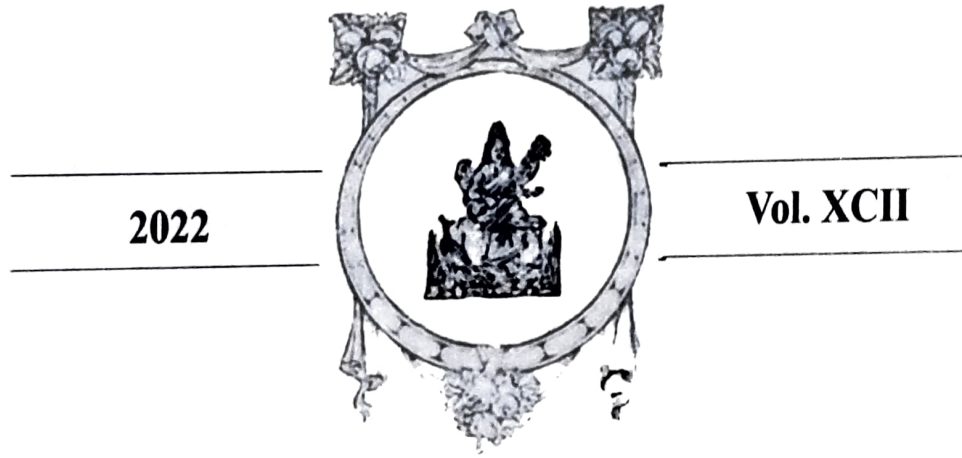


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Assertive Voices of Human Rights in Tehmina Durrani's *My Feudal Lord* and Malika Amar Sheikh's *I Want to Destroy Myself*

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Abstract

The issue of human rights has always been the focal point of discussion in literature, particularly the issue of women's rights. As the domain of human rights also includes the women's rights and the literature written across the world by women writers very much deals with the life of women so we need to trace what aspects of experience have been shared in the autobiographies written by those women. The objective of this paper is to discuss the issue of gender discrimination and women's right as found in the two autobiographies: Tehmina Durrani's My Feudal Lord and Malika Amar Sheikh's I Want to Destroy Myself. The reason for selecting these two writers is that they have been the victim of marital violence at the hands of their husbands. Tehmina Durrani is a Pakistani writer whereas Malika Amar Sheikh comes from Maharashtra, India but their life experiences reflect that the boundaries are collapsed on the issue of women's victimization in the hands of patriarchy and its agents. However, the life narratives of these authors tell the tale of not only their victimization, but also how they struggle hard to protest against their subjection and attain sense of empowerment.

Key Words: Gender discrimination, Women's rights, Patriarchy, Empowerment, Protest.

In order to make a gender just society and to ensure philosophy of liberty, equality and fraternity we need to assure people of their human rights. It is a general perception that any nation can achieve the goal of sustainable development and, as Rineke van Dam stated in "Gender Equality, Women's Rights and Human Rights", "gender equality, women's rights and human rights are essential" (01) for it. Rineke emphasized that for transformational change in society we must give importance to "women's economic rights, women's and girls' participation at all levels, including peace at all levels and the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls" and their "sexual and reproductive health and rights" (Rineke 01) should also be not excluded. Laying particular focus on women's sexual rights Rineke highlighted that "the rights of women and girls to control all matters related to their sexuality, including their sexual and reproductive health, free from coercion, discrimination and violence" (Rineke 01) should also be recognized in multiple development agreements.

In their discussion paper on "Gender Equality and Human Rights" Sandra Fredman and Beth Goldblatt tell four dimensions of substantive equality: "to redress disadvantage; to counter stigma, prejudice, humiliation and violence; to transform social and institutional structures; and to facilitate participation, both in the form of political participation and social inclusion" (05). So, the domain of human rights also envelops the women's rights and the literature written across the world by women

subordination caused by the patriarchal social system. These autobiographies prove their potent act, as Arpna Deepak “of breaking [their] silence because [the] repressive patriarchal society has taught South Asian women to be culturally silent” (Deepak 10). In fact, their efforts reflect their spirit of, what Rahat Imran calls, “feminist resistance against patriarchy” (92)

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