



## Indian Women: Ancient Vs. Post Truth In the context of short fiction

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### ABSTRACT

Truth and lies used to exist. Truth, falsehoods, and assertions that may not be true but are too harmless to be called false are all now available to us. It is no longer true. In the post-truth era, distinctions between fiction and nonfiction, truth and falsehoods, and honesty and dishonesty are hazy. Tricking people turns into a test, a game, and eventually a habit. The term "post-truth" is occasionally used to describe a social and political situation in which people no longer respect the truth but instead accept what they feel or believe to be true. Post-truth feminism is a branch of feminist theory that acknowledges the existence of multiple truths and seeks to challenge the dominant narrative that has historically excluded women and marginalized groups. Postcolonial feminism seeks to explain how racism affects non-white, non-Western women, and the long-term consequences of colonialism. The impression of the post-truth concept in contrast to post-colonial Indian women will be critically analyzed in the short stories vis-à-vis post-truth, colonial, and post-colonial. The evolution of the concept of truth is traced through the ideas of various philosophers.

**Keywords:** feminism, education, society, rights, Indian English literature, womanhood, identity, sexual politics, post-truth, post-colonialism, patriarchal system.

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### I. INTRODUCTION:

#### feminism

A movement known as feminism promotes giving women the same political, social, and economic rights as those enjoyed by men. A patriarchal system has stripped women of their fundamental socio-legal rights across the world. A woman is a social construct and a platform in patriarchal culture.

Speaking with macho connotations and acting on manly wants. The process of social conditioning that shapes a girl's mentality to seek and pursue only historically approved and encouraged feminine roles, rather than just her anatomy, is what ultimately transforms her into a woman.

The social and moral philosophies of the day had an impact on feminist views, which were born out of the experiences of women in various social, political, and economic contexts. These ideologies generated academic research that sparked social movement involvement.

Early feminist views had a propensity to approach all women uniformly as marginalised groups. They frequently ignored the social, cultural, and racial boundaries that separate women to emphasise a shared sisterhood.

#### Postcolonial feminism

Postcolonial feminism is an alternative to feminism that focuses solely on women's experiences in Western states and former colonies. Postcolonial feminism tries to explain how racism and the long-term political, economic, and cultural consequences of colonialism affect non-white, non-Western women in the postcolonial globe. Postcolonial feminism originated in the 1980s as a critique of feminist theorists in developed countries, claiming that women living outside of Western countries are unjustly portrayed. It accomplishes this by highlighting the universalizing tendencies of classic feminist ideologies.

When the term "woman" refers to a global group, postcolonial feminism maintains that women are defined solely by their gender, not by their socioeconomic status, race, nationality, or sexual orientation. The goals

of indigenous and other Third World feminist organisations are also incorporated into mainstream Western feminism by postcolonial feminists. According to Third World feminism, feminism develops in Third World nations due to societal and internal views rather than being imported from the First World.

Indian women in the postcolonial era encounter numerous difficulties and barriers. Despite legal safeguards, gender-based violence continues to be a widespread issue, and women continue to experience marginalisation and discrimination in many aspects of life. Indian women's experiences are also varied and complex, influenced by things like class, caste, religion, region, and ethnicity.

### **Postmodern feminism**

The term "post-truth" refers to a political environment in which objective facts and expert opinions are undervalued and emotional appeals and personal convictions are given more weight in public discourse. In a post-truth society, people are more inclined to accept information that reinforces their existing ideas, even if it is not factual, and to reject information that opposes those beliefs, even if it is based on trustworthy data.

"Post-truth feminism" refers to a feminist movement that depends on emotional appeals and personal narratives rather than evidence-based arguments. Post-truth feminism has been chastised for being too focused on subjective experiences and identity politics rather than systematic causes of female inequity.

Some claim that post-truth feminism undermines feminist activism's legitimacy and efficacy by advocating a simplified, polarised vision of complicated societal issues. Others say that post-truth feminism is a crucial response to the constraints of established modalities of feminist discourse, which have historically been controlled by white, middle-class women and have ignored marginalized groups' perspectives.

In any event, it is critical to understand that the concept of "post-truth" is a relatively new development in political discourse, and its implications for the feminist movement are still being argued and investigated.

Indian women, like women in many other parts of the world, can be impacted by post-truth narratives that distort reality and undermine the pursuit of gender equality. Post-truth stories in India could perpetuate preconceived notions about gender roles and how women should choose marriage and motherhood above education and a job. Additionally, they could advocate for beliefs that portray women as threats to cultural purity or as the cause of social ills.

## **II. OBJECTIVE:**

My goal in conducting this research is to critically analyse feminism from many historical perspectives and to compare women from various times to those of the post-truth era.

To do it, I observe various ladies from various historical periods while taking the short stories of Tagore and other Indian writers into mind.

## **III. METHODOLOGY:**

I'll do my investigation using a method suitable for philosophical inquiry. The significance of comprehending and critically analysing "post-colonial and post-truth" notions from a philosophical perspective, especially feminist philosophy, Along with looking at short stories by Indian authors, I'll also look at the concept of "gender" and the development of "post-truth analysis," and how authors' works contain these themes. Most of my studies will be devoted to character evaluations.

The methodology of "subjective interpretation of post-truth" will be used in my work to analyse the study concerns produced from Tagore and others' literature.

## **IV. OBSERVATIONS:**

### **Ancient women:**

In ancient India, women were highly regarded. In the Vedas and Upanishads, women were revered as mothers or goddesses. Ancient Hindu texts such as the Vedas and Upanishads shed light on the position and status of women in ancient India. These texts assert that women were recognised for their contributions to the family and society as well as their status as equal partners in marriage. They oversaw taking care of household chores like cooking and cleaning, but they were also permitted to take part in religious events and rituals. There are mentions of female sages and professors who debated philosophy with male scholars, such as Maitreyi and Gargi.

In the Manu Smriti, women were first under the care of their husbands before being protected by their fathers and brothers. Later by her child. Girls were valued in the early Vedic era and provided with educational opportunities. Widow remarriage was allowed.

As muscle power and financial power overtook societies, the status of women declined over time. Men believed they were better than women, even though men were the ones who led the industrial production firms and waged wars. In later eras, daughters were additionally considered sources of information. Later civilizations forbade women from attending school. They could tolerate hearing the Scriptures. The purdah system, dowry, and sati customs all originated in the mediaeval era. Polygamy and Sati were exalted. It is believed that the home is

where women belong. Cooking and other laborious tasks are her primary responsibilities. They are deemed capable of having and raising children. As a result, women have been denied their true place in society and have been exploited for generations. Only the character of women's movements has evolved with time, even though the fight for equality, justice, and liberty has been ongoing for centuries. There are both explicit and implicit kinds of prejudice against women. The pre-independence issues, however, were very different. due to the varying levels of societal progress and development in the post-independent ones. Because of this, each conflict took on a new form. Colonial women:

The campaign during the colonial era was primarily directed against the inhumane practise of sati, in which the wife was expected to burn herself to death on her husband's burial pyre. Dowry has become widespread. The demand for dowry rises with a groom's level of education and income. Therefore, the birth of a girl is regarded as unlucky. Despite making numerous contributions to our society in many areas of India, women are still often seen as a financial liability. Even educated and well-off females nowadays still struggle to locate a compatible partner who doesn't want dowry, which is a situation that is not all that different from the one described in the past. Particularly when it comes to arranged weddings. As a sign of their status, the parents of some communities provide dowries in the form of money and kind. Even at a time when live-in relationships and love marriages are prevalent, they help to keep this evil going. Positively, women used to work almost as hard as men, whether in the fields of agriculture or other occupations, with the exception that they had less stress. Together with other household duties, they enjoyed caring for the husband, the elderly, and the kids. They were able to handle any scenario because they had a healthy emotional balance, which gained them respect in society.

Males dominated women throughout the colonial era, but only to the level necessary to feed their egos as males. The ladies recognised their role and elevated themselves on the domestic and home fronts. Despite appearing submissive to the men in their homes, their emotional intelligence was so well-balanced that they were safer under the guardianship of their fathers, brothers, and husbands. There were also notable instances of women who ventured outside the safety of the home and worked in a variety of disciplines, such as promoting independence and leaving their mark on history. The colonial women were strong and capable of managing their lives despite the prevalence of various social ills.

#### **Post-colonial women:**

Women in the postcolonial era gained additional focus. Following independence, numerous provisions for women's safety and advancement through reservations, education, and equality were incorporated into the constitution. Women began to put in extra effort and succeed in all fields that were previously dominated by men. Outstanding leadership by women has been shown in several spheres, including politics, business, space exploration, and sports. The line between men and women had begun to dissolve before the beginning of modern times, when women started to be extensively impacted by western culture and dress. They overexerted themselves in terms of education and sophisticated living, leaving themselves open to males who viewed women as objects of pleasure. Women contribute significantly to the development of the country and to the financial stability of the family. Because of the high cost of living in cities, both men and women must work to make money and pay their bills. Most people work in the private or business sectors. Positions in the government sector are scarce. Every day is a struggle because of how much pressure there is at work.

#### **Post truth women:**

The phrase "post-truth" describes a political and cultural environment where appeals to emotion and personal opinions are more effective at swaying public opinion than the use of objective facts and reality. The term "post-truth women" is not a generally used or recognised expression, despite the fact that the concept of post-truth may be applied to many aspects of life, including gender roles and women's experiences. However, it may be claimed that the post-truth period has significantly changed how women view the world. Women's experiences and stories can be marginalised or dismissed as subjective or insignificant in a world where truth and facts are frequently contested or discounted.

Women's accusations of sexual assault or harassment, for instance, are frequently examined and disregarded, with offenders relying on the strength of their own stories to obscure the reality of the situation. Women's opinions and experiences may be overshadowed in political discussions by louder or more dominant voices, creating a distorted view of the world.

In this era, people with the greatest influence and power frequently determine the narratives that shape our perception of the world, which can disproportionately affect marginalised communities, especially women.

#### **OBSERVATION OF INDIAN WOMEN CONSIDERING SHORT STORIES:**

##### **In ancient**

Literature is regarded as the ideal medium for highlighting any subject or restating any stance. Even though women's positive contributions have been significant and have been growing for the past two to three

decades in post-independent India, the male-dominated Indian literature has purposefully disregarded their supporting role.

Women are portrayed as symbols of strength and generosity in several short stories from ancient Indian literature. Here are a few illustrations:

The Mahabharata's "The Cow of Plenty" In this tale, Sudeshna, a wise and upright queen, is the owner of a magical cow that can produce an endless supply of milk and grain. Sudeshna uses the gifts of the cow to feed the entire kingdom and win their allegiance when her husband is wrongfully accused of a crime and sent to prison. Through the strength of the cow's plenty and her own leadership abilities, she is able to redeem her husband's name and obtain his freedom.

The Tamil epic "Silappatikaram" has "The Story of Kannagi." In this tale, Kannagi is a loving woman whose husband is executed after being falsely convicted of stealing. The grieving and enraged Kannagi uses her power to overthrow the unjust king and his city. She becomes a representation of righteousness and justice, and South India still celebrates her life as a source of inspiration for social justice and the empowerment of women. In Kathasaritsagara's "The Story of Vishnudatta and Vasavadatta," Vasavadatta, a lovely and giving courtesan, falls in love with Vishnudatta, a humble but upright scholar. Through Vasavadatta's guidance, the two are able to overcome challenges and achieve happiness together despite their socioeconomic distinctions and the disapproval of Vasavadatta's affluent patrons.

These tales demonstrate the power, prosperity, and generosity of women in ancient India. These tales show how women's virtues and strengths were praised in literature and folklore, even though they do not necessarily represent all women's experiences in ancient India.

### **In Colonial era**

Significant changes in women's status and duties occurred in India throughout the colonial period, which lasted from the 16th century until the middle of the 20th century. Here are a few brief stories from this time period that shed light on the experiences of women:

Author Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's "The Widow's Son" In this narrative, a poor widow by the name of Tarasundari struggles to support her son, Dhani. Tarasundari is forced to take drastic measures to raise the money when Dhani becomes ill and requires an expensive operation. The narrative emphasizes the difficulties bereaved women confront in a patriarchal society and the tenacity and selflessness of a mother's love.

Author Subhadra Kumari Chauhan's "Lakshmi Bai": This narrative tells the tale of Lakshmi Bai, the Rani of Jhansi, who in 1857 organized an armed uprising against British colonial control. The narrative presents Lakshmi Bai as a valiant and daring warrior who fought for the liberty and honor of her people. The narrative debunks the myth that women are docile and submissive by highlighting women's role in India's struggle for freedom.

Written by Rabindranath Tagore, "A Wife's Letter": In this narrative, a young bride by the name of Mrinal writes a letter to her absentee husband while he is gone on business. Mrinal writes about her feelings of solitude, loneliness, and longing for her husband to come home in the letter. The narrative emphasizes the emotional and psychological difficulties that women experience in patriarchal societies, as well as the ability of love and connection to help women get over these hurdles.

These tales provide an overview of the many experiences that women had in colonial India. Stories that laud women's strength, resiliency, and potential for love and connection contrast with those that emphasize the difficulties and challenges that women confront on a regular basis. Today's conversations regarding women's rights and gender equality are still influenced by and informed by these tales.

### **In Post colonial era**

Numerous short stories by Indian authors have as their focus the condition of Indian women in the postcolonial era. The social, cultural, and political developments that have occurred in India since its independence are reflected in these tales, notably in terms of women's rights and gender equality.

The writers have highlighted the challenges faced by women in postcolonial India, such as gender discrimination, domestic violence, and social restrictions. They have also explored the ways in which women have challenged and subverted these norms, often through acts of resistance and rebellion.

"The Portrait of a Lady" by Khushwant Singh: This story explores the themes of gender, sexuality, and social expectations in postcolonial India. The story follows a young woman who defies her family's expectations by pursuing her own interests and desires, but ultimately finds herself trapped in a patriarchal society.

"The Old Woman and the Cow" by Mahasweta Devi This story examines the experiences of marginalised women in postcolonial India, particularly those from indigenous communities. The story follows an old woman who fights for her rights and dignity in the face of oppression and exploitation.

"The Interior Castle" by Githa Hariharan: This story explores the themes of identity, memory, and displacement in postcolonial India. The story follows a woman who returns to her ancestral home after years of living abroad and the ways in which her memories and identity are shaped by her experiences.

"The Man from Kabul" by Mridula Garg: This story examines the intersection of gender and class in postcolonial India. The story follows a woman who falls in love with a man from a different social background and the challenges they face in navigating their relationship in a society that is deeply divided by class.

"The Housewife" by Manju Kapur: This story explores the themes of marriage, family, and gender roles in postcolonial India. The story follows a housewife who is trapped in a loveless marriage and the ways in which she finds her own voice and agency in the face of societal expectations.

"The Homecoming" by Bama: This story examines the experiences of Dalit women, who are at the bottom of the caste hierarchy in India. The story follows a woman who returns to her village after years of living in the city and the discrimination she faces from her own community.

"The Journey" by Kamala Das: This story explores the themes of gender, sexuality, and identity in postcolonial India. The story follows a woman who embarks on a journey to discover her own identity and sexuality in the face of societal expectations and norms.

These are just a few examples of the many short stories that address the status of postcolonial Indian women. They offer a unique perspective on the experiences of women in a rapidly changing society and highlight the ongoing struggle for gender equality and social justice.

### **In Post truth era :**

The concept of "post-truth" refers to a political and cultural climate where objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief. While there may not be many short stories that explicitly address this concept, there are certainly stories by Indian writers that explore the themes of truth, perception, and the power of narrative in postcolonial India. These stories may offer insight into the ways in which the idea of "post-truth" affects the status of Indian women.

"The Muslin Curtain" by Sagarika Ghose This story examines the ways in which cultural and religious divides shape perceptions of truth and identity in contemporary India. The story follows a group of women who confront the prejudices and assumptions of their community to assert their own agency and freedom.

"The Liar's Weave" by Tashan Mehta This short story explores the themes of truth and deception in a small village in Gujarat. The story centres on a young girl who is tasked with weaving a rug that tells a lie and the ways in which her actions affect the lives of those around her. This short tale focuses on the experiences of Amrita, a young girl who lives in a rural area of India. Amrita's father is a weaver who makes exquisite fabrics while fabricating the truth about where they came from to increase their value. The narrative follows Amrita as she discovers the nuances of truth and lies and the effects they have on her relationships and perceptions of the outside world. Amrita is initially content to believe her father's lies, but as she grows older, she becomes increasingly disillusioned with the way that the truth is manipulated for personal gain. Her experiences suggest that, to challenge dominant narratives and promote a more nuanced understanding of reality,

Anjum Hasan's short fiction "The Road to Redemption" chronicles the journey of a lady named Maya who has recently divorced her husband and is seeking meaning in her life. Maya sets out on a journey to the northeastern part of India, where she encounters a variety of people and has several events that put her beliefs and notions of who she is to the test. The story explores the themes of gender, power, and truth in a small town in Assam, centred on a young woman who must navigate the complexities of a patriarchal society and the ways in which her perceptions of truth are shaped by her experiences.

Mahasweta Devi was a renowned Bengali writer and activist who wrote extensively about the struggles of marginalised communities, particularly women and tribal communities. Her works are known for their powerful portrayal of the feminist struggle in India.

"Draupadi": This is one of Mahasweta Devi's most famous short stories, which portrays the life of a tribal woman who is forced into prostitution by upper-caste men. The story is a powerful critique of patriarchy and the caste system, and it highlights the exploitation of women by men in positions of power. The story is based on the life of a tribal woman named Dopdi Mejhen, who becomes a rebel against the oppressive state. The story is set in the context of the Naxalite movement, a communist insurgency that took place in West Bengal and other parts of India in the 1970s.

"A Pair of Mustachios" is a short story that explores the experiences of a woman named Sohini, who is forced to navigate the complexities of power and privilege in a rural Indian village. Sohini is a landless labourer who works for a wealthy landlord named Haren Babu, and the story follows her as she confronts a range of injustices and inequalities in her community. This short story explores the themes of gender, power, and truth through the perspective of a young girl who is forced to shave off her moustache to conform to societal expectations. The story raises questions about the ways in which gender norms and expectations shape our perceptions of truth and identity.

These are just a few examples of the many short stories by Indian writers that touch on the themes of post-truth and the status of women in postcolonial India. These stories offer a unique perspective on the complexities of truth and narrative in a society that is constantly evolving and highlight the importance of challenging stereotypes and promoting gender equality.



## **ANALYSES OF EARLY WOMEN'S IMPRESSIONS ON THE POST-TRUTH CANVAS.**

Post-truth feminism, commonly referred to as "post-truth feminism," is a term used to characterise a type of feminism that is superficial and performative rather than sincerely committed to advancing gender equality and confronting patriarchal conventions. Pseudo-feminism, in contrast to the female protagonists of short stories, can be considered a shallow and constrained version of feminism that falls short of seriously challenging cultural norms and established gender roles.

Women are portrayed in works by Rabindranath Tagore in a complicated, nuanced way. His female protagonists frequently explore themes of love, desire, and self-discovery while challenging gender norms and societal expectations. Tagore's female characters can be considered early examples of feminist ideology that foreshadow many of the problems and challenges that post-truth feminism tries to solve when compared to post-truth women.

For instance, in "The Wife's Letter," Tagore introduces a female character who defies the demands of motherhood and marriage while claiming her own identity. Like this, in "The Postmaster," Tagore investigates the themes of loneliness, desire, and self-discovery from the viewpoint of a female character who breaks social conventions by separating from her family and choosing her own route in life. Tagore creates fascinating, multifaceted female characters who frequently question conventional gender roles.

The gripping tale "Giribala" by Rabindranath Tagore examines issues of love, identity, and social expectations. It takes on new relevance and meaning when examined through the post-truth feminism lens, addressing societal norms that limit women's autonomy and self-expression as well as traditional gender roles. The movie "Giribala" can be seen in this light as a critique of traditional gender roles that restrict women's agency and their capacity to express their desires and emotions. It emphasises the ways in which traditional gender roles restrict women's agency and their capacity to pursue their passions and express their emotions. He also demonstrates how cultural standards are used to oppress and mistreat women by pressuring them to adhere to constricting stereotypes.

Another character who exemplifies this is Mrinmayi, the protagonist of Tagore's short story "The Lost Jewels". Mrinmayi is a poor, lower-caste woman who is hired by a wealthy family to care for their sick child. She discovers a valuable necklace in the child's room and struggles with whether to return it to the family or keep it for herself.

Mrinmayi's experiences can be seen as a reflection of the post-truth era, in which power and privilege can shape our understanding of what is right and wrong. Mrinmayi is a woman who is struggling to navigate a society that values wealth and status above all else, and her actions are shaped by the narratives that dominate her world.

A non-fiction book titled "The Muslim Curtain" by Sagarika Ghose examines the lives of Muslim women in India, notably in the years following the destruction of the Babri Masjid and the riots in Gujarat. This book provides insights into the experiences and challenges faced by Muslim women in a culture that is frequently characterised by discrimination and disinformation, even though it does not directly address the issue of post-truth.

While "The Muslim Curtain" does not directly address the topic of post-truth, it does provide insights into how societal myths have an impact on women's experiences. The book examines how Muslim women are frequently portrayed in the media and in public discourse and how these narratives can reinforce negative stereotypes and help Muslim women become marginalised.

One way to compare Amrita to post-truth women is to look at the ways in which she is forced to navigate a world in which truth and lies are often intertwined. Like many women in the post-truth era, Amrita is confronted with conflicting narratives and must work to understand the ways in which power and privilege shape our understanding of reality.

Whether or not these dominant narratives are founded, they both have an impact on how women view the world. Although there are differences between the themes of post-truth and Muslim women's experiences, both provide insights into the nuanced and intricate ways that privilege and power influence the way we perceive the world.

Amrita from Tashan Mehta's "The Liar's Weave" might be linked to post-truth women by examining how she must negotiate a world where lies and truth are frequently entwined. Amrita, like many other women in the post-truth era, must learn to comprehend how privilege and power impact our perceptions of reality in the face of competing narratives.

Although "The Liar's Weave" does not specifically address the idea of post-truth, it does provide insights on how truth and lies can affect how we perceive the world, especially regarding privilege and power. Examining Amrita's experiences will help us better comprehend the difficulties women confront in a post-truth society and the significance of questioning dominant narratives and seeking out multiple perspectives.

When comparing Maya in "The Road to Redemption" by Anjum Hasan to post-truth women, it's important to look at how she is made to face the constraints of her own viewpoint and the stories she has relied

on to form her worldview. Maya, like many other women in the post-truth era, must navigate her own path ahead in the face of competing truth claims and contradicting narratives.

Maya's experiences also emphasise the need to accept ambiguity and complexity rather than looking for straightforward solutions or answers. Maya encounters a variety of viewpoints and opinions throughout the novel, and each one challenges her beliefs and sense of self. By accepting these difficulties and looking for fresh experiences, Maya is ultimately able to find a sense of purpose and meaning in her life.

Sohini from "A Pair of Mustachios" by Mahasweta Devi can be compared to post-truth women by considering the difficulties she has surviving in a culture where truth and power are intertwined. In the post-truth era, Sohini, like many other women, must learn to understand how privilege and power affect the myriad conflicting narratives she encounters.

The life lessons Sohini has learned underline the need for cooperation and opposition against injustice. Throughout the story, Sohini runs across several injustices and abuses of power, from Haren Babu's violence to the dishonesty of the local officials. She remains firm in her commitment to fighting for justice and promoting the rights of the underprivileged despite these challenges.

## V. CONCLUSIONS:

Early and post-truth women approach truth, power, and story differently. While post-truth women have access to information and forums to communicate their thoughts, early women were denied education and the ability to engage in public life. Both groups experience oppressive and repressive regimes that restrict their ability to stand up for themselves and assert their rights. However, both organisations stress the significance of hearing all points of view, contesting prevailing theories, and striving for justice and equality.

By observing women's images from different eras in comparison to the post-truth era, we gained a better understanding of the challenges faced by women in the post-truth era and the importance of solidarity and resistance in the face of injustice. address the more fundamental structural problems of gender inequality and discrimination. We learn about the importance of remaining open to new perspectives and embracing ambiguity and complexity. and the importance of questioning dominant narratives and seeking out multiple perspectives.

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