

Treatment Of Women In The Novels Of Namita Ghokale

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ABSTRACT

Namita Gokhale is an Indian writer, Editor, Festival director, and Publisher. Gokhale is a founder and co-director of the Jaipur Literature Festival and Mountain Echoes, the Bhutan Literature Festival and director of Yatra Books, a publishing house specialising in translation. Namita Gokhale is popular for discussing about man-woman relationships. The treatment of women in her novels is different. Namita Gokhale portrays the female characters in her novels who long for true love in life but they fail in it. Paro, Gudiya, Parvati, Rachita, Shakuntala, and other female characters of Namita Gokhale fall in their love-life. They face failures and disappointments in their life due to the selfish attitude of their male partners. Ghokale portrays women in a different perspective. Women are not merely toys in the hands of man and object of pleasure but they should be treated as equal partner. This article attempts to explore the treatment of women in the novels of Namita Gokhale.

Key words: Deprivation, Suppression, rebellion, Identity.

Introduction

Namita Gokhale novels represent the status of women in society and in patriarchal system.

Namita Gokhale focuses on the problems between man and woman. Paro: Dreams of passion is about Paro's rebellion and her rejection of the culturally imposed sexual repression. Paro created her own world and thinks in a different way. Namita Gokhale creates a sensation with the development of Paro who can be treated as modern woman with her own ideology. Paro is the main protagonist who boldly searches for her life and also a rebellion of

women against the traditions. Paro tries to reject the patriarchal rules in the Indian Society. Paro is a woman of pride and self trust. She thinks herself as superior to men. Priya and Paro represent the consciousness of women. Paro is ready to do anything in the name of modernization which inspired Priya. She narrated the love and failure of her friend Paro. She wished to be like Paro. Priya loved B.R. but he married Paro which led to the misunderstanding between them. Paro changed her life partner as that of changing the objects. For her men are just tool for her enjoyment. Paro used her sex to overpower men. In her teens she was abused by men and remained a unforgettable scar in her mind. Whenever she has a chance to encounter a male she dominates them with her sex.

Paro fulfilled her materialistic needs in the name of sex. Her relationship with men is not out of love. She never worried about moral and social ethics but firm to live an independent and individual life. The society was responsible for Paro's change of behavior. She was raped by the art master in her school but the punishment was given only to Paro. She was expelled from school. This painful experience created a thought in her mind that women can encounter men and gain power only by sex. Many men like B.R., Bucky Bandhpur, Lenin, Shambu Nath, and Loukas are victims to the sex of paro. Both Paro and Priya had their own choice but failed to implement them. Paro is a symbol of modernity and Priya is a symbol of tradition. Paro identified her asset is sex and enslaved all the male to assert her power.

Priya states the attitude of Paro that she can twist everyone around her little finger with her magnetic personality. She expects the unexpected things and find pleasure in doing it. B.R.says that Paro

'is definitely one of the crudest, most castrating, selfish women I have never encountered.'(22)

Later on Paro realized that she can't dominate men without her beauty and physical charm. Paro's family felt her as a shame but she felt it as a victory in her teens. Later on she was disillusioned with her life. Priya who believed in arranged marriage also failed in it. Paro finally committed suicide and Priya finds herself empty and lonely. Both Paro and Priya were not happy in the male dominated society. Ghokale portrayed the domination of men and sufferings and frustration of women through the characters of Paro and Priya. A satire about Delhi's upper-class, Paro has been described as "far

more witty and genuinely irreverent than any of De"s novels". (Gokhale. From South Asian Women authors. Online)

Gods, Graves, and Grandmother deals with female liberation. Grandmother, Gudiya and Phoolwati face major crisis in the male dominated Indian Society. Gudiya is the protagonist of the novel who lived with her grandmother. Gudiya in *Gods, Graves, and Grandmother* is contrast to the traditional view on man-woman relationship. She fall in love at first sight with Kalki and is ready to sacrifice anything for her love. She not even hesitate to surrender her chastity to satisfy Kalki's physical pleasure. She is not ready to hear the advice of Phoolwati who is her grandmother's assistant. Phoolwati was a strong, fierce, loyal, practical and caring woman. First she was presented as an entertaining woman but later on she is a woman of stability and dignity. "Grandmother had abandoned her burka the day we arrived a virtuous woman's curses may follow you." (12). Gudiya decides to marry Kalki who is worthless. Namita Gokhale pictured a different vision on women

Women is presented in the role of subjects and men as objects. Kalki is presented as the object and Gudiya as the subject. Kalki's relationship with Gudiya is only to fulfil his material advantage. Kalki does not have genuine interest and love for Gudiya. His wish is to fulfil his sexual pleasure. Their marriage life is not blissful as she expected. He marries Gudiya reluctantly but he has his own ambitions and aspirations. Gudiya's love for Kalki is true and feels worried by his indifference after their engagement. Gudiya had many expectations about her married life. She wished for his true love but her expectations vanished day by day. Though their physical pleasures are satisfied, Gudiya is tired and dejected. Kalki's uncultured behavior entirely wipe out Gudiya's dreams and desires. Gudiya's dreams are totally destroyed and she is heart broken, "that this was how my whole life might pass – in indifference, indignities and calculated cruelties"³. Though her love is true she decides to get rid of him. Gudiya's stopped thinking about Kalki and started thinking of her own life. Gudiya loves Kalki but she prioritized her freedom and serenity. She wishes to be happy in loneliness instead of living with a man whose love is not true. This novel represented the modern women's pathetic hopes and fears and portrays the powerful women who are practical and assertive. Female characters face their fate happily and powerfully.

Rachita Tiwari is the protagonist of the novel *Book of Shadows*. She is working in a college as a lecturer. She is a normal, beautiful woman with enough money. Rachita's fiancé Anand hanged in a room and committed suicide at the very beginning of the novel which is pathetic. His suicidal note makes it clear that he was not happy with the marriage relationship. "Goodbye, cruel world! I bid thee farewell! You have tried me sorely, you have abused my trust!"(5). His sister made an acid attack on Rachita. Her news is scandal is everywhere. All the female characters of Ghokale's novel feel to be lonely in their life. But Rachita decided to alienate herself from the family as well as from the society. There is a total transformation in her life after the acid attack. She was no more beautiful. This resulted in her loss of peace of mind and also confidence.

She wished to overcome this accident but felt that she needs some more time to get rid of this scar. She planned to go to Raniket for peace of mind. She follows the trick of engaging herself in a busy schedule to forget all the events that happened the past. First she thought that being silent is the only solution to come out of her pain and sufferings. She was not even ready to face the students in the college. Later there occurred a change in her mind. She understood nothing can give her peace either money or beauty. Peace cannot be sought outside but its within her. The injury in her face cannot be changed but she can change her own life by enjoying the nature. Each and every woman face problems in their day to day life. The difference is that some seek for solution and some worry about the problem.

Rachita first worried about the acid attack and was not even ready to face his friends, students and neighbours. Later she realized that her confidence will change her life. Instead of depending on people for peace she spent time with books and listening to the stories of Lohaniju. Her emptiness in life is consoled by the nature. Namitha dealt with the emotional aspects of women's life. Rachita is neither weak as Anand nor revengeful as his sister. She cope up with the realities of life and proved that woman is always strong. After facing physical and mental trauma in her life she proved herself courageous at the end of the novel and emerged from the shadow in her life.

The world outside is full of change, and I do not
know if these memories can endure. This hillside

will remain, as will the snow mountains that watch over us, even if nothing else does. The garden will bloom again, the roses by the veranda, the weeds and the forget-me-nots by the gravel path. I think I know that I will remain. (Gokhale 232)

A Himalayan Love Story which trails the lives of Parvati and Mukul. Both Parvati and

Mukul grow up together in the Himalayan town of Nainital. One gets trapped in an unhappy

arranged marriage and finally ends up in a mental asylum. The other one flees the restrictive and

conservative hill tribes to live in Hong Kong. He returns in the middle age to fulfill the last wishes of his former teacher, and to search for an unrequited teenage love. This novel has a story of fierce sexuality and unrequited love. It is one of the tenderest stories of the genre. It has several themes that can be broadly separated for discussion: the themes of human relationships, women's bonding, death and fear

A Himalayan Love Story presents the oppressive, debilitating life situation of a housewife.

This family life is firmly located in its middle class environs. The silence and the silencing of the

woman as a gendered subject is the focus of the narrative. But even as the family life is located in the middle-class environs, the narrative maps the position of the middle class. The woman as a gendered subject is the focus of the narrative. But even as the family life is located in the middleclass environs, the narrative maps the position of the middle class. After sometime when Lalit is diagnosed of Tuberculosis and has to get admitted in Bhowali' sanatorium, Parvati tries hard to raise money for the Bhowali sanatorium. She writes a letter to Mukul Nainwal, and another to Masterji, asking for help. But before she could post either of them, Lalit is dead:

What surprised me about death was this: the soul departs, leaving the body forlorn. The body departs, it is taken away, disposed of, it disintegrates, decomposes, it is gone. The ashes are thrown into muddy rivers, ...His nail cutter, a gift from his father, sits safely in

the steel box that also holds his watch and wallet. His slippers still lie under the bed, waiting. They did not perish with him. His two suits hang in the cupboard; his shirts lie folded, quiescent. I wonder if they remember him, his smell and his body. (47)

Lalit's death and Raju's wedding are horribly mixed up in Parvati's mind, a blur of weeping and

laughter, death and merriment. Lalit's family is initially affectionate to Parvati and look after her

tenderly. They decide not to delay Raju's marriage because of Lalit's death. When Lalit's family

goes to Bombay with the Barat, Parvati moves back to Masterji's house and here she comes to

know about her pregnancy and is delivered of a girl child, Irra. She then, apparently, goes mad. Rights and failures are the main points in this novel. The present novel reveals how poignantly Parvati expresses the frustration and disappointment of women experience social and cultural oppression in the male-dominating society. The novel highlights the agony and trauma experienced by women-in male dominated and tradition- bounded society .

Namitha Ghokale occupies a prominent position in the portrayal of women characters. Her female characters are courageous and independent instead of demanding the rights from others. Her image of women is in a different perspective. She projected the sufferings of women in various dimensions and gave solution to their obstacles in life. They are not silent rebels but are bold, outspoken, determined, and action-oriented.

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