

Female-Centric Ideologies: A Comparative Study of the Select Novels of Githa Hariharan and Namita Gokhale

**A Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English**



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**Department of English
School of Language, Literature and Arts
Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies
Sanchi (M. P.)
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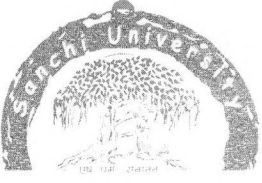
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PREFACE

Indian English Novel was the last to arrive on the Indian English Literature scenario. As during the initial years of Indian Writing in English poetry was dominated and followed by drama. In India, there is a great tradition of storytelling from the time of *Rig Veda*, *Purana*, and *Upanishad*. Sake Dean Mohomet in 1794 published *The Travels of Dean Mohomet*, the first book written by an Indian in English. Kailash Chandra Dutt's *A Journey of 48 Hours of the Year 1945* appeared in the Calcutta Literary Gazette. Then we have S.C. Dutt's *Republic of Orissa*. Indian novel in English grew rapidly in the nineteenth century and thematic variety was introduced with the publication of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife*. The rise and development of Indian English Novel were felicitated by the impact of English education, national awakening and the influence of European models. In terms of themes, techniques and human values English novels have emerged as a product of Indian soil.

The flowering season of Indian English novels is generally regarded with the arrival of the trio – Mulk Raj Anand (*Untouchable*, *Coolie*, *Village*), R. K. Narayana (*Swami and Friends*, *The Dark Room*, *The English Teacher*) and Raja Rao (*Kanthapura*, *Serpent and the Rope*). The main themes of Indian English novels during this period are viz – the struggle for freedom, East-West encounter, communal tension, the plight of poor and women etc. After this trio, the notable novelists are Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandaya, Arun Joshi, Khushwant Singh, R. P. Jhabvala, Nayantara Sahgal, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Bharti Mukherjee, Shobha Dey, Arundhati Roy, who wrote on different aspects related to India and they highlighted poverty, caste system, religion, and tradition.

There is a significant increase in the emergence of Indian English Women Novelist. The Pre-Independence period was male-dominated, only a few women novelist emerged in this

period like Toru Dutt (*Hindu Wife* and *The Enchanted Fruit*), Swarna Kumara Ghosal (*The Fatal Garland* and *The Unfinished Song*), Swarna Kumari Debi (*Deepnirbhan*, *Chinnamukul*, and *Phuler-Mala*), Cornelia Sorabji (*Love and Life Behind the Purdah* and *Gold Mohur*) and the like were the most prominent. The significant female novelists in the Post-Independence era are Kamala Markandaya (*A Silence of Desire*, *Possession*, *The Golden Honeycomb*), Anita Desai (*Fire on the Mountain*, *The Village by the Sea*), Shobha Dey (*Second Thought*, *Sisters*), Arundhati Roy (*The God of Small Things*, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*) Kiran Desai (*The Inheritance of Loss*, *Private Passion*) and Nayantara Sahgal (*Rich Like Us*, *A Voice for Freedom*).

There are a number of Indian English Women novelists with influential and powerful writing. Their enormous contribution to the field of Indian English Writing is commendable. This study explores female centric ideologies in the select novels of Githa Hariharan and Namita Gokhale. The select novels of Githa Hariharan as *The Thousand Faces of Night*, *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* and Namita Gokhale's selected novels as *Paro Dreams of Passion*, *Gods, Graves and Grandmother* and *The Book of Shadows* have been chosen for the present research study. The main objectives of the research study are to discuss Female-Centric Ideologies, to explore Ethnicity and Culture, and to examine isolation and alienation in the select novels of Githa Hariharan and Namita Gokhale.

In order to cover the vast area of the present research, this study is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter is introductory in nature and an attempt has been made to peep into the history of Indian Writing in English. It also covers a brief survey of Indian English novels, a brief discussion on Indian English Women Novelists and their contribution, and it concludes by highlighting the information about the select novelists and their contribution in the growth and development of legacy of Indian English novels. The second chapter is

on custom and patriarchy in Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* where the research study focuses on socio-cultural perspectives, analyses family bonding and moral values and discusses traditional and modern norms. The chapter third is about dialogic paradigm as ingrained in Githa Hariharan's *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*. It explores journey of self-exploration and the concepts of alienation and self-exile as elaborated in the select novel. The chapter fourth is on locating women in Namita Gokhale's *Paro Dreams of Passions*, wherein the research study makes an attempt to unfold the broad concept of feminism, draws out emergence of new women and establishes an analogy by covering marital relationship and status of woman. The chapter fifth discusses ethnicity and culture in Namita Gokhale's *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*. This chapter explains ethical issues and challenges and discloses pseudo spiritual practices and has at length discussion on generation gap and family values. The chapter sixth entitled as isolation and alienation in Namita Gokhale's *The Book of Shadows* discusses voice of resentment, describes supernatural elements and their influence and explains search for new identity. The chapter seventh is conclusion and has an overview of previous chapters, points out relevance of the research study in the modern context and discusses key findings.

Githa Hariharan focuses on women's lives, their relationship with other women, their ability to struggle amidst patriarchal society. She advocates women's autonomy through education and self-employment. She has expressed her deep faith in social justice and the empowerment of Indian women. Similarly, Namita Gokhale focuses on women's quest for identity. She very brilliantly highlights women's vision of freedom and independence. She presents before us a very complex spectrum of the feminine search for identity against the milieu of contemporary educated Indian society.

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CHAPTER – 1

Introduction

1.1 Indian Writing in English: A Historical Background

1.2 Indian English Novels: A Brief Survey

1.3 Indian English Women Novelists and their Works

1.4 The Select Novelists and their Contributions

Chapter - 1

Introduction

1.1 Indian Writing in English: A Historical Background

The history of English language and literature was initiated with the arrival of East India Company in India. In 1608, when Mughal Emperor Jahangir welcomed British Naval commander William Hawkins. For Indians, it was the first indication to meet Englishmen. After that the British were asked to initiate their operation on the request of King James IV. Thus, English was in India to stay.

The East India Company established trading ports in a number of cities. By 1765, the company had established control over most of the parts of India. “This is taken as the start of the British Raj in India which lasted for almost two hundred years. Initially, the English language was only taught to the local population by the Christian missionaries and there were no attempts to force the language on each and every individual. English was established as the language of the administration by the 1700s. Citizens, mostly the educated citizens demanded English to be taught in the schools and colleges as a sign of social advancement. Universities had opened in Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay by 1857 and English was finally being accepted as the language of government, of the social elite, and the national press.”¹

In words of Krishnaswamy and Krishnaswamy “The history of English in India is inextricably entangled with the politics of the Empire, both political and economic. The English language and English literature were central to the cultural indoctrination and transplantation effected through English education.”² Literary questions are enmeshed with political and historical ones and English must necessarily be seen alongside the other English

languages. To consider Indian writing in English is to consider the relationship Indians have with English and how it has changed over time. “Within India, there has been much debate over the fact that Indian literature outside of India is seen as being exclusively written in English rather than in the other Indian languages, all of which have much longer histories of depicting Indian social and cultural life.”³ It is English writing by Indians that become recognized as being national, partly because of the globalizing power of English and partly because of the history and place of English in India.

“The interaction between English and Indian languages has had its impact on both. The Fascination of Europeans with India its people and culture resulted in a substantial adaptation of numbers of Indian words and phrases Into English words Like *Rajah, curry, brahman, coolie, jungle, verandah etc. had entered*. Even after the British left India, the English-speaking world keeps borrowing words from Indian languages, words like *Bandh, hartal, mantra, avatar, karma, kundalini, maya, ahimsa, ananad, bhagwan, bhakti, devi, ghee, yoga, kali, moksha, mudra, muni, rasa, veda etc. are* commonly used in international English. The Oxford English Dictionary lists about 1000 words of Indian origin and some dictionaries list more than 2000 words in their supplements.”⁴

The famous author Raja Rao discusses the difficulties of telling such a story. According to him:

“One has to address in a language which is not his own but in a spirit which is one’s own. While writing in a language which is alien to them, it becomes difficult to convey all the shades of the emotions and thoughts for they look maladjusted in the ‘alien language.’”⁵ According to him, “the language has helped shape the intellect of

generations of Indians, a role earlier played by Sanskrit and Arabic. English is a language of the ‘Intellect Makeup’ and not Emotional Makeup”⁶. He also says that “most of the writers are bilingual and write in both, Indian languages as well as in English but they do not write the way in which English writers do and Indians should only write as Indians.”⁷

Indian literature refers to contribution of work given by the writers from India but their native or co-native language could be the other one of India. It is also known as the Indo-Anglican literature where mostly post-colonial literature put the broader extent of production of the colonized countries like India. This literature is dynamic among the other literature in the world and inherits from the Vedas which spread its mellow light and ancient treasure of celestial thoughts. C.R. Reddy remarked:

“Indo-Anglican literature is not essentially different in kind from Indian literature. It is part of it, a modern facet of the glory which, commencing from the Vedas, has continued to spread its mellow light, now with lesser brilliance under the inexorable vicissitudes of time and history, ever increasingly up to the present time of Tagore, Iqbal and Aurobindo, and bids fair to expand with our and humanity’s expanding future.”⁸

Until late seventeenth century, the publication was either restricted to printing Bible or government judicial decision. “The breakthrough of Indian English Literature came with the publication of *Travels of Dean Mohamet*’ in 1793 A.D which was based on the mixture of non-fiction and a travelogue. With this, Indian people experienced the impact of the western culture. The enormous blow gave expression to the feelings and experiences to the writers in

English with the establishment of four Universities and Western educational system. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay published “*Rajmohan’s Wife*” in 1864.”⁹

India is a land of different languages and the literatures. In India, the cultural root is the same but the differences are marked in the regional languages due to the richness of particular languages. The certain movements in India affected the regional literatures but the thread that used to weave the literature is the same. This is why they are more picturesque, artistic and organic as a whole.

Translation has always been an important part in the Indian literary culture. The *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have been translated to many languages other than English. In the late twentieth century, translation has been evolved as an academic discipline. According to Meenakshi Mukherjee, “The complex linguistic dynamics in the country and the ambivalent position of English in India created a unique configuration that could not be analyzed by the existing translational theories originating in Europe.”¹⁰

According to Mukherjee:

“translating a text from one Indian language to another Indian language is a far more satisfactory activity both for the translator and the readers than the translation from an Indian language to English. The writer says in English, negotiating semantic and cultural hurdles to achieve equivalence of meaning tends to be a relatively uphill task. She believes that translation from Indian text to another means there is a richer resonance of recognition and discovery rather than a translation from an Indian language to English.”¹¹

She also believes that the English audience is very vast and it cannot be specified who will read the translated book. In her essay, Meenakshi Mukherjee quotes a statement of Susie Tharu and K Lalita who say, “translation takes place where two invariably unequal worlds collide and... there are always relationships of power involved when one world is represented for another in translation”.¹²

The Publishers in metropolitan cities are more interested in the English translation of books written in Hindi. Indian language books have small markets compared to English books. In the sixties, a few publishing companies sponsored some translations of Indian language books in English but publishers didn't show much professionalism in publishing translated books. There are a number of the enduring novels in Indian languages are virtually untranslatable because of their local and specific frames of reference. Indian novels written in English generally have a poor readership because they have not been promoted effectively. Thus, “the fates of Indian novels in English and Indian novels in English translation might continue to be dissimilar in the global market. English was a marginal presence on the Indian scene, yet writers like Rao and Anand as well as R. K. Narayan were among the first to gain an international audience for their work, evidence of the early understanding of English in India as being a ‘window to the world.’”¹³

The paradigm of colonizer and colonized in the political and literary realms began to be displaced only after India gained independence in 1947. Discussion, debate and political conflict continued to be there over the role and place of English in post-colonial Indian society. Indian writing in English to the post-colonial literature is an integral part. The English that we use today is the Indianized English. Meenakshi Mukherjee takes the translation route to make the point that Indian Writings in English these days has acquired a

clear edge over Indian literature available in English translations. Many postcolonial writers wrote in English to reach to a large number of people. Agha Shahid Ali used the term '*biryанизation of English*' which meant mixing English with Urdu so that people could emotionally identify themselves with the language. English is an important component of contemporary life and has a distinct place in the writing of all time. The discourse on the language within English and the bhasha texts is a part of the self-consciousness of the language that many Indian writers have expressed.

According to Mulk Raj Anand: "English is a language which can never entirely be one's own but is nevertheless a part of one's thinking-speaking system. It is a love-hate relationship between the language and the writer, where the writer is ever skeptical about the ability to express and yet to cannot but say what he said, thought over or found to be acceptable and therefore worth sharing with the reader."¹⁴

Indian English literature is highly obligated to Raja Ram Mohan Roy for his valuable contribution. During the critical period of India, he came in the scene and created the significant trends. Ram Mohan was gifted with the knowledge of cultural traditions of India. He translated Upanishads into Bengali. He learnt Persian and Arabic too. He understood the importance of English to acquire the modern knowledge. He was the person who became the bridge between India and England because his pleading was on English and Englishmen. He also served for the British officials and learned a lot in his early ages.

"The first publication of Roy was *Tuhfatul Muwahhiddin* or *A Gift to Desists* which was written in Persian and the introduction page in Arabic in 1803. But the English version consisting of twenty-five pages was come out by the Adi Brahmo Samaj in 1884. It is about Roy's concern for the state of contemporary Hinduism, his wish to

separate the essential from the superfluous in it. His major writings came in the year between 1815 to 1823 along with Translation of an Abridgement of the Vedanta and the translations of the Upanishads in Bengali, Hindi and English. Through *The Precepts of Jesus*, he opposed the illogicality, fallacy, miracles and doctrines of religion. *A Guide to Peace and Happiness* was come out in 1820 which is associated with the religion and morality. He also wrote three lengthy tracts named *An Appeal to the Christian Public* in Defense of the Precepts of Jesus. In the first appeal, he argued about the miracles and dogmas which are not required for the salvation and eternal life but it requires the compliance to the moral teachings of the Christ. In the second and third appeals, he refused the principles of orthodoxy regarding God and the Christ.”¹⁵

The grave situation of widows, the condition of the country, superstitions and ignorance of the people brought *Brahmo Samaj*. Through *Brahmo Samaj*, he imparted new ideas, eradicated orthodox rituals. It encouraged in establishing accord between accepted faith of men and their practical observations. He wants the Hindu society to be reformed and India to learn a lot from the west. He was in favor to keep the balance between traditional values and modern development.

“Ram Mohan Roy’s use of the English language developed in three stages as he experimented with literary styles, grammatical refinements and vocabulary. His focus changed from petition to polemic and finally exclusively to public instruction. English was for him not only the language of command but also that of documentation, of histories, of narrative, theological disputation of histories of these genres is represented in his writings”.¹⁶

Ram Mohan Roy's interest was to see India newer and more modern that uses the scientific disciplines from the west. He fought for the rights of women and education, for the religion tolerance, and for the Indian peasantry. His main aim was to regenerate India, economic progress, education and spiritual awakening. He is reminded for the modernization that he introduced in the education sector and the eradication of Sati. "Apart from Ram Mohan Roy's work there was not a little prose writing of note during mid and alter nineteenth century in metropolitan centers like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Most of this writing was on religious, social, historical and political subjects and some of it in in the form of journalism and pamphleteering."¹⁷

"Krishna Mohan Benerji's major works includes *Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy* and *The Enquirer*. Ram Gopal Ghose was actively associated with literary, cultural and political organization. Connected with journals such as *Agyanashun*, *Durpan*. He was an enthusiastic pamphleteer and eulogized as the Indian Demosthenes. Harish Chunder Mukherji edited *The Hindoo Patriot*. Bal Shastri Jambhekar a great pioneer of the new awakening, the first Sanskrit pundit of note to study English. He became teacher of men such as Dadabhai Naoroji, Bhau Daji. He was the founder of the journal *The Durpan*."¹⁸

Gandhi's *Experiments with Truth* is one of the eternal classics that describe this unfolding process. His *Hind Swaraj* is considered best among the Gandhi's writings which present the true sense of Indian life. His works depicts Gandhian thoughts. Due to the ongoing nationalistic movement in India people were seeking the social and political changes. They were upset with the hypocrisy of self- government and were in need of fresh air to breathe. He opened the pathway of freedom for them. His thoughts in various issue such as politics,

education, ethics, literature and economics provided a new perspective. Gandhi gave a new generation literature and his contribution to Indo-Anglian literature is unparalleled. His literature is also known as Gandhian literature

Gandhi was not actually a writer but even then, through his writings he had mesmerized readers all over the world. The time in between World War I and World War II was 'Gandhian' or 'Heroic' Age. With his revolutionary thought and practice, he exercised potent impact on languages and literatures. He didn't receive the 'greatness' title all of a sudden but he had started his journey with an ordinary man who gone through error, aspiration and endeavor and achieved prominence.

Jawaharlal Nehru was multi-faceted personality. He was political figure, champion of liberty, keen observer of the people in India as well as in abroad. Nehru was very expressive and talented in his writings and through it he became widely known not only in India but also in the west. He was extremely swayed by Gurudev Tagore, Marx and Lenin. He emerged himself with infinite possibilities and striking qualities. His *Glimpses of World History* contains the mountains of letters written to his daughter Indira during the isolation in jail regarding the suppressive burden of humanity's ill.

"Nehru's *Autobiography* is the fusion of personal and national history. It deals with not only to personal, sensitive biography but also to the testament of a new generation struggling for a new world. He recorded the impact of men and events, the subtle influence of places, the fascination of Nature, the force of the current history, etc. in his prose with the sense of purity. During his incarceration, he also wrote *The Discovery of India* to explore the inheritance of India. It was a semi-historical work of six hundred pages and took the labor of five months. It is written with the more

naturalness, abiding and homely beauty. The book is the mixture of cultural unity and monumental in conception. Nehru's deep patriotism and his love for heritage can be seen in this work. It was up to the time of Jawaharlal Nehru; the Indian English literature blossomed and extends its beauty. The literary prose and poetry prospered at its height but literature in the form of novel was yet to rise by the master of novelists in the land of India."¹⁹

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio is another prominent poet. He is considered to be a critical thinker and is one of the educators who publicize the western learning and science to the youngsters of Bengal. He is in love with nature and highlighted Indianness. He flourished English verses in India Derozio's comparison was done with John Keats because both of them were passionate with the infinite compassion of nature. Derozio, as a poet was highly influenced by the Romantics like Byron, Scott, and Moore and especially with Shelley and Keats. He was mainly interested in writing sonnet. His facet to see the nature was both with beauty and terror. But he was never frightened by death or fate instead he considered death as his best friend. According to Arvind Krishna Mehrotra.

"Derozio might be said to be on a cusp between the romantics and the Victorians. His poems have a light lyrical touch and the influences of the younger Romantics can be seen everywhere in his work, in its sensuousness, its detailed natural observation, its patriotic fervour. He is everywhere a creative reader in his poems, in which Homer, Tasso, Byron, are all grist to his mill. Western and Indian mythology mingle easily in his poems but the setting is always determinedly Indian and painted in vivid colours".²⁰

Kashiprasad Ghose was one founder pillar of Indian English literature. His involvement to literary works was identical to Henry Derozio. He had tremendous knowledge in English Prosody and versification. His poetry was largely customary and derivative. He too was highly influenced by the British Romantics and is considered as the torch bearer of the Indian English poetry though his poetry was less consisting of originality. Even then they were highly admired by the public. It represents the Indianness and the Indian Ethos. He was also the editor of The Hindu Intelligence. His poetry is the mixture of good consistency of originality and conventional descriptions.

Michael Madhusudan Dutt is another profoundly gifted writer whose comparisons cannot be done with anyone. He was the iconic face of Bengali literature. He brought the western form of sonnet and transformed into Indian literature. He began his writing during the Hindu college. His poems were published both in English and Bengali. He got the inspiration to write from Lord Byron. His works includes *Tilottamasambhab*, *Meghnadbadh*, *Brajangana*, a cycle of lyrics on the *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa* theme.

Toru Dutt's poems have been highly placed in the Indian English Literature. But her life was the mixture of beauty, tragedy and fatality. Her poetry was based on the reality that consists of fascination and depression. She got the rich and respectable literary creation from her ancestors. In her literary work '*A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields*' (1876), the glance and remembrance of a lost brother and a sister can be seen. Also, as she had a great command of the Sanskrit language, she had also translated many mythological works into English. Her works gave her fame and name but she did not live as she died at the age of twenty-one. As per A. K. Mehrotra:

“A glance at Toru Dutt’s use of language is enough to show the difference between her style and that of her predecessors. Toru Dutt’s poetry transcends that school, evolving a separate identity. The difference lies in the manner in which her language addresses her experience, her vision radiating beyond the boundaries within most of the nineteenth -century poetry in English was confined. Her awareness of her own Indianness is not restricted to Indian historical themes and the reworking of Indian legends. In her poetry we confront for the first-time language that is crafted out of the vicissitudes of an individual life and a sensibility that belongs to modern India”²¹.

Romesh Chunder Dutt was the Toru Dutt’s cousin and contributed to the literary work of the Indian Literature in English. He had cleared his Indian Civil Services exam in 1869 and had served in many fields. In his primarily literary works, one can see the influence of European style. But the success he received was through Bengali. He published Bengali translation of Rig Veda and awakens a storm of objection within the orthodox community. The more distinguished works were his English verse interpretation of *The Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, the *Upanishads*, Buddhist Literature, Kalidasa’s *Kumarsambhava*.

Manmohan Ghose, was the child of the eminent surgeon Dr. K. D. Ghose and was eldest to Sri Aurobindo Ghose. He finished his studies at Loreto Convent, Darjeeling. He went to England to study Bar-at Law in 1879. Most of Manmohan Ghose’s poems underlie a subtle sense of anguish. He began to write poetry when he was in England. In 1890, *Primavera* a collection of poems came out by Manmohan which were highly acclaimed by the literary scholars. As he was so attached with the poetry, the classes were able to turn into living reality. In 1898, he published *Love Songs and Allegis*. His poetry considered as the height of

thoughts, intellects and rhythm. The literary activity had received the bliss from all over the India. It was not limited to the Bengal alone.

Behramji Malabari also gave his contribution to English Literature. Basically, he was born in Surat and had struggled a lot in his early life. He lost his parents and had to earn by taking tuitions for his livelihood. Soon he secured himself in the reformation movement and in the journalism. His words include *The Indian Muse in English Garb* was appreciated a lot as a verse autobiography. Malabari's works shows the careful observation made to describe east and west with the vivid power of portrait. He played the role of author, editor, publicist, a social reformer for fifty years. The edge of writing he had got from his sensitive and active social conscience and made him a caster of public opinion.

Rabindranath Tagore is the most excellent writer who represented the modern India to the world literary scene and bearded Indian literature to the world scale for the Nobel Prize he acknowledged. In the beginning, Rabindranath Tagore began his career as raconteur but the patriotic feeling and powerful literary works brought him to the mainstream at the time of freedom struggle. His poem *Into That Heaven of Freedom* holds so much vigor of the nation's feelings that it brought many followers of independence to tears.

Through his writings, he influenced the masses and the political leaders of the national movement. His poetic mission was to save the nation from slavery. He ignited the passion in the people to join the struggle fight. He used his great genius in cultivating the spiritual and political resurgence of India for half a century. He dedicated his life in establishment and development of an educational and cultural center the *Vishwabharati*, with international idyllic. His life was an expression of the *Upanishad* philosophy which he imbibed from his

father Debendranath Tagore, a leader of the Brahmo Samaj. His ideals were the mixture of western science and practical efficiency with the sacred inheritance of the East.

Tagore had mastery in both Bengali and English but primarily he turned to Bengali. He modified the originals into English often. He was not only a poet, a dramatist, educationalist, idealist, philosopher, novelist, short story writer, critic- a man with a full of versatility. Through poetry and philosophy, he looked at the external varieties. He had gone through *Upanishads*, *Gita* and the Epics of India. He believed that God is the soul of one's soul. One must realize oneness with beauty, love and joy.

In his works, he gave expression to his gospel of the beauty and authenticity of the universe and of the joy of service to compassion and dedication to God. Tagore begun writing at the age of 15 and by 1875 his prose and verse seems in print. *The Child* is an English poem wrote by him instantly. About 7,000 lines of verse had been written by him. His phenomenal and outstanding work is *Gitanjali*. By his extraordinary speeches, he became the ambassador to East and West and gave lots of prestige to India.

The Crescent Moon, *The Gardener*, *Crossing*, *The Post Office*, *The Fugitive* and Other Poems, *Chitra*, *Sacrifice* and other dramas. *Red Orleanders*, *Gora* are some of the examples of his rare literary works. The works of Tagore are deeply colored with metaphysical concepts. His philosophy is the creation of an artist and is to be understood as a flower is understood. He has his own individuality based on his personal divine bent and numinous experiences which he has described in *Reminiscences*. In the *Jivansmriti*, he centered on the eternal question of the finite and infinite relation. He was a humanist and his humanism was based on two features- the authenticity of individual joy and anguish in the concrete. He had his faith in the kingdom of man on earth, affluent with a variety of human relationships.

Tagore was an educationist and he had preserved his principles of *Vishwabharati* and the spirit of the ancient ideal of the *Tapovan*. It emphasized on simplicity, purity, chastity, spirituality of body and soul. His outlook was universal and believed that people should get all knowledge and culture whatever its derivation and province. An opportunity was given to those who want to pursue the study of comparative religion at *Shantiniketan*. In his institution, he wanted to have no racism, no sectarianism and caste or color prejudice. Thus, *Vishwabharati* stood for literacy, vocational education and more.

Sri Aurobindo holds one of the excellent figures in Indo-Anglican Literature. Just like Tagore, Sri Aurobindo also held a great place in Bengali literature. He acquired complete command over the different languages like English, Latin, French, Sanskrit, Bengali, Marathi, and Gujarati. His interests were lies in teaching, poetry and politics. He studied Western philosophy and literature at an early age and was very well acquainted with Plato and Aristotle. He was deeply influenced by Hegel, Whitehead and Bergson. Sri Aurobindo was highly astonished with the English poetry but was not agree with the western stress on intellectual value of art. His vision and thought integrates the history and development of human culture. In his works, one can find the best elements of ancient and modern thought, a melodious blend of absolutism and evolutionism. It is this blend that gave a very unique place in the history of Eastern and Western philosophy. In his philosophy, one can find an assimilation of both philosophies and a new synthetic, comprehensive vision of reality known as *Advaitism*. He believed that Brahman or the Absolute is the fundamental reality.

The Songs to Myrtilla, *Urvashi* and *Love and Death* are his eminent works. His works represent the invincible love that fights against the mortality and gains victory over the death. His '*The Life Divine*' is a philosophical religious book based on the spiritual evolution, how

to overcome the ignorance and gloom. Apart from all of his work, his distinguishing mark is 'Savitri' divided into twelve books containing twenty-four thousand lines and took almost his 50 years. It is a symbolic story about a loyal wife who fights for her husband with the Death, greatest of evils.

Sarojini Naidu is considered as God gifted child who uttered her feelings in terms of the poetry. At the age of twelve, she wrote the poem of two thousand lines. She received the degrees from London and the Cambridge. She got the complimentary criticism and wide recognition from the western audiences for her verse. Her friends helped her to acquire the visions to compose the melodious poetry. Naidu's most outstanding works were *To a Buddha Seated on a Lotus*, *The Golden Threshold*, *The Broken Wing*, *The Bird of Time*. She received the remarkable place through *The Lotus* in the Indian English Literature. She had the patriotic emotions for the Mother India also. She had given lyrics *Awake*, *An Anthem of Love*, *To India* to express the heat of passion and exoticism. Sarojini was also recognized as Nightingale of India. She had played the different role in life- as political activist, poet, feminist. In words of K. R. Srinivas Iyengar "The best Indo-Anglican poets have given us something which neither English poetry nor any of our regional literatures can give; in other words, they have effected a true marriage of Indian processes of poetic experience with English formulae of verse expression".²²

The poetry after 1947, "witnessed the most crucial developments. In the Fifties arose a school of poets who tried to turn their backs on the romantic tradition. The chief poets are Dilip Kumar Roy (*Eyes of Light*, 1948), Romen (*The Golden Apocalypse*, 1953), Prithvi Singh Nahar (*The Winds of Silence*, 1954). By the sixties the new poetry had already made its appearance. The first of the new poets to publish was Nissim Ezekiel."²³ His works includes

A Time to Change, The Third, The Exact Name, The Unfinished Man. The major theme in his work was alienation and isolation. P. Lal collection include *The Parrot's Death, The Man of Dharma and the Rasa of Silence*. "A. K Ramanujan was the most outstanding poet of sixties. His works include *The Striders, Relations, The Interior Landscape, Speaking of Siva*. His poetic technique appears to have a Surest touch, for he never lapses into romantic cliché." ²⁴

Gieve Patel poem include *How Go you Withstand, Body*. There is note of pain and suffering in his poetry. Pritish Nandy, (*Of Gods and Olives, On Either Side of Arrogance, In secret Anarchy*). The Nineties embark the arrival of poets like K.N Daruwalla, Shiv. K Kumar. Jayant Mahapatra and Arun Kolatkar. Women poets form a sizeable school in modern Indian English literature. Kamala Das has published three books of verse in English. Among women poets who have published more than one volume each are Meena alexander (*The Bird's Bright Wing, Without Place*) Roshen Alkazi, (*Seventeen Poems*) Margaret Chatterjee (*The Sandalwood Tree, Towards the Sun*), Mary Ann Dasgupta (*The Peacock Smile, The Circus of Love*) Lakshmi Kannan (*The Glow and The Grey, Impressions*) Lila Ray (*Entrance, The Flowering Heart*)."²⁵

Thus, "Indian Poetry in English that was born with verse romances and lyrics written in the Romantic vein Closely followed various moods and movements of English Poetry. It was Reflective, reformative and patriotic in themes and traditional in modes of expression. Post - Independence Indian poetry in English differs widely from Pre- Independence Indian poetry in English in themes as well as in modes of expression. This Change was firstly because of the unprecedented changes in the socio-economic and political milieu of the country. Secondly because of the rise of modernism in Indian literature in English. The poets adopted the technique of symbolists and Eliot's view that poetry was not an act of self-expression or an expression of personality. The poet was the explorer of experiences who used language in

order to build up rich patterns of meaning. Poetry was regarded as the music of ideas and a pattern of symbolic suggestions.”²⁶

“Drama is a composite art in which the written words of the playwright attain complete artistic realization only when it becomes the spoken words of actor on the stage and through that medium reacts on the minds of the audience. Ironically in a country with such glorious dramatic tradition, the Indian English drama has not made any impressive development. Poetry and drama began around the same time but the pocket theatre clearly left behind the theatre in its development. The reason for this –

- Dearth of living theatres
- English not being a natural medium of conversation in India
- The failure of the dramatists to tap the rich resources available in the country myths, legends, history and dramatic tradition and folk theatre.
- Lack of proper discretion in the use of western models and techniques.”²⁷

M. K. Naik remarks “Indian drama in English is called Cinderella of Indian English literature”²⁸ The first period of Indian drama in English begins in 1831, the year Krishna Mohan Banerjee published his play, *The Persecuted. Then comes Is this called a Civilization* by Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Nandkumar observes “In the field of Indo Anglican Literature, drama is but sparsely cultivated. We have had very few dramatists and one can easily count the number of good dramas.”²⁹ Again, the revelation of the rich heritage of India has made the playwrights look for the plots of their plays from the Ramayana. the Mahabharata. the puranas, the plays of Sanskrit masters, tales of romance and chivalry and stories of heroic deeds of Indian history. Moreover, most of the Sanskrit dramatists have been translated into English during this early period of Indian drama in English.

Sri Aurobindo Wrote five plays from 1819 to 1916. The two major theme in his plays was Idea of human Evolution and power of love and compassion. His works deals with Indian Ethos. Tagore's plays Includes Sanyasi, The cycle of Spring, Chitra, Malini, Sacrifice. Karna and Kunti. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya plays "falls under four groups devotional, Social, Historical and Miscellaneous plays. He was deeply influenced by the progressive writer's movement. His famous plays are *Pundalik*, *Jayadeva*, *Raidas Siddharth*."³⁰ *The Slave of Idea*, *Sita's Choice* are the plays by A.S.P Ayyar. His themes consist of women place in society, their life and experiences, hypocrisy of society. "Kailasam's rendering of puranic characters like Bharata, Krishna, Karna, Draupadi, Kunti has a touch of iconoclasm, but in actuality the idealism is deeper than the iconoclasm. His plays include *The Burden and Fulfillment*, *Karna and Keechaka*."³¹

The second period in the progress of Indian drama in English begins from 1919, the year Mahatma Gandhi emerged as the national leader of the country, and stretches up to the year 1947, the year India achieved her independence. The plays register explicitly Gandhi's influence on the playwrights who expressed their concern for the underdogs of the society and explored Indian myths, legends and history to arouse patriotic and nationalistic sentiments in the Indian mind. Drama, during this period, became a forum of social awareness.

There was noticeable advancement in Indian English Drama after post- independence. "The Five-Year Plans after independence encouraged performing arts as an effective medium for public entertainment. Institution like National School of Drama was established in Delhi. The Theatre Group in Bombay and some other agencies did successfully stage Indian English Drama, Notable among them being Pratap Sharam's *A Touch of Brightness*, Asif

Currimbhoy's *The Doldrums*, Gurcharan Das's *Larins Sahib*, Gieve Patel's *Princess*, Shiv Kumar's *Last Wedding Anniversary*.”³²

Nalini, *The Sleepwalkers* are plays by Nizzim Exekiel. Girish Karnad is a prominent dramatist in Indian English drama. Karnad was deeply influenced by legends and myths. His plays include *Yayati*, *Tughlaq*, *Hayavadan*, *Naga Mandala*, *Dream of Tipu Sultan*. Mahesh Dattani, the “first Indian English playwright to be honoured by the Sahitya Akademi. He is preoccupied with contemporary social and political conditions. His themes are the plight of women in Indian society, homosexuality and Indian joint family and its impact on the individuals.”³³ The plays exhibit a curious blend of hope and despair, faith and cynicism, sentimentalism and idealism of the Indian mind creating a substantial national literature in English. In fact, dramatists of the post-independence period show a keen interest in using the indigenous folk-theatre form and the myths and legends of the country for their creative endeavors in drama.

So, in the view of Sharda Iyer: “Indian drama In English has not been the high status of fiction or poetry despite the great interest shown by Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo. Even now the dramatist has not solved the problem of fusing dramatic stories with dialogues and a good theatre all of which are indispensable to the success of play on the stage. The English-speaking theatre in India anxiously awaits a writer of the stature of Narayana or Raja Rao's vision who might combine the poetic vision of Sri Aurobindo with the professional craftsmanship of Asif. Equally fruitful might be the assimilation of the Hindu tradition to the absurd and avant grade of the Western plays.”³⁴

1.2 Indian English Novels: A Brief Survey

Novel can be defined as “a popular medium to express the characteristics of society. It works as a mediator between the novelist and the society. This plant did not generate in India but this exotic plant has been brought by the British on the Indian English literary ground. It originated in Europe and with the establishment of European colonies it stepped into the non-European countries. It appeared on the Indian English literary scene following the British colonization in India. Now it is flourishing because of the great efforts of Indian writers. But it took a long time to start as in the beginning it had to face a number of problems—medium of expression, culture and prejudice against English. Although in the Indian English novel the medium of expression is English, there is a common thing which is running through its varieties— a standard the body of which is correct English usage, but whose soul is Indian in colour, thought and imagery.”³⁵

Indians began to write novels in English towards the end of the nineteenth century. *Travels of Dean Mohomet* was first book published by an Indian in English in 1793. It sketches the life of Indian people, their history and geography in the eighteenth century. “The Indian novel derives its form and content closely from social reality and is bound up with particular moments in the nation’s history. It is firmly rooted in socio-political economic and cultural ethos of the country”.³⁶

“The novels published between 1930 and 1965 shows the influence of the ‘western tradition of the long prose’. Mulk Raj Anand through his subtle style and delicate sense of form brought the western techniques and form to perfection in his fiction. His novels aim at presenting Indian life as it is and so they have the rambling slow place of every day”³⁷. His novels include *Untouchable*, *Coolie*, *The Sword and the Sickle*, *The Road*.

R.K. Narayan narrative style follows the traditional pattern. There is “occasional use of symbolism but it is generally direct and unadorned.” The remarkable novels of Narayan are *Malgudi Days* (1942), *Swami and Friends* (1935) *The Guide* (1958) *English teacher* (1945). His capacity for innovation can be seen in the *Guide* where “he handles the modern fictional techniques such as flashback, interior monologue and stream of consciousness. Raja Rao ‘s novels are different in style and matter from that of Anand and Narayan. Rao met his requirements with a whole battery of devices. Indian locutions, idioms, and usages are rendered directly into English.”³⁸

Train to Pakistan and *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* are works of Kushwant Singh. He is one of “the Indian’s distinguished men of letters with international reputation. He makes narration itself an echoing analog of meaning and experience which are the substance of the story. Bhabani Bhattacharya employs a wholly different narrative idiom and techniques. Through telling a single story he subdivides it into several subplots completing each other. His works are *So Many hungers* 1947, *He who Rides a Tiger* 1954. Manohar Malgonkar has a talent for lively narrative. He writes in a striking British Indian and admired narrative gusto, neat plots often with historical background. *Distant Drum* (1962) *A Blend in Ganges* 1964 and *Combat of Shadows* (1962) are his remarkable works. ”³⁹

“The richness and diversity of the new Indian writing is represented in the novels of Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Rohinton Mistry. *The Golden Gate* 1986 by Vikram Seth proved to be literary miracle by an Indian writer in English in the 1980s. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that it is the first novel in the verse by an Indian author. Amitav Ghosh ‘s *His Circle of Reason* (1986) marks a definite break with the traditional themes of Indian novels in English. His other novels are *The Shadow Lines* 1988 and *In an Antique Land* 1993. Rohinton Mistry is a

powerful chronicler of contemporary social and political life. His novel *A Fine Balance* was shortlisted for Booker prize. The remarkable feature of his writing is that it captured the crowded throbbing life of India.”⁴⁰

Thus the “journey of Indian English novels started with the trio and has continued without interruptions till this date. Various changes have occurred in the art of novel writing over the years. Simple straight forward narrative technique of Narayan and Anand has paved way for more complicated narrative technique of Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy etc. Novels of the first phase were based on socio-cultural themes like poverty and marriages. Indian English novels of today deal with psychological issues like alienation and disturbed minds. The novels have acquired in depth and dimensions.”⁴¹

1.3 Indian English Women Novelists and their Works

In world of Indian English novel, Indian English women novelists made significant contributions. In bulk variety and maturity, Indian novel has grown considerably. Indian novel's development follows certain clear trends, and its incremental progression from imitative phase to rational to the psychological stage to investigational phase is not difficult to track. The 1980s occupy a unique position in growth & development of the Indian English novel. A number of talented female novelists have published their first works during this time. In the 1980s, Indian women novelists received unparalleled awards and recognition both at home and abroad. A.N. Prasad remarks:

“New women in India have started questioning the age-old patriarchal domination. They are no longer puppets in the hands of men. They have been the object of constant humiliation and persecution by an entirely indifferent, cold patriarchal society. But in present scenario woman have shown their mettle in every field and in some respects

far better than the men. They have shown their worth in the field of literature both qualitatively and quantitatively and are showing it even today without any hurdle. They are being Conferred not only national but international awards. Today the works of Kamala Markhandaya, Ruth Prawar Jhabvala, Santha Rama Rau, Nayantara Sahgal, Sashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Gita Mehta, Rama Mehta, Shoba De, Arundhati Roy, Bharti Mukherjee, Mahasweta Devi, Manju Kapur, Jhumpa Lahiri, Githa Hariharan and Namita.”⁴²

In the contemporary literary scenario, however, Indian writing throughout English enjoys equal status with other countries literary works. Indian women novelists in particular made sure their voice was heard in the Indian way around the world. In addition, Indian women novelist have also been able to excel in all areas of literature in English in recent times and have achieved global recognition.

“The Indian women authors, through their writings in English, articulated the role and status of the woman, illuminated literature with its value and vividness. It reflected culture; history, & overall variants needed to enrich the literature around the world. Although the writings deal deeply with regionalism, universal themes crossed the natural boundaries. India, with so many languages, religions, races and cultures, is land of diversity. That multiplicity offered authors a great opportunity to deal with different topics. Indian women authors voice also discussed historical, social, philosophical and much more focused their themes around humanity. It based their themes on sociological, diasporic aspects, feminine topics, science and technology, and much more.”⁴³

Women writers appeared gradually in India, beginning with Torulata Dutt (1856-1877), who dealt with Indian womanhood archetypes such as the legendary *Sita and Savitri*. Pandita

Ramabhai *Saraswati* was praised for her work that laid the groundwork for the liberation of women in India. Her prominent works, *Love & Life behind Purdah*, *Sun-Babies in India's Child Life* and *Between the Twilight* (1908). Cornelia Sorabji, is famous for her three significant novels *Love Behind the Purdah*, *Sun babies*, and *Between the Twilight*.

After 1947 the history of Indian women Novelists brought a new vision. Kamala Markandaya has secured a firm position. "She has been grappling with the subsistence problem. Her books *A Handful of Rice* (1966) tackle the plight of the poor whose lives are an endless struggle for life. The conventional relationship with Mother Earth could be found in her novels since the fortunes of these rural characters are related to the fertility and sterility of land & people. In a conservative society, she challenges women who are thrown between tradition and modernity the dilemma's twin horns. In *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), Markandaya points out how the contradictions and imbalances in the economic and social order have seriously hampered the Indian woman's emancipation. Her stories are mostly told honestly and explicitly, and she sparingly uses humor and metaphor."⁴⁴

Ruth Praver Jhabvala works includes *The Householder* (1963), *Shakespeare Wallah* (1965), *A Room with a View*, (1985) *Heat and Dust* (1983). The titles of these novels bear witness to her novels Indianness and show her appreciation of Indian culture and interest. While Jhabvala retains the voice of objectivity and sticks to straightforward narrative, in her novels one can find biting humor and social commentary. Shyam Asnani opines that "R.P Jabhvala writes about the furious social Scuffling in the Present-day India. All Her Novels are full of local colour and clamour, dealing with the young who are inert, romantic and not too -wise and the old who are cool, calculating and rigid. She describes the head on collision between

the traditional and the modern, the east and the west and the confusion that follows in the wake of these collisions.”⁴⁵

Nayantara Sahgal’s writing reflect simplicity and boldness. “Her writings are famous for keeping in touch with the latest political ups and downs with a tinge of western liberalism.”⁴⁶ Some of her works are *A time to be Happy*, *This Time of morning*, and *The Day in the Shadow*. Anita Desai deals “with the mind and the soul of a character, his inner working and hidden and silent thoughts rather than his outer appearances uses the stream of consciousness method and the interior monologue which become coincident with consciousness.”⁴⁷ Vimala Raina is known for her novel *Ambapali*. “She was the first woman (*Ambapali*) to be admitted in the fold of Lord Budha.”⁴⁸ Rama Mehta wins the Sahitya Akademi award (1979) for her outstanding novel *Inside the Haveli* (1977). Shashi Deshpande novels deals with the pathetic condition of female in male dominated society. Her works includes *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *If I Die Today*, *Shadow Play*, *Strangers to Ourselves*.

“Shoba De’s novels show the novelist’s perceptive portrayal of the secret depths of the human psyche, her accurate characterization her saucy racy and captivating. Her writing invokes imagination and compels them to relate with situation. Mahasweta Devi, the winner of the prestigious Jnanpith and Magasaay Awards for her novel, *Mother of 1084* contends that women should not be submissive and passive and should realize the inner strength for which they are known.”⁴⁹ Arundhati Roy was conferred with the Booker Prize for *The God of Small Things*. It is autobiographical in nature. Her another famous novel is *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017).

1.4 The Select Novelists and their Contribution

The novels of Indian women writers largely portray with the frustrations, sufferings and agitations of women in India deal. Their novels depict the sufferings and the struggles of women. Their women are busy with the issues of self-definition and are on a journey of self-exploration.

The female novelists articulate the emotions and suppressed feelings of women. They have expressed their perspective, mindset, agonies, and their responses involving attitudes, its own traditions and customs and the society. Even the oppression, lack of freedom to perform their own will, lack of liberty to split their livelihood, de-recognition of their decision-making abilities, exposure of the potentialities in a restricted manner are a number of the problems that have come up at the novels of those authors. The women authors such as Githa Hariharan, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, and Kamala Markandaya, Namita Gokhale have chosen problems and the issues faced by the women in the patriarchal society.

“The women writers pose an insider's perspective of the mind, their internal ambitions, and their answers to matters and men. The characters of women authors reflect mindset and their vision though their response and era differ and also reflects the ethos. Hence the Indian women authors present the stone base of the Indian mind and revealing its connection. The figures are displayed as grappling together with the realities of Indian life and injury they demand and on the flip side with private origin's battles.”⁵⁰

The women of her novels are obsessed with their identity's sublime and primordial queries. They realize that they are only gender and desire to the guys around them. They cannot escape out of the world which disturbs. They endure with the guys around them, bear, and forfeit.

Their outcomes are negative to them although their measures might be radical. The women convince themselves. They are in a pursuit of subsisting and eternal vision of existence. They are attempting to find the religion fulfilling values.

Githa Hariharan's production of alternative women characters, and also, they tried to fulfill plan of a storyline around their options, embodies a sort of writing nearer to their hunt and difference concepts for women's priorities and solutions. The majority of the protagonists, feel distressed and tired after discharge and redemption.

“Githa Hariharan’s novels follow the way of genre of the contemporary writers like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Bharati Mukherjee, Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur, Kamala Das, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Bapsi Sidhwa, Jhumpa Lahiri, Ruth Pravar Jhabvala, R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao.”⁵¹

Her protagonists such as Devi, Sita, Sara, and Shahrzad, Duniyazad Mala are under the grasp of nausea. They wage a battle by finally detect that nausea is universal; each resort, each sanctuary from it is exposed. Githa Hariharan's women tried to seek liberation from the shackles of the captivity under unhappy and deadening conditions. Githa Hariharan follows the method of story-telling as they are implied from the traditional fantastic stories of fairies and ghosts. The supernatural world interferes with it chooses its favorites and the regular world and preferred ones. These people bear an indication of the or a mark preference. The conditions of birth might also comprise some of those marks, enumerated by prophets or person, and present among the individuals as kinds of superstition or folklore.

Women of Githa Hariharan due to dominance of male dominated are reduced to being soul-less, life-less, unloved, alienated creatures carrying no place either in family, society, home or hearts of their callous and unimaginative husbands. In the face of rejection or to say

dejection, faltering on pebbles one after another, they are left with no alternative except to embark on journey of freedom from their worldly cages they have been stuffed into. Their souls cry and in a fit of rage they say 'No' to such demeaning and wretched existence as if that is the only act of value, they can commit out of sheer force of will and choice. This shows the consciousness of her women in all her five novels. They represent the modern women who are conscious of themselves. Githa Hariharan has been able to invent meaningful new world that is not meant for perpetrating only agony, disgust, despair, loneliness, alienation, meaningless in existence but a world that is imbued with the everlasting springs, hope and harmony, upon a faith that does not ravage but enriches and invigorates, encourages the sustain. The vision of a changing, moving reality through the passage of time is a new faith that reflects through the women characters of her novels.

“Namita Gokhale is an Indian writer, publishers and festival director. She is the author of sixteen books including nine works of fiction. Her debut novel, *Paro: Dreams of Passion* was the first published in 1984, and has remained a cult classic. She is co-founder and co-director of the ZEE Jaipur Literature Festival, considered the large free literary festival in the world, as well as of Mountain Echoes, the annual Bhutan Literary Festival. She is also a director of Yatra Books, A publishing house specialized in translation.”⁵²

Namita Gokhale was born in 1956 in the city of Lucknow, and was raised at the foothills of the Himalayas in Nainital. *Paro Dreams of Passion* was published in 1984, is a considerable achievement for a beginner. The foregoing observation makes it justifiable to conclude, that the explicitly sexual thematic concern of the novel, does not relate to a specifically Indian preoccupation with sexuality. “She builds up her works with a different vision. She involves

a unique positioning in the Indian women works. She depicts her female characters act with more mettle and opportunities as opposed to requesting rights or featuring the issue of women.”⁵³

The formal features of the novel and its narrative technique go very well with its theme and characterization. The women of Namita Gokhale compromise, though there are issues, which cannot be spoken of by an individual to disturb one’s social sphere. The other name of woman is ‘sacrifice’, first for the sake of father: wearing ocean of compromise among the whole family; their shaping her makes her realize that ‘she was a girl’; besides, she dreams of a charming loving husband with whom she would lead a life of blissful marriage. And again, there is another sacrifice for the sake of husband and in-laws’ family. And at last, she is cast to dependency on children and grandchildren.

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CHAPTER – 2

Custom and Patriarchy: *The Thousand Faces of Night*

2.1 Socio-Culture Perspectives

2.2 Family Bonding and Moral Values

2.3 Traditional and Modern Norms

Chapter - 2

Custom and Patriarchy: *The Thousand Faces of Night*

Collins English Dictionary, defines custom, “a custom is an activity, a way of behaving, or an event which is usual or traditional in particular society or in particular circumstances.”¹

Oxford Learners Dictionary defines as custom refers to “an accepted way of behaving or of doing things in a society or a community.”²

Cambridge Dictionary describes patriarchy as “a society in which the oldest male is the leader of the family, or a society controlled by men in which they use their power to their own advantage.”³

Merriam Webster Dictionary describes patriarchy as “a family, group, or government controlled by a man or a group of men. Social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family.”⁴

Githa Hariharan has minutely observed the struggle of human life, social structures and grown along with the changing paradigms. She was conferred with the Commonwealth Writer’s Prize for *The Thousand Faces of Night*. *The Ghost of Vasu Master*, *When Dreams Travel*, *In Times of Siege and Fugitive Histories* are some of her works. “She writes with candid vision and mission. In the novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* she highlights patriarchal brutality and how Indian women have been marginalize din the Indian society in the name of tradition and custom.”⁵

Githa Hariharan presents mythic references in patriarchal perspective through the character Baba. His stories are different from the stories of Devi’s grandmother which enabled Devi to

understand occurrences in life at her childhood. They are intended for a woman to make a point in concise terms, “center-point an exacting touchstone for a woman, a wife.”⁶ They are elucidation of the codes laid down by *Manu*. It denotes a chaste woman who inspires her husband to follow the path of Dharma. After listening to the music of Muthuswamy Dikshitar, Baba narrates an incident of his life. Dikshidar had two wives; one is dark in complexion and the other fair. The fair wife desired for jewels to match her beauty. Dikshidar sang in praise of goddess Lakshmi who appeared in the dreams of the wife satiating her desire for ornaments.

Devi is intelligent enough to understand that there can be no permanent relationship between. At the backdrop of her mind, she has a picture of a perfect marriage, painted to her by her grandmother. She is not aggressive enough to retaliate against the existing social customs and thus drifts into a marriage with Mahesh, skillfully arranged by her mother, Sita. But Devi soon realizes that she had strayed herself into an empty, hollow relationship. She craves for equality in matrimonial relationship and tries hard to check the decay in their lives. As long as her father-in-law keeps her spirit high by telling her stories about ideal womanhood, she endures the void in her marriage. She is not at all satisfied with the typical, traditional role of a wife, having material comforts and social status.

On the contrary though not a hardcore feminist, she belongs to the bandwagon of awakened woman who crave for more and more. Her concern about their relations is genuine, but Mahesh ignores her, frustrating her more when he refuses to consider her problems seriously. There is monotony and moroseness in their relationship to the extent that there is anger and hatred for each other more than love and feeling. Devi wants dialogue in her relation, not dictatorship and ultimately decides to protest and assert her individuality. Her decisions are

pre-meditated, unlike her relationship with Dan, when she is afraid to take risks. She is bold enough and when Gopal comes in her life, her suppressed dreams leap into flames and she walks out of wedlock, courageously.

Devi is happy with Gopal, because her happiness is her concern. He takes her along on his concert tours, shares his professional plans with her. But again, despite all this, she feels alienated for she realizes that she does not belong to his world. He is like a dancing peacock, too engrossed with him. Moreover, the illegitimacy of their relationship makes matters worse, and she becomes extremely touchy. Devi could not help but think of the changing milieu from that of her mother. Sita suffered loneliness in spite of her unstinting devotion towards her family. Taking her position Devi recalls her precarious situation.

The decision of Devi to return to her mother may not be an expected reaction to situation from Devi. Listening to the mythological stories of various women from her childhood from her grandmother, Devi develops a sense of individuality to decide on her position when she encounters the situation. She bothers not to consult with anyone as it is her own life. She believes that her mother would be at her side on any circumstances and she develops such confidence from her experiences and observations of her mother's love towards her. The leaf taken from the stories of mythological characters strengthens her and Devi reflects the courageous acts of her heroines. She is independent and sure that hereafter she would not be forced to engage herself in anything of her concern. The characters like Devi do expect them to be treated equally with men but want them to be let alone without any interference in their attitude towards life. Sita and Devi of the novel are different from their traditional characters. Sita, in the novel, is a very firm character and Devi is a spineless person, yet becomes firm

slowly when she gets out of senseless relationships both with Dan and Gopal. Githa Hariharan tries to give relevant answers to the dilemma which her heroines face.

The changing scenario in condition and approach of women in the postcolonial period is reflected in the writings of the period. The writers voice for the marginalized people rendering priority to trivial concerns of the subalterns. Women empower their right to gain equality resurrecting the age-old tradition of India. Inequality, untouchability and other social evils have not been attributed to the very much practice of the traditional indigenous people of Bharat but by the influence of the invaders from the foreign soil. The cultural and societal urges to get rid of such social evils have been inherited by the social reformers from the inspirations of ancient texts. The reformers claim that the culture in *Bharat* had no social evil as such till the period of King *Harshvardhan* in spite of the diversity of cultural practices in the subcontinent. The impact of the invasions and colonialism has been felt to have interrupted the natural evolution of the cultural practices in the great nation. Though it is inevitable to gain back the purity of the culture, the better elements of influenced culture can be detained to maintain humanism in the society.

2.1 Socio-Culture Perspectives

The Thousand Faces of Night unravels the potency of initiation and socialization of women in the patriarchal norms through the seemingly naive way of storytelling. Myths and religion are among the most powerful ways of induction into the socially accepted ways of patriarchy. The novel narrates the story of three generation women who act and react on their own unique ways. The grandmother is the main story teller who innocently sparks her granddaughter Devi's inquisitive spirit. Sita, Devi's mother and Parvati, her mother-in-law are strong women who believe in patriarchal notions and take up their individual stands. Mayamma, the

caretaker of Devi's marital home is an old dejected woman who supports both Parvati and Devi tacitly when they step out their home in search of their identity and fulfillment.

The protagonist Devi is representative of those young and educated women whose lives are controlled and stage managed by their families. Devi breaks all the rules and regulations of caste, class and sexual morality that she has been made to observe all her initial years when she gets an opportunity to go abroad for higher education. Even her marriage back in India is settled by her mother and then her husband tries to be her lord. Finally, her decision to pay her husband back in the same coin and to seek her sustenance and fulfillment in another man, make her step out of her home and marriage. Devi's ultimate realization of the futility of her search for happiness and meaning of life in outside agencies make her evolve into a mature human being.

Myths have relationship with every woman of the novel. Gandhari of grandmother's story is very much similar to Devi's mother Sita. Gandhari does not know about the blindness of her husband, her entry in the splendid palace is not welcomed by her husband because "a woman meets her fate alone"⁷. The sight of white sightless eyes shocks Gandhari beyond words. Devi asks grandmother about the deception done by the king for Gandhari was not intimidated about his blindness, grandmother says: All husbands are noble, Devi. She tears her rich red silk and ties it to her eyes. She thus becomes blind from that very moment.

According to the myth, she is perceived as a true *ardhangini* of her husband but novelist portrays the other side of the myth. Sita, Devi's mother is the projection of Gandhari, is a trained disciplined and passionate veena player for whom her veena was the raga and melody of her life. On a minor infringement of duty on her part she sacrifices her veena to become an ideal Indian wife. One day she is so lost in her playing of veena that she doesn't hear the

voice of her father-in-law and he bursts into a fit of anger: “Put that Veena away. Are you a wife, a daughter-in-law?”⁸

“Sita hung her head over the Veena for a minute that seemed to stretch for ages, enveloping us in an unbearable silence. Then she reached for the strings of her precious veena and pulled them out of the wooden base. They came apart with a discordant twang of protest.”⁹

She looks up at her father-in-law and says, “Yes I am a wife, a daughter-in-law”¹⁰. In her silent rebellion, she never played her veena again and became a daughter-in-law whom even the neighbors extolled. “Like a volcano, seething with rage inside, but presenting a cool and calm exterior, she gives up her passion for music ... Sita draws strength from her subdued desires and curbed individuality.”¹¹

Sita's decision to throw away the veena is an act of vengeance, once she leaves her veena aside, she proves a hard task master and settles scores with her family by taking the rein of their lives in her own expert hands. Hariharan's Sita is an antidote to the mythical Sita who surrenders her role of wife and takes shelter in deep forests. This Sita is a pillar of towering strength that persists in the midst of the severest odds with dignity and courage. She does not crumble in the face of odds and hardships; she asserts herself in the given space of home to prove her indispensability. She acquires a stern and dispassionate aura devoid of feminine softness and does not tolerate any illusion all her life, not in the life of her daughter. She masters economy of her home with single-minded devotion and then assumes gently and painlessly role of ideal wife. She was a good wife, good daughter-in-law, good mother. She lost herself in performing all these roles.

Her endeavor reaches its fruition when her husband is posted abroad and she is able to send her daughter Devi to America for higher education. She secures material success for her family yet ironically, loses both her husband and daughter in the maze of life. She ruthlessly crushes her husband's passion for folklore and takes revenge upon him for remaining silent during her trials. The basic cord of understanding and compassion gets snapped between them along with the cord of her veena. Even during the life time of her husband, she reigned supreme and after his death, she feels free of all obligations, burning his papers and poetry and burying his dreams and fantasies in a far corner of her mind. Her home, her garden and the future of her daughter now become and her theatre of her action. Within the periphery of her home, she nurtures and directs the growth of the plants of her garden and in the same manner she marries her daughter to the man selected by her.

Sita proves herself to be a balanced and able woman who knows the art of negotiation to her advantage. The news of elopement of her married daughter with a neighbor however compels her to admit her defeat and interrogate the self-created stringent boundaries of propriety and decorum. In her realization against the limitations imposed by the social ethics and principles that construct the space of women in society, she realizes that she herself has become a tough agent of the same forces. Instead of relating to her husband and daughter, she relates herself with inanimate things like veena and her garden and lost her real self for the sake of that institution that had snatched the very rhythm of her life. The novel scrutinizes the self of the character itself rather than putting the entire onus on patriarchal constraints to validate her persona. She reveals her individual psyche reacting to and wrestling with the worlds within and without.

Ultimately, she rediscovers her own true self and decides to discard the self-imposed ceilings that she had erected around herself in her attempt to fit into the customary patriarchal roles. Breaking the shells of orthodoxy and conventions, she waits for the reunion with her daughter with veena in her hand. Her taking up veena again is symbolic of her positive assertion for life in the quest of the self.

The ways adopted by Sita in the novel are clearly subversive yet within the acceptable norms of patriarchal society. Nobody can raise finger on her conduct and find fault with her devotion towards her family. She could eat dry chapattis at night, could sacrifice her love for music without complaint and never revisited her home to affirm her space and status as a flawless wife and daughter-in-law. Her uncomplaining arrogance self-respect lend her respect and reverence. In India, Marriage is like a sacred bond for a woman, but for some women it is a shackle of confinement.

The grandmother or Sita's mother-in-law is another character who resists patriarchy, negotiating with its various thresholds. She evolves amazingly during her negotiations with the deep-seated patriarchal forces in the social fabric. Initially she seems to be a meek and docile woman when like a mute spectator she witnesses her husband Sita of negligence of duty and latter's equally vociferous reaction of breaking the strings of veena. She appreciates Sita's passion for music and feels aggrieved for her sacrifice. She shares this undisclosed appreciation with her grand-daughter, Devi and draws a parallel between the mythical character, Gandhari and her daughter-in-law. Gradually she comes to the understanding of miserable plight of women in this male dominated world.

This realization is manifested in the choice and narration of mythical stories she narrates to her granddaughter. A perennial story teller, she satisfies the curiosity of her granddaughter

and sharpens her questioning spirit so that she starts finding her own answers. Refraining from the popular myths of Sita and Savitri, she narrates the stories of Amba, Ganga, Gandhari and Damayanti to Devi. In her narration all these rebellious women register their protest against the oppression and exploitation of the sexist world in their own powerful ways. She shatters the myths of sheltered and cocooned existence for women in the name of security and the myth of glorious womanhood.

In *The Thousand Faces of Night*, the portrayal of female characters of caste, Mayamma and her mother-in-law, provides a vivid depiction of the drained-out vitalities of womanhood. It is, in fact, appalling to see the continuum of patriarchal system in different shades despite the changing socio-cultural set up. The inherent feminine instincts in these characters are numb that is evitable through their unquestioned submission to harsh behavioural patterns in their own contrasting ways.

The gruesome atrocities committed by the mother-in-law on Mayamma describe the horrific clash that entails hierarchical power, superstition and primitive outlook and the fanaticism to prove allegiance to old conventions. The social and class background, lack of formal education and exposure to awaken the 'self-further reinforce, the mother in-law's convictions regarding the hegemonic absolutism of patriarchal norms. The pontification and assimilation of the orthodox ideology in her character can also be seen when she denies any space outside its inflexible borders even to the next generation women. Reducing Mayamma to a mere 'body', she makes this child bride of twelve take all sorts of penances and punishes her by smearing chili paste on her barrenness. She professes that "A woman without a child, say the sages, goes to hell".¹²

She blames Mayamma for her son's dissipation and final disappearance from home and hold the daughter-in-law's bad and malicious *karmas* and stars, responsible for everything. Mayamma's mother-in-law symbolizes the women who are frozen in the past and hide themselves behind the role-idealism to justify their inhuman behavior with their counterparts.

“With their blinkered perception, they are oblivious of the sexist politics involved in the male hegemonic rules. Victimized themselves, they perpetrate the same atrocities on other women revengefully whenever they are in a position to do so. They do not evolve any logical perception and remain entrenched in the superstitions and prejudices handed over to them by their predecessors in the form of religious beliefs and taboos.”¹³

Mayamma, the housekeeper of Den's marital home is another character who is on the similar expedition. She registers her rebellion in her own way and tries to negotiate with the patriarchal forces. Married at the age of twelve, she was ill-treated by her husband and her mother-in-law. After ten years she gave birth to a still born. She was punished and tortured by her mother-in-law. In fact, her penance starts the very next year of her marriage and all kinds of fasts, ritual baths, tying the knots of thread on trees, chanting mantras without stopping for a breath, prostrations before the goddess of fertility, starving the self and hosting feast for *Brahmins* and offering rice and curd to snakes, fail her in fulfilling the duty of a wife, that is to beget sons.

Mayamma accepts everything as her fate and does not ever dare to question her tormentors in her marital home. She describes the lone incidence when she had interrogated her destiny and was ruthlessly punished and all her queries were silenced for the rest of her life. Finally, she was blessed with a baby boy. She represents the poor women who are used as producing machine, betrayed and exploited by husband, children and in-laws, cheated by everybody

around and then thrown away to rot by herself but once she gets thrashed by the son for whom she had been tormented throughout her life, she does not remain an all sacrificing and suffering mother.

She stoically nurses him in his illness but “There was no tenderness left in Mayamma's hands. They were efficient, cool, but they withheld reassurance”¹⁴. The death of her abusive son, free her of all obligatory relationships. She contacts with her past and leaves the very village that has been a witness of her woes and she sets on the journey of a new life and takes refuge as a caretaker in the old house of Parvatiamma, the future mother-in-law of Devi in Bangalore. All her life she has been abused and misused by her own people and at this juncture, she rekindles her life force and grabs lustily whatever space she can acquire for her self-fulfillment. she becomes close confidant of the mistress of the home. Her value and indispensability are proved when assigning the whole responsibility of that household, Parvati decides to leave in the pursuit of the higher goals. She becomes a mother substitute for Mahesh and the caretaker of the home. She does not forfeit her space when Devi enters the scene as daughter-in-law rather acts as her virtual mother-in-law and mentor.

Despite the agonizing experiences of her own life, Mayamma has a compassionate heart that could sense the pangs of unfulfilled desires and hear the agonized cries of the fettered soul. She understands Parvati's rebellion in abandoning her home, husband and son in search of spiritual self. Despite Mahesh's objections and warnings, she keeps her memories alive and narrates them to his wife, Devi. Her innate sympathy and reverence for Parvati is a proof of the development in her own self. She embarks on a journey where she reverts back and re-examines her own submission and surrender to the patriarchal social system during her early life.

She is the one who witnesses Devi's travails as a new bride who yearns to have a happy and contented life but languish alone in the absence of a sympathetic and sustaining relationship. Narrating her own lived experiences to Devi, in fact, is her subtle attempt to help the young woman unshackle from prejudices and shallow patriarchal norms. Through her self-example she impresses upon Devi's mind the futility of submission and surrender in the name of conformism. Her tacit support in Devi's elopement out of her suffocating marriage is indicative of silent rebellion against the male chauvinist forces. Unlike the women who perpetrate moral propriety and patriarchal injunctions in the name of family honour, she rather facilitates Devi's elopement and does not sit on judgment. She evolves into a woman who is more mature and compassionate towards the sufferings of others like her. She encourages Devi to find contentment that has always eluded her.

She seeks subtle pleasure and satisfaction when Parvati and Devi liberate themselves from the shackles of patriarchal social system and try to capture their soul and body. What she fails to get in her life, she supports and feels rejoiced seeing others realizing, even though through unacceptable ways. Her very understanding of the pathos of her own counterparts and commemorating their self-determination plant her among women negotiating for the space and autonomy.

The women who finally rebel and position themselves beyond the patriarchal thresholds have been conformists in the early phases of their life. No one of them was initially inclined to disturb or disrupt the broad social concerns, however, after an extent, unlike their predecessors; they deny to yield meekly to the clamping forces. It is heartening to categorize them as distinct individuals, appearing to fly towards freedom, or waiting with hope for positive change. "Irrespective of the variation of caste, class, and age, women have one trait

in common that is they are born with the burden of traditions and taboos, indoctrinated and socialized in the laws of patriarchy, silenced and trained since childhood, trained and educated to perpetuate the sexist set up of society and stand up against their own deviant counterparts. It has been drilled into their psyche that a woman can either be a victim or a martyr is a better choice for which they need to surrender their own interest and independence.”¹⁵

Even formal education fails to play vital role to wake them up from their slumber as their fear of rejection and retribution is deeply rooted. They earnestly toe their line and accept their relegation and marginalization as their fate and consequent of the evils of their previous births. Their garb may change but the prevailing ideology of their life remains the same everywhere. They might not have read the sacred literature and religious texts themselves but the message seems to have percolated to them without any alteration and seepage. In lieu of their conformism they continue to be the recipients of patronage they continue to be treated as objects to be worshipped, defiled or deified. Devi, Sita, Mayamma have different socio-economic class and cultural background, but situation and treatment s remains unaltered.

The characters positioned within the threshold of patriarchy establish the fact that the influence of traditional role models, epics and cultural lore and myth and their hold on Indian collective unconsciousness is too enormous to be shaken easily. The models of normative ideal womanhood are the only guidelines that these women trust and follow. If ever they try to listen their inner voice, they repent and flinch, nursing guilt conscience and cursing themselves. The apprehension of consequent retribution of their defiance and bad *karmas* makes them all the more adherent followers of patriarchal rules and regulations for the rest of their lives.

Within the threshold of patriarchy, the diversities in women's experiences to adopt new behavioural patterns of life in an attempt to enlighten self, these characters instead of adopting a militant view, they adopt 'change' as one of the choices, among many. Abandoning the orthodox prejudices, they improvise and sustain the patriarchal norms as per their own inclination. They do not advocate dissolution rather strive for solution, a conceptual clarification of empirical rules of patriarchy. They seem to be striving to manoeuvre their space by breaking the silence of the patriarchal subordination and empowering themselves to raise a voice while nesting into the present cultural inscriptions.

“The portrayal of Sita is unique in terms of her expressions of resistance against the patriarchal injunctions that leave no space for woman for her personal fulfillment. She sacrifices her passion for music at the altar of marriage and acquires the role expected of her dispassionately yet not without avenging the atrocities committed on her. Very deviously she manoeuvres her circumstances to gain an upper hand in other's life, still she is praised and eulogised for her sacrifices and capabilities.”¹⁶

The grandmother and Mayamma, positioned on the threshold of patriarchy are trying to negotiate with various thresholds of patriarchy that are instrumental in denying them the space and freedom required to realize their potential as free human beings. The gender specific roles and expectations of the family and society condition their responses and they appear somewhat diffident and reluctant challenging such motions and restrictions openly, yet they do not give up. They fight consciously and cautiously and evolve stronger in the process as is evident in the case of the grandmother and Mayamma.

Parvatiamma is a loving and gentle lady. She remains an enigma; subjected to the loneliness of the big house after her children were sent away to the boarding school. Her husband, a

Sanskrit Professor believes “a man needs a wife to help him with the business of living”¹⁷ His faith in his filial piety was to such an extent that he felt that it was not necessary for him to see his bride, selected by his father. His stories are never about ambiguity, fantasy or magic; they always have a theme. His concept of spiritualism and detachment from the worldly illusions casts a negative spell on his wife.

Devi, Parvati’s daughter-in-law, too follows the latter's footsteps and leaves her home and husband in the search of self-fulfillment, though her quest is not for the spiritual gods. Devi is a modern woman of present era, educated in the best of institutes in India as per the status of her father and aspirations of her mother, she is sent to America for higher education. Born and brought up in an orthodox Tamil Brahmin family to the stern and astute Sita and dreamy Mahadevan, she is a natural ally to her father and shares his penchant for fantastic and far away things. Her upbringing under the strict watch of an authoritarian mother along with refreshing annual visits to her grandmother, a fabulous story teller, helps Devi to gather information and reach conclusions independently since her childhood.

Devi’s anxiety and helplessness is portrayed through the juxtaposition of her dreams and nightmares in the novel. She remembers her grandmother's story of Amba, who fights back to avenge her insult and ignominy acquiring superhuman energy through her rigorous penance. Baba always sets the examples of virtuous women for Devi.

Hariharan's vision is noteworthy, herein she does not leave her protagonist alone and destitute. Realizing the superficiality of men's world, Devi goes a step ahead than mythical Amba whom she seems to have internalized. Being capable of taking the charge of her life, she does not need the hollow security and fulfillment provided by men. Like a free person, she decided to reconnect with her roots. She is self-assured and guilt free.

In this novel, not only Parvati and Devi who walk out of their marriage to seek fulfillment, Gauri, the beautiful and fair maid servant of Devi's grandmother, too, asserts her feminine self by rejecting her callous husband and eloping from home taking all jewellery with her brother-in-law. She is proud and flamboyant in her womanhood and refuses to be bogged down to the cruelties and bestialities of her rich husband. Gauri, too, is an independent woman in her own right, "chains around neck and bangles on her arms, a proud and unrepentant housewife"¹⁸. She remains her usual cheerful self with no scars or signs of turbulence. Sita, Devi and Mayamma "walked a tightrope and struggled for some balance, for some means of survival they could fashion for themselves."¹⁹ They cross all the thresholds - emotional, sexual, familial, social - of patriarchy to assert their self and existence.

2.2 Family Bonding and Moral Values

A Family bond is a strong and intimate connection among members of a family that develops over time; which requires collective effort and time. Family bonding lays a strong foundation for strong relations, helps build confidence, instills great moral values in children and create wonderful memories. In *The Thousand Faces of Night*, there is a strong bond between Devi and her grandmother. Devi spent every summer in her grandmother house in the village. "Every summer she would wait for us in the old stone porch outside her house squinting as our car drove down the dirt track road raising clouds of dust. She would weep unashamed tears when she saw me and lift me out of the car as if I was a baby."²⁰

Behavioral practices and habits of an individual which gives him a sense of right and wrong; and define what is socially acceptable or evil are called moral values. Moral values such as loyalty, courage, patriotism and honesty are equally respected around the world irrespective of region or religion; these values are instilled through a long process of observation,

conditioning and holistic education. In Indian society, where patriarchal values are still prevailing, a woman has no independent existence of her own and she, since her birth, is assigned to various roles. Her individual existence as a member is not acceptable to society.

Devi's grandmother was a widow who owned large property and during her summer vacation, every year Devi used to visit her grandmother along with her parents. Regarding her grandmother's stories, Devi remarks:

“My grandmother's stories were no ordinary bedtime stories. She chose each for a particular occasion, a story in reply to each of my childish questions. She had an answer for every question. But her answers were not simple: they had to be decoded. A comparison had to be made, an illusion discovered, and a moral drawn out. Like the sugar shapes she made for me, a rich, oversweet syrup that was magically transformed over the fire into ornamented little elephants, swans with each feather delicately etched, her stories fashioned molds. Ideal molds, impossibly ambitious, that challenged the puny to stretch her frame and fit into the vast spaces, live up to her illustrious ancestor.”²¹

In her spare time, Devi's grandmother used to tell her stories of ancient mythical women, hoping Devi to cherish her life on the basis of these ideal women. Stories relating to Damayanti, Ganga and Amba were narrated by grandmother with great interest. The only purpose of these stories, narrated by her grandmother, was to make Devi aware of lives of these ideal women who enriched the glorious Indian tradition by their high ideals and moral values so that Devi herself could get some inspiration for her future life as a wife and mother. Devi, while comparing her grandmother's stories to those of her father-in-law's, remarks:

“Baba`s stories remind me of my grandmother`s, but they are also different. They are less spectacular, they ramble less. Her stories were a prelude to my womanhood, an initiation into its subterranean possibilities. His define the limits. His stories are for a woman who has already reached the goal that will determine the guise her virtue will wear. They make one point in concise terms: that the saint lived according to the laws of time-tested tradition.”²²

Devi`s father-in-law was an ideal son to his parents. Baba`s father “was a wealthy man who owned acres and acres of fields”²³. Baba, her father-in-law, took no interest in managing his ancestral wealth and earned fame in the field of Sanskrit literature, by being a professor, an erudite man of literature. During his life, he received lots of awards and medals for his stupendous performance in Sanskrit. When his mother insisted him on getting married to a girl, he selected Parvati as his wife from among Hema, Mohana and other two girls, because the name Parvati sounded synonymous with well- mannered cultured girl itself. He never sees the girl before his marriage, as he believes in his mother`s wise choice. He never questions the wisdom of his parents.

His wife Parvati was an ideal wife and she dedicatedly served Baba`s parents along with Baba. When her children had gone to a boarding school, she devoted her all time to worship God. One day, when Baba was out of home, for some work, she abandoned her home in search of God without giving prior information, handing over the keys of the house to Mayamma and advising her to take care of the house as well as her husband. When Baba returned, he was informed by Mayamma, of Parvatiamma`s departure and he got shocked and remained speechless.

In a male dominated society, a woman has no independent identity from her own, and she is expected to carry out various duties and roles in a family from a nascent age. After listening to the heart-touching story of Mayamma, Devi realises that even if a woman works heart and soul in a house, she still has no importance in her own family, where she dedicatedly serves throughout her life.

As the time passes, squabbles between Mahesh and Devi become quite frequent, and Devi starts realizing that she has been entrapped into the web of arranged marriage. In spite of Devi`s effort to be a good wife, Mahesh always finds fault with Devi and compares her with her mother Sita, who in the eyes of Mahesh, has been an ideal wife and mother all her life.

Her grandmother tells her the story of Sita and her favourite veena. Sita got married with Devi`s father Mahadevan at an early stage of her life. When she arrived to her in-law`s house, she brought the veena as dowry with her. She had been a good veena player, who played her veena so well that whole house became vibrant with harmony of music and every member of the family felt spell-bound. She used to play the veena after finishing her household work in her spare time. She regularly practiced her veena and it became her friend during the hours of boredom and frustration, arising out of the monotony of household works.

Sita keeps herself too busy in the household work that she hardly gets any time for herself. After being scolded by her father-in-law, she completely abandons her musical interest and from the morning to the evening, she keeps herself busy in taking care of her in-laws and husband neglecting her own health and needs. She used to take her meals after everybody ate his meals. She scarifies her own dream of becoming an excellent veena player in order to fulfil the needs of her own members of the family. Like traditional women of our society, she molds herself according to the various traditional roles imposed on her by her family. Her

husband, hardly had any time for Sita, as he keeps himself busy in his studies and lectures, neglecting his duties towards his wife and his family.

Mahadevan symbolises patriarchy in our society, in which a man is considered to be superior to a woman and in order to prove his dominance over her, he exercises tremendous control over her. Mahadevan belongs to that category of men who never try to know about the needs and wishes of their wives, always occupying to their own aims of life. While describing Sita's life, Githa Hariharan has presented a true vignette of Indian women:

“A few months after they were married, he found Sita in the kitchen at midnight, ravenously eating the chapattis left over from dinner. He realised with shock that she missed rice: all her life, she had eaten three square meals of rice. Marriage had meant that Sita would have to learn to eat dry chapatis, which refused to go down the throat like sticky, wet balls of mashed rice. This was the sort of detail which overwhelmed Mahadevan. A woman did not complain, a woman who knew how to make sacrifices without fanfare: Sita was such a woman, he thought, and she had earned his unswerving loyalty.”²³

An analytical study of *The Thousand Faces of Night* provides an amalgamation of various kinds of conflicts, surfacing in the novel. Conflicts such as, tradition versus modernity, myth versus reality and individual versus society make this novel highly relevant to the contemporary times.

The first conspicuous conflict that emerges, in the novel, is the conflict between tradition and modernity in our Indian society. Traditionally, we are living in a society that is patriarchal by nature. In our society, men are considered to be superior to women. Till now women are given secondary status in our society. The domination of men has made women's life

miserable assigning them a lower status in the household. Women feel subjugated and suppressed in our tradition-bound Indian society. A conflict is born when this tradition-bound society clashes with the modernity of contemporary society. This conflict can be clearly noticed in the life of Sita, Devi's mother.

She is an embodiment of an ideal Indian woman who adhering to her tradition, follows every conventional custom rigorously. She proves herself as an ideal wife and daughter-in-law. But when scolded by her father-in-law for forgetting her household duties, her silent protest against her father-in-law generates modernity in her outlook. We can sense modernity in her nature, when she decides not to touch her favourite veena all her life, as a mark of silent protest against her domineering father-in-law. She, by protesting against her father-in-law, shows a strong sense of modernity in her character. And this protest generates a strong sense of conflict between modernity and tradition in her mind. Even though she tries to be a perfect daughter-in-law, a sense of self-respect brings modernity in her outlook and this is why she abandons her musical interest forever. Her mind has been bitterly tormented by the overbearing conflict between tradition and modernity. In our Indian society, there are women like Sita who are still struggling to strike a proper balance between tradition and modernity by searching for their identities in their households. According to Subhashree Mukherjee-

“The parameter of satisfaction has altered tremendously leading to highly individualistic personalities who fight out the odds rather than succumbing to them. The writer has proved through the text as well as the intertext, that women have emerged through the out of age-old domination and oppression and rejuvenated themselves to enjoy a meaningful coexistence with man. Hariharan has shown the marginality and traditionality of all the textual as well as inter textual character, but

has also shown their revival. She has not merely concentrated on the struggle and quest of women, but has shown how they overcome the predicament and seek salvation.”²⁴

The novel reveals the web of mythical stories by juxtaposing myths and reality, analyzing the centuries old myths in the context of contemporary perspective. Myths are narrated to Devi by her grandmother, as stories to be idealized by Devi and in her narration of these mythical stories, she colors these myths with her own contemporary explanations. In the whole novel, the character of grandmother has been strong and powerful but if read closely, a latent conflict also can be sensed in her life. Devi’s grandmother, during all her life, had been a meek, submissive and subservient wife. Her husband was domineering. During her life, she never took any decision on her own. Whatever her husband decided, she had to willingly or unwillingly accept all. She was not bold enough to show her own wish to her husband. This suppressed condition of her mind generated a conflict in her life. This conflict can be seen in the statement of Devi, when she remarks:

“I must have, as I grew older, begun to see the fine cracks in the bridge my grandmother built between the stories I loved, and the less self-contained, more sordid stories I saw unfolding around me. The cracks I now see are no longer fine; they gape as if the glue that held them together was counterfeit in the first place. But the gap I now see is also a debt: I have to repair it to vindicate my beloved, story teller.”²⁵

Devi, the protagonist of this novel, also undergoes both an external and internal conflict. Her external conflict can be seen with her husband Mahesh and internal conflict comes to the fore, when she fails to adjust to her newly married life and starts searching for her own identity. This search for identity generates a psychological conflict in her life. Her external

conflict is seen in terms of her frequent arguments with her husband over various issues of her life. She, for the sake of her mother, willingly accepts the proposal of arranged marriage. She tries to fit in as a good wife and daughter in law but at the same time, fails to suppress her own “Self” and this suppression of self generates an internal conflict in her life. Devi, in the institution of marriage, finds herself alienated and helpless; for she has been unable to strike a balance between herself and her husband.

2.3 Traditional and Modern Norms

Githa Hariharan is a feminist voice claiming for perfect freedom of women both in personal life and professional career. She tries to elevate her voice against the established order by the men. Her distinct identity is affirmed in the literary field breaking all the traditional taboos of the superstitious beliefs of the people. She is quite conscious of her role as a feminist voice articulating the subjugations, oppressions, and concerns of women and claiming the equal status for women with men is her vision to achieve. With her significant contribution of artistic integrity, vitality and variety in writing, she decorates the contemporary fictional canvas of Indian English literature. Her novels are the protestations against the subjugation of women by the male chauvinism.

While condemning the subservience of women in Indian society in her novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*, Hariharan seeks for their liberation from the oppression of the men. Her excellent depiction of tragic women and their inward reaction to the subjugation and persecution of men is appreciable. The novel sticks to the feministic approach on the theme of women psychology presenting a clear picture of patriarchal dominance in social life. Comparing the psychosomatic suffering of women in India with the women of other countries, it is very intensive and heart touching, that global women enjoy more freedom.

Women of developed nations may revolt against their persecution quite freely for they are not bonded culturally and their misery was not much with psychological agony. The writings of women from those nations go around the affairs of love, festivities, and disappointments in their marital life. Women in India experience the conquest at their very existence of being woman and the deep mental trauma is inflicted upon them at their every stage of life.

Modern society pays little attention to its traditional way of life and it is given little credibility to understand life of traditional values at this hectic present life. Against the belief of the younger generation of the period, tradition becomes a milestone of human civilization which processed the shaping up of human civilized life. Similar to the rules and regulations of any institution in the modern society, tradition created the codes of belief, faith in rituals and principles of morality of the ancient society. The members of the community developed their attachment sticking together with their sole belief either by the territory they were living, or the language they were communicating. Traditional values provide insights into the mysteries of life and death in the absence of secular substitute for truth.

India, one of the most traditional nations in the world, is rich in mythology and very ancient in its traditional history. India being a land of spirituality, Indian psyche is deeply rooted into the religious beliefs emerged in the same old country. Each and every activity in life in Indian continent is absolutely controlled by the spirituality. Indian spiritual life is based on the mythic narratives like the *Vedas*, the *Puranas*, the *Upanishads*, and the epics like the *Ramayana*, and the *Mahabharata*. These great sacred Indian classics celebrate the legendary heroes who were the incarnation of gods with their supernatural powers. All spheres of interests of mankind in India are comprehensively dealt in the classics of India.

Traditional values have been created by human kind extending a rich resource for collective consciousness of humanity. Professing the customs, beliefs and attitude of people in the ancient India, tradition has been a source of imagination to the Indian writers throughout history. The Indian writers in English are no exception but to be influenced greatly by the classical works. The functional demands to the creative artists necessitate them to get fascinated by the legendary characters and their super powers in myth which itself being a great literary work. The earliest Indian English novelists in pre-independence period to twenty first century refer to Indian traditional beliefs to convey their viewpoints through the novels. Githa Hariharan, a prominent novelist of contemporary Indian English, skillfully employs traditional belief and modernisation in her work, *The Thousand Faces of Night*. While discussing the status and attitude of women in modern society she connotes the references from Indian mythology.

Till recently both in rural and urban societies the Indian families are specific about passing on their traditional ethic to their new generation as their bed time stories. Having brought up in the tradition loving orthodox family, Githa Hariharan has great love for Indian epics and assesses her themes providing anecdotes from the classics. The relationship between men and women in the family would be smooth and sound when the personals involved understand their role to play in the family. The elderly people inculcate the moral principles expected of an individual at his or her different stages of life. The novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night* focus on three main female characters of different age groups and different background.

Devi is the protagonist of the novel, very much inquisitive to understand life even at her young age. She is eagerly waiting for the occasion to visit her grandmother during summer holidays in the village. Every curious enquiry of Devi about the people and the incidents'

taking place is responded with apt stories from Indian mythology by the patient and loving grandmother. In an occasion Devi got glimpses of a photograph of her mother Sita holding veena, a musical instrument in her hand playing the strings, she was much surprised. She has never seen her mother playing veena anytime at her home. She knows that her curious query would be responded rightly by her *pati*. The immediate reply of the old lady was that it gives an opportunity to learn “what is to be real woman.” *Gandhari*, a mythological character in the *Mahabharata* was shocked to know that her husband from royal family was noble but a blind. She reacted to the fact blindfolding, sacrificing her sight to make herself worthy enough to the royal blood. The young girl wonders how the story relates to her mother:

“I said nothing, and was not precocious enough to ask how Gandhari’s story and Amma’s came together. Or perhaps I knew. I must have known, even then, that Gandhari’s pride, the fury that was to become her life-force, the central motive of years of blind suffering, was no piece of fiction. Gandhari’s anger, wrapped tightly round her head in a life-long blindfold, burnt in a heart close, very close to mine.”²⁶

The old lady intended to convey the message to the growing young girl that her mother Sita was good at playing veena and she was appreciated for her skill by the family members of her husband. But she was advised to concentrate on the domestic services of her husband and the family members rather than playing veena to please them. The hard-earned skill of playing veena was sacrificed for serving the family better. Sita resisted her interest to play till the death of her father-in-law and her husband. Actually, it was an act of protestation from the part of new member of the family who would have little support from her fellow member even from her husband. Hariharan presents the reaction of Sita as if she is willingly taking up the domestic responsibility without any reaction. She manoeuvres to control her husband

to move up in the ladder of promotion and dictates him to move from his parents finding a job abroad. Sita took over the responsibility of running life of her single unit family, her husband Mahadevan, and her daughter Devi.

“Sita could, and did, rule with iron hand. She thought for all three of them; and when she could do so without offending propriety, she acted for them, swiftly, decisively, and above all, unobtrusively. Her reign did not always run a smooth course; there were little challenges in plenty. Both Devi and Mahadevan had grown into sly, shifty-eyed accomplices of a mutiny that threatened to erupt through books, daydreams, gods and goddesses.”²⁷

Sita obliges to the expectations of the elders in the family accordingly. Her reaction at the given setting is very much comprehensive that she cannot disobey her father-in-law immediately after her arrival into the house, though she thinks that he is not supposed to interfere in her routine activities. She waits for her turn to take control of the situation and she does it when the situation demanded. At the quickest possible time she takes her husband away from the family finding the means of promotion and settles down in a foreign country. Ignoring her skill of playing ‘veena’ is temporary. She calls the shot in all the decisions in the family. Though she appears to be a woman who follows the traditional practices developed in the Indian families in the medieval period, she is a modern woman who enjoys the liberty of woman in traditional India. She is the representative to claim the rights of woman at this modern age. At this fast-developing age, women being better educated than their husbands take the major decisions in the family – where to reside, the kind of nutritious food to be taken by the family members, the type of education the children to be offered and most importantly the religious sector the family may follow. Sita represents them.

When a girl turns into a young lady, she would be in shock to experience the first menstrual period. The elderly lady whispered in Devi's ear not to reveal it to anyone as they would insist her to be separated from others losing her innocence. She might not have told her about the kind of changes taking place in her physique and its bodily functions but tried to comfort her from the shyness which makes her a stranger to herself. Devi is comforted by her grandmother: "... saying, 'It means you are a woman now, my child. It means that you will be a mother.' ... 'But Devi, motherhood is more than the pretty picture you see of a tender woman bent over the baby she is feeding at her breast. A mother has to walk strange and tortuous paths.'"²⁸

The grandmother narrates the story of Ganga to interpret the hardship of motherhood. King Shantanu developed his fascination towards Ganga and agreed to marry her on condition that she should not be questioned for any of her actions. For seven years she bore a child a year and threw them into the River Ganga. Upon her attempt to drown the eighth baby, the king stopped her. Ganga plunged into the river asking to be the father and the mother of the child. Devi understands, "to be a good mother, to be a mother at all, you have to earn the title, just as you have to renew your wifely vows every day."²⁹

Traditional values serve as means to express man's desire to better his life formulating a normative system that carries ethical implications in a community. It reminds the member in the community to follow laid out custom and regulation when he passes through the stages of his life. Sita is very firm in her stand when she took her decision to send her teenage daughter to U.S. for higher studies against the concerns of her close relatives. They reminded warning her, 'Your daughter will be lost to you, Sita' and same like many other boys and girls, she would never return back to be with her aged mother. Sita took pride in providing

her daughter higher education in the USA but cautiously brought her back at her turn of eighteen for her *swayamvara*. Devi recalled her days with grandma at the *agraharam* narrating the occasion of *swayamvara* of beautiful princess Damayanti in order to divert her attention from a large lizard falling on her bare leg when she was six years old.

“Not a sound was heard in the hall as the kings held their breath and Damayanti walked slowly, surely, towards the row of enthroned bridegrooms-to-be. She would stop occasionally, in front of one of the thrones, and the silence would give way to a song in praise of the king she beheld, sung by his own minstrels. The heralds of the princess issued their challenge in verse, witty and brief; and the kings’ heralds would reply, in defense of their masters’ achievements and virtue. But Damayanti listened with only one. Her heart, loyal and steadfast, never wavered from the path leading to Nala, the king of the Nishadas, and her feet, adorned with gold rings and henna, were sure of their destination. The honeyed words of Nala’s courier, the wild swan who had won her heart for him, sand in her as she sought out her destiny.”³⁰

The grandmother is no longer alive to witness Devi’s *swayamwara* which takes place against the wish of the girl concerned. It is to please her strong-willed mother who has been firm in her stand when Devi is in indecisive confusion to move forward. The mother is the anchor-rock of the family to have the final say arranging marriage for her sole daughter. After accomplishing her role as a perfect house keeper and blameless wife, she beckons her daughter to oblige the customized call for finding the right choice of a young lady. It is to perform the role of ideal mother in Indian family to prepare her daughter to be a good wife. Devi succumbed to the wish of her mother in spite her disinterest to go in front a potential bridegroom to display herself.

Devi's cousin Uma's brief married life inspired her grandmother to tell the story of Amba. Uma would have been much relieved to get married in a rich family after her bitter experiences with her hostile step-mother and indifferent father. She had to return her birthplace after foreboding torture of her drunken in-law. The grandmother could only console Devi at her tender fifteen years telling the story of Amba, a high-born princess was a victim of disaster in spite of being courageous woman.

On the occasion of her *swayamvara* Amba was about to garland the young King of *Salwa* with her love for him, but she was carried away by *Bheeshma* along with her two sisters for being married to crown prince of *Hastinapura*. Learning the mind of Amba and her love for king of *Salwa*, she was allowed to take the hand of her choice. But the King of *Salwa* considered Amba to be a leftover and refused to accept her. *Bheeshma* could not take her as wife for his vow taken in his youth. A woman is known through husband and his home, says grandmother. Amba developed insatiable desire for revenge piling penance on penance produced a venomous garland to defeat *Bheeshma*. After her lonely life in forest, she died to be reborn as *Drupa's* daughter and be raised as a son. At the right time she became a man to avenge *Bheeshma* participating in the bloody battle of *Kurukshetra*. The story left great impact in the mind of the young girl that she began to have the dreams of female avengers.

The present study finds that Githa Hariharan relates the incidents taking place in the life of common man with the mythical characters. The mythological evidences have to be decoded to understand the occurrences at the current period. The curious observation of specific life situation may enable a person to find the similar instance in traditional mythic writings. The maid-servant, Gouri, in the house of Devi's grandmother has been saving her meager earnings to buy gold for her marriage.

Devi is excited to find her getting ready for marriage with great anticipation. After few years Gouri is back in the village being ill-treated in the house. She developed an affair with her young brother-in-law who had been considered an outcaste for the leukoderma disease. The grandmother relates this instance with the story of a snake being born to a couple who longed for a child. At the snake's adulthood the father managed to find a fair girl to his snake son. In one of the nights with her snake husband, when he came out of his scales, she caressed him warmly and burned his scales before he was awake. Thereafter she lived happily with her reborn youth. Though Devi is not sure whether Gauri is happy or not, story has developed Devi's interest to hint Gouri for her feminine fulfillment.

Subhashree observes:

“All the protagonists in the novel have been victims in a such a way that their very individuality has been in threat, or they have been shown to be under constant suppression wherein breaking free from those chains have been the crux of their existence. Thus, the quest of identity in all forms whether in the form of silence regression or open rebellion has found a place in the novel through the characters like Sita, Devi, Mayaama. The writer has proved through the text that women have emerged out of age-old domination and oppression and rejuvenated themselves to enjoy a meaningful coexistence with man. Hariharan has shown the marginality and traditionality of all the characters, but has also shown their revival. She has not merely concentrated on the struggle and quest of women, but also shown how they overcome the predicament and seek salvation.”³¹

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CHAPTER – 3

Dialogic Paradigm: *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*

3.1 Reminiscence and Nostalgia

3.2 Journey of Self-Exploration

3.3 Alienation and Self-Exile

Chapter- 3

Dialogic Paradigm: *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*

Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory defines Dialogic “Terms used by the Soviet critic Mikhail Bakhtin in his discussion ‘voices’ and suggests how the use of discourse in, for example, a novel may influence and, in sense ‘disrupt’ the authority of a single voice. Novels that are in the dialogic form, allows character to speak ‘in their own voices’, as it were.”¹

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines Dialogic “of, relating to, or characterized by dialogue.”²

Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory defines Paradigm “a pattern or model which, as a literary device points up a resemblance.”³

According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines Paradigm as “a model or pattern for something.”⁴

The Ghosts of Vasu Master (1994) is Githa Hariharan's second most academically acclaimed novel. The novel deals with the various flaws in our Indian education system. The novel begins with its protagonist, Vasu Master a school teacher, who is searching the new meaning of life after his retirement.

Githa Hariharan has presented the zig-saw-puzzle narrative strategy in this novel. She has depicted the emptiness, boredom and identity crisis of a retired school teacher who, now being a retiree, ponders the merits and demerits of the education system, through the reminiscences and memories of the past. Regarding these recollections and reflections.

Vasu feels that now these schools have become a commercial hub of business where students are living under the pressure of lengthy syllabus, tuition classes, extra classes etc. These activities have become part and parcel of their chaotic life and where more emphasis is given on stuffing information in a young mind by sidelining the practical and sensible aspect of education. And teachers, teaching in these schools/colleges, have become emotionless like machines, having no bonding with their students. Instead of stimulating the brain of their students, they teach in a mechanical way where more stress is put on learning facts and data. Vasu's remark is quite appropriate regarding the teacher and taught both, of these schools

Mani's brother, Gopu also suffers an internal conflict in his life. He has a strong sense of discontent with prevalent education system. He is a young college educated youth who has lost his faith in education system completely. Describing the condition of Gopu, Vasu remarks: But my simple boundary lines, good and bad rich and poor, were quaint anachronisms in Gopu's new world Gopu's vocabulary was sharper, less shy of ugly detail. Corrosion', policies, nepotism, caste leaks gherao pressure, system: words like these flew about the air rapacious crows in sight of a paralyzed dying mouse.”⁵ Gopu has a grudge against prevalent education system where commercialization of education has ruined so many poor lives, including that of Gopu. Those, who are rich, can buy degrees and certificates without even going to any school or college. Everything in this current education system is being bought and sold. And merely paying a handsome amount of money, anything can be purchased.

Vasu also undergoes an internal conflict when traditional methods of teaching do not work for Mani. If there would have been a normal school going child, teaching to him would have been easier than teaching Mani. Mani, being a special child, is unable to understand Vasu,

showing no improvement in learning abilities. Vasu who has taught normal students for years, feels helpless and this helplessness creates a conflict. Regarding this conflict, Divyaranjan Bahuguna`s comment is quite significant as he remarks:

“The conflict of his real and his imaginary marks a difference with significantly their mutual participation in a larger one. Vasu is certainly gripped with his own hole until working with Mani enables him to change his stability to perceive. This wilderness of images does not give up hope of reaching wisdom. Mani is a boy who plays the reader`s role. He becomes plain Vasu, as in the dream where he finds himself in the field with his classes. That dream story is about giving up the master`s discourse and turning to the rhetoric of fables, stories, and open-minded exams. Early in the novel, he can see his own mangled body in the mirror of Mani`s eyes which is the mirror of his own youth, silenced for hours at a time in his authoritarian father`s office. A bit latter he finds his dead wife`s mirror where he sees himself an ugly stranger, a scarred face and hounded animal.”⁶

Priya and Saburunnisa remarked that: “When Vasu master started to teach Mani, Mani was not able to understand anything. He did not show any kind of expression. So, Vasu master was upset and worried. But at the same time, when Vasu started to teach Mani by telling stories, he saw a great difference in Mani, because Mani was able to understand and he is giving response to stories. This the beginning of Mani`s learning”⁷.

3.1 Reminiscence and Nostalgia

Macmillan English Dictionary defines Reminiscence “formal stories or thoughts of past experiences”⁸.

Macmillan English Dictionary defines Nostalgia “thoughts about happy times in your past, often mixed with the wish to be back in the past”⁹.

The major difference between reminiscence and nostalgia. “Nostalgia is a longing for the past. Reminiscence is merely collection of the past.”¹⁰

Vasu Master was suffering from Cancer. His wife died earlier; his two sons live in other cities. He was alone in the town. He was living in his ancestral house. Once while cleaning his room, he found a scrapbook and old photos. With the photos he went into the lane of memories.

“I looked at my first-class photocopy. I wore a white narrow -bordered veshti, impeccably starched. My wife Mangala was alive then. I wore a coat, the only one I owned, the one I wore on my wedding day...I placed my thumb on each face, saying the boy’s name aloud so that I remembered better. Every morning I went through a roll call of more than twenty years. At the end of it, I felt a small triumph if I remembered most of the names. But I also felt the chocking sensation of having viewed a whole life’s handiwork. I was on the last page, and the afternoon, the evening still stretched before me.”¹¹

Vasu Master share his memories with *Peepal* tree and a mouse. “The small creatures who lived in the darkened safety of these patches were my sole companions”¹². He was suffering from stomach-ache and high blood pressure. “Day after day, I lay down the scrapbook, and

my momentary triumph dissolved it dissipated into an amorphous pain that began in in my temples. It sped down my bloodstream, raced swiftly down in my veins...then my stomach began its ritual of rage- a frenetic circular movement that trapped the pain and teased it till it was provoked to the point of explosion.”¹³

He had a mission of teaching Mani. Mani is a slow learner; he did not participate in the class actively. The first interaction as described by Vasu. “Mani had smooth skin, short neck. He was pale skinned boy. His clothes were always a little too big for him, as he had not yet grown into them. The first few days his eyes darted about my room looking for ways of escape, or looking to see where the nest danger would spring from.”¹⁴

Mani was suffering from a rare condition. “Mani head had grown into a long ripe papaya, much faster than the rest of him.”¹⁵ While teaching Mani, he used to remember things from his own childhood. Memories of his father and grandmother. His father was a healer. He says remembering his father “on my father’s table, in the midst of files and loose scraps of paper, six hardbound tomes stood like unshakeable pillars. He dusted them lovingly, as if he were a mother bathing her new-born infant.”¹⁶ After the retirement, before teaching Mani he joined library. “It was around this time that I began my solitary, weekly walks to the town library. It had always been there and I had always been a regular visitor, but now I was a devotee.”¹⁷

3.2 Journey of Self-Exploration

The notion of self- exploration is depicted by Hariharan in her novels. In an interview with Bageshree S. Hariharan “I see myself as a complex of fluctuating identities. I would not be able to separate my life as a writer, citizen and feminist. Identity is something we re-invent on a daily basis.”¹⁸ The novel starts with the visit of Vasu Master to a doctor. He has been suffering from some stomach problem for some time and on the insistence of his elder son,

Vishnu, he goes to a doctor. After examining Vasu, doctor prescribes some medicines and regular check-ups for him, advising him to take rest. Vasu is quite confident of the treatment of his doctor.

After his retirement, Vasu lives in his house alone and there is no one who can remove the emptiness and boredom of his life, after the death of his wife, Mangala and the settlement of his both sons in a metropolitan city. Mangala died many years ago when their sons were not grown-up. After the death of his wife, the onus of rearing children falls on Vasu. He brings up his both children, Vishnu and Vinu with great care and love, never making them realize that they have lost their mother forever. Regarding the education of his son Vishnu, Vasu says: “Vishnu decoded his book as best he could and passed the exam. He could hardly wait to leave home for the college hostel, which he did the next year. That is what I lost a pupil who I had never really claimed as my own.”¹⁹

Though Vasu has educated many students in his school, he has been unable to do justice to the education of his own two children, for he never gets sufficient time to teach them. His both sons, after completing their education, have settled in a Metro City, away from Elipettai. They hardly get time to see their father. The only medium of communication, between father and sons, is letter writing. It is only by writing letters, they share their joys and sorrows. Vasu gets valuable advice by his both sons through their letters. Although Vasu writes long and full letters to his sons, he receives precise and succinct letters from his sons, as they do not have sufficient time for writing long letters. His elder son, Vishnu wants after his retirement Vasu should take care of himself properly and he should settle himself with Vishnu's family in city. Since all his life, he has been a devoted teacher, now he should stop working hard and should live a life of peace and happiness, governed by his own decisions only. But Vasu

dislikes living a life which is devoid of work. So instead of going to his son's place, Vasu likes to live alone in his house.

His wife, Mangala has been an ideal wife all her life. Although she dies at her earlier stage, she takes great care of her family till she is alive. She had been an ideal companion for Vasu. She, as a traditional house wife, had never visited the premises of P.G. school, where his husband taught all his life. She belonged to those groups of women who kept themselves confined to their household work and their family. Vasu's remark about Mangala shows her genuine nature.

Mangala had been the first educated woman in the family of Vasu Master. She never demanded anything from her husband, as she had been meek, submissive and domicile wife. After the death of Vasu Master's father, she provided great solace and consolation to Vasu. In other words, she was a worthy noble wife and mother who sacrificed her comforts for the sake of her family.

He never let communal or religious sentiments to divide people in sects. He believed that India had attained its freedom because of the joint effort of every religious community whether Hindu or Muslim. Its freedom had been a collective effort of freedom fighters who fought without considering the caste and creed of each other.

Vasu has been so close to his father that even when his father is no more, he still seeks his advice on various complex issues of life, imagining, what his father would have done in that condition which Vasu himself is facing. As Mani gives no response to his traditional methods of teaching, he naturally thinks about taking suggestions from his dead father as what his father would have done while giving his treatment to Mani who is too reluctant to learn. After much contemplation, he decides to play a role of healer rather than to be a teacher of Mani.

He, like his father, tries to heal Mani's mind in order to teach him properly and the best sort of healing that he can do is with the help of the interesting stories. Stories are liked by every child, so Mani would definitely like to listen to stories.

Thus, real teaching of Mani begins with the parables, fables which provide comfort to Mani's agitated, stubborn mind. Vasu tells Mani the stories of crow, mouse, spider, firefly, and wasp in order to provide common sense to Mani. Mani starts taking interest in them and his real peregrination of learning begins. While describing the relevance of stories and fables in the novel, Sarita Prabhakar remarks: "In the Ghosts of Vasu Master stories in the form of fable and allegory teach both Mani and Vasu practical wisdom enabling them to meet the challenges of life"²⁰.

While teaching Mani, Vasu analyses the relevance of teaching methods which are generally used in school for educating children. According to Vasu, a teacher has to be a healer in order to teach his students well. Because only a healer knows where the trouble is and he treats it with his great skill and care, likewise, a good teacher knows the problems of his students and where his students are committing mistakes. Vasu expresses his angst while thinking about the present-day relationship between teachers and taught:

"Though I had never been a full-fledged figure of authority, though my life had been demarcated by the whims of principal, teacher, healer—I knew the healer's ideas and techniques could vary; one physician could differ from another. But what makes him a healer—his system or his person? If the patient does have faith in the healer he has chosen, or in the healer assigned to him by chance, does he have the remotest chance of a cure?"²¹

Vasu belongs to those categories of teachers who dedicate their whole life to teaching and learning, always encouraging their students to achieve knowledge in their respective field. They regard their students their own children, treating them compassionately and lovingly.

Thus, with the help of interesting and motivating stories, Vasu tries to inculcate in Mani those values and manners which are essential to anybody for living his life successfully. And teaching Mani with the help of parables and fables, imparts knowledge of the world to Mani.

A detailed study of the novel provides a various kind of conflicts which make this novel quite relevant to contemporary times. Vasu Master, the protagonist, has been a teacher all his life, now after his retirement, sitting in his study room, feels that the adjectives like "patient, mild and soft-spoken" which have been attributed to him by his principal of school Veera Naidu, have really some importance in a teacher`s life or they are only superficial words having no importance at all. And therefore, the novel foregrounds a conflict between tradition and modernity.

For a teacher, it seems qualities like patience, humility and mildness are indispensable, in order to become a successful teacher. Qualities like patience, softness, kindness, mildness, politeness, make a teacher successful in his teaching career. From time immemorial, teachers have enjoyed supreme authority over society with the help of these highly remarkable virtues. They all have enlightened the path of society by disseminating the knowledge among people. In ancient time, the place of a teacher has been more respected than that of a king. R. S. Pandey comments relevantly on the dichotomy between the ancient past and the modernized present in the teaching profession.

Vasu Master, after his retirement, ponders the relevance of these virtues. By questioning his colleague Venkatesan about the relevance of these virtues, he analyses whether these

qualities have been strength or weakness in his forty years of teaching career. Vasu now feels that qualities like patience, mildness, politeness have no positive role in a teacher's life as time has completely changed and teaching has become quite professional. During all his life he has been regarded as an ideal teacher by the whole community of teachers. Vasu has practised these qualities in his own life time and has demonstrated them brilliantly in his own career of teaching. Defining the role of an ideal teacher, R.S. Pandey comments:

“A teacher is not only a social engineer, but also a social doctor and social therapist. He is a pillar of the society. Hence, destiny of the society and nation is shaped in the hands of the teacher. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the teachers to make a beautiful and dynamic society. More efficient teachers possess higher intellectual level, better emotional control, and indicative of well-organized ego system which enables them to behave in a socially approved manner, higher level of aspiration, higher creative potential and conscious. The efficient teacher is one who not only chooses an effective behavior, but who actually strives to reach at goals and continually modifies behavior in order to do so.”²²

Vasu, after his retirement feels that after living his life on these ideals, at the end of his profession, he has developed a strong sense of meaninglessness and hollowness for the remaining part of his life. After living a life of a successful teacher, he is compelled to think about the importance and relevance of these qualities of a teacher today. At this stage, he realizes that although he has attained a sense of self - fulfillment and satisfaction in his profession, now in modern times is it possible for a teacher to live his life only by cherishing these virtues. Qualities or virtues which, at a time, have been indispensable tools for teachers have become a symbol of weakness now. With these qualities one may achieve a tag of 'a

great teacher' but a teacher is also a part of society and being a part of society, a teacher also expects something in return from the society. A teacher sacrifices his life for the sake of welfare of others. But merely living a life based on these virtues somewhere creates doubts and conflicts in the mind of a teacher when after retirement he feels that he has achieved nothing after living a life of successful teacher. He struggles with his own identity of a teacher and gets dejected and frustrated when unable to find the answers to his own questions.

And now after his retirement, Vasu Master analyses what he has achieved as a human being, as being part of the society, not as an ideal teacher. A teacher denies his own existence in order to be a role model in his society. And in this process, he sacrifices his own dreams, desires, and wishes by living a life of abstinence and morality. At the end of his profession, when he realizes what he has achieved and what he has lost, this generates a sense of hollowness and meaninglessness in his life while comparing his profession to other professions. Comparing ancient Gurukula system of education to our modern system of education, Vasu feels that there was a healthy environment in Gurukula system for teacher and taught both. But in modern times, the condition of teaching and learning has much deteriorated. Thinking about our ancient teaching system, Vasu remarks:

“I know, at least by hearsay, that the teacher used to be thought of (once upon a time) as indispensable to knowledge. No path to learning was more accessible than that of the teacher. The pupil sought the teacher he needed. When he found him, he went up to him with a small burning log and said: I wish to learn from you, sir. May I come to you? The teacher asked him his name and accepted him. . . . Now the pupil lived as a member of the family. His teacher fed him and treated him in every way as his child.

The school was not made of brick and mortar. It was made of something natural an intimate relationship between teachers and taught in a home of solitude and silence.”²³

From time immemorial teaching has been regarded as a profession of great reverence and honour. Teachers have been torch bearers of society. They have been enjoying supreme authority over their students. But now time has completely changed. Teachers have become completely self-centered and focused on their needs. They are giving preference to their own personal interests and motives. During his own time of teaching in P.G., Vasu never heard of strikes of teachers, but now, for the first time he heard about long continuing strikes in P.G. and his reaction to these strikes: “So, I heard for the first time about the strike at PG . . . I had felt, on several occasions, sadness, even anger, when I was at PG. But not once had I imagined that teachers, parents and pupils could conspire to form a motley army, and march towards Veera Naidu's office, shouting slogans about bribes and donations, favoritism, suspended teachers and students.”²⁴

Thus, P.G., his school, where Vasu has spent his life as a teacher, has now changed. With endless strikes, bribes, schemes and political-motivated teachers Vasu`s school has turned into a centre of political activities devoid of learning and knowledge. Gopu, Mani's brother, being fed up with this current scenario of education system, describes his frustration:

“Teachers are selling examination papers; teachers are being intimidated by other teachers and students into allowing any kind of cheating; and a few months back a resident teacher beat up his wife so badly that the hostel students had to complain—they couldn't study with all that noise... Teachers are not teaching; doctors are not doctoring. If teachers are not paid to teach, they have to make their livelihood elsewhere. Everything has collapsed; only the empty titles remain.”²⁵

Thus, through Vasu Master, the narrator portrays that life is a journey of self-exploration and learning never stops. Vasu Master through Mani, experience new situation, a challenge in life and learns every person is different in his own way. In the process of teaching Mani, Vasu Master explores new facts about himself.

3.3 Alienation and Self-Exile

Macmillan English Dictionary describes Alienation as “the feeling that you do not belong in a particular society, place, or a group.”²⁶

Collins Dictionary defines self-exile as “a state of exile imposed by oneself.”²⁷

After his retirement, Vasu engages himself in giving private tuition to students at home. This way, he sloughs off his loneliness and hollowness and adds a purpose to his life. Mani ‘a smooth skin and a thick short neck . . . pale-skinned boy’ comes with his father to join tuition classes run by Vasu. Mani is a mentally retarded child who is slow on the uptake. Regarding the unusual behaviour of Mani, Vasu, remarks

“No one knew what was wrong with Mani. For several years his family did not even suspect there was something the matter with him. He crawled like other babies, walked and talked at the right time. He was also a happy, placid sort who stayed still for hours wherever he was put down. He was not considered a clever child or an especially attractive one but he was quiet and contented and that was good enough. Then almost unnoticeably, without any apparent crisis, Mani took a step backward. He became quieter than ever; his silence was as disturbing as a continuous reproach. At the same time, his head began to grow a little longer and faster than it should have. His family was now forced to admit that Mani did not look or sound like any other child they knew.”²⁸

Mani never responds like a normal child. His condition becomes worse, when he is sent to attend a school. When “Mani's head had grown into a long ripe papaya, much faster than the rest of his body so that he began to look as stupid as they said he was”²⁹. He, like other children of his age, never behaves normally, and his voice also changes into a grunt. By his gesture, he seems to be a stubborn child, who cannot understand or respond to any common situation. This type of behaviour of Mani becomes so frequent that members of his family lose all their hope for his betterment. They send Mani to a school so that he can get some basic knowledge of general things but nothing happens there, as Mani is reluctant to learn anything. About Mani`s poor condition in school, Vasu comments:

“It was this time that Mani becomes a violent little boy. The children in school (and let me add with anguish, even the teachers) made fun of him. The quiet, drooling, overgrown baby suddenly grew horns. It was as if his head, the ripe papaya that hung so heavily from a skinny tree, could no longer wait for picking. It grew a pale but thick sheath with a bristly mop on top, so that when it fell, came in sudden contact with the hard ground below, it was protected. Mani's head still looked like a papaya but no longer felt like one. Now that it was not tender or vulnerable, he used his big hard head like a charging bull and butted anyone who spoke to him or came near him.”³⁰

When the condition worsens, having behaved abnormally, he is consequently expelled from school. He returns home not to go to school again. He is now an eight-year-old child who is unable to speak or learn anything. On being advised by a well-wisher, Mani's father comes to Vasu Master thinking, Mani at least would get some basic education, which he could not receive during his schooling. When Vasu Master first sees Mani, he is unable to guess

whether Mani is really a stupid child or he is pretending to be one in order to keep himself away from books and studies.

Raghavan is Vasu's colleague and he has been teaching for two years and having the same age as Vasu's second son. Now Vasu begins teaching Mani with three other boys at his home. Although Vasu has taught for forty years in P.G., he faces a great difficulty while teaching Mani who shows no response to his teaching and this makes Vasu short-tempered. On the very first day, when he starts teaching Mani, he becomes disappointed as Mani shows no response to him and Vasu remarks:

“Mani hated books and pencils I spread out before him like a street vendor making absurd promises about his wares. The last day we sat at the table, the books lying open between us, my patience began to fray at the edges after the first ten minutes of the lesson. It had been two months, twenty-four lessons since we first met, and the voyage I had lovingly planned had not yet begun. I opened the reader, my hand on the ruler for comfort. Do you know what this is, Mani? I asked, pointing to a raven on the first page. He looked unblinkingly.

It's a bird, Mani. A bird like a crow. You have seen hundreds of them. You see them every day. They are noisy and dirty. They shout ka-ka-ka!

With every caw my voice rose, till I was as shrill and raucous as the crow that visited my window every afternoon. Mani watched my turning into a crow. He was unmoved. He sat still in his chair, considering me coolly. As the tears welled up in me, I saw a door shut in his appraising eyes.”³¹

Thus, traditional methods of teaching and learning have been a big failure for Mani, as he shows no response to them. Vasu tries to the best of his capacity to teach Mani but he remains unsuccessful. Mani, anyway, does not respond him well and instead of giving any response to him, he keeps sitting inactive, living in his own world of dreams and fantasy. Vasu now feels disappointed as so far, he is unable to teach Mani anything. He feels that Mani is not a normal child like other children of his age. His behaviour and nature are different.

Vasu, while teaching Mani, remembers his deceased father whom he has been deeply attached and who had been an Ayurveda healer all his life. He had enjoyed a very friendly relationship with his father. His father taught him Sanskrit and English, never compelling him to learn his own profession of medicine. Vasu spent his childhood on his bed watching him brew his Ayurvedic potion.

His father had been a famous adept in Ayurvedic medicine and had transformed his own room into the Ayurvedic dispensary where people from faraway places used to visit him for their treatment. He had planted many medicinal saplings and used to manufacture his own medicines at his place. Regarding the healing ability of his father, Vasu remarks: “My Father then was no ordinary healer. His powers were directed at the food that made the body; the body that made the mind; the mind that made the unique, whole individual, the carrier of the spirit. These spirit-bearing minds then made the pyramid, India, with the Brahmin at the tip—healers, custodians and guardians of the masses below.”³²

His father used to believe that most of the problems relating to our body were created due to the ill-function of our digestive system. If our digestive system is in a good condition no aliment can harm our body. He advises his son that one can serve one's country well when one is healthy and free of diseases. So, anybody who wants to serve his country, he should

first nourish his own body well. A nation with its weak and frail citizens can never be strong enough to compete with other nations. For the betterment of India, it is imperative that its citizens should be free of poverty and diseases that weaken and hamper a country's progress. Any kind of weakness is of no use in a country that has recently attained its freedom from long time of slavery. So, India can be served best when its youth are free from ailments and afflictions whether mental or physical.

Finally, a conflict between tradition and modernity arises when Vasu deeply contemplates the importance of virtues like patience, politeness, honesty for teachers. Vasu has an external conflict with his colleague Venkatesan over the suitable teaching methodologies for students. Vasu thinks that a teacher should be patient, humane and kind while teaching his students, contrary to this Venkatesan, his colleague, gives no importance to patience, perseverance and kindness in teaching learning process, considering these qualities as complete waste of time.

Vasu thinks that a teacher should use only those methods of teaching that are easy and comprehensible to his students. Using difficult and complex methods of teaching makes teaching-learning process dull and slow. A good teacher should inspire his students by generating curiosity for their subjects. Instead of teaching in a simple and easy way, when a teacher opts for complex methods, he mars the interest of his students and turns even simple things into complex ones for his students.

Consequently, there has been a conspicuous conflict between Vasu and his colleague Venkatesan regarding the appropriate teaching methodologies for students. Apart from this, there is a conflict between ideal and reality too. Ideally, a school is a place where students learn a lot of new things about their subjects and at the same time, they develop both physical and mental power for their holistic development. A school is not just a building of bricks and

mortar. A school has an interminable mission to churn out good citizens for the development of its country. Thus, Githa Hariharan has artistically woven various kinds of conflicts into the thematic texture of *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, in a manner that compels the reader to contemplate.

R. Manimozhi remarks “Githa Hariharan has employed various techniques in her novels. She has adopted the stream of consciousness technique, flash, back technique, storytelling aspects to picture the theme of alienation, betrayal and disloyalty to construct her novels with clear morals to the society. *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* is a charming, entertaining and thoughtful novel. It is about the psychological fall out of a retired school teacher Vasu Master who succeeds in winning over the problem to teach the most complicated boy Mani. He tries to teach him in various roles as a tutor, Psychologist and an educator. She has made a bold attempt in narrative structures and exhibits a zigzag in narration. Zigzag in narration is an outstanding and innovative method adopted by Githa Hariharan to charge the novel with past, present and future.”³³

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CHAPTER – 4

Locating Women: *Paro Dreams of Passion*

4.1 Notion of Feminism

4.2 Emergence of New Women

4.3 Marital Relationship and Status of Woman

Chapter - 4

Locating Women: *Paro Dreams of Passion*

4.1 Notions of Feminism

Feminism is cultural as well as intellectual movement that voices issues related to women and makes an attempt to empower them. Feminist Literature advocates equal rights for women and tries to establish their identity in the society. In 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft discussed writers like Pope, Milton and Mill in *A Vindication of Rights of Women*. In present time writers like Virginia Wolf in her essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929) draws our attentions about the lack of alternatives available to women. In 1949, Simone di Beauvoir, in *Second Sex* discusses, representation in literary works and attitude of male towards them.

Dictionary of Critical Theory describes Feminism as:

“Feminism, which became one of the most important forces in twentieth century politics and thoughts, can take many different forms, its common core is that the relationship between the sexes is one of inequality or oppression. The first recorded use of the French *Feminism* dates from 1830s and the term is usually agreed to have been coined by the utopian socialist Charles Foureier, for whom the degree of women's emancipation was the measure of the emancipation of society as a whole.”¹

In India, the earliest feminist tried to address social evils like child marriage, female illiteracy, dowry and *sati pratha*. In Indian context feminist readings of literature is found in the works of historians, sociologist, social workers, and political activist. In Indian writing in English and there are many writers who tried to raise issues related to women emancipation. Women

awareness has not been discussed boldly. But writers like Namita Gokhale, broke the silence. She writes like a woman who has deep understanding about women issues and challenges. Elaine Showalter represents feminist literary criticism and developed the concept of gynocritic i.e., study of women as writers. Showalter contribution 1970s and 1980s offers us the glimpse history of feminist tradition and reflects us perspective towards women upliftment in the society.

Born on 26 January 1956 in Lucknow, Namita Gokhale was raised in Nainital. She has completed her education from Delhi university. She is the co-director of Jaipur Literature Festival. The show Kitabnama: Book and Beyond was hosted by her at Doordarshan. She has written ten novels and eight non-fiction works. Her latest novel *The Blind Matriarch* got published in 2021.

Women novelist like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Manju Kapoor, Namita Gokhale writes about problems and experience of women. Kalpana remarks “Namita Gokhale creates her own signature in the contemporary Indian women writers’ list with her frank presentation of realities of life. As a multi-faceted personality, she pens down the status of women and men in the society and their relationships with real time experiences through her characters. Her debut novel ‘*Paro: Dreams of Passion*’ deals with men and women and their life style with urban backdrop. Her new approach on woman towards identifying and presenting problems in an unconventional way. She succeeds in presenting alternative realities with her new woman voice ‘*Paro*’ who quest for self-identity and self-autonomy with liberation.”²

Her characters depict messages through their lively presentation in the story and always stands as a symbol of success in their premises and shares a ranking of success. Her character *Paro* stands as a figure of lust with her extreme liberation and individuality. With her passion

she enjoys a lot with her status and it shows the difference between different classes in the society. This character develops a new perception on woman characters.

In *Paro Dreams of Passion*, Paro is set as a symbol of inhabitant rich of Bombay and Delhi, 'through the world of privilege and scotch'. She is closely watched by the narrator Priya. Priya lost her heart to B.R. and then B. R. lost to Paro. She has seduced many eminent persons engaged in diverse fields. Like Lenin, the son of cabinet minister, Bucky Bhandpur, test Cricketer and Scion of a Princely family, Loukas Leoras, a homo sexual Greek film director and very lawyer Suresh, whom Priya has married.

Priya fantasizes about impudent Paro and aspires of the seductress charm of Paro she is symbolic of social mobility. Priya's first sight of Paro starts in the book with the description of Paro's Charm at her marriage celebrations with B.R. It also reflects the social life of upper-class nature. "I am Paro, and this is my party... My party is the congress party ... Like a cat in heat"³.

Priya, the protagonist, who conquer her lower middle-class struggle by the end. She maintains self-respect and individuality. She is the only character who shows major development in the story. She depicts the story as she is also a part of characters and eye witness to the situations. Priya character can be compared with the role of author, at this situation readers never find difference to authors voice to narrator voice. The novel starts with the statement: "I am writing about them because I saw myself."⁴

Priya starts with an infatuation for her boss, the great B.R., owner of Sita Sewing Machines. The first time she went to his home and fascinated by the affluence and the quietness. She describes as it was a place of heaven in the land and compared herself as a princess and she

forgets her surroundings and starts enjoying with her boss. “A strange beatification, a feeling of utter lassitude, overtook me, I forgot that my nails were as chewed and bitten.”⁵

Priya was surprised that her boss married to Paro. She was distressed with that news and decided not to attend marriage but she developed eagerness with the tales of her colleagues about Paro’s beauty and B.R.’s obvious infatuation. She attended the marriage celebrations and described Paro’s personality and charm. On seeing Paro’s self-confidence and audacity, Priya lost her confidence and accepted Paro as a symbol of affluence. She observed upper middle class social style and their polite vacant smiles.

Priya shared her life with Suresh a lawyer from Delhi. He is very sociable They together enjoyed in their life in two-bedroom rented flat. She shifted from lower middle class to middle class enjoyments with her marriage.

Priya has another brief experience with her boss B.R. She spent her days with him again in Bombay. She meets B.R. while staying in Bombay. The meeting soon converted in candle lights dinner. At that moment she forgot her age and struggle to return to Suresh clumsy hateful arms.

Priya’s extramarital affair with B.R damages her relation with Suresh. Throughout the story Priya struggle a lot. This situation provides a drastic change in the attitude of Paro and Priya. Paro enters the personal life of Priya and tries to change the mind of Suresh. This situation helps us to understand the real nature of the characters. When Priya returns to Delhi, she received unusual welcome from Suresh with the interference of Paro in between them. Suresh is very practical and a man with complete understanding of his wife. He tries to warn his wife when he heard about the relationship of his wife and B.R.

Apart from these, she was ill treated by her husband and Paro. Here narrator expresses the nature of three uncommon characters. It reveals the insight of characters. "She faced a pathogenic situation in her life and has an abortion after getting Paro's gift."⁶ Though Priya hates Paro she expressed sorrow. Priya was always fascinated towards Paro in this novel. She never recognized as passion for sex and with her flow of narration she framed some memorable dramatic senses.

Apart from the major characters like Paro and Priya, Namita portrays number of minor women characters like Ivy and Mary, friends and coworkers of Priya. Namita's understanding in the development of women is very convincing. She creates a pathetic situation of an Indian woman character like a widow. She is narrator's mother and nameless character in the story. She is like a silver screen mother and compared as a particular model to the script writers. She faced a lot of struggles to lead her life. She lost her husband at early days and she had two children Priya and Atul. It set as a best example to understand the life of below middle class. "My mother was still the same... that she died of, four years later."⁷

Namita Gokhale's Paro is a story of multiple women characters which reflects and shares their experiences. Paro stands as a symbol of over freedom and individuality. She has created with abandoned emotions and freedom and Priya stands as a symbol of Indian womanhood. She always quests for self-identity and she struggled with the differences of mind and heart. These two characters stand a difference between reality and fantasy. Namita credited a remarkable reputation with not only in the creation of major characters like Paro and Priya but also able to depict minor characters with the same attention.

As an advocate of women's rights Namita Gokhale expressed if man can eat dung with a number of ladies, why a woman not? Paro did not feel guilty at heart and even wrote him a

letter. The whole family had to suffer for this. In the college, she meets Babu and does not feel any shame for her past. Every time she is thinks about prosperity so that she can become an independent woman.

She thinks of her physical needs and the satisfaction of appetites is meaningful for her. Her beauty is her weakness. So many people enter the life of Paro and she does not follow Indian tradition and goes on sacrificing them one by one. It is surprising that an Indian woman forgets the conception of chastity and devotion. As mentioned earlier, she starts enjoying sex with her art teacher in the convent school. Then, she returns to Mr. B.R. again and again for financial support as well as sexual enjoyment. She thinks that she is young though she is losing the glamour regularly. She feels interest in life as and when she has a new fish in her net. The only liberation that comes to her again and again is after leaving a husband.

It is true that the “woman does not want to live with the traditional people. She does not want to keep herself busy merely in washing, preserving, family parties, toilets, drawing rooms, halls etc. It is acceptable that some of the educated women do not lead an unhappy life and are really exemplary uses. However, one fails to understand how can Priya and Paro be called exemplary wise? How can they be regarded ‘the beauty of devotion and sacrifice’? Do they find great joys in making love to their husbands? Are they matured and wise and prudent in the approach to life? Are their dreams of youth justified? How do these two women emerge as ‘emancipated beings? as Dr. Rashmi Gaur comments Priya uses a simile for Paro and compares her with “a sharp little scorpion.”⁸

“It is Priya’s folly to feel that she cannot face life and the world without Paro. Priya has no sense to be jealous of Paro as the latter has no real charm and vivacity. The battle between two is not justified as Priya had every opportunity to take her own course. One fails to understand the sense of victory that Paro has every time.”⁹

Thus, in *Paro Dreams of Passion*, Namita Gokhale analyzes the passions and expectations of middle-class women like Paro and Priya who face troubles of life. Secondly, Priya finds relief in writing her own biography and through this action, Namita Gokhale establishes the fact that the difference between the art of biography and art of narration is decreasing rapidly. It is Priya who narrates all the incidents of the life of Paro, B.R., Bucky Bhandpur, Lenin, Shambhu Nath Mishra, Lukas Lerous, Suresh etc. Priya has no right to boast of her ethical values as she enjoys sex freely with B.R. even after marriage. Chance brings her in the life of Suresh who is an awakened fellow. She satirizes people like Avinendra, his father, Shambhu Nath Mishra etc. who are not loyal to none.

Even Lenin talks of corruption in the country but fails to take any action against the corrupt people. However, as a journalist, Namita Gokhale knows the defects of Indian democratic setup, where women are still oppressed. The novel ends with the death of Paro and Priya and Lenin feels shocked on her death.

Here, Namita Gokhale peeps into the inner mind of her characters and at the same time describes their outer world. She seems to be a follower of Henry James, Virginia Woolf, etc. Virginia Woolf asserted her view against the traditional novel having defined plot and concentrating on tragedy, comedy and love:

“Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being ‘like this’. Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impression -trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant show of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there; so that, if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style, and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the Bond Street tailors would have it.”¹⁰

She said:

“Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semitransparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit/ whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? We are not pleading merely for courage and sincerity; we are suggesting that the proper stuff of fiction is a little other than custom would have us believe it.”¹¹

4.2 Emergence of New Women

The term New Women is used to describe women who were against the norms that society imposed on women. “The phrase ‘new woman’ coined by Henry James which represent the changes in women and their lifestyle in Europe. The concept of new women started in early 1880s and introduced by Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, and George Egerton, feminist writers.

This is a noticeable movement which gives a turning point for gender roles in Britain. There is no concept of single New Woman, but a multitude within literature based on the urgency and experiences of the feministic writers. main idea of this concept is to create a new model of womanhood by providing more rights and opportunities for women with equal education, independent decisions, and sexual freedom and so on”¹². Kalpana says: “Gokhale realizes the need of ‘New woman’ to strengthen her woman voice with her character ‘Paro’. ‘Paro’ unlike a traditional woman, she creates her own space in the society by fulfilling her dreams with complete liberation and tries to create her own identity”.¹³

“The belly of Shambhu Nath Mishra is said to protrude obscenely “like a fat rotting pear”. Paro, after her unsuccessful attempt to commit suicide, shrunk like a stale apple. Other images are also highly functional. Paro, while displaying the remnants of her sexuality amidst the wreck of her body, is “like a flagship in a war-devastated land”. This harmony between the theme and its expression is an impressive aspect of the novel.”¹⁴

The novel is presented as a confessional account of Priya’s own experiences and those of Paro. “It is a kind of ‘vindication’ of what they had seen, heard and felt. It started as a sort of confessional, a diary, which eventually became this thing, this novel”¹⁵

Another example wherein we find Paro getting even with men is the game of sexual flirtation. Soon after her marriage to B.R., she once discovers B.R. ‘screwing’ their neighbor’s daughter. This horrifies Paro beyond her tolerable limits and she makes a suicide bid by wounding herself with a knife. But this evokes no reaction in B.R. This is the moment when Paro takes a momentous decision “After that, I decided I would pay him back in his own coin. I mean — everyone was in love with me and who do you think could ever love that guy? And Paro

embarks on her mission to pay him back in his own coin. The result is her sexual adventure spree. It is no wonder then that the likes of Lenin's and Shambhu Nath Mishras remain under eternal bondage to her."¹⁶

One could distinguish the traces of abnormality in her short-lived enthusiasm for *yoga*. At a chic cocktail party, she was on the grass, sandals kicked off. She makes this confession when she comes to inform Priya that she has of late taken to play-acting. She further adds that Lenin's marriage has sparked off a desire in her to know herself and as if for a change.

This desire to 'know' herself takes her to theatre-acting. She gets a role to play Clytemnestra in Aeschylus. But this 'play-acting' is short-lived and Paro is next heard of when she accompanies Shambhu Nath Mishra on a foreign tour. Immediately after this her marriage with Loukas Leoros is reported. Thus, Paro's flirtation with art is as momentary as her 'one-night stands.' She also worked her seductive charms on Suresh and caused a rift between him and his wife Priya. With Priya away to Bombay, Paro had Suresh in thrall. Meanwhile, she met a homosexual Greek film director Loukas Leoras and got married with him. The narrator expressed "wondered whether she (Paro) would have been able to survive a nice ordinary life"¹⁷ and "whether it was she who chased excitement or, as she claimed, the other way round."¹⁸

Sasikala remarks:

"Namita's Novel Paro Dreams of passion is about the possibilities of exploring changes within oneself. Her woman protagonist like Priya, is always willing and receptive to redefining attitudes and relationships shorn of undue romantic embellishment. Though they belong to a different stratum of society, they do possess inner independence to experiment with their life. In the process, life yields self-

knowledge, which imparts them the strength of accepting that a woman's desire to succeed as an individual is not incompatible with her desire for love or small pleasures of domesticity. Namita Gokhale is excellent in depicting the inner furies of women and their rising tone for emancipation and empowerment.”¹⁹

4.3 Marital Relationship and Status of Woman

Marital relationship refers to the “relationship between husband and wife”²⁰. The core of marriage is said to be the “personal association between a man and a woman and a biological relationship for mating and reproduction. As a social, legal and religious institution, marriage has undergone number of modification and changes, but the basic realities remain the same.”²¹ About marriage Westermarck said “a relation of one or more men to one or more women which is recognized by custom or; law, and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of the parties entering the union and in the case of the children born of it.”²²

Singhvi state “Marriage is an ancient institution validated by individual needs and social utility, sanctified by scriptural approval and fortified by manifold norms and injunctions.”²³

Bertarand Russell expressed that “Marriage differs, from other sex relations by the fact that it is legal institution. It is also in most communities a religious institution, but it is the legal aspect which is essential.”²⁴

“The history of human society is nothing but the description of the evolution and diffusion of various institutions designed towards perpetuation, maintenance and survival of society. The institution of marriage occupies a unique place in the realm of institutions and it is this institution which is instrumental in perpetuation human society through regulations of conjugal and filial ties. Malinowsky has observed -

The different forms of marriage are not stages in an evolutionary series, but marriage is fundamentally one and its variations are determined by the type of community, its political and economic order and the character of its material culture.”²⁵

Marriage is an important institution in society. The ethical and ideological aspects of marriage as observed by Lowie. According to him “The future of marriage will be shaped not merely by utilitarianism but largely on the basis of regnant ideologies. Marriage is a pivotal institution in the social functioning of all cultures.”²⁶

Shantha Krishnaswamy says that “Marriage is seen mainly as a religious sacrament to fulfill the stages in one’s life and to attain eternal salvation and secondarily as a duty towards the social order. It is also increasingly seen as security against economic and sexual aggression.”²⁷

Omkar Joshi remarks on the quality of marital relationship:

“The qualities of a good marital relationship are love and care between the partners, understanding. The predictors that lead to a good marriage occur at the individual as well as the contextual level, while some of the individual level factors such as, age, education, presence of children are universal in nature, others like type of marriage, contact before marriage are context specific factors which differ in different societies. Even the way in which factors affect marital quality is shaped by the local cultural norms and practices.”²⁸

Similar is the case with gender dichotomies. All these codes of behaviour like masculinity or femininity are willful and open to deconstruction. Iqbal Gaur observes, the concept of femininity has been enunciated by proponents of patriarchy - a social system rooted in conventional history. It too is arbitrary, tentative and open to deconstruction. Patriarchy has always painted ideal womanhood associated with weakness, helplessness, dependence, passivity, docility, subservience and complacency. Whereas masculinity has always been associated with power, independence, self-assertion, activity, domination, etc.²⁹

Vandana express:

“Woman in Indian social set up has received different treatment at different times. In the Pre-Independence era woman was predominantly mild, docile and submissive with no choices to lead her life. She was compelled to accept the norms set up the traditional male dominated society. The ill practices of child marriage, sati and denial of education were imposed on her. She was the object who had to look attractive and obey the ducats of her subject, the male. She was dependent for her survival and well-being on her father, husband or son. The post-independence era gave a new meaning to the role assigned to a woman. Education and changing social conditions paved way for the emergence of a New Women on the Indian social horizon.”³⁰

Feminism in the process letting them bring to the centre stage their aspirations, their dreams and most importantly their jouissance. Female jouissance came to be regarded by the feminists as the cardinal principle in determining whether women in a society were regarded as individual entities with personalities of their own.

The novel *Paro* begins with the portrayal of *Paro*'s character in very unflattering terms by the narrator *Priya*. The picture of *Paro* emerges as very unfeminine. *Priya*, the narrator of *Paro*

narrates Paro's story, because she says, 'I saw myself in her 'Priya was B.R.'s secretary at that time. Then this BR is a business tycoon. He looked into women's eyes.

This BR was short, but he had not begun to go bald-and he was Priya's boss. Ivy, Mary and Priya loved him madly; and all of these ladies hated Paro, now BR's wife. The situation reminds us Thomas Hardy's novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* where all the ladies love Angel Clare.

Gradually, Priya is obsessed with Paro in her life. Then Anita, B.R.'s secretary, became engaged to be married. It was an arranged match and her husband did not want her to continue working. B.R. elected Priya from the typist's pool to become his secretary. So Priya bade goodbye to Mary and Ivy and became one of the twice-born. She had to do the flowers in his office and she had to answer his calls. She would telephone him every fifteen minutes on any possible pretext, and often B.R. would instruct her to tell Paro he was not in, or that he was busy in a meeting. "You are a North Indian, aren't you?" once Paro enquired Priya. 'You are Priya Sharma,' this almost accusingly. 'My father was from Rajasthan, but we've always lived in Bombay...' 'Oh,' she said indifferently. I could not tell if she approved or otherwise of Rajasthan, or for that matter of Bombay".³¹

Since Priya really had nothing much to say to BR, she handed over the papers and left for home. She sat brooding on nothing. Slowly it dawned upon Priya. She had received an offer of marriage. Priya was quite incoherent with excitement, and it was some time before she could extract even the basic facts from her. Apparently, her sister in Meerut had written to ask if Priya was agreeable to meeting her (her sister's) husband's nephew, who was a lawyer in Delhi, and from a prosperous and decent family.

Suresh had a two-bedroom flat rented in Delhi; he was very sociable and entertained others regularly. Priya waded laboriously through cookbooks while he sat reading his briefs, and soon mastered the basic rudiments and skills of Continental, Mughlai and Chinese cooking. At night, they would grapple with sexual appetite. He took Priya with him to Bombay once. He had a case there and Priya was to stay at her mother's for a while. New Delhi seemed like a heaven after that week of maternal recriminations.³²

Priya remembers how, one evening, at a pot-luck party, she and her husband got to discussing the jet-set-Bombay's rich-whom they pretended to despise or at least be indifferent to. A journalist's wife, whose parents were from Bombay, told them of a party she had been to. "You can't imagine," she insisted, her eyes big as saucers, 'what these types behave like! They have these wild parties where everybody-but everybody-who is anybody is invited. Bunny, of course, is a good friend of theirs. Well, he's really very charming, but I think she's a bitch! You must meet them sometime. Suresh's interest was aroused"³³. So Priya came across Paro's case once again and for worse.

It can be observed that, "Paro hardly fits in the role of feminine virtue. Her revolt does not stop here. She takes a big leap and crosses the *Lakshman Rekha* of chastity. In the eyes of Priya, Paro is nothing short of a prostitute. But this term too has no final meaning. Paro snatches for her a unique and enviable place up the social ladder playing a rebel against established social and moral order."³⁴

The lawyer Suresh gallantly entered the fray, and, most uncharacteristically for him, offered to do all her cases free. Priya exulted in her kindness, and would constantly and insistently call her over for lunches and dinners.

Priya was always very careful with Suresh after that. Avinendra had, in the meanwhile, become something of a permanent fixture in their house. Suresh also managed, through effort, innuendo and application, to get on close terms with Avinendra's father's private secretary in New Delhi. Paro emerged as a strong woman and Priya tried to mend her relationship with her. The insidious web of friends, and contacts was coming into operation. Suresh's family too, had introduced several friends to Avinendra, who had helped them out with various little problems. These friends, in turn, helped Suresh out in numerous little ways, and soon Suresh had his own little house built in Greater Kailash.

Suresh looked absolutely horrified, and Priya did her best to calm Paro. When Priya came back from hospital in the morning. The telephone kept ringing and Suresh was there to pick it up and it was Lenin's father on the other side. He came to know about the suicide attempt by Paro. Suresh hurriedly prepared himself to go to the court to reach on time, but a policeman appears to take Paro's statement.

Namita Gokhale describes how the two-woman Paro and Priya wayward and indulge in sexual orgies more as a mark of empowerment. They seem to have been possessed of sex as a deadly passion. Paro soon bounced back to normal. Her hold over Lenin had become even more vicelike, more gripping.

“A guest called Arif was spouting extravagant Urdu shairi about her being like a zephyr, a spring breeze, a monsoon shower and things like that. This man was just another to catch hold of Paro. Naturally, Suresh was famished by the time they got home. ‘That was a rather inadequate lunch, Priya,’ he said chidingly. Priya almost threw a tantrum. ‘I thought your Paro was too good at everything’ Those were happy days for all of these people. Priya's happiness assumed a special shape, for, after all

these years, she found herself pregnant at last. But she aborted. Lenin's father was no longer a minister-he fell out of favour, and was reshuffled. And then, in the by-election, he did not even get a renomination. Lenin shifted into Paro's house, for he just could not bring himself to return to his home town in Madhya Pradesh"³⁵.

Priya could see that Suresh wanted desperately to drop Lenin and Paro, for they had become something of a social embarrassment. And yet they hated each other and would bicker constantly, and Priya's practiced feminine eye observed that Paro was on the lookout for a saviour to get her out of this mess. And then, one day, the unthinkable happened. Lenin won a lottery. They spent almost a lakh just on redecorating their flat. They gave a little party, a second housewarming, for their friends. Suresh was horrified at the extravagance.

Lenin's sister, who was married to an I.A.S. officer in New Delhi came for a visit. Priya wondered if she was the family, or the Middle-Class Intellectual Elite. Priya was quite nice. One Mr. Shambunath Misra attracted Paro's attention greatly. She told him by way of self-introduction: 'I am Paro, and this is my party. And who may you be?' she asked him in chaste Hindustani (as against her Memsahib Hindi reserved for servants and panwallahs. The enigma of the disproportionate power emanating from this strange personality suddenly cleared. Shambhu Nath Mishra was most corrupted politician. For the rest of the evening, he and Paro were inseparable.

Paro would telephone Mishra incessantly, trying always to dodge the phalanx of secretaries and officials surrounding him, trying constantly only to be with him. This junior is an orphaned boy with them. There was more than just sexuality at play.

One day, Suresh managed to persuade Mishra ji to come for dinner. Paro was, of course, invited; there was much debate about whether or not to invite Lenin. Priya was adamant that

Lenin come, for she wanted an ally, and besides, she was curious. The three sat in confused silence over the dinner. Suresh, of course, still managed to polish off a large meal, but Paro was close to tears, and wouldn't eat anything. This is to say Suresh also fell in love with Paro. Priya was, by now, a mature woman, and knew how to handle difficult situations tactfully.

One morning, Mrs. Shambhu Nath Mishra descended upon their flat. Priya asked for Paro; and-according to their maid, who told their driver, who in turn, with a little prodding, disgorged the story to Priya pounced upon her, literally and physically, telling her to leave her husband alone. Soon the story was all over the cocktail circuit, and Paro was once more the butt of various suggestive, sniggering jokes.

Then summer came, and Shambhu Nath Mishra was to go to America for World Conference on something or the other. Paro cajoled and hustled the money out of Lenin and Suresh to buy herself a ticket as well, for she was determined to accompany him to the USA. She accompanied him but returned soon after. Lenin had been playing the surrogate father to Aniruddha during Paro's little jaunt of the States. Some legal problems and disputes about custody of the poor child seemed to have surfaced. "'Bucky' Bhandpur, forgotten ghost from the past, wanted to send him to Doon for his further education. This scene lurks like a shadow from the past."³⁶

"Paro had been seeing less and less of Shambhu Nath Mishra lately; he had become like a fading echo in life. 'Did you say you were getting married, Lenin?' Priya asked, panicking at the idea of development. Lenin said that he wanted to get rid of Paro Paro's smile shattered for a fraction of a second, her lips trembled and a sort of uncertainty descended on her face."³⁷

Through Paro, Namita Gokhale seeks to deconstruct the conventional concept of womanhood. Paro is a rebel who flouts all the social and moral restrictions imposed on woman in the society. She, unlike a typical Indian woman is a perfectly liberated soul far from being a prisoner of her own sex. Her conduct and behaviour appear to be shocking and immoral, viewed from a male dominated patriarchal view of womanhood. However, from modern deconstructionist point of view all roles assigned to woman are arbitrary and fashioned by male psyche. Femininity has no such fixed and certain meaning and is open to deconstruction.

Bhaiya was glued to the radio, listening to 'A Date with you'. "As the music billowed across the room where we all slept, I watched my mother fiddling with her scanty hair, and wondered what Paro would look like after fifteen years. Spitefully, but with some accuracy, I assured myself that she would run to fat."³⁸

"B.R. was devastated. He shrank, crumpled, and did not even pretend to recover. We spent the rest of the evening in strained, distracted thought, cowering under her malignant presence."³⁹

The relations between Priya and her husband gradually, became indifferent, now they were "two separate people' who shared only their silence while living under one roof. Their life together became sterile, (and) loveless.

Due to separation of Priya with her husband. She could not sleep properly. She lost her interest on the job at the bookshop. as to sit alone and all along felt that there is nobody to love, like or care her in the entire world. But according to her, brother Atul, Lenin and B.R. still figured as her friends. She felt exhausted and tired even in the bookshop on account of, desolation.

Suresh sensed Priya's inner turmoil and also about her increasing inattentiveness towards him. He rang up meanwhile to know about her and it was a temporary relief for Priya. Paro takes advantage of this situation and starts endearing Suresh by her romantic activities in his house itself in the presence of Priya. This acted as adding fuel to the fire.

“I should never have returned. But I barged into the room. ‘Memsahib khayengi’ I said significantly. Suresh set up embarrassedly. Paro was unperturbed. She continued to stroke his hair. I could feel Suresh turning red. After a while she withdrew her fingers, or rather her talons. Her eyes were narrowed in a familiar mocking way. All of us were silent. I went to the bathroom, returned, and poured myself a drink. Suresh walked over to the bar. Get me a drink as well, Suresh, Paro cooed. Further silence. After a while I just left the room. I locked myself into our bedroom and shut the lights. Suresh did not knock all night; I was lonely without him.”⁴⁰

Next morning Suresh had a short dialogue about her relations with B.R. and also about her intention to publish her work on the topic to which Priya gave vague replies. Being dissatisfied with her replies Suresh proposed her either to go to her parents' house or continue to live in the present one separately. She agreed to live alone in her parents' house.

“Then I telephoned again. Suresh picked it up this time. This is Priya speaking, Suresh, I said tonelessly, the hope and terror concealed somewhere in my larynx, can I return home please? I received your letters, he replied. If that is how you feel, perhaps we can give it a try again. I'll be there tomorrow. I said, and tried to contain the sudden surge of joy. My knees were weak with relief.”⁴¹

The study finds that Namita Gokhale's novel *Paro, Dreams of Passion*. Paro is a modern woman. She is a lady who does not rebel against her marriage but appears to be symbol of liberation and shifting women. She creates her own world and thinks in a different way. She does not directly oppose, the world of male, but at same time she does not also accepts the norms of patriarchal society. She has own ideology. At times, it seems that Namita Gokhale portrayed her own experience and lifestyle in so called elite class of society, Paro is the new women who does not fight against male-dominated and even does fight against male dominated does not demand equality. She is frank in discussing her experience and her desires as a woman. She represents a world of woman that has no boundaries to restrict their desire and regards herself as superior person at every stage of her life. She applied her character as a tool to exploit others. She has her own principles and ideologies to enjoy her life. Thus, Paro reflects Gokhale's world of modern women.

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CHAPTER – 5

Ethnicity and Culture: *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*

5.1 Ethical Issues and Challenges

5.2 Pseudo Spiritual Practices

5.3 Generation Gap and Family Values

Chapter – 5

Ethnicity and Culture: *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*

Macmillan English Dictionary defines ethnicity as “the fact that someone belongs to a particular ethnic group.”¹ Joane Nagel says that, “Identity and culture are two of the basic building blocks of ethnicity. Through the construction of identity and culture, individuals and groups attempt to address the problematics of ethnic boundaries and meaning. Ethnicity is best understood as a dynamic, constantly evolving property of both individual identity and group organization. The construction of ethnic identity and culture is the result of both structure and agency -a dialectic played out by the ethnic groups and the larger society. Ethnicity is the product of actions undertaken by ethnic groups as they shape and reshape their self-definition and culture; however, ethnicity is also constructed by external, social, economic and political processes.”²

Macmillan English Dictionary defines culture as “activities involving music, literature and other arts. A set of ideas, belief, and ways of behaving of a particular organization or group of people”.³ *Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus* defines culture “as customs and civilization of a particular people”.⁴ Culture is mixture of qualities like customs, traditions, dialects. It is shown through the way one express thoughts. Thus, Culture is blend of language, cuisine, social habits, knowledge and wisdom of a particular group.

5.1 Ethical Issues and Challenges

Macmillan English Dictionary defines ethical as “involving the principle used for deciding what is right and what is wrong.”⁵

Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus defines ethical as “relating morals or ethics.”⁶

Shefali Moitra in understanding Ethics defines “Ethics is concerned with the notions of good and bad, right and wrong, virtues and vices, as well as rights and duties and their application.”⁷ Ethics is a branch of knowledge that is concerned with the study of moral values. Ethical code is the part and parcel of human societies. Its main purpose is to regulate the behavior of an individual or a group or a society. Moral obligation differs from society to society. Thus, Ethical issues is formed when a decision, choice, activity is not according to the society moral codes.

In Namita Gokhale’s, *Gods, Graves and Grandmother* (1994), she depicted the characters of Ammi and Phoolwati as two strong women who make their own rules, face challenges, and overcome all the problems with their confidence and personal experiences. Namita Gokhale deals with women concern, their experiences, their desire, sensibility and awareness. In the novel, Gokhale objectively presents and investigates women’s consciousness at the moral and spiritual levels. It is a different kind of Gokhale’s novel where female characters use a set of various techniques to gain respectability in our society which is also a male dominated society with mercantile moral, and where the woman has no complaint against the society, where she does not want to change or refine the society, it is an indication of some morbidity. In *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*, Gokhale portrays the lives of women like Ammi, Phoolwati and Gudiya, who fight with all the odds, and make their own world.

In the novel, Ammi is a '*Kothawali*'. She has been thrown out of her '*Kotha*' and she finds herself without any money in a Delhi slum. Yet she manages to survive in metro city like Delhi. She is able to achieve this by cleverly manipulating the social machinery to her own advantage.

Gudiya, her grand-daughter and also the narrator of the story, tells us how her clever grandmother steals a marble slab from the building site behind their shanty and places it under the "*Peepal* tree along with the five rounded river stone and a few marigold flowers to complete the hurriedly improvised shrine."⁸ She moves on with the new avatar and bids farewell to her past life when she was a *Kothawali* singly and enjoyed a rich status. She put aside her *burqa* and put it to her *peti* (trunk). Although she was never well-versed in the higher tenets of Hinduism. Ammi quickly switches to 'bhajan-singing'.

Ammi's first acid test comes when she is required to 'tackle' Sundar Pahalwan. Sundar Pahalwan is all out to exercise his "territorial-rights over the stretch of pavement"⁹ which is being used by Ammi.

In the novel, *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*, Ammi faces challenge "... comes a time when, Ammi finds herself on the wrong side of the law"¹⁰ Her fingerprints were discovered on the axe with which a slumdweller Saboo was killed by another slum dweller, Shambhu. Ammi is led off to the police station but the presence of her devotees succeeds in cutting out of the case. Even Kailash Shastri, a scholarly person, well-versed in religious rituals, accepts Ammi as his superior in theological and spiritual matters. Ammi achieves this 'miracle' through her resorting to 'silence' and 'vague generalizations'. She meets one of the technical objections of the Pandit in these words: "It is all Lord Krishna's Leela *Sab Iswar Ka Khel Hai*...."¹¹ She has by now perfected the art of false showing of wisdom.

Thus, Ammi cleverly manipulates Kailash Shastri into declaring her a saintly person. It is this weakness of Kailash Shastri which Ammi is at once able to perceive through her long experience. So, Ammi's rise becomes possible because it serves the mutual interests of both the Pandit and Ammi. With Phoolwati, Sunder Pahalwan and Pandit Shastri on her side, activity of temple rises and Ammi is able to stop the commercialization of temple.

The novelist expresses that Ammi uses her show of wisdom and her silence to manipulate the male-dominated society. She handles Pandit Kailash Shastri by her 'silence' and 'vague' generalizations about theology and Sunder Pahalwan by her show of 'Virtue' and piety. Another female character Phoolwati, the widow of Shambhu, uses different ways to handle both Sunder Pahalwan and Pandit Kailash Shastri. With Sunder Pahalwan she uses the art of 'deceiving the deceiver'.

To what extent Phoolwati can dictate her terms becomes clear when Sunder Pahalwan proposes marriage to her, Phoolwati gives her consent subject to certain conditionality's. Phoolwati faced her challenge, for survival after Shambu's death. She was not afraid of the Sunder Pahalwan and faces him bravely and that impress Sunder Pahalwan.

Journey of Phoolwati shows that she was trying to reverse the prevalent norm of the society. With her practical common-sense and vision coupled with her domineering stature, do bring about reversal of roles. After the death of Ammi, Pandit Kailash Shastri starts delivering 'discourses' on the Bhagvad Gita. Phoolwati objects to this: "Forget your philosophy-wilosophy... Only Lata Mangeshkar could replace our *Mataji*"¹² and then announces that henceforth. She would lead the 'bhajans'. Every one dismisses the idea as absurd, For Phoolwati has no musical talents, nor any training in music. Yet she holds her ground and

make her ‘debut’.”¹³ Pandit Kailash Shastri has to admit that the songs went down better than his discourses and attracted people. The shrine flourish under the control of Phoolwati.

5.2 Pseudo Spiritual Practices

Spirituality refers to a meaningful connection with a divine energy. It is a relationship between man and God. Connecting with the inner energy that is inside of all living beings. This connection provides peace to oneself. Mario Beauregard and Denyse O’Leary, defines spirituality as “any experience that is thought to bring the experiencer into contact with the divine”.¹⁴

A false showing of spirituality is called pseudo spirituality. It is materialist masquerading of spirituality. When people fake to make a connection with a soul. They make it a business and con people for their profit.

Kaushik comments:

“Conning people into believing that traditional spiritual approaches that have withstood the ravages of time are useless in modern day and inventing new age practices just to cater to the market is pseudo-spiritualism.”¹⁵

In *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*, the character of Ammi is symbol of pseudo spiritualism. Ammi is old lady from a non-Hindu background. She comes to Delhi for survival. Here in the slum area, she arranges a stone and put flowers and *Kumkum* on it and puts some coins and the shrine is ready. With the passage of time the shrine becomes a sacred place. Ammi, is main priestess and she started singing bhajan and delivering devotional stories of *Rama*, and *Krishna*.

Once when an officer from Municipal Corporation came with demolition order, after meeting Ammi fell at grandmother's feet and begged for her forgiveness for not believing in God.

Leela was another woman came to Ammi. She was a woman in her fifties. Her son abandoned her. She was highly influenced by Ammi. Sunder was the bully of that area in the first meeting he came for rent of ten rupee per week. But Ammi manipulates him and soon he became her follower and provided security to shrine and Ammi. Gudiya was amazed by the new avatar of Ammi as Mataji. She asked how do you know all these things so minutely as they both belong from a non-Hindu background. So, the main source of income of grandmother and Gudiya was the shrine. Though they were not as rich as they were before coming Delhi.

Namita Gokhale through various events in the novel depicted the fake show off of Ammi. Ammi in her childhood used to live beside a Hindu family for a short period of time. She observes them and remember all the minute details they used to follow while doing puja, and other traditional practices. So, the experience helps Ammi to build up a strong connection with the new surroundings. She was called as Mataji. She hides her burqa in the trunk and wears '*ghagra* and red blouse with *chunari*'.

5.3 Generation Gap and Family Values

Generation Gap is due to the age factor. The main reason is due to the mental gap (thinking patterns, attitude, changing trends in teenage, children believe that they are 'grown-ups' and can decide what is right or wrong for them. They have their own ways of understanding any situation. Teenage or adolescence is a stage where children are influenced by the society. Lack of understanding, and not having enough interaction causes generation gap.

In *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*, Gudiya is the main character and she is also the narrator of the story. Gudiya develops along the lines in which a good looking, ambitious and careless slum-girl generally develops. In this dissatisfaction with their surroundings and the ambition to become rich and famous such girls become total wrecks in the end. The reason is they figure themselves as rebels and do not understand how the social system, functions.

Gudiya remains in this world of make believe as a larva in its cocoon until Phoolwati helps her to come out of this cocoon. In the tender age Gudiya fails to grasp the significance of what her grandmother, Ammi had been doing. As Ammi was busy in her shrine service, she rarely takes out time for Gudiya and hence cause a gap between them. Gudiya develops her own conception of society and its working. She lives in her own fantasy world. During this time of adolescence, she became close to Phoolwati.

As time passes, Gudiya becomes conscious of her age and admits. "Even inside our room, I felt I was being observed from all sides by the enormous staring eyes of the gods and goddesses. I hated the sensation. Trembling with fear, I crept out of the room into the dark night. Stationing myself behind the Peepul tree, from which I could see Ammi's huddled figure out of the corner of my eye, I settled down to my silent vigil."¹⁶

Soon Ammi became popular as Mataji. Rumors were spread that Mataji is hundred years old and she knows magical spells. Ammi takes a vow of silence and pretends to be an ascetic.

The condition of the temple improved and the money continued to pour in. Quite often Gudiya is afraid of spirits of night and admits:

"... as I fell asleep on my folding cot near the window, the Peepul tree would begin its seductive song. Shuttering my eyes tight against the visions, I would still encounter

the energetic acrobatics of Shambhu and Magoo, of my mother and Riyasuddin Rizvi. There were other ghouls and spirits who dwelt in that Peepul tree, a man with a blank featureless face, no eyes or nose, nothing saves a large red mouth that was always laughing.”¹⁷

“Though she likes Phoolwati but she did not accept her as her mother. Phoolwati cares for her. She prepares lunch for her, they talked about school activity. Phoolwati is her dear company, she shares her experience. We shared the same fiercely independent spirit, but mine had floundered in the confusion of identity and norms.”¹⁸

She at early age marries Kalki, a band artist. Soon, they separate and Gudiya regrets her decision. Then she comes under the shadow of Phoolwati. Gudiya fails to understand the real nature of Kalki, as she has no practical wisdom. The tendencies of *Kalayuga* are unknown to her, and hence, Kalki, an orphan like her, gets married with her. This love at first sight is just an emotional outburst of Gudiya.

According to Kailash Shastri, “Whatever good fortune comes in the life of Gudiya it is with the gold coins picked up by grandmother.”¹⁹ But she earns no fame and name at all. She possesses a lot of patience and fortitude and learns how to adjust with circumstances. Her marriage is a complete failure as she has one more mouth to feed after the departure of her husband. She fails to possess a home of her own and her dreams proved to be great expectations.

After reading the film magazines such as Stardust, Movie, Filmy Duniya, etc., she tries to have a new hair style. Then she changes her name and identity. She is not prepared to accept that Phoolwati as her mother. Phoolwati’s mean surroundings make her nervous and quite often she feels complex in her company. She fails to develop any liking for Sundar Pahalwan.

Her moment's joy is rare and short-lived. After having enjoyed sex with her she feels ecstatic joy though Phoolwati rebukes her for this. Now Kailash Shastri also warns her that Kalki is not a very 'nice person'.

Gudiya commits a mistake in leaving St. Jude's Academy. Had she stayed in the academy with Roxanne Lamba, her lot might have been different. Roxanne takes interest in the welfare of orphans and requests Gudiya to stay with her. In the beginning Gudiya has all regards for Roxanne Lamba and remarks:

“Roxanne was an able administrator, and our small school, with its three rooms, two tents and port-a- cabin administration block, was run with flair and acumen. We had blackboards and swings and a sandpit and three reasonably literate teachers who under the stewardship of Roxanne Lamba drilled us valiantly in all aspects of empirical knowledge. It was thus due to the noble impulses of the parishioners of the Church of the redemption, British Columbia to do good to others that I was inculcated at an early age with the right English accent.”²⁰

Roxanne Lamba had no axe to grind in taking care of Gudiya though the latter fails to take any decision and admits: “I realize now, in hindsight, that the personal loss of her affections made me misunderstand her almost celestial quiescence.

Mrs. Roxanne Lamba had plans for an impressive career for me, involving competitive examinations. Perhaps even the IAS, or else, she hinted, I could become a school teacher and educationist like her.”²¹

Roxanne Lamba had no respect for Phoolwati, Lila, Shastri etc. as she is above superstitions. She blames people like Phoolwati and Kailash Shastri for the backwardness of society. If

Gudiya had stayed with Roxanne Lamba after the death of Ammi, the former would have received the best education. Roxanne Lamba was so considerate to Gudiya that she gave a share to her out of her property and assets. It confirms that Roxanne Madam was really kind to her. But, as ill luck would have it! Gudiya takes the wrong decision and leaves the Academy. One fails to understand - Why did Gudiya kick the shelter and support as offered by Roxanne Madam? Actually, Gudiya fails to understand the difference between wise Roxanne and ignorant Phoolwati.

However, Phoolwati remains loyal to Gudiya at every critical step. The trouble with Gudiya is that she lacks the tactfulness, wit and intelligence of Viola, the heroine of *Twelfth Night*.

Many a times Gudiya feels that she belongs to nobody. Her grandmother was practical in her approach to life and established a temple just with the help of a green marble and few rounded stones. Even Kailash Shastri wins the sympathy of her Ammi and plans his future in the premises of the temple. Phoolwati, though uneducated and a tough woman, is wise enough to understand the possessive nature of Kailash Shastri. But Kailash Shastri cannot be regarded a villain and a sinner. Like most of the ignorant Hindu Pandits, he has his practical ways to earn money. Whenever the situation demands, he takes out his *Panchang* and beats around the bush. When Phoolwati asked him to read the hand of Mataji, he cleverly replies: "Great souls have no past and future. It is all the same to them. It would be sacrilege for me to talk about her past. I can see it here before me, like a cinema-scope - her history - but she is a saint, an embodiment of Shakti. You have much to learn, excuse me for saying so, if you can dare to ask me about her past."²²

As a feminist, Namita Gokhale satirizes the people who manage the temple as a commercial activity. Sometimes they have a musical sound and that is why they sing Bhajan spontaneously. Gudiya remarks:

“Two important changes had taken place in the temple routine. The first was that Pandit Kailash Shastri had set up office in the temple premises and was available for consultation from ten to twelve every morning and from four to six every evening. Phoolwati had even managed to procure a loudspeaker, which nestled in the spire and was wired up so as to broadcast Ammi’s evening Bhajan. We could be heard in a radius of a few kilometers. Grandmother’s liquid voice leading, and the orchestrated response of our devotees, became a feature of the evening life in our locality.”²³

Kailash Shastri succeeds in the temple due to his tricky nature. He is practical enough to take care of his interests and hence remains alert from Phoolwati and Lila. The situation becomes manageable at the temple after the death of grandmother. On her death, Kailash Shastri makes the people believe that *Mataji* had attained *Maha-Samadhi*. Even Gudiya is really sad on her death and remarks: “... the mobs, who came, it seemed to me, not in curiosity but in genuine sorrow. Somewhere, somehow, my grandmother’s incredible energy and power had touched and moved and changed them.”²⁴

Kailash Shastri decides that *Mataji* should be buried in the premises of the temple. She is compared with goddess Durga and Maa Shakti:

“The miracle created the expected stir. Even Pandit Kailash Shastri seemed convinced by his own interpretation of events. The crowds surged forward to witness the hand of God. They pushed and jostled for a sight of that other-worldly Chunni. The offerings of flowers and coconuts piled up and had to be continuously removed.”²⁵

In an outburst of emotion Lila threw her ornaments into the grave though her son did not appreciate this gesture of his mother. Namita Gokhale knows how to create pathetic situations and bring tears from the eyes of readers. Memories touch the heart and mind of Gudiya.

Gudiya also remarks: Life without grandmother continued much as before. In death all activities in the temple simply began to revolve around her absence ... Everybody was extremely busy with all manners of mysterious and arcane ritual. There Gokhale analyzes the psychology of Gudiya who has a hidden sense of fear in her heart.

This fear turns into panic and the lower branches of the Peepul tree start swaying with the wind. Gudiya does not know what fate has in store for her. However, like the heroes of Eugene O' Neill, her past haunted her again and again. She fails to get rid of her past. One of her dreams reminds her of the loving nature of grandmother: "I dreamt of grandmother that night. It was a vivid dream, which featured two groups of sultry belly dancers, who between them held a veil which concealed a precious object. After much laughter and music, the veil was moved to reveal my grandmother, seated in the lotus posture as she had been at the time of her internment, with the Amber Chunni draped about her white Sari. She summoned me towards her and, cupping my chin affectionately in her gnarled hands, asked me how I was keeping."²⁶

Sometimes Gudiya feels inspired to lead a normal life as Ammi is with her. She has not left her alone. Gudiya is a round character, as she has her own weaknesses. The question arises - Why does she not take hold of the temple affairs? Why does she remain indifferent to the construction plans of the temple? Why does she not manage the donation money for public welfare? Actually, she wants to marry a rich man who has handsome personality. Had she been practical and bold, she would have managed the temple well. The temple management

could give her fame, fortune, property and prosperity. But alas! She forgets everything after meeting *Kalki*. As love is blind, she becomes blind and forgetful due to her love for *Kalki*. Pandit Kailash Shastri delivers lectures on The *Bhagavad Gita* and defines virtue, truth and Dharma.

Time proves that she is really one of the underprivileged students. Actually, she is not justified, if she blames others for her miseries. Subsequent steps taken by them are stated as: “We left the haveli at the crack of dawn, as the birds chirped and the morning haze floated around the town. I can still remember the smell of the chillum the *tonga* driver put away, the aroma of horse and tobacco, the kind eyes of the old nag, kinder than any I had encountered for a long time. Then to many houses in many towns, but never for long.”²⁷

Due to these unfortunate events, Gudiya and Ammi (Grandmother) settled in old Delhi by making their abode beneath a *Peepal* tree. They started worshipping idols of *Shiva* and the grandmother recited *Bhajans* in melodious voice. By the sound of *arti* and *bhajans* people started gathering at temple, this also attracted a tea vendor Shambhu. After much infatuation between Shambhu and Magoo, Magoo’s husband Saboo, murdered his wife and then to Shambhu also. Thus, Ammi’s new abode became a place for all the characters engulfed in a mood of despair and emptiness. But then they took a positive turn. Gudiya was admitted in St. Jude’s Academy and a temple and some improvised accommodation was raised at the sight.

Ammi soon introduces order into disorder. The texture of life has to be experienced first not spoken about. Silence is precondition of speech. Now she is calm and quiet like a saint and often meditates in solitude. She disdainfully attends to the activities of the temple and also

about Gudiya. Gudiya is in a bewildered state for she has lost her mother in her tender age and only Ammi was there to support or look after her.

However, Gudiya was left to fend for herself, which she did well. She attended school was growing taller in size and fairer in skin this growth she enjoyed with a sense of satisfaction. But, Gudiya often reminisces the time she spent with her mother. She admits: “Every night, as I fell asleep on my folding cot near the window, the peepul tree would begin its seductive song. Shutting my eyes tight against the visions, I would still encounter the energetic acrobatics of Shambhu and Magoo, of my mother and Riyasuddin Rizvi.”²⁸

The Temple grew in fame and fortune. Phoolwati, and Lila help Ammi to manage the temple affairs their company is a regular solace to Gudiya. Few beggars also settled nearby beseeching the blessings of Ammi. The police departments Sinha family felt highly obliged to Ammi for her charismatic blessings, which helped in the recovery of one of their family members from serious illness. Here the artist refers to various Hindu rituals followed by the people. The Hindus have full faith in the *Panchang*, an astrologer Pandit Kailash Shastry, utilizes the situation for performing the rituals at the temple and rendering other religious services. Kailash Shastry is happy there in the temple. As he gets a meeting place with his customers. During her leisure moments Ammi recollects her past ambitions and scarcely reveal her inner feelings to Gudiya. With the passage of time, Ammi passed away leaving Gudiya alone.

The death of Ammi shattered the nerves of Gudiya as she loses her patron of life. She had decided not to continue her studies. For Kailash Shastri death is ultimate truth, so *Mataji* is with God now. Only Phoolwati shared the grief of Gudiya. Life continues as before though Gudiya feels lonely due to the absence of Ammi. As is reflected by her: “Everybody was

extremely busy with all manner of mysterious and arcane ritual. There were lamps that had to be kept constantly alight, flowers to be offered and removed, Lobhan to be burnt, prayers to be said, constellations, to be propitiated. Above all, the crowds, the surging throngs of devotees, had to be handled with tact and patience.”²⁹

Gudiya felt orphaned but Phoolwati came to her protection and this saved her from falling in distress. But takes toll in shape of taking her services to massage her body. Phoolwati consults about Gudiya’s future to Pandit Kailash Shastri. He astrologically calculates her future and predicts it in her favour. Besides, the Principal of the Academy Roxonne Lamba is interested in the welfare of Gudiya so he sends his chauffeur, Bhimsingh, for obtaining her consent to join their institution. But Phoolwati and Sunder Pahalwaan did not agree to send her. Quite for some time Gudiya developed hatred for Phoolwati and Sunder Pahalwaan, decided to leave their home. Consequently, Gudiya felt lonely in this whole world.

Gudiya’s aimless journey continues like a string less kite in the vast expanse in the sky. And her wanderings continue as stated by her:

“After I had trudged along for what seemed like a very long time, I came to the edge of a dusty park. It was hedged in on all sides with henna bushes and iron railings. There was, as far as I could make out, no way to get in, and yet I could see people strolling inside, I had been walking for over an hour and I was very tired. D.T.C. buses and auto rickshaws wheezed past me. I had an overriding desire to go in and sit quietly beneath a tree, but I could not find the gate. Finally, I settled down on the pavement, oblivious of the damage to the new clothes Roxanne had bought me.”³⁰

Gudiya strolls on the pavement aimlessly: “It was getting dark outside. I had absolutely no idea where I was. The streets were crowded with habitation and through the windows of the

but I could see lit windows, bits of sofas, corners of bookshelves, television screens, lampshades, people. Everyone and everything seemed contained, defined, in context. Only I was alienated and at large.”³¹ Gudiya feels isolated in this unknown world. She aptly remarks: “Outside all was dark, strange and lonely. The leaves rustled in the strong February breeze, and, although the day had been warm, the evening was distinctly chilly. I had no idea where I was, but it seemed to be a government colony, the kind of middle-class area where clerks and their families lived.”³²

To avoid any unwelcome attention Gudiya began walking very fast because it was growing dark in the evening hours. She was walking fast but she did not know her destination. She was followed by a man riding on a cycle, perhaps, he was an earlier devotee of Ammi. He took Gudiya to Phoolwati’s house again. Gudiya actually suffers as she fails to take correct decision at right time. She lacks the sense of judgement, which her Ammi possessed. Gudiya ignores the advice of Roxanne Lamba and Miss Mehta but declines to join their institution. She does not know that opportunity knocks at one’s door only once. As ill luck would have it, she is fascinated by Kalki from Shiv Mohan Band. They enjoy sex. This increases her tensions.

She feels emotionally disturbed. Gudiya’s romantic thoughts soon melted down as her husband did not care to run the household properly. He was alcoholic and unable to earn funds sufficient to meet their expenditure. When Gudiya pressed him to mend his ways and properly provide funds for their maintenance. He became upset, frowned on her. Gudiya now took a strategic turn to solve the intricate problem by suggesting him politely to take up another job elsewhere. He agreed to it but had no funds to proceed ahead. Gudiya offered her

ornaments to meet the expenses therefore her golden ornaments were sold out. Kalki went off to Bombay in the train.

Obviously, Gudiya selected her life partner without any perspective thinking or verification. Her decision was devoid of any philosophy for leading a happy married life. It is also a fact that there was none to advice or checks her steps taken with an emotional swing to fulfil their romantic aspirations. She even failed to retreat timely after her married life therefore, she had to suffer during the entire period they lived together Ultimately, Kalki deserted her along with his baby. She however gives a justification to select Kalki as he looked handsome beyond belief and wore a victorious smile.

She loved him for his physical charm but they were not financial stable. So, Kalki went to other city for a job.

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CHAPTER – 6

Isolation and Alienation: *The Book of Shadows*

6.1 Voice of Resentment

6.2 Supernatural Elements and their Influence

6.3 Search for New Identity

Chapter - 6

Isolation and Alienation: *The Book of Shadows*

Macmillan English Dictionary describes isolation as “the state of being separated from other people or situation in which you do not have the support of other people”¹

Dictionary of Psychology defines isolation as “the condition of being isolated, avoidance of social contacts, blocking off a wish or memory from the rest of the psyche as a means of denying it. The separation of memories from their emotional components.”²

The Merriam-Wester Dictionary describes isolation as “the state of being in a place or situation that is separate from others.”³

Collins English Dictionary describes isolation as ‘the state of feeling alone and without friends or help.’⁴

The Book of Shadows depicted the condition of Rachita after acid attack. After treatment she decided to move to her village Ranikhet. Rachita feels isolated. She wants to be alone. She accepts the situation.

Dictionary of Philosophy defines alienation as “According to Hegel alienation is the process whereby the products of mind such as nature emanating from the absolute Idea of God or physical objects, Ideas and so on created by finite mind become separated from their originator as a consequence of their objectification. Marx held that man also alienates himself insofar as he fails to realise himself as an agent and

allows himself to be dependent on, or exploited by his own environment, even though it may in some respect be his own product.”⁵

Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus defines alienation as “a feeling of unfriendly or hostile, to feel estranged.”⁶

Dictionary of Psychology describes Alienation as “a feeling of standard of strangeness or separation from others, a sense of lack of warm relation with others.”⁷

Macmillan English Dictionary discusses alienation as “the feeling that you do not belong in a particular society place or group.”⁸

Alienation refers to “the estrangements of individuals from themselves and others, a feeling of normlessness and powerlessness caused by separation and isolation from an individual, sense of self, society and work.”⁹ The person feels helpless, for him the world seems empty. Among people he feels left out in conversation. The person did not want to communicate with others. The feeling of self-worth and hopelessness is constant that creates a change in life perspective.

In the novel, the Protagonist suffers from acid attack and after discharging from hospital she went to her village Ranikhet. Through her sister requested her to accompany her. But she refused and want some time alone in Ranikhet. In the novel, while explain in class the concept of alienation she remarks: I tried to explain the concept of alienation to my students. Rich young girls from Punjabi Bagh, without a care in the world beyond their next shampoo, creased their perfectly threaded eyebrows in puzzled if polite concentration and accosted the problem. Thus, the act of acid throwing, which is called vitriolage also results in physical and mental damage. The course of medicine and surgery can treat the skin rashes and help burn

marks to disappear. Psychologically, a person needs intense care and understanding. Rachita, after the incident became socially withdrawn and was in depression.

6.1 Voice of Resentment

Macmillan English Dictionary defines resentment as, “an angry unhappy feeling you have when you have been treated unfairly or without enough respect.”¹⁰

Cambridge Dictionary defines resentment as “a feeling of anger because you have been forced to accept something that you do not like.”¹¹

Collins English Dictionary defines resentment as “bitterness and anger that someone feels about something.”¹²

Namita Gokhale takes inspiration from the gothic romances written by Horace Walpole, Mrs. Clara Reeve, Anne Radcliffe, Sir Walter Scott etc. and creates the atmosphere of wonder, fear and loneliness in *The Book of Shadows*. The novel explore journey of Rachita, who teaches English literature in college. She was in love with Anand, but Anand commits suicide and his sister attack Rachita with Acid. After discharging from hospital, she moves to Ranikhet alone. She explores her new perspective about life. She questions herself who am I? What is the purpose of life? What is the result of all action in the course of life? All this question comes in her mind. In Ranikhet she finds solace and has time for herself. She observes nature and the scenic beauty and remembers her childhood days in Ranikhet. The author has admitted that the novel has its core in truth and she has stated that it is a spontaneous expression, which helped to resolve her personal pain.

She never expected such a devastating result of her passion. Now she wants to be forgiven for her guilt and recollects her past during moments of solitude and loneliness. She asks a question- who am I? Now the shadows are her companions.

Rachita is at best in bringing out pathos and is engaged in brooding thought about her past. She realises there is a beauty in existence.

Rachita has learnt about the bitter truth of life due to her unfaithfulness to Anand. Her passion has proved unbearable for her as nobody wants to sympathies with her. She has lost friend's esteem and her own health. Her servant Lohaniju does not know about her turmoil fully. She does not look at her disfigured face into the mirror. It is actually loss of identity for her. She tries in vain to forget her past as a teacher of English. But alas! The memories persist and cause immense pain. She is conscious of her defeat and sense of betrayal.

Hence, Rachita is there in the calm and serene surrounding of hills, just to hide and heal, to forget and to be forgiven by the victim.

She feels as if she has been forgotten by the world. But the question arises- Who advises her for seeking retreat from life and Delhi? Why the Ultimate power generates evil? How to overcome it? Where am I? She reminisces her link to take refuge in this lonely place where she lands in her devastated condition. She has obtained consent of the landlord who is closely related to her.

She plans her future course of activity in this solitary place with none else excepting a very loyal, old and helpful servant. "My instinct tells me to lie low, to evade discovery, to await the return of strength and continuity. Rachita seems scared of her surroundings. She keeps aloof from the natives and expresses her doubt. She expresses her doubt: "Who knows what

evil lurks in the hearts of men! There were murmurings among the hill folk, but none dared question me about the matter.”¹³

She asks herself- What is to be done during isolation? She does not want to listen stories though there is a suspicious silence in the house almost at every time.

Living in isolation and all alone she has become victim of monotony and depression. Even in depression, the person is silent outside, but the inside there is no silence. Lohaniju, her servant is living nearby. He draws her attention towards Himalayas, proud and inaccessible, serene in their solitude. Rachita is only a human being susceptible to worldly attractions. She feels puzzled or out of senses.

She stared so long in the void of pessimism during her isolation, but in vain. The avenues for redemption of her grief stood blocked. She is however, unable to see the one that is open. Then good sense prevails. Now she focuses her attention on the activities of the visitors dwelling within her cottage.

From the above assertion it is obvious that she realizes her behavior towards her fiancé was lacking to some extent therefore, she decides to watch Dona Rosa. This obviously means that leading a solitary life is her preference.

The lovely Fauna and Flora does not attract her and she moves into isolation. Rachita cannot focus on anything, she would gaze mountain ranges covered with snow. However, mostly foreigners in the house occupy the surplus accommodation and they enjoy their life in their own way. She believes that pain is part of life and one cannot escape it.

“I love the snow even more, it is so playful, it spars with the house, the trees, the wind. And here was a family of bears, Himalayan black bears with furry coats and

snow on their snouts, sitting in our veranda, sheltering from the snow, looking at the white garden with patient eyes.”¹⁴

At times she is nervous and feels lost. She observes Dona Rosa making love to Wolcott but Rachita feels herself isolated and recollects.

“Dawn broke, and the mysteries of the night were dispelled. I scurried back to my spot behind the curtain, my special place, my safe place, the place where I belonged. The journey, the proximity to Dona Rosa, the incessant talk of the crows, all this had sapped me, and I was anxious and enervated. I resolved to forget this folly, and I even considered leaving my spot and finding another place or dimension from where to await my moment of transition. But such things are not easy, they do not happen just like that, they have to be ordained. And of course, I had made my choice, I had already embraced my destiny.”¹⁵

Like Thomas Carlyle, Father Benedictus tells her that the physical body does not reveal the real self of a person. The outward organs hide much that lies beneath the surface. Even his robe hides his wisdom and knowledge. As a soldier cannot kill simply with a gun, a person cannot combat all the cruel instincts with his outer-self. Now Rachita realizes that her real self has got to be discovered by herself alone. The struggle between two confusing forces starts in her real self. Father Benediction who gave her great joy and brought ease and peace and gentleness also loved but in a different sense, as Rachita admits: “I tried to grope beneath the words into the mind of the man before me. I encountered physicality, sensuality, a primal joy strength; and then I met with the resistance of a powerful counter-pull. I saw before me the image of a great iceberg, a floating mountain of ice, such as I had never conceived or encountered.”¹⁶

Lohaniju was an honest man and remained there looking after the property, almost unsupervised, during his entire life without any blemish. This proves that lonely surrounding has helped him to work faithfully. Work of a person speaks about his person fully. His working can be said as rarest of rare instance of honesty and competence, as compared to the workers presently functioning in the society elsewhere. With the death of Lohaniju, Rachita is left in the house all alone as a hermit in recluse. She also confesses that her resources to live on in the house are nearing an end. When she joined here, she was in constant pain for injuries on her face but now as she admits that there is no pain and she is merely in retreat. The thought of pain however, has harbored in her expectations. Rachita resolves to be careful and silent. For her further action and reactions, she terms it as just hang on. Her conscientiously taken decision benefits her as states:

“Last night I slept the sleep of the innocent. The fluctuating electricity, the wavering shadows, these things didn’t bother me at all. All through the night I listened to the dull splatter of rain on the slate roof. It reached through my dreaming to some recess of my mind where its constant percussion lulled me into further security. I dreamt that I was having a dream from which I dreamt that I woke up. Sleep and dream and awakening merged into a circular connectedness. When I awoke, that is to say, when dawn broke with the certainties of the morning like birds chirping and the first ray of sunlight illumining the Nanda Devi peak through the distant mist and fog- when dawn broke, I felt all right. I felt as though I had the right to exist, as though I was a part of creation, of the dawn chorus, of the healing sunlight that was showing up in shy dappled patches in the garden. I was a glob of consciousness, of reactions and conditioning, enveloped in skin (damaged skin, but nevertheless). I was defined in time and space and dimension; I had the right to exist!”¹⁷

That was the breakthrough, the sudden insight into my innocence, my lack of culpability, my exoneration. But Rachita is not a fully recovered patient because she is living in such a beautiful villa where every morning warm clear sunlight gleam brightly through the peaks of snow-clad Himalayas. Then abruptly, atmosphere of divine charm prevails driving away the remaining darkness of the last night. This change is substantial, refreshing and rejuvenating in nature. This contrast reacts in the heart of Rachita. It makes her spellbound but soon she reverts to her grief and horror stricken past. Sordid realities are sometimes very hard to forget. Her optimism fades away and a sullen half-asleep state of mind sets in. She starts dreaming, Lohaniju entering into her room wearing a gentle, faithful smile as usual on his beloved face. Anand follows and appear to give her an affectionate and amiable smile and softly instruct her no hard feelings baby', and tells that her philosophy of life is still incomplete. Dona Rosa, her one-time friend, companion joins beautifully dressed, offers her well wishes with a gift of rose bud with thorns on its stem. Rachita feels another soft tender hand on her spine. As usual, Dona Rosa is looking ravishingly a sexy woman. But Rachita soon wakes up from her dreaming, which she terms as dementia'. Obviously, it was their ghostly presence, in her memory lane wherefrom these personalities who are no more there. After a while Rachita clarifies the situation by asserting:

“I had been trapped in a confusion of second-hand perception, confounded by the treachery of words. My language-clogged consciousness had led me astray. We do not see things as they are, we see them as we are. The lover creates the loved one by projection. Narcissistic love is an act of incest. Of course, I had never loved Anand.”

The redemption of language is a long and infinitely arduous task. Silence is the precondition of speech. The texture of life has to be experienced, not spoken about.”¹⁸

Rachita has amply justified her stand of relapsing in the negative thoughts even after resolving to go ahead in positive direction by excusing personal restraint on her speech and attitude. But without a clear admission of her guilt before its readers, it sounds as much said but less done. Her character is embellished and brightens only when she gets reader's sympathy for herself. She had her existence as a lonely person in the cottage therefore; she has to take her decision at her own speedily. Her personal weaknesses psychological or otherwise add to her part in the story. When she conceals or pretends for nothing and starts thinking positively.

After taking steps courageously Rachita looks bold and confident. Now she seems in a position to sermonize others well forgetting her past when she used to waiver just in a fit of pain and loneliness. Pain was her habit. Pain became an orientation. But it could be repudiated or left behind. Instead of following the path of wisdom as above she felt darkness all around. She experienced presence of ghosts and was attracted from falling into the trap of nuns and lady priests coming from the temples of local deity like Airee God.

Being there in a lonely house located amidst the jungle. She has also to attend to the naked fakirs visiting her. She listens to their frivolous talks or take their benedictions though not very willingly. She used to define the cawing of the crows living on the treetops nearby. And follow several other local traditions and believes as per opinion of Lohaniju. But the element of hallucination is like a bane that has followed her in her loneliness. She followed a rustic guide and care taker of the house, Lohaniju in these affairs. There was no other well-wisher available to her in that lonely place. She was also wholly dependent for cooking her daily

food and other errand work on him. He also attended to the needs of the visitors coming to her place causally. She has a great sense of gratitude for the house where she is staying.

Towards the end of the novel, Rachita is seen slightly in a pensive mood perhaps also due to the absence of Lohaniju and other visitors of the house. She is left all alone in the house but ultimately; she keeps heart and very poetically writes a positive and matter of fact statement.

6.2 Supernatural Elements and their Influence

Dictionary of Psychology defines supernatural as “belonging to a transcendent order. Beyond the natural order or natural.”¹⁹

Macmillan English dictionary defines supernatural as “used about things that seems to come from a power such as magic and do not have natural or scientific explanation.”²⁰

Gokhale’s *The Book of Shadows* is a story about Rachita Tiwari, who is an acid attack victim. She suffers a lot of pain physically and emotionally. She does not want to see her face in the mirror even after surgery. She wants to escape. Sandhya remarks

“She finds a place in the lonely house amidst the hills of Kumaon. The house was an ancestral property built during the British era and was handed down to her uncle while they left India after independence. Throughout the novel she keeps reiterating her purpose of visiting the hills – to obliterate her past, to seek refuge. This novel has lots of thrill and suspense in it. In this novel, the images of the ghosts of the past come before Rachita even, she heard the sound of them. Being alienated and estranged from her social life, Rachita was psychologically disturbed and was experiencing hallucinations - unusual and unreal sights in the house and becomes astonished.”²¹

In Ranikhet she enjoys reading books, going on walk. But in the house, she feels a different feeling. She says, “I am being stalked, I know I am being stalked. All the evidence is there all tell a tale sign of a person? Entity? Stalker? ... Intent on pursuit.”²²

Rachita further, admits:

“The magic of human creation had propelled my seed into her womb, that night when I had offered her the homage of the fireflies. By the paradox of creation, by fusion and fission, the crawling sperm that Wolcott and I had let loose within her sat triumphant in her womb, a little foetus feeding, fattening, feasting on my fate. There was no option for me now, no choice but that I take from and become immanent.”²³

With the arrival of her student Zenobia with her love Pashu, Rachita becomes positive. She accepts life the way it is. She feels as if she is going to enjoy rebirth and return to life.

Hardy does not hide the natural truth about the Wessex people. Same is the case with Namita Gokhale. In the Book of Shadows, Rachita Tiwari analyzes if the doors of self-knowledge are open for her? In spite of the loss of identity she analyzes her past and present. Her absurdity is responsible for her present misery. Lohaniju tells her about the British people who came to this house and lived here to satisfy their greed and lust. Ultimately, they had to suffer. The spirits of the hills don't allow unethical deeds and disguise themselves as panthers and attack the evildoers. Most of the people of Kumauni region are afraid of the anger of Airee God.

She asks herself - Is she really self-conceited as Anand told her? Is she self-obsessed in reality? Yet she is afraid of her personal likes and dislikes, as there is a positive self-consciousness in her where nobody else can enter. Even though her past provides her

memories, she is not disgusted with them: “The past exercises a tenacious hold over the future; sometimes it tyrannizes the future into repetitive patterns. I came to the hills to obliterate my past, to seek refuge in the immediate present. Here was my past stalking me again, leaping out of a Led Zeppelin tape like a jack-in-the-box, like a practical joke gone sour. My instinct tells me to lie low, to evade discovery, to await the return of strength and continuity.”²⁴

For Gokhale the hills are not empty retreats, but already laden with history that is also living myth- it is an animated world of shadowy forces; even the trees house spirits: “The scream of the butterfly is the saddest sound in this world. Ghost spirits butterfly’s bats and I believe vampires, exist in a mutually receptive auditory sphere. As the bats beats his wings and make for the butterflies, he can feel the faint frail presence in his pulse.”²⁵

In the novel the landscape is literally haunted, and like Desai’s *Kasauli*, a significant part of its atmosphere is the result of history of the sahiblog who battled their own demons, their missionaries and socialites and soldiers. The novel is a ghost story that operates though a fundamentally realist outlook. This makes it very much a “book of shadows” since we are never able to either to deny the reality of the spirit world or admit its actual presence in the every day.

The worlds inhabit each other, history and fantastical legend folding and unfolding uncannily about them the relationship is expressed in the opening paragraph: the house is full of mystery and mystery keeps Rachita busy. So, this house is like a companion to her.

It is noted that presentation of the house as an active being and perceive that ideal, enclosed unite admits to at least internal alteration. As we discover, the house encompasses more than just the narrator, and the closing of the ranks against the world on the part of all its inhabiting

souls is also on opening of “doorways” into the world occasioned by the narrator’s return to it.

In the “present reality” of the book, Rachita Tiwari returns to her childhood holiday home to “heal, to hide, to forget”. A teacher of the English who cannot endure poetry because of its decorative falsity, she has suffered (rather coolly) the suicide of her manic–depressive boyfriend. Her affair had apparently driven Anand to flamboyant despair (his suicide note is derided for its florid excess) and his sister had revenged herself by throwing acid into Rachita’s face.

After surgery, Rachita goes to the hills beyond Ranikhet to avoid crowds and recover her mental composure. There, suspended from the duties of daily life, “linear time” slides away and her tough persona is stripped and alienated as she comes to terms with having a different face than the one which had defined her identity. Rachita’s narrative is broken into three sections all of them presented as disjunctive paragraphs akin to diary entries.

The underpinning continuity is a cycle of listening each evening to the aged house keeper’s tales of local lore that are also stories of the house. The characters manifest themselves as real presence to the narrator as she arrives at the house. We are never sure whether they are the result of her stressed and medicated state in which “days and nights interlap” or of servant Lohaniju’s storytelling, but neither can we dismiss them since they seem to be part of a temporal overlap that gives them a place simultaneously in memory and perceptual immediacy: “It was as though we had escaped the confines of our life – scripts, stumbled upon some interstice of experience, some simultaneity of narrative. But who was the narrator?”²⁶ This question becomes more insistent as the novel progresses. There are two sections of narrative interspersed with Rachita’s (which includes some of Lohaniju’s

narration). These pick up two of the servant's tales: the missionary who first built the house, and the wicked white men who were devoured by hill gods in the form of panthers. The first is presented as a realistic continuous story based on documentary evidence, an old note book bound in the green leather, bundled up in a decaying square of cloth, that Lohaniju gives Rachita.

William James Cockerell records his attempt to establish a mission in the hill in 1868. When he arrives at Raneekhet there is not a single house at the site. To make his delicate wife more comfortable, he builds the house in Christian defiance of local superstition that the site is unlucky. Like Rachita, he is rationalist with little understanding of his wife's taste for poetry and a puritan's distaste for her novel reading, but he indulges her love for nature and watercolor painting.

A practical man of faith that he is, he is nonetheless horror-struck at the impassioned attempt on his virtue and suicide of the hill woman, Lali. Before his eyes, she gets up and runs like one possessed, waving the sharp scythe, which the hill women always carry at their side.

He records seeing the parade of Lord Airee and his witches and dogs, reported as folklore to Rachita by Lohaniju, as though it is simple reality: "There was a sound of drums, of the local 'damru' and 'hurkiya', the hand-held drums these natives' favour, and then a strange procession entered that tranquil field from the bend of the hill. An enormous 'dandi' or 'palanquin', too large for the use of any ordinary mortal, came into view, followed by a pack of dogs of size and shape I had never before encountered."²⁷

He continues:

“These dogs, dozens of them, were running through the marigolds, and yet the flowers were neither bent nor crushed. Small bells had been tied like collars around the necks of these dogs; a strange tinkling, a clear crystalline sound not of this world, filled the air. The attendants, who were carrying upon their emaciated shoulders the burden of that outsized palanquin, were murmuring and whispering a strange song, the words of which went as follows: 'Sau, sau, sau, sau, sau!' Two women followed the palanquin. Their legs were twisted and their faces turned backwards.”²⁸

From this we intuit that he feels he has killed his beloved fanny by building the house on its haunted ridge and we come to know later that he anticipates the words of another well – meaning presence. This has the same narrative quality of realist historical reportage, and tells of the fates of subsequent occupants of the house. First, we are introduced to the beautiful and sensuous Dona Rosa and her vacuous lover, Captain Wolcott, Dona Rosa's husband Wolcott is a devotee of Satanist Aleister Crowley. Wolcott first encountered his mentor, Aleister Crowley in Ceylon. Wolcott has lived briefly with Crowley in Paris. They are evicted from a series of hotels when they avoid paying their bills. Crowley has cast Wolcott's horoscope and makes a believer out of him. Crowley has found great reassurance in the cosmos, in astrology, numerology, and the occult. It satisfies his inner need for unity and order, his longing for something to believe in.

Wolcott signs a cheque at Crowley's behest- a forgery, from the consequences of which he thinks magic can shield him but it could not, and so, to avoid unpleasantness, he becomes Captain Wolcott makes his way to India. He and Crowley have allowed a party of mountaineers to die, so there are spirits waiting in the wings for vengeance. These are the

spirits of three who stalk Wolcott, impatiently waiting the moment of retribution, which will also be their moment of release. Crowley has already been dealt with.

Revenge for cruelty is also the story we step back into the previous inhabitants being the Englishmen devoured by the panthers mentioned at the outset by Lohaniju: a sadistic madman and his lover who mess with blood sacrifice until the locals arrange their own ritual slaughter to cleanse the house. Marcus and Munro are silly dilettantes with an appetite for pain and sadism. They are pathetic impostors who pollute the house and its environs with their stupidities.

Munro considered himself as a marksmen hunter, every weekend he and his punters get the locals in searching the surrounding forests of oak and deodar for young panthers, which they catch in a cleverly laid traps and bring to the big house. These panthers are taken to the tennis field, and are tied by long ropes. For one week they undergo a special regimen, some of them extravagantly fed with veal and viands, some starved until they grow weak with hunger.

They drink the blood of slaughtered goats: "They were, all in all, an earnest lot of people, but their collective aura was ugly in the extreme. For some, magic was a release from the tedium of daily life, for others, a means of seizing power, a form of conditioned greed, a desire for more and more and more."²⁹ After getting satiated with their sadistic play Marcus and Munro leave for sexual pleasure to their bedroom, a cloud of hemp and heroin trailing after them. They are addicted to this sacred hemp, the 'bhang' of the hills, which give them a tremendous appetite, both physical and sexual, and make them easier to handle for the servants. They decide to throw a male child of perfect innocence to the black beast of the night to revive the flagging of their energies. They bribe a servant to steal a child from its mother. After slaughtering Marcus hurls the infant to the hungry animals in the tennis field.

In Ranikhet, the child's mother, Saruli is frantic with worry and grief. Her husband who is a Rajput goes from his home to the bleak *Bhairav* temple. Here an old woman contemplates him sorrowfully and tells "he is gone chela". The Headman of the village comes to know about the slaughtering of the child through his own son who loves a washerwoman. She is the same washerwoman who washes the clothes of Marcus and Munro. The washerwoman throws the silver earrings in the tennis field which has been gifted to her by headman's son because he denies marrying her on the basis of caste. He ventures valiantly in the tennis field hunting for the silver earrings.

At the edge of the field where nettles and dandelion grow, he finds the index finger of the slaughtered infant. He comes to know, as every villager, does, of Saruli's child that is lost, and her husband's vow not to return home until he finds her. He rushes home to his father, to inform him of his discovery: "The five elders of the village met a formal panchayat to discuss what was to be done. 'We have been indulging these madmen too long,' the mukhiya said solemnly, his bushy moustache bristling with potent. 'It is time to retrieve our Pahari honour and show them that we are not afraid.'"³⁰

With great stealth and secrecy, the villagers collect panthers from forest far and near, and keep them in specially constructed wooden cages near the temple of Kalika. The cooks at the house begin putting the quantities of laxatives into the food. Marcus and Munro both begin to have trouble with their insides, and in a week, they are debilitated beyond belief. On the amavasya night, during the festival of Diwali, the village headman comes to visit Munro and his lover Marcus. He brings with him a hamper of sweets, and some crackers, which are expensive and hard to come by in the village. They both are gratified by this show of

affection, in token of which they give the village mukhiya a bottle of rum, and one of port as well for good measure. In the midst of these smiling pleasantries, upon a pre-arranged signal the villagers, all of them for once united, despite the boundaries of caste, by their common anger, let loose two-score panthers they bring with them, and beat them with drums and cries into the big house. Then, after securely locking the front door, they lit the firecrackers and celebrate the justice of their cause with the rum and the port.

Marcus and Munro, who have both the luck of the devil with them, run up the stairs and manage to find refuge in the dressing room, Munro reaches out for his pistol, a handy Mauser which he keeps hidden with his underwear in a drawer in the dressing room. All of sudden a hill monkey hurls down to descend upon the slate roof of the house, the sound of his fall so startles the already terrified Munro that his pistol goes-off, the bullet searing through the heart of Marcus. Munro cannot bear being the cause of Marcus's death and shot himself. The next day panthers are fed with poisoned bait that is thrown into the house by the villagers. After the bodies of the dead animals are disposed of, Saruli's husband enters the house, accompanied by the mukhiya.

There is a calm about the rooms that convinces them that the Englishmen are indeed dead. Although Sarul's husband has obtained his revenge, but he can never go back to his home because of the oath he has taken to his wife that he will return with his child, and a thakur does not break his word lightly. As for the washerwoman, she whose silver earrings has wrought this revenge, she leaves the hills and becomes a successful courtesan in Bareilly.

It is only several days later that the four officers named Dunbar, Forbear, Kennedy and Turner from the army cantonment at Ranikhet come to hear the rumours of the massacre. When they question the locals, they meet with a wall of silence. A year to the day, Turner hangs himself

from the rafters of the barracks at Bareilly, where he is posted. Kennedy was drowned at sea and people thought that he committed suicide.

The army decides to requisition the house, to scorch the strange and disturbing rumours that have quite naturally come into circulation. A colonel called Osborne takes over the blood-soaked house only to commit suicide. The house continues to nurture anger, a sullen quiet, a waiting. Strange things begin to happen-at last they look strange to colonel. Osborne has seen the world and he is too old to be afraid, but he knows that something is not right in the house. On one cold February evening rape a hill woman, and, after taking a satisfaction of her, shoots himself through the temple and die.

After Osborne, not a soul venture near the house. Even the servants stay away and then Father Benedictus comes to the house. He is the only human who can reach to the ghost in the house. Father Benedict is having mastery over theology. He is a guest at the Parsonage in the cantonment but he does not like it there, it is simply too neat and orderly for him. He is a man given to long rambling walks. It is only on one of his butterfly expeditions that Father Benedictus comes across the house. Instantly he seeks the permission of the new colonel to stay in the house for a six month. The permission is hastily granted. Father Benedictus can see and recognize ghost living in the house.

He addresses the ghost with respect and affection. The ghost learns a lot from the Father about the human life. A few months later Father moved into the house, a strange smell begins to emanate from the dressing room, the one where Marcus and Munro met their gory end but Father Benedictus is not surprised: "The only way to drive out the devil, when he does not yield to texts or scripture, is to jeer and flout him, for his is a proud spirit, which cannot endure scorn,' he said, in his usual gentle and even tone."³¹

Then he asks ghost to leave: "I have now to exorcise the source of his evil he told me gravely. To do so I must further evoke it. Go away, far away, beyond harm and danger. Do not return until I call for you. Goodbye."³² The ghost comes back to the house only to find father Benedictus dead. On a distant shore ghost sees the woman is in the last stage of pregnancy that Father Benedictus loved and she does not know that the father of her unborn child has departed this world. Obviously, the temporal setting of the novel move to and fro, and increasingly the study finds that they (to use Rachita's word) "interlap" Dona Rosa. In a blissful moment just before in the blue dress with an armful of flowers who has greeted Rachita when she returns to the house. A vision of her has also comforted Rachita as a child when she and dogs appear in all episodes in the book. Fanny's watercolours are commented on following the "panther" narrative.

The moving back through time is confused but linked by repeated message that the past is to be placated and left behind. Airee's witches have their feet turned backwards and are described by one character (in a moment of clarity as he surrenders his life) as pursuing the past. Father Benedictus speaks as a spirit before departing to the other world after exorcising the house.

Dona Rosa makes him peace as she dies, teaching her familiar spirit that "everything that had to be had been. The past was over, the future was waiting"³³.

This is the lesson that Rachita has also has to learn as she is led beyond the blank confines of the present moment of convalescence and avoidance, painting her nails and writing in a notebook to keep her demons at bay. The blurring of times in the story (the shadowing of one time by another) is achieved, in part, by shifts in narrative voice. Reverend Cockerell's diary matches Rachita's self-questioning notebook jottings, though the first-person narration in

both also matches Lohaniju's story telling and the voice of section three. This section is narrated by a spirit wandering in limbo, but attached to the house. As a being that is freed of portal constraints, it comments sardonically not only on the clumsiness of bodily function (giving a nicely balanced dry edge to the several lubricious sex scenes of the third section), but also on the limitations of mortal linear times and the need to be instructed in the art of human speech.

Words go with perspective and memory rather than the synesthetic synchronicity of spiritual experiencing. This section is in fact, a narrative in search of the voice, or a voice in search of a vehicle of expression.

It becomes difficult to tell from which time or presence this narration might be coming to us, since the spirit has been the one comforting Fanny Cockerell, observing the mad Englishmen, getting too involved with Dona Rosa(in intervening to get rid of Wolcott, it causes the destruction of a benign true spirit and echoes Cockerell's last words: "God knows I meant well" and comforting the child Rachita .It mentions the young woman who comes to the house seeking herself and comments on the negative "vibes" of her Doors records, thereby placing itself after the " present" of Rachita's own narration, and thus "outside" of the novel. Gokhale said in an interview with Pawan Vema: "The book began in a very strange way. It began as a diary of a missionary. I don't know why I started writing the diary, but it gave a certain balance to the book. It set the historical time-frame and geographical boundaries."³⁴

This spirit narration is folded into real, present writing of Rachita, who admits to hallucinatory dreams and the sense of being taken over by others. She, in fact uses her dislike of poetry as a means of resisting the loss of her own voice to the shadows haunting her.

However, in her sense of co- presence with the ghosts of the house, perhaps she has become their medium.

In the end, we cannot see whether one set of shadows is more real than another. Rachita sees arrival of both a former student, Zenobia Desai and Dona Rosa, the birth of pups by the dog that has always accompanied her, and the spirits of the panthers from over half a century ago. The “real” Zenobia comments that there are too many presences in the house, and we learn also that Lohaniju is possibly around one-forty years old. He asserts that time moves in circles and that he “remembers” in his role as “guardian of the house”.

It is at this point that Lohaniju repeats what the narrator has already but not yet said, “I belong to this house and this house belongs to me”.³⁵ Rachita has a vision of redeeming plenitude and apparently moves back into the real present, taking control of her script and having exhausted her “repertoire of memory”, but the passages of the novel’s worlds do not end there because the author’s note outside of the story suggests that it is also her own story, that she is part of the text, that it has written itself through her.

Rachita Tiwari regularly notes the connection between Pahari idiom and the spirit of place, and the troubling artificiality of English –medium education – promising, towards the end of her narrative, that she will one day return to “the dialect of my tribe”. This is also played out musically in her thesis of Led Zeppelin, the doors, the moody blues versus Lohaniju’s preference for Kishore Kumar. For “all her loathing of poetry and suspicion of English though, the narrator constantly quotes bits of Shakespeare, Milton, Dylan Thomas, Emily Dickinson and other writers (Rimbaud, Emily Bronte, Sappho, and Coleridge). Intertextuality prompts the thought that: The past exercise a strong grasp over the future, it terrorises the

future to be repeat the mistakes of past. I came to the hills to obliterate my past, to seek refuge in the immediate present. here was my past stalking me again.”³⁶

She awaits the “return to Strength and continuity”, but if a ghost is “a voice trapped in time...displaced by accident” then she as a ventriloquist of English writer whose voice is displaced by the historical accident of Empire – is herself a ghost, or at least a medium ghostwriting the tales of others. Her story of nested narration includes an exorcist, however, and as Rachita works her way to facing herself in the mirror and mixing with the outside world, so too, she exorcises the accusing voice of her dead lover, Anand –and, by retelling the stories of the house, lay its ghosts to rest.

In the process, Rachita meets with one of Lord Airee’s witches on the night hillside and exchanges ritual greeting thus escaping danger. She does this by dispensing with English. Indeed, she does away with all her languages, save for the magical language of place, an instinctual “language of demotic moonlight” –and also of poetry. Around the same time, she begins to hear her own inner voice and resumes life in the world.

In doing so, Rachita enacts a further twist to story: she takes over custody of the house and closes her tale with the equivocal words, “I think I know that I will remain”. In laying the ghosts of the house, she has become what she claims at the book’s beginning (repeating what Lohaniju says of himself) that she and the house are one: She has, in turn, become the spirit of the place; in recounting all the other stories to become free of their shadows. She has written herself into the script, and she and her writing are folded about each other.

The spirit of place is the spirit of time management- of recurrence and pattern, memory and present perception. It is the matter of narration – point of view, the site from which a voice comes. Like Allan Sealy’s instructions on how to create suspense within his complexly

narrated epic *The Trotter*- Namita Gokhale's narrator is ironically self-aware that effects are achieved through conventions: she comments, at the dramatic times of Lohaniju collapse, that it was like a student essay on "Some Conventions of the gothic", and she breaks the script.

There is a touch of that philosopher's slippery calculus of difference in *The Book of Shadows*, where in closed-off spaces that nonetheless strike "harmonic resonances" with each other and collectively incline asymptotically towards some pure but unattainable end. The past must be both legendary and historical; events have to be remembered as historical lest they should congeal into a haunting menace of closed tradition. Only then can the present be folded into the past without being more than a superficial distraction and without losing a vision of the future. All the books are books of shadows: all languages are medium – vehicles for ghostly voices and at the same time, necessary markers with which we exorcise the tyranny of the haunting past. In the words of the Spirit of Gokhale's place, "Reality is the multiple unfolding of all possible events" including their impossible shadows.

Born to a Kumaoni mother and a void of a blanked-out father – one may hypothesize: born out of a latent, dormant seed, a residue of one's past incarnations that Hinduism calls *piṇḍa*, therefore born into the human world in a womb that simultaneously functions as the tomb of the preceding state – the novel's protagonist abandons the "dream pool" of her childhood, the maternal "secret, hidden pool of resilience and faith" that she once could "access at will", for the phallic career in Delhi.

The trauma of birth, the trauma of sustaining life all these are starkly highlighted by Rachita's first childhood recollection. The primal scene/fantasy:

She is clearly not there, excluded, ejected from the desired fusion with the maternal womb. Joyless sex re-enacts the primary separation, mother is forced to become a passive receptacle, her fluidity staunch, the ensuing rupture displaced and forgotten, a compensatory fecundity posited instead: this is how separation works. Mother is all heterogeneity, erotic and destructive at the same time, but here heterogeneity splits her in two.³⁷

Fantasy precedes identity, identity is acquired at the expense of alienation – the two cannot be separated. It is precisely at the moment of alienation that Rachita assumes her identity, be it an imaginary one. Father is a void, for Rachita he has no existence, except as the prototypical signifier that painfully points to its underlying lack. The symbolic system attempts to drain the maternal fluidity, and indeed Rachita, who inevitably succumbs to Logos, after having been handed over to the city that embodies the paternal verticality, cannot but note: "I knew that although the first monsoon clouds had gathered themselves around Delhi the taps would inevitably be dry."³⁸

The inculcated, logocentric Anglophone discourse will frame Rachita's vision, a fixture that cannot let go its grip: "When I was young my favourite writer was Enid Blyton. I was in love with Fatty, and with the English countryside, with muffins and scones and tongue sandwiches."³⁹

After the acid attack she was aware of her condition. She admits that she was under treatment. Sandhya remarks:

“Not only nature but also supernatural elements play their role in Rachita’s recovery. It all started with the journal that Lohaniju gave her. Through unnerving she found it intriguing in many ways. It was about the house and its previous residents. Lohaniju also talks about the British residents and the way they were punished for their crimes by Airee, their folk God.”⁴⁰

6.3 Search for New Identity

Merriam Webster defines identity as “who some is, the quality, belief etc. that make a particular person or group different from others. The distinguishing character or personality of an individual.”⁴¹

Cambridge Dictionary describes identity as “the qualities of a person that make them different from others.”⁴²

Dictionary of Psychology defines identity as “the individual self. The personality. The condition of being the same in all essential characteristics.”⁴³

Identity refers to “identity is a person’s conception and expression of their individuality group affiliations. It may be defined as the distinctive characteristic belonging to an individual or shared by all members of a particular social category or group”⁴⁴

Identity is defined by Erikson as “a subjective sense as well as an observable quality of personal sameness and continuity, paired with some belief in the sameness and continuity of some shared world image. As a quality of unself-conscious living, this can be gloriously obvious in a young person who has found himself as he has found his communality. In him we see emerge a unique unification of what is irreversibly given--that is, body type and temperament, giftedness and vulnerability, infantile models and acquired ideals--with the

open choices provided in available roles, occupational possibilities, values offered, mentors met, friendships made, and first sexual encounters."⁴⁵

"In the social jungle of human existence, there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity."⁴⁶ In *The Book of Shadows*, Rachita Tiwari, a thirty-four-year-old lecturer in one of the college of Delhi where she teaches English Literature. She is an acid attack victim. After surgery she moves to Ranikhet and enjoys living there. She enjoys the greenery, the quite atmosphere. She expresses himself as betrayed by his lover.

After Anand's death she discontinues to attend her college for some time. When she resumes her best friend and colleague attack her Rachita aptly remarks: "I hadn't killed him, of that I was sure- and not even anger at his sister's revenge."⁴⁷ There is a tale told by Lohaniju of Munro & Marcus who lived in this house long ago. The former was a hunter interested in catching panthers and wild animal in the jungle by laying traps and, sadistically, confining victims in the fenced tennis court adjoining to the house. They were sadist and celebrate killing of his prey in a most cruel manner. They used to practice child sacrifice to suffice their devilish passion for dark magic and justified their barbarous act of human killing by offering the victim to animals.

Later on, their bodies are taken out from the temple and an official enquiry is conducted. It is found out that Englishman died, as a result, of some misadventure and not on account of any act of murder. Colonel Osborne moves there to reside. But still strange things continued to happen in the house. A shadow of violence still has its imprints there and colonel feels not at home, sometime sick and lonely. Cold breezes of the autumn also make his living uncomfortable. Subsequently, he commits suicide and is found dead on his way for hunting. Before that, he rapes a native woman carrying grass load for her cattle from the forest.

“I did not know then, on that cold February evening, that soon afterwards Osborne would pick up his gun from its perch in the paneled study wall and venture into the blustery twilight, successfully shoot at a rabbit, rape a hill woman returning from the forest with a bale of grass and fodder balanced upon her head, and, after taking his satisfaction of her, shoot himself through the temple and die.”⁴⁸

Father Benedictus joins as the next inmate of the house who is ex-military man and a renowned theology expert. He felt great pleasure seeing the enchanting scenic beauty of the place. He used to catch hold and enrich his stock of butterflies. He was, of course, not sensitive enough to hear the scream of flies when captivated and glued alive to his collection. At first Rachita rebuked but he soon after and mended his way and thus appeased her. Unfortunately, Father Benedictus left for his divine abode and his soul was separated from his body. As an observer, Rachita finds a strange supernatural spirit possessed him and thereafter he became silent and ultimately passed away.

Father Benedictus was no longer alive; his spirit had departed the body. His flesh was seated on the chair, the same chair that had gravitated to the ceiling and danced about the room. “He had only just departed from his body; the orifices were still in the process of closing their apertures. Crowds of hungry spirits, displaced like me from their natural host bodies, were jostling around the radiant cast-off sheath of his body, but it held such residual powers that they were all hesitant to enter.”⁴⁹

His death created a sense of despair in her heart. It is only for a short time that she could rise above the trivialities of life and rise above her insubstantial self. She felt as if she had become an orphan with the death of Father Benedictus: “I too was orphaned by his death. I still grieve the pain of his departure, although by giving me the gift of words and language he did me a

disservice, he bound me to schemes and symbols and dimensions which my insubstantial and incorporeal self should never have entered. Human affairs are an amazing web of trivialities, convoluted by interpersonal alignments into a weft and woof of longing and despair.”⁵⁰

All of them drank deep and started enjoying the food and also indulged in nonsense gossiping. Subsequently, there was a passionate exchange between males and females and all of them except Nicholas Kurtz slept near the fire place in the room greatly intoxicated Walcott got serious burns and he tried to douse the fire by jumping into the river flowing nearby house but it was too late as the burns were fatal and grave therefore, he died later Rachita aptly remarks:

“I realized just in time what was happening and took my leave of the flames to return to ride Wolcott. His hair was on fire, his long golden mane of hair, and the tangled curls around his penis. His heels were licked by flames of orange. Although the fire was hurting me, it was hurling me towards a luminescence of glowing pain, yet I had to save her. She could come to no harm. I entered the heart of the flame and I led it by my volition out of the house. I did not permit Wolcott to roll down the stairs, to flatten himself against the floor, for that might have saved him; it was not entirely in his destiny to die. There was a portion of his fate that awaited a different outcome, but I allowed it no passage. I had to escape him, I had to destroy him.”⁵¹

His hair shedding a million stars: it was a golden shower, the mane of a comet against the night sky. He ran, past the house, past the deodar tree, past the tennis court, until he reached the banks of narcissus where the stream bubbled and sang and the sated tiger burped in the shadows. He threw himself into the water, he quenched the fire, but it was too late. His skin had peeled off like the first layer of an onion, exposing the delicate tracery of capillary and

vein. His eyebrows were charred into a look of exaggerated surprise. His face- his handsome well-proportioned face- was a pantomime mask of pain.

After living in Ranikhet, with the passage of time, she started recovering and believing in life again. She believes I karma. She hopes for the best is yet to come.

Namita Gokhale Rachita fights her fear and became confident. In nature she finds solace and a new perspective towards life. She is now ready to face the world, with her new avatar. She is positive and hopeful. Now she does not want to escape from society. She will follow her heart.

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CHAPTER – 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 An Overview of Previous Chapters

7.2 Relevance in Modern Context

7.3 Major Findings

Chapter - 7

Conclusion

7.1 An Overview of Previous Chapters

Indian English women novelist have emerged very strongly and represented feminist perspective in a very strong manner. The introduction of English education in India facilitated the emergence of Indian English writers whose mother tongue is one of the native languages of India. There is a significant increase in the emergence of Indian English Women Novelists. The Pre-Independence period was dominated by male novelists, only a few women novelists emerged in this period like Toru Dutt, Swarna Kumara Ghosal, Swarna Kumari Debi, Cornelia Sorabji. The renowned female novelists of the post-1950's are Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Shobha Dey, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai and Nayantara Sahgal.

There are various Indian English Women novelists with influential and powerful writing. Their huge contribution to the field of Indian English Writing is commendable. This study explores female-centric ideologies in the select novels of Githa Hariharan and Namita Gokhale. Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night*, *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* and Namita Gokhale's *Paro: Dreams of Passion, Gods, Graves and Grandmother* and *The Book of Shadows* have been chosen for the present research study. The core objectives of the research study are to discuss Female-Centric Ideologies in the select novels of Githa Hariharan and Namita Gokhale. To explore Ethnicity and Culture, to examine isolation and conflicting conditions in the select novels of Githa Hariharan and Namita Gokhale. In order to cover the vast area of the present research, this study is divided into seven chapters.

The first chapter is introductory in nature and makes an attempt to peep into the history of Indian Writing in English. It also covers a brief survey of Indian English novels, a brief discussion on Indian English Women Novelists and their contribution, and it concludes by highlighting the information about the select novelists and their contribution in the growth and development of legacy of Indian English novels. The Indian Writing in English now has laden with branches like prose, poetry, drama, fiction. Indian English Prose began with Ram Mohan Roy. Mahatma Gandhi's *The Story of My Experiment with Truth* and Jawahar Lal Nehru's works include *Glimpses of the World History* and *Discovery of India* are landmarks of literary history. The great writers and philosophers like Dr. Radhakrishnan and Swami Vivekananda expressed their ideologies through speeches and writings that spread over volumes. The great thinkers like Madan Mohan Malviya, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, and Dayanand Saraswati have made significant contribution in education and social reforms.

The history of Indian Poetry in English began with poets like Henry Derozio, Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Sri Aurobindo. Toru Dutt was the first Indian poetess in English. Sarojini Naidu considered as the most prominent poetess of the colonial period. Rabindranath Tagore's *Geetanjali* was awarded with the Nobel Prize in 1913. The Post-Independence period is marked by a search for identity reflected in the poetry of poets like Nissim Ezekiel, A. K. Ramanujan, Jayant Mahapatra and Rajagopal Parthsarthy and so forth.

Indian Drama in English began with Krishna Mohan Banerjee's *The Persecuted*, Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *Ratnavali* and *Sermista* and Rabindranath Tagore wrote dramas in Bengali and a few of them was translated in English. Sri Aurobindo made an impact with dramas like *Eric*, *The King of Norway* and *Perseus, the Deliverer*. Bharti Sarabhai is the only

notable Pre-Independence woman playwright; her plays include *The Well of the People* and *Two Women*. Post-Independence dramatists include Asif Currimbhoy whose works include *The Captives*, *Goa*, and *The Dumb Dancer*. Girish Karnad who translated his plays into English, and his notable plays are *Tughlak*, *Hayavadana*, and *Naga-Mandala*, Dina Mehta's plays include *The Myth Maker*, *Getting Away with Murder* and *Brides are Not for Burning*, Manjula Padmanabhan and Mahesh Dattani.

Indian English Novel was the last to arrive on the Indian English Literature scenario. As during the initial years of Indian Writing in English poetry was dominated and followed by drama. In India, there is a great tradition of storytelling since the period of Rig Veda, Purana, and Upanishad. Sake Dean Mohomet in 1794 published *The Travels of Dean Mohomet*, was the first book published by an Indian in English. Then we have S.C. Dutt's *Republic of Orissa*. With the publication of *Rajmohan's Wife*, the Indian English novel expanded rapidly and thematic variety was introduced in the nineteenth century. The rise and development of Indian English Novel were felicitated by the influence of English education, national awakening. Indian novels in English emerged as a product of Indian soil with reference to techniques and themes.

The blooming of Indian English novels is generally regarded with the arrival of the trio – Mulk Raj Anand (*Untouchable*, *Coolie*, *Village*), R. K. Narayana (*Swami and Friends*, *The Dark Room*, *The English Teacher*) and Raja Rao (*Kanthapura*, *Serpent and the Rope*). The main themes of Indian English novels during this period are viz – the freedom struggle, communal tension, the predicament of poor and women etc. After this trio, the notable novelists are Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandaya, Khushwant Singh, R. P. Jhabvala, Nayantara Sahgal, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Bharti Mukherjee, Shobha Dey,

Arundhati Roy, who wrote on different aspects related to India and they highlighted poverty, caste system, religion, and tradition.

The depiction of women in literature has undergone many changes over the period of time. It portrays the different aspects related to the status and condition of women in society. The emergence of modern woman has given a wide range of variety to the writers to deal with an issue like as a quest for self, liberty, empowerment and sacrifice, upliftment and so on so forth. This study focusses on Githa Hariharan and Namita Gokhale. Hariharan focuses on women's lives, their relationship with other women, their ability to struggle amidst patriarchal society. Her remarkable works include *Gods, Graves and Grandmother* she talks about the odds of human existence, survival and struggle of socially handicapped women in traditional Indian society.

The second chapter is on custom and patriarchy in Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* where the research study focuses on socio-culture perspectives, analyses family bonding and moral values and discusses traditional and modern norms. Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* explores the life of Devi, Sita and Mayamma who belong to different generations. They fight for their survival, freedom and individually. The study observed that women are suppressed and exploited in the name of custom and tradition. Their desires are not valued. The characters in the novel represent contemporary Indian women of Indian society. They bring revolution and represent feminism and advocate freedom. are bringing about a silent revolution. They represent the third wave of feminism and strongly advocating liberation. The novelist provides peep into Indian culture and portray the position of women in Indian society. The story also describes journey of Indian women from tradition

to modernity. The main character finally is ready to find herself and disowns her status of 'other'. She returns to her mother, to rediscover her true identity.

The chapter third is about dialogic paradigm as ingrained in Githa Hariharan's *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*. It discusses the journey of self-exploration and the concepts of alienation and self-exile as elaborated in the select novel. Githa Hariharan describes Elimma, Mangala and Jameela as Vasu's feminine ghosts. The myth and reality with a special reference to patriarchy is examined. The dynamics of Githa Hariharan's protest against the traditional system is also given an expression. Vasu is a teacher of Mani, a disabled child. Teaching him is a challenging task. Vasu succeeds in this task. *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* becomes a discourse on the way of teaching and at the same time learning the real meaning of life. Its emphasis on life is unpredictable and there are no fix routes or perfect planning for living a trouble-free life.

The chapter fourth is on locating women in Namita Gokhale's *Paro: Dreams of Passions* wherein the research study makes an attempt to unfold the broad concept of feminism, draws out emergence of new women and establishes an analogy by covering marital relationship and status of woman.

Through the depiction of her female protagonist Paro Namita Gokhale seeks to deconstruct the conventional concept of womanhood. Paro is a rebel who flouts all the social and moral restrictions imposed on woman in the society. She, unlike a typical Indian woman is a perfectly liberated soul far from being a prisoner of her own sex. Her conduct and behavior appear to be shocking and immoral, viewed from a male dominated patriarchal view of womanhood. The novel has a strong cultural perspective. The feminist approach is

predominating. The whole novel is about women and about woman's emancipation and empowerment.

The chapter fifth discusses ethnicity and culture in Namita Gokhale's *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*. The chapter explains ethical issues and challenges, discloses pseudo spiritual practices and have at length discussion on generation gap and family values. Namita Gokhale depicts a woman's quest for identity and freedom. She talks about the problems, and fears of the women, sufferings, and pain of female in the patriarchal society. The novelist talks about the female exploitation and treatment towards them. She raises voice for women identity and demands social justice and freedom for women.

The chapter sixth entitled as isolation and alienation in Gokhale's *The Book of Shadows* discusses voice of resentment, describes supernatural elements and their influence and explains Search for New Identity. The book shows the emergence of a new woman.

7.2 Relevance in Modern Context

The present research study is very helpful in understanding how the Female-Centric Ideologies are developed in the selected novels of Githa Hariharan and Namita Gokhale. It will bring forth the female concerns of contemporary Indian society. It might also help in revealing the aspects of the fictional characters. Thus, their identity as women could be explored.

Githa Hariharan perceives herself basically as a story-teller because she deems a writer great if she/he has imbibed and mastered the art of narrating stories. What is more important for a writer in telling stories is to tell other peoples' stories. This offers the writer an opportunity to relive the life of others, to probe their psyche, the pain suffering and loss experienced by

others. In order to achieve this end, the author has to depict different lives and events drawn together. Memory and fantasy is essential in storytelling. *The Thousand Faces of Night*, *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* accord centrality to memory. *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* is conspicuous for its dexterous blending of both memory and fantasy. The fables in the novel are largely based on fantasy.

Hariharan's emphasis on the articulation of silences and gaps in the lives of her characters, especially women correspond to her engagement with telling other peoples' stories. These stories emerge from the closed recesses of the consciousness of the characters whose voice and presence has been invisible so far. In telling other peoples' stories Hariharan finds an opportunity to give chance to alternative voices. It provides space for the narration of the same event by different people but also allows for alternative/contradictory views to emerge as the events are retold or recalled.

The thematic range of Hariharan's novels might be limited or narrow but she manages to achieve her goal - the representation of human condition. In doing so, she deals among other things with pain, suffering, loss, power, domination, cruelty and so on. However, she perceives the feelings of compassion and tenderness as a sure remedy to loss.

Hariharan advocates the vision of a life marked by the feelings of togetherness, compassion and understanding. This is why she professes herself to be an enemy of bigotry, fundamentalism and prejudice. She thinks that erecting walls between two individuals or communities is the worst of crimes against humanity. All the boundaries are human-made but instead of making life comfortable and meaningful, these boundaries create gulfs and distances, generate hatred, prejudice and malice. But everyone must come together to detoxify the society through love, togetherness and compassion. As Hariharan is still writing,

it would be too early to predict her exact position as a writer but the fact remains that she has the potential of a great writer, and her readers may expect better and more sublime work from her pen.

7.3 Major Findings

The portrayal of women in Indian novels has undergone many changes over the period of time. It portrays the different aspects related to the status and condition of women in society. Githa Hariharan and Namita Gokhale in their select novels offer us image of modern women and advocate women empowerment. The emergence of modern woman has given a wide range of variety to the writers to deal with an issue like as a quest for self, liberty, empowerment and sacrifice, upliftment and so on so forth. The main findings of the present research study are as:

- The growth and development of Indian English Women's writing in India is divided into four phases. In the very first phase, Indian Patriarchy and gender, freedom and bondage were given main focus in the first phase while the second phase emphasis was on the strength of women to revolt against subordination.
- The third phase shows a regressive movement in the path of progress as it centers on the women writers and their experiences from the outer world. The fourth phase of women writing witnesses diversion from the stereotypical images and turned to be assertive of their qualities, position, and outlook. In this phase, the silent voices started speaking for their position in society.
- The select novels represents women predicament and emergence of the 21st century Indian women.
- They oppose atrocities marginalisation, exploitation and gender discrimination.

- They represent quest for identity, liberty and individualisation.
 - They outthrew the traditional rituals and social-norms which force them to remain isolated and deserted in the society.
 - The leading female characters desire to contribute in the overall development of society whether it is social, cultural or economical.
 - The female characters represent the image of new women but still they are deeply rooted in the age-old value based Indian society.
 - The study also finds strong family relationships and family bond.
 - The female characters portray the women of modern age. However, they have their deep faith in institution of marriage.
 - They represent the essence of Indian philosophical thoughts like as self-realisation, compassion, love, individuality, sacrifice, family values, moral and ethical codes, honesty, truthfulness, loyalty, responsibility renunciation and so on so forth.
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Annexure(s)



Women Predicament and Manifestation of Self - Identity in Githa Hariharan's the Thousand Faces of Night: A Study in Socio- Psychological Perspective

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Abstract

“A woman is required to accept her status of other, make herself object’ and ‘renounce her Autonomy” (Beauvoir,280)

The Thousand Faces of Night talks about the underworld of women's life. Hariharan expresses the significance and relevance of their suffering to the great epic periods of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. As from them, Indian women appeal to their life models. Githa Hariharan has carefully observed human life. She has seen the social structure and grown with the changing paradigms. She is a voracious reader and a conscious novelist who talks boldly about women and their issues. Identity may be defined as the typical characteristic belonging to any given individual or shared by all members of a particular social category. This paper makes an attempt to study socio-psychological in the light of women perspective in Githa Hariharan's The Thousands Faces of Night.

KEYWORDS- Identity, Suffering, Society, Discontentment, Culture

Introduction

A well-known psychologist, Carol Gilligan, “proposed that men and women possess very different paths toward developing a sense of self, including the manner in which they develop



moral judgments. A woman's sense of self is not separate from a man's, according to Gilligan, inasmuch that it is a solid state of identity and is an important part of human development.

It is different from a man's, however, in the way it is developed and the motivation behind women's behaviours, ideas, and systems of morality. External motivators or measurable things do not develop a woman's sense of self; instead, a woman's sense of self is driven by an intrinsic, interior sense of care, community, and responsibility.” *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development* (1982). In that work, Gilligan argued that girls exhibit distinct patterns of moral development based on relationships and on feelings of care and responsibility for others.” She argues that a “women identity is defined in a context of relationship and judged by a standard of responsibility and care.”

According to Gilligan, the alienation and separation that many women feel well as the social pressures are borne of a man's view of the world. This view is governed by morality ruled by judgments and logic, while a woman's sense of morality, self, and navigating the world is ruled by the desire to feel connected and responsible. This is the greatest source of women developing their sense of self and feeling somewhat alien. The entire world is structured to fit a man's sense of self, while women are left to flounder and driven to find connection and commiseration in one another. This is a beautiful aspect of Gilligan's theory.

Identity is a person’s conception and expression of their individuality or association, as per sociology. According to Dictionary identity is the distinct personality of an individual regarded as a persisting entity. The term comes from the French word identity, which finds its linguistic roots in the Latin noun identities, itself a derivation of the Latin adjective idem meaning "the same”.

According to Taylor, personal identity is a personal moral code or compass, a set of moral principles, ends, or goals that a person uses as a normative framework and a guide to action.

Identity is “people’s concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others” (Hogg and Abrams 1988, 2).

Identity refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivises are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivises” (Jenkins 1996, 4).

Society can be defined as the group of people who share the same culture. It consists of the people and institution around us. Culture is the way of life of a group people the behaviours



beliefs values and symbols that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next

The emergence of women novelists is one of the important features of the Post-Independent Indian English Literature. Indian women novelist after independence has made far-reaching changes in the field of Indian English novels. They focus on the suppressed and marginalized section of society. Githa Hariharan in the world of Indian English Novels arrives during the nineties. She is included in the category of those women novelists who not only contributed to the field of literature but also brought radical changes in society for feminist and social cause. Started writing in the final decades of the twentieth century, Githa Hariharan is one famous novelist in the galaxy of Indian English Literature. Her themes in her novels reveals her keen concern for the welfare of women. Women occupy a central position in her mostly novels. She as a conscious person has observed human life, social structure and grown along with the changing paradigm. She has vast creative output to her credit. Her works includes- *The Thousands faces of night* (1992), *The Ghost of Vasu Master* (1994), *When Dreams Travel* (1999), *In Times of Siege* (2003), and *Fugitive Histories* (2009). Also, she has authored a collection of short stories, *The Art of Dying* (1993).

The Thousands Faces of Night: A Saga of Devi, Sita and Mayamma

The Thousand Faces of Night is a story about three women Sita, Devi, Mayamma. In the novel, the novelist draws the position of Indian women in traditional male-dominated Indian society. The stories of the three women uncover the diverse dimensions of women's oppression. The battle of Devi with men and society, her inner and outer dilemma, tensions that a woman had to face in her life. The novelist blends the three lives; a foreign return young girl Devi, her self-sacrificing natured mother Sita, and an old caretaker woman Mayamma.

In the words of Erik Erikson – “In the social jungle of human existence, there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity.” In the society, women are exploited physically, socially and psychologically. The humiliation, exploitation, and harassment of women by the male are major concerns discussed by the novelist. In the novel, she discusses the patriarchal brutality and the way women have been marginalised in the name of tradition and custom. In accordance to this Jean Baker Miller says “The woman is not encouraged to take her own needs seriously. To explore them, to try to act them as a separate individual. She is enjoyed from



engaging all of her own resources and thereby prevented from developing some valid and reliable sense of her own worth. Instead, the woman is encouraged to concentrate in the needs and developments of man.”

Devi the protagonist was living in the USA, for her studies. On her mother’s wish, she returned back to India. In the USA, she refuses the marriage proposal of Dan (her boyfriend). Amma’s letters brought with them an unspoken message of loneliness, poignant in its quiet dignity... But the image of her alone by the sea teased me like a magnet.” (Hariharan,16).

Devi’s womanhood was set against the backdrop of her grandmother’s tales. She seeks to instil in her granddaughter virtues such as self-sacrifice, responsibility, endurance, and perseverance “My grandmother’s stories were no ordinary bedtime stories. She chose each for a particular occasion, a story in reply to each of my childish questions. She had an answer for every question. But her answers were not simple, they had to be decoded. A comparison had to be made, an illustration discovered, and a moral drawn out.” (Hariharan,27)

Devi’s mother Sita selects Mahesh for Devi, who works in a multinational company in Bangalore. The marriage holds no charm as there is no affection between them. Being a manager, he believes in managing everything in life as he does for his company and marriage is just a required milestone to him. “He is unable to pull himself out from emotional filthiness and he is a poor manager of emotions; his faint nature could never make him a reliable husband.” When Mahesh is on tours Devi feels “like a child whose summer holiday had slipped away from her when she was not looking” (Hariharan,50). “...This then is marriage, the end of ends, two or three brief encounters a month, when bodies stutter together in lazy, inarticulate lust. Two weeks a month when shadowy stranger who casually strips me of my name, snaps his figure and demands a smiling handmaiden.” (Hariharan, 54)

Devi follows the ways of life to a traditional woman from the stories of Baba. Baba is her father-in-law, who is a retired Sanskrit Professor. He narrates to her some stories of ideal “mythical women, virtuously of womanhood and the path of salvation to a woman”. She feels that the stories of Baba direct and demand her to lead a traditional Indian life. He elaborates codes of virtuous women and the role to be played by a woman in married life.



Devi does her best to be a dutiful wife and daughter-in-law, like her mother Sita. But somehow, she feels her life incomplete and boring. There was no emotional connection between Mahesh and Devi. “He is far too civilised to raise his hand and bring it down on my rebellious body. He snarls instead about women’s neuroses and my faulty upbringing.” (Hariharan,74).

Mahesh satisfies his physical desires without paying any attention to Devi's feelings and emotions and his insensitiveness and inability to understand her properly shocks her and gives rise to a feeling of splendid loneliness in her. He is totally insensitive towards Devi possessing a personality to get away from loneliness she decided to take a job but Mahesh does not permit her so as discussed in the lines - “Devi was not allowed to work outside the house. Mahesh discourages her and asks what will you do when the baby comes?” (Hariharan, 64). She cannot play cards with Mahesh’s friends because she is a woman. Her freedom is always restricted. Mahesh is a typical traditional man who believes a woman should complete her duties as a wife, and as a mother. She should not be independent. Devi is snapped as shown in the given lines- “This is what comes of educating a woman. Your grandmother was barely literate. Wasn’t she a happier woman than you are? What is it you want?” (Hariharan, 74).

As per Palani “Devi's depressed life represents thousands of women's life and they expect the hands of their husbands for everything yet mostly they are neglected. Mahesh views the role of a wife as confined to the hours only. He does not even take into account her education. Devi's married life is quite unhappy and she finds many things lacking in her life. She finds herself in a deep despair and disappointment and feels marriage has been imposed on her and she considers marriage a torture to her and it hangs like a knife above her neck always.”

Devi thinks her independence is being blocked by the marital bond, and the gaping emptiness threatens her very life. She is left alone in the house with Mayamma, the old housekeeper, and she is filled with a feeling of futility and loneliness. Baba only persuades Devi, not Mahesh, and he believes that only women must adhere to Indian culture, not men.

Commenting upon the patriarchy, Nayar says- “The women is ‘interpellated’ as girl-child, daughter, mother, wife but made to believe that these are her ‘natural’ roles. In fact, she is carefully nurtured into these roles -a process of cultururation by being made to adopt certain



postures, prefer certain kinds of function, and behave in certain ways. Her position as women is created in advance of her; she is simply inserted into the ideology of patriarchy even though she never realises this.”

As her father-in-law passes away and her gentle mother-in-law Parvathimma (her mother-in-law) leaves the house to seek redemption (as shown in the novel) elsewhere, her sense of idleness grows. She is unable to change her husband's mindset, and all of her attempts fail, so she becomes aware of her condition and leaves home because she is unable to change the actions of men in her life, and she portrays modern women.

She was drawn to Gopal because she couldn't find joy and satisfaction in her married life. Devi leaves her marriage and walks out. Devi soon realises her place in Gopal's life, and the excitement of a new relationship fades away. Gopal, Devi discovered, is no better than Mahesh. Devi knew the time was right; if she did not act now, she would be forever condemned to drift between worlds ‘a floating island detached from solidity of the mankind’. (Hariharan,138)

Devi is described by the author as a modern-day feminist with virtues of self-assertion and inner self-identity. She argued that a person has complete power over his or her destiny and that neither society nor organised religion should restrict our ability to live authentically. Women, on the other hand, have been relegated to the role of others since men asserted the category of self, of a subject. As a result, women have little substance as an extension of male fantasies and fears. Since all cultural representations of the world around us have been produced by men, women must ‘dream through the dream of men’ (The Second Sex, 48).

Devi also depicts her escapist fantasies as a way to express her marginalisation as a woman and yearns for liberation. As shown in the lines “I lived a secret life of my own: I became a woman warrior, a heroine. I was Devi. I rode a tiger and cut off evil, magical demons heads.” (Hariharan,41)

In Indian society, the biological expectation from a woman is significant. In the modern world to the status of a woman in the family depends much on her child-bearing capacity. Also, society whether modern or traditional holds great importance to a woman giving birth to a male child. Mayamma is the character in the novel who suffered from male domination and



oppression at its highest peak. She was tortured by her mother-in-law for not bearing a child. After some time “as a result of long prayers, “she gives birth a baby boy. The importance of a child is highlighted in the lines by Devi’s grandmother- “If you don’t have a child, you displease the gods; if the gods are angry, they make sure that you don’t have a child.” (Hariharan,33)

Her husband one day takes all the money and leaves the house. After this incident, she was devastated and had to do odds jobs. Soon she met with Parvatiamma and becomes a caretaker in her house. Mayamma had been thrown into the waters of her womanhood well before she had learned to swim. She had learned about lust, the potential of unhidden bestial cruelty, first-hand. She had coveted birth, endured life, nursed death.” (Hariharan,136)

Ragini pointed out that “the mind or the deepest thought of Indian woman is generally influenced by violent powers that control unfairly her acceptance and admittance of defeat resulting in the varieties of reactions that include protest, revenge and violence.”

Sita is the character who is portrayed as an ideal wife, mother, daughter-in-law. She has also suffered from disappointment throughout her life. In patriarchal culture, she has sacrificed her interests and endured secretly in order to live and achieve ideal womanhood.

As described by grandmother-Sita, the mother of Devi has brought a veena as a part of her dowry. “her parents had heard her talent even as a little child and had trained her with the best teacher they could find. She played so beautifully; our household came to a standstill”. But once when the ‘pooja ghar’ (a place of worshipping in the house) was found undone. (‘the flowers have not been picked; the floor had not been swept’)

Her father-in-law came and shouted at her while she was playing veena. - ‘Put That Veena away. Are you a wife, a daughter-in-law?’ (Hariharan.30). After this incident she never her touch the veena again. She became a dutiful daughter-in-law the neighbours praised. Sita resembles Gandhari (a character in the Mahabharata, mother of Kauravas, who blindfold herself knowing about her husband blindness.) she had submitted unwillingly to in front of patriarchal domination.



The notions of survival, identity emerges in the Thousand Faces of Night. As per Pradeep Triikka says- "...compels the reader to undergo an enigmatic experience, along with the protagonist, straight from a women's life. She ferrets out the struggle of Indian women in her affiliation with society and man for the sake of preserving her identity. The novel brings alive the underworld of the Indian women's lives- where most dreams are thwarted and the only constant is survival. The sharper relevance of the whole issue is on universal suffering of women in the subcontinent."

Sita and Mayamma had faced many hurdles in the process of self-development. They have suffered sorrow and discontentment in their life. Both have sacrificed their desires and suffered in silent, to attain the ideal womanhood in the society. But Devi is not woman who suffer in silent, give up her desire. She is a rebellion, not a passive acceptor of the traditional norms of society. As she expresses in the lines- "I lived a secret life of my own. I became a woman worrier, a heroine. I was Devi, I rode, a tiger and cut off evil magical demon's heads." (Hariharan,41)

According to Subhashree "All the protagonist in the novel have been victimised in such a way that their very individuality has been in threat, or they have been shown to be under constant suppression, wherein breaking free from those chains have been the crux of their existence. Legal rights, property rights, right to suffrage, right to conception and abortion are considered secondary to the issue of quest for identity. Thus, the quest for identity in all forms, whether in the form of silent regression or open rebellion has found a place in the novel through the characters like Sita, Devi."

As a novelist, she focused on the marginality and subjugation of women. She also depicts her women's character to face society and to strive and survive with dignity. She presents the women who dared to go beyond the limit set for them. Her novel talks about feminist sensibility as an onslaught on patriarchy, gender crisis.

"She has dared to portray the roles of women that refuse to conform to the male-controlled model of femineity. It is a feminist in her who has dared to break the conspiracy of silence against the oppressive, unequal man- women relationship and who want to change it."



The novel ends with Devi returning to her home back to her mother “Suitcase in hands, Devi opened the gate and looked wonderingly at the garden, wild and overgrown, but lush in spite of its sand choked roots. Then she quickened her footsteps as she heard the faint sounds of a veena, hesitant and childlike, inviting her into the house.” (Hariharan,139).

The Novel depicted the journey of self-quest of three characters Devi, Sita, Mayamma as- “the women who walked a tight rope and struggled for some balance; for some means of survival, they could fashion for themselves.” (Hariharan, 135) Thus, the novelist skilfully depicted the roles of women rejecting to confirm to the male-controlled model of femininity. The women character in the novel strives and survive with dignity and determination and fight with all the hurdles of life. Her women character dared to go beyond the limit set for them. “It is feminist in her who has dared to break the conspiracy of silence against the oppressive, unequal man -woman relationship and who wants to change it.” (Fulzele,25)

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डॉ० सुनील कुमार मानस

संपादक

डॉ० योगेश कुमार तिवारी

प्रबंध-संपादक

श्री सुधीर कुमार तिवारी

Githa Hariharan's Female Protagonists in The Thousand Faces of Night: Shifting Identities and Creating New Paradigms

Dr. Naveen K. Mehta*

Soumya Tiwari **

Abstract

Post-Independence, women novelists of India have minutely analysed the psychological, emotional crises experienced by the women in the Indian society. Through their tremendous work, they present the issues of Indian womanhood. The women novelists of the current century have thematic consideration; however, the treatment taste of their own. The image of women in Indian English novels has undergone a through a radical change from ancient unselfish women characters to characters that think over and urge for identity, which indicates the emergence of new women. They drive their role models from the great epics of India -The Ramayana and the Mahabharat. Githa Hariharan's novel The Thousand Faces of Night explores the journey of three women whose different but similar stories cut across generations and cross walls of sophistication. The young well-born western-educated girl named Devi, her sacrificing mother Sita, and the caretaker of house Mayamma. This paper discusses the journey of women characters in The Thousand Faces of Night.

Keywords- Domination, Society, Identity, Tradition, Patriarchy.

Introduction

"Indian writing in English has been acclaimed around the world for its innovation, radical new approaches to the art of storytelling and reworking of language. While the older generation continues to produces literary masterworks, a newer generation of writing talent has emerged, ensuring that the fount of imagination in the country has not run dry. Women writers in India are moving forward with their strong and sure Strides, matching the pace of the world" (Nawale, 1)

The portrayal of women in Post-Independence Indian novels in English changed dramatically. The traditional ideal woman, who meekly accepted traditional, domestic, and sexual oppression and had her mouth muzzled, speech arrested, and activities restricted by patriarchal norms and power, was replaced by the "new woman," who began to reject customs, orthodox ideas, and values. The status of Indian women has undergone drastic changes from home-bound to professional. She is not 'abala', she is shakti now.

Novelists like Kamala Markandeya, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Nayantara Sahgal, Manju Kapoor, Namita Gokhale, Gita Mehta, Githa Hariharan have added new dimensions and depth to the Indian English Novels. The exploration of self and the psychological state of the human mind is found mostly in the works of Anita Desai. Her writing communicates the true significance of self. Bharti Mukherjee works show women caught in the flux of conventional and contemporary. Shashi Deshpande focuses on the working of the psyche of her female characters. They desperately struggle to assert their individuality. Sensitive to the changing times and

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situations, they revolt against the traditions. Manju Kapoor's works throw light on gender discrimination in the social-cultural milieu in Indian Society. Namita Gokhale has a gift of seeing common characters from within and revealing them on their own plane. Namita focuses on women and their condition in contemporary society.

Githa Hariharan is a novelist who is extreme, fearless, and sensitive. She has a large body of work to her name. "She advocates for women's empowerment and examines women's issues with care. She observes human life with detail and care. With her writing and committed activism, she has earned a unique place in the English literary world. She has received a Commonwealth writer's award in 1993 for her work *the Thousand Faces of Night*". "The novel represents female characters, with varied wishes and frustrations, desires and agony, searching for self-identity or self-liberation. Githa Hariharan vast output includes novels, short stories, essays, newspaper articles and columns. Her other works are *The Ghost of Vasu Master*, *When Dream Travel*, *In Time of Siege* and *Furtive Histories*.

Sita: An Epitome of Sacrifice

Sita (mother to Devi) is married at the age of twenty. Once, while she was playing the veena very keenly, forgetting everything, her father-in-law gave a mild, but firm warning against her not giving enough care and attention towards her household chores and duties. He shouted with anger at Sita "put that veena away, are you a wife, a daughter in law?" (Hariharan, 30) "Traditional Indian society limits woman's individual development and growth. She has to abide by many rules and restriction as she is controlled by man throughout her life" (Dhalayat,30)

After hearing these words from her father-in-law, she was shocked and for some time she stares over the veena, and finally, she pulled the strings out of the wooden base. Through her grandmother, Devi heard the story of her mother as an act of killing one's interest which was similar to the vow taken up by *Gandhari* (One of the female characters in the Epic *Mahabharat*. She is known for the vow to spend the rest of her life in a blindfold as her husband was blind. by blindfolding herself.) From that day onwards, Sita She sacrificed everything and devoted herself to keep up the prestige of the family. Geetha defines the term Patriarchy as-

"Patriarchy rests on defined notions of masculine and feminine is held in place by sexual and property arrangements that privilege men's choice, desires and interest over the above those of women in their lives and is sustained by social relationships and cultural practices which celebrate heterosexuality, female fertility and motherhood on the one hand and valorise female subordination to masculine authority and virility on the other."

Sita learned that her husband lacked high hope of life and was opposite to her. At this stage of life, a daughter was born and she was Devi. For her baby was a new *veena* she could play. Besides, this time she was not going to abandon it easily. At one time, Sita, along with Mahadevan went to Africa on a prestigious overseas assignment with proper arrangements of the journey. And on the other hand, Devi was made to go to America for higher studies. On reaching Africa, Mahadevan proved to be more exhausted than what Sita had thought. In his fifties, he was a sick old man and he had no taste of his time of beauty and energy. One day Sita saw her husband on his chair with his head resting upon some papers on his desk and found him dead. She saw everything silently and without uttering a single word she burnt the papers and "in a modern, sanitized crematorium" the body was also burnt. (Hariharan,106)

Devi belongs to a Tamil Brahmin Family. She has been sent to America for studies. There she develops a relationship with Dan. She was happy with him but cannot take her relationship with Dan to a marriage. On her mother's call, she was back to India as suggested in lines-

"Amma's letters brought with them an unspoken message of loneliness, poignant in its quiet dignity... But the image of her alone by the sea teased me like a magnet. (Hariharan,16)

Devi: Voice of New Women

Devi's stay in the U.S. makes it impossible for six prospective grooms to accept Devi as a wife. Marriage is a sacred and important custom. Devi recalls her grandmother's stories at the time of her marriage. Devi's grandmother narrates stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata that include an ideal woman who follows the footprints of her husband. In Devi's grandmother's stories, there are only heroes and heroines, the sun shines brightly and everything is done in pomp and splendour. Devi is happy that her grandmother is not active to see her wedding. She declares, "I am glad she is not here to see me at my Swayamvara, the princess robe she lovingly stitched for me frayed round the edges and two sizes too large". (Hariharan, 20).

When she returns to Madras from America. Firstly, she confronts difficulties in making adjustments to the realities in Indian society. She realises that it was difficult to change the older norms with her radical thinking and ideas. Her mother wishes to arrange her marriage. Then Devi is married to Mahesh. He is a Regional Manager in MNC. Devi tries hard to fit in the new role of wife and daughter-in-law.

Mahesh is an eligible man having a good job, a big house in a city like Bangalore and he comes from a well sound family. Devi is provided with everything but she finds that something is lacking. Mahesh's cold behaviour upsets Devi. Her marital life lacks the colour that she expected. Devi told about Mahesh's attitude towards her. "Devi was not allowed to work outside the house. Mahesh discourages her and asks what will you do when the baby comes?" (Hariharan, 64)

"It seems that Mahesh is completely insensitive towards Devi possessing a personality because of long tours of her husband and total absence of sexual desire."ⁱ Hariharan works in synchronization with Beauvoir. Devi's decision not to have children is also feminist. When she asks Mahesh why he wants children, Mahesh answers because everyone has them. Devi does not want to produce children because everyone is doing so.

This is a condition where she tries to overcome the pressure of society or expectations of femininity by her independent decision. Here, Hariharan's perspective matches with Shulamit Firestone (*The Dialectic of Sex*, 1970) who believed that women's capacity for reproduction was the source of their oppression. This distinction allowed her to examine reproduction as the driving force in history. "Women should seize control over the means of reproduction in order to eliminate sex class discrimination. This can be achieved through wider access to contraception, sterilization, and abortion."

"Devi finally decides and walks out of Mahesh's life. She is drawn to Gopal, who was the singer and a visitor to her neighbourhood. Devi elopes with Gopal. Initially, Devi's relationship with Gopal was affectionate but later he shows his true colour, Devi found that Gopal is not any better than Mahesh. Her feelings are described within the following lines Devi found that Gopal is no better than Mahesh."ⁱⁱ Her feeling is described in the following lines. "The power unleashed by Gopal's voice, the promises his music had made, had lost very little of their earlier potency. The images of his music evoked in her were no longer uplifting, or even neutral." (Hariharan, 129)

Devi thinks that her walking out of Mahesh's life is her solution. But, after her disappointment with Gopal, she decided to run no further and return to her mother to start a new inning of life. "Devi knew the time was right, if she did not act now, she would be forever condemned to drift between worlds, a floating island detached from the solidity of the mainland." (Hariharan,138)

Devi's journey back to her home is a sign of self-assertion. She has a tale of her own, she is free to reach her new world now, as Mayamma says '...go, Devi, search for the forest you crave in your delirious youth. Go deep, deep, into its hollows, and into the wild terrors of its dark stretches. Yours, thirsty, seek the river, miles away, where the dim forest gives way to a clear, transparent flood of light.' (Hariharan, 126)

Devi at this time has to decide whether she wants to remain in a false image throughout her life or she wants to be free and liberated. She decides to be bold and face the world with conviction. She recalls that she has never taken her own decisions, 'I have made very few choices, but once or twice, when a hand wavered, when a string was cut loose, I have stumbled on-stage alone, greedy for a story of my own' (Hariharan, 137).

"The new woman is inching towards freedom and she has been trying to learn bonding with one another. She concentrates on the theme of meaninglessness and sexual confusion suffered by her in traditional oriented society, asserting thereby that the inequality of sexes is neither a biological given, nor a divine mandate, but a cultural construct. She is aware that her life is succession of traps created by mothers, lovers and finally herself, by accepting the confinement of marriage." (Gahlawat 78)

Mayamma: Symbol of Suffering

Mayamma is an old housekeeper in Mahesh's house, she has not got a proper education. She is the greatest sufferer in the novel, she never complained of the grief and suffered silently, and is tortured by her mother-in-law for not bearing a child. Finally, after a long time, she gave birth to a baby boy, one day her husband takes all the money and leaves the house. His son grew up in the bad company and indulge in gambling. At last, she was left with nothing. Then she came to Mahesh's house as a maid cum caretaker and lived there. All her life Mayamma has sacrificed her desire and suffered mutely to attain ideal womanhood in a patriarchal world. "Mayamma had been thrown into the waters of her womanhood well before she had learnt to swim. She had learnt about lust, the potential of unhidden bestial cruelty, first-hand. She had coveted birth, endured life, nursed death." (Hariharan, 136)

Concluding Remarks

The novel ends impressively, as Devi returns to her mother. She decides to start a new life and this time Sita is there to give her all her support. "Suitcase in hands, Devi opened the gate and looked wonderingly at the garden, wild and overgrown, but lush despite its sand choked roots. Then she quickened her footsteps as she heard the faint sounds of a veena, hesitant and childlike, inviting her into the house." (Hariharan, 139)

"One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the female presents in a society, it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature...which describe as feminine." (Beauvoir, 16)

Githa Hariharan's Devi, when positioned in this tradition, attain a symbolic position and her quest becomes an attribute of the whole community of women. It presents a voyage to the geocentric past, a time when the goddess was representing Devi as the centre of all creation. She can liberate herself from the desire of attaining motherhood. The desire to conquer herself is the strongest in her. She is educated and knows that she needs to find her own identity before motherhood. She is marginalized and alienated to such an extent that she loses faith in herself. She is completely exhausted by giving her desire, her self-respect. Finally, decided to introspect and work upon her strength. Nayar says-

"The women is 'interpellated' as girl-child, daughter, mother, wife but made to believe that these are her 'natural' roles. In fact, she is carefully nurtured into these roles -a

process of cultururation by being made to adopt certain postures, prefer certain kinds of function, and behave in certain ways. Her position as women is created in advance of her; she is simply inserted into the ideology of patriarchy even though she never realises this."

According to Subhashree Mukherjee- "The parameter of satisfaction has altered tremendously leading to highly individualistic personalities who fight out the odds rather than succumbing to them. The writer has proved through the text as well as the intertext, that women have emerged through the out of age-old domination and oppression and rejuvenated themselves to enjoy a meaningful coexistence with man. Hariharan has shown the marginality and traditionality of all the textual as well as intertextual characters but has also shown their revival. She has not merely concentrated on the struggle and quest of women, but has shown how they overcome the predicament and seek salvation." (52)

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Department of English

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on

Postmodern Voices and Transdisciplinarity

27th – 28th February, 2020

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