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NEW PERSPECTIVES IN THE ATTITUDE OF MODERN WOMEN -  
A STUDY ON WOMEN CHARACTERS; 'PARO' AND 'PRIYA' OF NAMITA GOKHALE

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ABSTRACT

With the influence of globalization, the ideas of shifting and liberation in the mind of women throw a new light in the attitude of modern women. Sometimes it leads to sweet experiences in their life and rest of the life move smoothly. But in most of the cases it leads those into pathetic situation and left bitter experiences and rest of the life went on worst. This paper titled: "New Perspectives in the attitude of Modern Women - A Study on Women characters; 'Paro' and 'Priya' of Namita Gokhale" focuses on how Namita Gokhale projects new perspectives of women characters as the symbol of liberation and shifting women. Priya and Paro are the major female characters in her first novel "Paro: Dreams of Passion" which create their own world and think in a different way. She neither directly opposes the world of male nor accepts the norms of patriarchal society. She creates a sensation with the development of Paro who can be treated as modern woman with her own ideology. She gives top priority to her own thoughts to lead her fashionable life neither questioning male dominated society nor social norms of patriarchal society.

Key words: Globalization, new perspectives, modern woman, liberation and shifting.

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Gender concept is not a new term especially in the writings of women. It is not only concentrated on biological concepts but also on social, cultural and individual based on sex. It is also helpful to evaluate the status of the society in different aspects like class, race, age and religion. It is also referred relation between men and women and the formation of power in the social ladder with the support of family, society and culture. The concept of gender is proposed by Lill Matthews in her "Construction of Femininity" (1984). According to her the gender concept gives identity to women and shows a systematic path to understand the relationship of men and women. There is a slight difference between patriarchy and concept of gender. The concept of patriarchy identifies the domination of men in society. The concept of gender clarifies the difference in behavior between men and women. It also analyzes the biological and societal differences in understanding the men and women relations.

The community assigns different kind of roles and responsibilities to the men and women with the understanding of the nature. At this juncture, gender concept analyzes the status of men and women and their rankings in the society. In the allotment of activities, inequality is the selective major theme in the writings of women. Patriarchal society is the oldest mode which supports the dominance of male against the women and she struggle for existence and identity. It leads to the writings of women with the demands of gender equality and equity. Gender equality is the concept of sharing equal rights based on their personal abilities without having any prejudices. Rights, responsibilities and opportunities shared equally based on the ability but not on sex whether male or female. Gender equity concentrates on the idea of the compensation of the previous disadvantages of women. Gender difference leads to the feminism. It creates fundamental premises to the feminism with structural inequality between women and men, social injustice and cultural manipulation. It is also against to the patriarchal society.

Contemporary Indian women writers occupy a leading role in the history of writings with their new themes. These reflect the development of females place in the society and also help to create the world of female. Over the years, Indian Women Writers struggled to project the position of women in different roles in the society, against patriarchal norms, inequality between men and women, and struggled to create an image of being women. Many women writers gained prominence through their writings like Ruth Praver Jwala, Nayantara Sehgal, Shobha De, Namita Gokhale etc.

She creates a sensation in her career with her first novel "Paro: Dreams of Passion". She portrayed her personal experiences and the life style in high-class society. It leads to the development of new ideas in her writings. She creates completely liberated woman it leads to the image of new woman in her first novel Paro: Dreams of Passion with her character Paro. The new women neither fight against patriarchal society nor demand for equality with men. She has completely given an importance to her own path of her life. Namita female characters are bold enough to face any situation in their life for personal satisfaction. Paro is the symbol of new women whereas Priya is a symbol of shifting women. Priya and Paro are the major female characters one that has create their own world around them. Paro is the symbol of liberation where as Priya is symbol of traditional woman one who tries to accept the norms of patriarchal society by giving an importance to the bondage of marriage with Suresh. Though the way of approach is different in the characterization of these two characters, they try to develop their individual principles to lead their life.

"Paro: Dreams of Passion (1984)" is Namita Gokhale's unique creation of female world with its frank discussion of sex and the desires of women. It leads the understanding of women world without boundaries to their desires. Paro is the main protagonist who boldly searches for her life and also a rebellion of women against the traditions. Paro tries to reject the patriarchal rules in the Indian society. She uses all the male characters to fulfill her desires and used as a medium. She considers herself as a superior at every step of her life. This clearly exhibits with the relation of her husband B.R. and also in the case of extra marital affairs. She used her charm as a weapon to exploit others. Independent attitude of Paro attracts another woman Priya who gave a partial importance to the social norms. Priya accepted the dominance of Suresh, her husband and also gives respect to the bondage develop with marriage. She was forced to follow the traditional land rules.

"I am an Indian woman,' I told myself,

'and for me my husband is my God.' .....telephone to call Delhi." (Paro pg: 125)

Priya's physical world is totally opposite to her inner world. She maintains extra marital relation with her lover and boss B.R. With these two characters, she creates a new world to the women where patriarchal society norms are up and downs.

Man dominated society accepts the man relation with many women but the same may not in the case of woman. In this novel, Paro develops physical relation with many by neglecting traditional society rules. She creates her own principles and codes for the enjoyment of her own life. B.R., Bucky Bhandpur, Lenin, Shambu Nath, Loukas and Suresh, though all these are eminent people in different fields, they become the victims in the hands of Paro. It is contrast to the patriarchal norms where the women victim in the hands of man and fate. Though she takes completely freedom in her life, she is also a victim of male society at early life. She

enjoyed with that suffering and search for physical satisfaction with men. She never shamed to share her sexual experiences with Priya.

“She did not perceive the shame and furtiveness of sex. -----

She told me the length of each of her lovers’ organs.” (Paro pg: 30)

She was very bold in her actions and expressions too with that nature. The narrator Priya attracts towards her and set as ideal to her life. Priya flattered and shower her love for her self- dramatization. She proved herself as mother of indifference and a person who give an importance to her own body. She is very attractive to not only men but also woman with her liberated thoughts and action.

“She was flattered by my curiosity and attention.....

I think I was in love with her.” (Paro Pg: 30)

Priya, narrator, develops a common image on traditional women in the upward moving society. She leads a middle class life as a working woman in B.R’s sewing company. She married Suresh, who are not attractive physically or financially to act herself as a traditional woman. But she attracted towards her boss, B.R and maintained extra marital affair not only before but also after the marriage. So, she tries to adjust with the traditional rules by suppressing herself. She was treated as a shifting woman who neither opposes the traditional norms nor accepts the modern society and struggle to adjust for the society. Priya and her husband both are revealing artificial love on each other. Priya loves her boss and Suresh was trapped by Paro. This leads to the conflicts in the lives of Priya and Suresh.

“When we returned home, Suresh was furious.

For the first time in our marriage, he hit me....

how dare you behave like that with my friends?” (Paro pg: 45)

Paro and Priya are the competitive female characters. They directly or indirectly oppose the world of male and they used men to fulfil their desires. They are not only competent with men but also try to get equality with the same gender. Priya tries to imitate Paro and she accepts the intellectual nature of her.

“I was wary about having dinner with Paro-----a small gold purse.” (Paro pg:41)

Priya describe Paro with her fist sight at wedding time. Paro is a bride and marries the dream hero of Priya. She treated her as self confident and beautiful woman. Paro’s arrogant behavior at her marriage occasion gives a negative impression in the mind of Priya.

“Her audacity and self confidence took my breath away.....

brides behaved in my world.” (Paro pg: 09)

**Conclusion:** Namita Gokhale writings reflect the contemporary life style of modern women and try to break the male dominated society. She creates a world of new women through her dominant character like Paro. She generates new perspectives in the development of characters. She assigns the major roles to female characters like Paro and Priya and minor roles to male characters to represent patriarchal society like Suresh and B.R.

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