

A Woman's longing for love in Namita Gokhale's novel Gods, Graves & Grandmother

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Abstract:

Namita gokhale is one of the Indian feminist writers, who received first centenary national award for literature from the Asam sahitya sabha. In her novel Gods, Graves and Grandmother, she shows a woman's ignorance, and her search for love, through the character of Gudiya. Though a woman bounded in family relations, bare all humilities, tolerate all difficulties but find happiness in small things, but expect some love from family members. The present paper deals with the life of a young girl, Gudiya, her thirst for love from her childhood to end of her life. She neglected by her mother who concern herself only, her grandmother who spend all her time to earn money, and her husband, Kalki also never takes care of her, even didn't provide food to her. Phoolwati and Roxanne Lamba are not family members of Gudiya, but show sympathy and love on her. She adaptable her life from haveli to life in the temple. Gudiya can't bear the domination of Kalki, so she protested, and gain courage, free herself from all bonding. Qualitative method of research has been used to collect the information and to write this research article to got to know the sufferings of the young protagonist and this paper represents how could she shaped her own life beautifully after going through the difficulties in her life.

Key words: Ignorance, Adaptable, Courage, Tolerance, Love.

Introduction:

Many Indian authors including male authors penned women issues in their novels, they are Raja Rammohan Rai, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo etc., many female authors in 21st century like Aurndati Rai, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpandi, etc., put their efforts to depicts women problems in their books, Namita Gokhale is one of the Indian authors, in her novels we see many kinds of women such as bold , have sexual desire, innocent, quest for knowledge , love, and freedom etc. She wrote 'Gods, Graves and Grandmother' in 1992, unlike her first novel 'Paro: Dreams of Passion', which deals with

upper class society people of Delhi. But in this book the author portrait courageous, and poor women, who struggle, used their tricks for livelihood and they never wait for help, depend on someone else, especially on men. They can adjust their lives according to the circumstances.

Gudiya, which means doll, was the narrator of the story, she says that once they were very rich, her grandmother, she called her as Ammi, and her mother were prostitutes, when Ammi's nephew was died, hanging himself from the mango tree, which was in their courtyard, customers stopped coming and they lost their wealth. For this reason Gudiya's mother started worrying and lost all her hair, Ammi did many things to stop her hair fall, but nothing was worked. Gudiya's mother was never care for her, she eloped with the harmonium player, who cheated her and escaped with her luggage and gold. After this incident they were all reached Delhi with the help of an old beggar, Riyasuddin Rizvi, in a few days her mother eloped with this beggar also.

To get food Ammi used her chanting voice, and made people believing her as she is a pious women, by the help of Shambhu, who was the owner of tea stall near the temple, and Sundar Pahalwan, who was a local rowdy. Gudiya was joined in the St. Jude's Academy for the Socially Hanicapped, the principal of the school was a Parsi lady, Roxanne Lamba, by whose beauty attracted Gudiya. But Ammi didn't like to send Gudiya to school, she might be thought a girl need not to be educated, as many Indian minds thinks. "You're better off learning to cook, Gudiya," she said, regaining control again 'become a good cook and marry a respectable man.'"(GGG.15)

Ammi loves Gudiya very much, but whenever she started to act as a pious lady, she started ignore Gudiya. Shambhu was murdered by Saboo, a labourer from central india, for having illegal contact with his wife. By watching all things Gudiya disturbed a lot, in the night times she looks at peepal tree, she saw obscene things of her mother and Riyasiddin Rizwi , Shambhu and Magoo, later these things were familiar and lovable to her. Very soon Ammi was stopped talking with Gudiya, and spent all her time with idols. Then Gudiya thinks, "Nobody bothered with me, and I was left to fend for myself, which I learnt to do rather well. I went to school as I pleased, ate what was available, observed everything I could." (GGG.28)

Gudiya started care of her Ammi by combed her hair, and persuaded her to eat something. At that time Phoolwati came to Delhi from Bihar after death of her husband, shambhu and started running tea stall and also selling marigold garlands, coconuts, incense to increase her earnings. Gudiya is never accepted insults, ready to protest and she liked to know the things whatever she don't know. Once she imitates Hema Malini, a heroine in the film Sholay, watering Tulasi as heroine done in the film. Here she believe is by worshipping

the holy Tulasi, she get good husband in the future. Leela the lovely disciple of Ammi scolded her, because according to Leela no one pour water to the Tulasi on Sunday, but Ammi stopped their quarrel. Then Gudiya said,

‘So what?’ I protested, sortled by her sudden belligerence.

‘After all, I am only watering the tulsi! What can be wrong with that?’ (GGG.32)

Phoolwati only loves and taking care of Gudiya when Ammi started departure from her. At the age of thirteen Gudiya matured and it made Ammi angry.

‘Nothing but trouble,’ grandmother gabbled, for her teeth had begun to foil her , this girl is good for nothing but trouble from now.’ A look pure virulent hatred crossed her face. She looked like a wicked old witch, and I hated her passionately and with all my heart.’ (GGG.54)

Phoolwati came to know this matter, helped Gudiya in that situation, and asked Gudiya not to come to the temple surroundings, as they think women were impure in that days, if they come to the temple the gods also became impure. Gudiya says, “I couldn’t understand. ‘it’ s bit not my fault,’ I protested, ‘I haven’t done anything wrong. First grandmother gets upset and now you! Why, Phoolwati.”(GGG.55)

Then Phoolwati console her, and said your grandmother wanted you always be her small and loving granddaughter. Gudiya hated the womanhood for not allowing her to have bathe and not allow her in the temple. Phoolwati presented many gifts to Gudiya, like ice-cream, cosmetics, films and cooked variety foods etc.. she feels, “ whatever or whoever I had lost in mother and grandmother

I regained in abundant measure in Phoolwati’s love and warm embraces, and her flatulence and mammoth bosom bothered me not a bit.” (GGG.57). Kailash Sastry dominated the life of Gudiya after grandmother without any relation, who come to do death ceremony of Phoolwati’s husband , Shambu, and settled in the temple. Once Phoolwati asked him for Gudiya’s future, he said that she would get wealth, better position, fame and name in her life. He stopped Gudiya, when she was going to picnic with her school friends, Gudiya wondered for what authority he has to dominate her, but he was a trusted person of Ammi, so she dropped her plan. she became a beautiful young girl, wanted freedom from her grandmother, wish to escape from all relations like her mother, even She didn’t like her name, wanted to change it. After death of Ammi, Roxanne Lamba took Gudiya to her home, and asked her to stay there, but Gudiya feel comfortable with Phoolwati, so she denied to her proposal. Roxanne Lamba was the second person, who loves Gudiya after Phoolwati. Roxanne Lamba also died when a fish bone strucked in her throat. Whoever loves Gudiya is escaped into another world one after one, she wrote some of her assets on the name of Gudiya, and she wanted educated Gudiya to be an IAS officer, It shows how much concern she showed on Gudiya.

Gudiya always live in dreams, wanted be a rich woman, and change her identity as she was the daughter of an English lord, changed her name as ‘Pooj Abhimanyu. She thinks, ‘I decided to rename myself ‘pooja’ ,in honour of my favourite film star.’(GGG.127)

As she was a teenage girl attracted towards Kalki, a trombone player in the Shiv Mohan Band. She thought that he was Kalki, the god of the kaliyug. After she had seen Kalki, she always remember him and wander in the dreams with him. When Gudiya meet Kalki in the second time without hesitating she goes with him for ride and feels excited. When Gudiya was feeling as pooja Abhimanyvu, she started hating to be in the presence of Phoolwati and temple.

Once Kalki invited Gudiya for a marriage party, she went with him, where she lost her chastity by Kalki, she didn’t worry but she enjoy that moment. Next day Phoolwati observed Gudiya and got known the matter by seeing torn kurta, Sundar also known this, he beaten up Kalki to marry Gudiya. Later Kalki started neglecting Gudiya but she longed for his love, and touch, she got information about him from the clarinet player, kedar that Kalki’s father was a nepali, his mother is a maid servant in that nepali’s house. She didn’t want marry him when she know his real life, and understand the nature of Kalki as he was a irresponsible person, but she got prgnency , so Phoolwati suggested her to marry Kalki. If she married him her baby have a legitimate father.

Kalki always spend her money on the lottery tickets to be rich man in future, he borrowed money from all his fellow band wallas, Gudiya also gave him money many times which was belongs to Phoolwati. Very soon Gudiya & Kalki had gotten married, and kept family in Shiv Mohan’s house, it was very noisy place, life with Kalki made Gudiya tired and depressed, he used to drunk alcohol, beaten up her, then Phoolwati compel Gudiya come to her home. But Gudiya felts,

“So many years of changes and surprises had made me very adaptable, and I fell into the rhythm of my new life with a flexible ease.” (GGG.215)

Gudiya wanted to get rid off Kalki by offering him money to go to Bombay to try his luck in films and she gave all her gold to him. While cooking food for Kalki she thinks,

‘ I burnt my finger, and later, when Kalki was about to leave, it was still hurting, reminding me that pain was a general principle of life’. (GGG.220)

After send Kalki to Bombay Gudiya went and lived with Phoolwati, she missed Kalki physically but lives happily without any domination and worries. Further she feels,

“ I missed him, but I sensed in his absence an opportunity for growth, for escape, which I was determined not to miss. I loved Kalki but love is not life, and the imperatives of survival pulled elsewhere.” (GGG.224)

Thus, Gudiya expected love from her mother, grandmother and her husband, but her desire was not fulfilled, and at last she got freedom from all bonds.

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