

## **RELIGIOUS ISSUES IN GITHA HARIHARAN'S NOVEL THE THOUSAND FACES OF NIGHT**

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The post – Colonial Indian Literary writers, have been preoccupied with exposing the evils of their society. The twentieth-century Indian women novelists have been showing their regards to the previous generations of women. Of course, Gita Hariharan has taken up the novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night* as a medium to express how those old women have been causing the new generation women's sufferings.

This paper attempts to explicate the issues connected to the religion. Everybody is born as an Indian woman cannot escape from the institution of marriage. This novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night* contains more or less all sorts of problems that the women in contemporary society have to confront. Through her writing, the novelist reveals the predicaments of women in India. These women, due to the irresponsibility's of their respective husband starve a lot and take up all the familial responsibilities including the economics ones on their shoulders. In the present scenario, women have to encounter many problems in their daily life and struggle a lot to enhance career.

Githa Hariharan shows off how men have dodged themselves from their lapses in the society. In the Indian context, we have a belief that marriage is the institution for enriching one's social status. If it is over then within the stipulated time, they have to beget children. But the modern women fairly want to quit from the society's behavioral web of tradition and culture. Githa Hariharan's move from slavery to the empower of her gender is clearly visible. According to her, the path towards emancipation is education and economy. Money is the primary factor for the survival of both men and women in the present scenario.

According to Indian tradition, women should take care of the domestic works, and they are expected to relinquish for the goodness of their family. The educated women's resources become worthless in India for preserving the traditional structures.

Devi is an ideal character of Githa Hariharan so that she never confines herself within the traditional male favoring web. Her suppressed reaction takes place in the novel when she quits matrimony hoping that she can lead her life without a man's assistance. Devi is the novelist's ideal woman to ensure her genders autonomy. Her journey towards empowerment and is well explained through the incidents taken place in her life. The novelist tries to show off the existing Indian women's suffering due to the Indian tradition and culture.

Githa Hariharan like the character Devi has got a good education from abroad and is greatly revolutionary towards the Indian socio-political environment with its all layers of power structures. Indian society is of the opinion that women should depend on their men even to fulfill their fundamental requirements. Women in India are considered as a burden both for their parents and husbands as they think that women are here to consume money whole life without earning a little bit. But now-a-days a lot of positive changes have occurred in the status of women as the number of educated people is increasing in the country.

The novelist seems to imply that the post-colonial India has got much influence from the western countries and their new thoughts. Some of the Indian girls, especially, during the last three decades, are getting education from those countries, where the gender partiality is not visible. The Indian girls after the completion of their graduation in the foreign countries return to India with those influences, Devi is one such girl. When she seizes herself in the name of marriage she could not show her tolerance after some extent. Hence, the failure takes place in the marital life of Devi and Mahesh.

Leading a comfortable life with Mahesh for Devi is very difficult, so she wants to get rid of the invisible traditional rules for their emancipation's cause. It does not mean that she rejects all the motherly duties. Devi suffers disappointment and disillusionment in the hands of Mahes. Mahes, Devi's husband is not sensitive enough to take

care of the emotional side of her. As he is often away from the business, Devi feels alienated in her own house. Suman Singh has observed,

It is evident that Devi expected marriage to be a perfect unification of two individuals. But Mahesh, like most men of the Indian men took marriage to be social responsibility. Devi soon begins to feel an 'awesome loneliness' and a kind 'uselessness' creeps into her. Under such mental condition, she meets Gopal in whom, she feels she could seek her unfulfilled feminine desires. She wanders with him for a few months but soon gets disillusioned. (Singh.74)

No woman in the social novels of Githa Hariharan is sentimental and emotional towards her husband. This lack of emotion in their characters causes the failure in their institution of marriage. The novelist never bothers about the defeat of matrimony as she has the strong notion that women of the present century must aim at autonomy. Her women characters do not weep for the prevailing injustice that is imposed upon them. Instead, they look for the possible escape.

Githa Hariharan condemns the typical Indian men's attitude and behavioral concept that household works are trivial and worth for nothing. The novel ends in Devi's returning home from her husband's control, and she has the hope that her mother would understand her predicaments and would accept her to live within her own house as she did before her marriage. The Veena's music after a long period from Sita seems to suggest indirectly that the melody of freedom is about to blossom in their life. Devi's isolation is not only physical it is psychological too. This isolation leads to her illicit affair with Gopal, a Hindustani classical singer. At last, she is seen as a trivial creature. The fact is that Mahesh is the root cause of all those things. Mahesh like all other men of Indian Society wants his wife to be subservient. Women for him are the family happy and healthy. He takes his married life for granted. He is unaware of Devi's loneliness. He didn't even take any attempt to understand her.

Nourished by Devi's grandmother stories, she imagines herself to be a great warrior of strength and agility. Trained by a mentor to fight against men, Devi is prepared to endure unimaginable pain. In her fantasy, she becomes a woman warrior, a heroine. She confesses, "I lived a secret life of my own; I become a woman warrior, a heroine, I was Devi. I rode a tiger and cut of the evil metical demons heads" (41) for the emancipation of the world. Women face a lot of challenges because of the existence of a patriarchal society, child bearing, and family care roles, deep rooted cultural norms etc, in Indian society. Finally, Devi flirts from one unsuccessful role to another desperately seeking redemption. She returns to her mother, hoping to make a fresh beginning – an air of freedom. In the patriarchal community Devi forms her own community to stand strong for her survival. She is a voice of women. Githa Hariharan portrays Devi as an independent individual who does not fall prey to passive suffering. So Devi decides to break all the barriers of religious issues and problems against her in the society. Then she remains in the status of enjoying in almost all the fields because of being financially independent and economically sound.

#### References

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