

Domestic Spaces and Feminist Discourses in the Fiction of Namita Gokhale

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Abstract: *The movement for women's equality and rights is known as feminism. This research focuses on how feminism is reflected in a few of Namita Gokhale's writings, including Things to Leave Behind (2016), Priya: In Incredible Indyya (2011), and The Book of Shadows (1999). Feminism's hallmarks include the pursuit of equal rights for men and women, with a focus on women's liberation, freedom, equality, and gender concerns. Notable books by renowned author Namita Gokhale include Things to Leave Behind, Priya: In Incredible Indyya, and The Book of Shadows. The topics of feminism are covered in these chosen texts. The main characters in these chosen pieces by Namita Gokhale are Priya, Tilottama, and Rachita. The problems of feminist theory are reflected in the lives of each character. Rachel Speght, Olympe de Gouge, Mary Wollstonecraft, Judith Sargent Murray, Fredrika Bremer, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and others are well-known feminists. This study's approach centers on feminist theory and compares it to a few of Namita Gokhale's writings. In order to have a better understanding, the researchers discuss the survey by contrasting it with the other studies. Psychoanalysis, self-disorder, parental care, alienation, and self-identity are suggested areas for further research..*

Keywords: Feminism, Identity, Empowerment, Patriarchy, Resistance, Agency

I. INTRODUCTION

Regarding feminism, Mary Dickenson accurately notes that "Men are afraid of being laughed at by women." Women fear that men will murder them (Dickenson, 1996). According to feminism, women and men are on an equal footing. Liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, radical feminism, cultural feminism, I-feminism, ego feminism, and so on are among the many forms of feminism. This philosophy makes an argument for women's freedom and rights. Feminism supports men for a greater cause rather than arguing with them. In addition, some men's rights advocates advocate for women's rights and support women's lives.

The Book of Shadows, Priya: In Incredible Indyya, and Things to Leave Behind by Namita Gokhale were chosen by the researchers for this investigation. The purpose of this research is to analyze women's characteristics using feminism ideas put out by well-known feminists. A literature review, methodology, discussion, and conclusion are also included in this research. The peculiarity of the present investigation is explained in these parts. Only articles on feminism that are mirrored in different novels are the subject of the literary review. This study's approach centers on the feminist theorist's perspective on feminism, which is then contrasted with a few works by Namita Gokhale. The researchers will contrast the findings of this study with those of other researchers' studies in the discussion section. The analysis and comparisons with feminist ideas and a few of Namita Gokhale's writings are strengthened by this research.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Every study should include a literature review as it contributes a variety of perspectives to the investigation. Since feminism is the subject of the present research, the review of papers about feminism is the main focus of the current study.

Connell's idea of feminism is discussed in Crowe's research. The researcher uses Connell's feminist concepts in this study in two ways. These are the differences between men and women in feminism. Because feminism holds that men should help women in their lives, this study examines men's perspectives on the movement (Crowe, 2011). Sulistyo's

analysis of The Palace of Illusions exposes feminism's concepts. This art reflects feminist concerns via the figure of Krishna. Feminist thought supports the masculine character in this research. The researcher who conducted this study advocates for women (Sulistyo, 2021).

The lives of women in the contexts of society and the family are covered in another research by Prajjal Saha. "Women genetically designed to be multi-skilled and multi-talented" is supported by this debate. Women are doing well in their roles as wives, mothers, sisters, employees, and so on. The many phases and issues that women encounter throughout their lives are also included in this research (Saha, 2015). The author, Pittman, and Reich specifically stress MCGorry's role in revealing the worth of women in the research, which also shows the contributions of other male authors to the wellbeing of women. His beliefs promote males from a feminist perspective, arguing that since men who support women's rights are known as feminists, it is simpler for them to become feminists. This study has examined the male feminist's conception of feminism in accordance with MCGorry's feminism beliefs (Pittman and Reich, 2016).

Through the father-child interaction, Honig's essay emphasizes the concept of feminism. Women experience a variety of life phases, including those of sister, child, mother, wife, and so on. The life phases of these women are compared to those of males. The researcher examines men as husbands, fathers, and brothers in this study (Honig, 2018). In her analysis of feminism, Desmawati examines Louisa May Alcott's Little Women. The researcher examines several forms of feminism in this study and examines how they are reflected in the chosen work by Louisa May Alcott. Liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, existentialist feminism, and radical feminism are the ideas chosen for this investigation. According to this research, feminism aims to eradicate all socially and domestically marginalized behaviors among women (Desmawati, 2018). Haiyan's research examines feminism in Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre. Additionally, feminism and Victorian period are the main topics of this study.

Because every period has unique challenges for women's lives, researcher Haiyan concentrates mostly on the Victorian era. Therefore, the researchers' focus in this study is limited to a certain age group and the Victorian era, namely Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre (Haiyan, 2013).

According to Alan Williamson, the study of Cheryl examines the many forms of feminism. In the book *Almost a Girl: Male Writers and feminine Identification*, he addresses feminist theory from a feminine point of view as a guy. The Joy Luck Club, *She's Come Undone*, *Une Si Longue Lettre* (So Long a Letter), and *La Femme du Mari Inconnu* (The Wife of the Unknown Husband) are the four works that the researcher chose for this investigation. To examine the many issues facing women, the chosen works are contrasted with one another. The study's conclusion affirms that males are capable of writing from a female perspective in a flawless, considerate, and forward-thinking manner (Cheryl, 2008).

The paper by Jaha and Darmastuti talks about feminism's viewpoints and gender inequality. Additionally, stereotypes, aggression, subordination, marginality, and double burden are covered in this research. The three female characters—Dorothy Vaughan, Marry Jackson, and Katherine Johnson—are the primary subject of feminist theory (Jaha and Darmastuti, 2018).

Through Katherine Graham, the main character in the film "The Post," the study of Nur Azizah and Nurl Fitri condenses liberal feminism. In this research, the authors used Marilley's theory and a qualitative, descriptive methodology. Three categories of liberal feminism were distinguished by the writers. According to Azizah and Fitri (2019), they are feminism of equal rights, feminism of fear, and feminism of personal growth. Despite the fact that there are many hypotheses on feminism, very little study has been done using books. From the discussion above, the writers of this study may conclude that no research has been done using Namita Gokhale's work. This motivates the researchers to use this topic in the study to talk about the feminist viewpoint in a few of Namita Gokhale's works, including *Things to Leave Behind* (2016), *Priya: In Incredible Indyya* (2011), and *The Book of Shadows* (1999).

III. METHODOLOGY

The methodology section provides the research with legitimate and logical conclusions. The feminist theory was chosen by the researchers to investigate this concept in this study. This section's scholars will contrast feminist concepts with a few of Namita Gokhale's works, including *Things to Leave Behind* (2016), *Priya: In Incredible Indyya* (2011), and *The Book of Shadows* (1999).

According to Shahrzad, the aim of feminism is the liberation of women. Marxist principles also support the liberation of women. According to Shahrzad (2015), both are promoting liberation within the framework of the capitalist political and legal system. This viewpoint is reflected in a few of Namita Gokhale's works. Tilottama is a character introduced by Namita Gokhale in *Things to Leave Behind* who aspires to be free of her family. as Tilottama's mother-in-law found it difficult to provide her with an education. Similarly, Tilottama's relatives rejected her kid. This event is described by Namita Gokhale as follows: "Nain Chand fell in love with his child from the moment she was born." Her mother thought she looked strange. "I find it incomprehensible," she would tell her relatives. "What gives her hair such an odd color?" Gokhale (2016).

Shahrzad adds that feminist awareness is a product of women's rise to prominence as a new social and political force and their dedication to altering the concrete reality of unjust and compulsive gender relations. Although women's groups throughout the globe have fought for "rights," this awareness has changed gender relations but has not been able to dismantle the hierarchy of gender relations (Shahrzad, 2015).

Rachita, the main character in the book *The Book of Shadows*, also has several social challenges since her life and looks were destroyed by an acid assault on her face. She sacrifices her life to defend her rights and freedom. "I was getting tired of human talk, it used too many wards, and their hysteria sickened me," she said of her dislike for civilization. I went back to an other plane, one of peace, one of such vast, empty quiet that may be difficult to enter at times (Gokhale, 1999). "Every man has the right to fulfill his own will without being afraid that it may interfere with that of others," Rachita adds while discussing freedom (Gokhale, 1999).

"My mother came from a middle-class household, and my maternal grandfather was literate, encouraging his four granddaughters to pursue higher education and become involved in the community," Shahrzad writes in his book *Feminism and Marxism*, describing his own experience. He urged women to be independent and to leave their husbands as soon as they started to cause them trouble. My mother met my father at her volleyball coach's home, and she was free to choose him as her future husband (Shahrzad, 2015). Priya: In *Incredible Indiyaa* by Namita Gokhale also depicts this Shahrzad tragedy. The main character in this book, Priya, encourages her kids to be self-reliant and free to make their own life decisions. Additionally, Priya allowed her children to choose their soul match. However, in every circumstance, Priya's spouse Suresh is the total opposite of her (Priyadharshini et al., 2021). In contrast, Priya is responsible for her husband and kids. She also acknowledges that the freedom to choose is one of everyone's rights in life. Consequently, the existence of Priya's kid remained unhindered (Gokhale, 2011).

"Feminists believe in the equal rights and full equality of men and women," according to Steinem, another feminist, who shares his perspective on the movement (Steinem, 2015). *Things to Leave Behind* by Namita Gokhale expresses this. In her book, the author advocates for both men and women. Namita Gokhale is aware of how men and women behave in both public and private spheres. She supports both men and women, as expressed by Namita Gokhale via the husband of the Tilottama. He claims that "he lost his temper." "You are narrow-minded and jealous," he said. "In addition, Tillie doesn't know any English or Englishmen!" Gokhale (2016). The study's researchers draw the conclusion that Tilottama's husband is a dependable support system for his wife in any situation based on her statements.

"I love man as a friend, but his sceptre, real or imagined, does not extend to me unless the person's reason demands my devotion; and even then, it is to reason, not to man, that I submit," explains Wollstonecraft (Wollstonecraft, 2013). Priya by Namita Gokhale reflects this: Priya is the main character of *Incredible Indiyaa*. Priya is from a middle-class family, yet she marries the wealthiest person. In any circumstance, Priya's spouse is there for her. She was entitled to offer presents to other people and to dress whatever she pleased. She was entitled to guide her children as well. According to Priya, "there are times when I pinch myself to make sure that this house and me are real" (Gokhale, 2011).

The primary and most significant character in the book is Priya. She is Suresh Kowsal's wife. She lived in Mumbai before to being married, and she now resides in Delhi. Compared to Delhi, Mumbai is a more traditional city. Luv and Kush are the names of her twin sons. She gives her kid the freedom to live their life as they see fit and to choose the partners they want. However, her spouse is the complete opposite of her. According to him, contemporary women are unfit for family life. Ultimately, Priya's husband transforms into a different person and lets her do anything she wants.

As he states, "A husband, a family, respectability," Suresh acknowledges that women are living their own lives. She will never be able to take them from me. Can she? Gokhale (2011). Men are afraid of women making fun of them, according to Margret Atwood. Women fear that men will murder them (Atwood, 1985). As a result, both sexes are abrading of one another. This occurs in *Novel Things to Leave Behind* by Namita Gokhale. Tilottama was unable to communicate her ideas because of her anxiety and hesitation. Additionally, her spouse finds himself in a similar predicament. This demonstrates that sharing their evolutions is a barrier for both of them. The elders had a significant part in Tilottama's life. Thus, Tilottama and her spouse were subject to the authority of their family's elders. The most crucial aspect of any human existence is the use of words. Due to the fact that spoken words have the capacity to both build and destroy individuals. Not everyone can understand the power of words. Rachita, the main character in Namita Gokhale's book, refrained from using harsh language with her fiancé's sister. Her fiancé's sister, on the other hand, hurls acid in her face without saying anything. Rachita's life was in danger as a consequence of this incident.

Roman Payne describes a woman's existence as "wild and free." She was a free spirit, a traveler. She didn't belong to any city or guy (Payne, 2013). This stands for everyone on the planet. because everyone has their own life to live. The work of Namita Gokhale reflects this concept. Tilottama, the main character of *Things to Leave Behind*, reflects ideas in her way of living. that she had no expectations of her mother-in-law or spouse. However, she makes her own decisions in life.

One may argue that politics begins with how the issues of the immoral are resolved, according to Vikki Bell, who discusses estrangement in feminism. The ethical dilemma within feminism may be reframed if this is the case. Morality is now a check on both politics and liberty rather than just one of them. Bell (2001). "I do not think I was involved in any way, at least not voluntarily," Rachita says, reflecting this point of view in her life. Our inclinations may sometimes take on a life of their own. Furthermore, according to Rachita, "Unless the physical counter-motion of their bodies keeps them in careful check, human minds are intrinsically weak." Far from home, rotten to the core, very lazy (Gokhale, 1999).

IV. DISCUSSION

The researchers compare the findings of this study with those of previous studies in the discussion section. The researchers chose the feminism-based studies to compare. For a more thorough comprehension of the ideas of feminism, the current research is contrasted with previous studies.

Gardiner's research investigates workplace discrimination. Additionally, the characteristics of prejudice that are reflected in the lives of women are the subject of this research. However, a lot of women are working alongside males in the modern world. They support one another without prejudice. The equitable treatment in the workplace is the main theme of this tale. Women now do their jobs on an equal basis with men. In the majority of locations, men and women assist one another (Gardiner, 2005). The text *Priya: In Incredible Indiyaa* by Namita Gokhale represents this viewpoint. For instance, Priya, the protagonist of *Priya: In Incredible Indiyaa*, leads an equal existence to her spouse. She takes care of herself and didn't expect anything from her spouse. The equality between Priya and her husband is shown in the following quote. "She will be a valuable member of our family." "Just as you are," Suresh said warmly. I'm simply a housewife, you know! I objected. However, it is satisfying to be valued (Gokhale, 2011). This demonstrates the closeness Priya has to her husband, Suresh.

Additionally, Sulistyo's research reveals feminist theory in *The Palace of Illusions*. The research discusses men's involvement in women's lives here. The male perspective on women is included in the study's analysis. People have diverse perspectives from one another. This research examines women's various lifestyles and issues (Sulistyo, 2021). *Priya: In Incredible Indiyaa* by Namita Gokhale expresses this viewpoint. Suresh, Priya's husband, is aware of the challenges of managing the family as a wife, mother, and so on (Gokhale, 2011).

Connell's idea of feminism is discussed in Crowe's research. Connell's feminist theories, which are reflected in two ways in this study, were used by the researcher. Women in feminism and men in feminism are the divides. Because feminism holds that men should help women in their lives, this study examines men's perceptions of feminism (Crowe, 2011). This viewpoint is reflected in the book *The Book of Shadows*, where Rachita explains that "... we must remain in control of our scripts in order to be ourselves." We must create and recreate ourselves, own and reclaim our reality,

and cast and recast our lot in each fleeting instant. Above all, in this tremendous flux that is life, we need to discern what to keep and what to throw away (Gokhale, 1999). This proves that Rachita has the life she desires.

Numerous authors and scholars are debating the ladies and their lives. Nonetheless, women continue to encounter several challenges. Rachita says, "I have come to the hills to heal, to hide, to forget," in Namita Gokhale's *The Book of Shadows*. To pardon and be pardoned. All of my pals influenced my choice. Even though my sister insisted on coming with me, I realized that I needed time alone and a soliloquy to process what had transpired (Gokhale, 1999). These sentences describe Rachita's life's circumstances, as she battles to overcome her own issues. Rachita's story also examines the hardships faced by all women.

Rachita's growing loneliness forces a conventional and philosophical appraisal of her existence. She learns that everyone must be aware of every valuable moment in life. Every step of life changes, and she comes to understand what she should keep and what she should let go of for her own benefit. Because she sharpened her thoughts and became powerful while she was by herself. Instead of trusting her family and society, Rachita trusted herself. "I've learned from bitter experience that philosophizing doesn't bring me any comfort or relief—it just makes the wounds of my broken experience worse," she says. According to Gokhale (1999), she goes on to examine the idea that "it is terrible to be suspended in time and space, without a body, without a context, ignorant of the reasons and circumstances that have led to this strange exile, this cruel isolation."

Pittman and Reich address the perspective of masculine feminism in their research. Numerous studies have been conducted on the topic of men's contributions to feminism. This study uses MCGorry's theories to highlight the importance of women. According to MCGorry's feministic perspective, males may more easily become feminists since those who advocate for women's rights are known as feminists. This study has examined the male feminist's system of feminism in accordance with the MCGorry perspective of feminism (Pittman and Reich 2016). *The Book of Shadows* by Namita Gokhale reflects this viewpoint as well. "Every man has the right to do what he wants without fear of others interfering with it," says one of the key characters. Gokhale (1999).

V. CONCLUSION

The present research focuses on the concepts of feminist theory. This research examines the theories of feminism in Priya: In Incredible Indya, *The Book of Shadows*, and *Things to Leave Behind* by Namita Gokhale. This research chose a few key feminist theorists' concepts in order to analyze the theory. The distinctiveness and originality of the present research are shown by the comparisons with the findings of prior investigations. Lastly, the discussion of this research demonstrates that a few of Namita Gokhale's works represent feminist concepts (Priyadharshini et al., 2021). The limitations of the present study might provide fresh insights for future scholars. The notions of self-identity, self-disorder, alienation, psychoanalysis, feminism, and so forth may all be the subject of future investigations.

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