



Quest for identity of woman: Gita hariharan's 'The Thousand Faces of Night'

RADHIKABEN. M. MISTRY

M.A. GSET. (Ph.D. Continue)

ENGLISH

Assistant professor,

Gujarat University, Ahmedabad

Abstract:

This paper focuses on the issues of woman's quest for identity and expose as a self hood in the post-colonial world. Gita hariharan expressed suffering of new generation women because of old generation women in 'The Thousand faces of Night'. Gita hariharan correlate Indian myth to contemporary Indian life of women. The novelist has been provoked on predicament of Indian women. The paper glance at how women are subordinate in Indian patriarchal society? So, here Gita hariharan shows to us women must have right creates their different identity.

Keywords: *Woman's quest, Woman identity*

1. Introduction

Gita hariharan's *The Thousand faces of Night* have one protagonist whose name is Devi. In India people believe that Marriage is the institution in which women remained subordinate of male in Indian society. Here, Indian myth intermingled with the lives of Indian women by novelist and reflected revisioning, retelling Indian Myth. However, woman in her novel is shown to overthrow the heavy rock of heritage with its 'Thousand Faces of Night'. It relates how women feel alienation after marriage and loses their identity in India?

The novel revolves around female characters in which Devi is the central character, her mother Sita, her mother-in-law Parvati, her grandmother, her maid-servant Mayamma. Gita hariharan's ideal character is Devi who never confines herself in the web of traditional male society. In Indian tradition women must have done domestical works and male must have earning. In India people believe that if woman educated then she didn't preserve her roll proper way in society. But modern woman didn't care of society tradition and culture because name of culture women must have exploited. Gita hariharan shows to us by her ideal woman Devi who takes revenge of Patriarchal society.

Devi's mother Sita had to give up her individual pursuit after marriage and adapt to prefixed roles instead. Sita's parents taught to her play a veena before marriage. She was interested in it and she takes it with her as a dowry. After marriage she has performed as a housewife but whenever she completed her works then she used to play veena. One day she was playing veena then she could not hear voice of her father-in-law. After her father-in-law scolded her: **"Put the veena away. Are you a wife, a daughter-in-law"** (p.30).

She come in anger and is disappointed. Then she Pulled out strings of veena and take oath never play with veena. After she whisper, **"Yes, I am a wife and a daughter-in-law"** (p.30).

So, this way sita deprived her interest after her marriage and loose her identity. Devi's grandma said one story of Gandhari in Mahabharata. Gandhari was married rich husband whose name was Dhitarashtra. But he was blind Prince then after she bound her eyes in veil. She wrapped a bandage

over her eyes and vowed to share the darkness that her husband lived in. Gandhari who has eyes but she cannot see the world and be blind with her husband. Devi's grandmother says,

“She embraced her destiny a blind husband with a self sacrifice worthy of her royal blood” (p.29). **Gandhari's story reflected the life of Sita.**

Devi's grandmother, in her widowed old age, had at last asserted her feminine individuality through sheltering women who had been broken by marriage. She becomes helpless and homeless due to the norms of Patriarchal society. Devi's mother-in-law had struck her own revolt by running away from the family to her god. When Devi was young then her grandmother tells her to story of our Indian myth but today, she (Devi) know how myth connected to the life in society.

Devi has got education abroad in America and she has ability to earn. Devi negotiated Indian tradition because marriage is the system in which woman always sacrifices her freedom and identity. But wants of her mother Devi has come in India and done marriage with Mahesh. According to Indian society, Woman should depend on male for fundamental requirements and beg money when she needs. Devi is ideal character for the woman in modern India. In India has influence of countries of western and people go for education and for better life because there is no gender bias and all are as equal. But when Indian girl has taken foreign degree and return back to India then attitude do not change for girl in India. After education, she must have Freedom for individual pursuit. All women must have freedom for made her unique identity.

Devi lived happy life with Mahesh starting days of marriage. But after Devi didn't set traditional system of society because Mahesh wants to child. But she didn't ready for this responsibility also. Mahesh is not sensitive for Devi. So, she suffers disappointment and disillusionment in her life. After marriage, she felt loneliness in her life. Mahesh often go tour for his business so Devi feels alienation. She realizes emptiness of this life-two/three brief encounter a month when bodies stutter together in lazy lust, and two weeks a month when the shadowy stranger demands a smiling handmaiden. Manu-shastra that commands the woman only serve her husband. Mahesh always says, **“I want to have my baby” (p.74).**

So, here we understand that woman only needs for child for her husband and in Society also. In Indian tradition remains influence of male domination. But woman is not like a puppet whom has lived on other hands. But she must have rights for made her identity. In Indian tradition woman has done domestic works and male has earning. Here Mahesh wants a baby but he didn't know condition of Devi. When she fails to pregnant, she has to undergo the torture of humiliating ordeal; Mayamma's physical and mental torture at the hands of husband and in-laws for failing to get pregnant offers. This way we know that what society wants from women? Sita also coaxes to her for a baby. Sita's life has hollowness and she left her veena and pursues her husband's steps. Though she coaxes to her daughter (Devi) for a baby. Devi believes that she needs only for baby. Then, she realizes that no one sees woman's condition but woman has fulfilled wants of society if she fails then humiliated and she made a victim of society. In Indian society has particular orthodox norms and people followed it but almost all norms for women, man has freedom in society and he has power. Both Devi and Sita realize **“Whatever dependent on there is misery; whatever rests on oneself is happiness” (p.68).**

However, being a woman of the new generation, she can have her realization before it is too late. Devi has decided she takes revenge it. Devi emerges with her bitter disillusionment about men she decides to “learn to be a woman at last... (to) walk on, seeking a goddess who is not yet made” (95). At last Devi thinks leave from this cage. But the modern women quit from the society's behavioral web of traditional culture. After left to Mahesh, she has an illicit affair with Gopal. After her initial experiment with love she leaves Gopal too and goes ahead alone in her search for her identity. So,

Devi left to Mahesh and Gopal too. She leaves from the cage and fly just like birds. All her life she has grouped for an unknown goal and now at last she feels: **“I have stumbled on-stage alone, greedy for a story of my own” (139).**

Devi refusing to be puppet on the stage any more. So, she comes back to Sita with the conviction and confidence, **“To stay and fight to make sense of it all” (139).**

Gita hariharan’s novels women characters are so strong. The novelist doesn’t like behavior of typical Indian male society because they need woman only as a producing machine which produces a baby. Mahesh’s brazen self assurance and total contempt for Devi’s individuality shows continuation of the orthodox approach of the patriarchal society. In her fantasy, she becomes a woman warrior, a heroin. She confesses, **“I lived secret life my own, I became a woman warrior, a heroine, I was Devi, I rode a tiger and cut of the evil magical demons heads” (p.41).**

Devi has come to return her home but after she feels loneliness in her house also. Devi’s isolation not only physical but it is psychological also. But all this problems root is her husband Mahesh. In patriarchal society, men believe that woman’s domestical works are trivial. Now Devi became independent and she creates community who become strong survival and she has a voice of new modern Indian woman. Gita hariharan’s woman character Devi has courage who has not fallen but lives with freedom and economically strong. So, she creates ideal woman character.

2. Conclusion

Gita hariharan illustrates voice of modern Indian woman. If women have education then they have got financial help by doing job. Here, Gita hariharan shows to us that every woman must have identity. Woman is not toy whom used to only for play. In ‘The Thousand Faces of Night’ have many faces of Indian traditional society for women. So this paper attempts to issues of identity.

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