

# Social Protest of women in Namita Gokhale's *Paro* *Dream of Passion*

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**Abstract:-** *Man does not live alone in society. From birth of life till end of life, he is bounded by a number of people. Some of these people are his family members, several are friends, and some are his group contacted, even as everyone further are unfamiliar person and unknown to him. He is correlated to every one of people who are related to him either on the basis of blood or marriage. The relationship is the outcome of social communication and is recognized by society. There are two major figures of the public stratification-caste and class.*

**Introduction:-** India is one of the greatest countries of the modern world. It has developed into a self-sufficient country and a republic more than a half century ago. Within this period the country has been full of activity in efforts to reach development and increase in various areas such as building infrastructure, making of food grains, art and technology and stretch of education but in the present time, India is suffering with some social problems. These problems are troubles of terror campaign, violence, offences against women, children and minorities, unemployment, poverty, drug, child labor, dependence, child marriage, collectivism, youth unrest, corruption, migration and displacement, population explosion etc. These problems are the effect of different reason that takes in economic, legal, cultural as well as historical.

In ancient time, women have normally been limited to the role of a home – maker, i.e. of a mother and wife regardless of major changes that have come to mind in the status of women in some parts of the world in current decades. The rules that limit women to the home are still powerful in India. Indian women

are completely devoted to their families. They are preached in the names of Goddess Saraswati, Durga, Parvati & Kali. On the other hand, India is fast developing but women in India continue to be differentiated. Women are facing problems in every area of life whether employment, access to physical condition care or home rights. The moribund sexual category fully represents the discrimination shown towards women at the stage of birth. They are sufferers of crime intended for particularly at them, rape, kidnapping and abduction, dowry-related crimes, sexual harassment, etc.

The present article descends out the changes in the status and liberation of women. This article also focuses on the legal explanations concerning the protest of female sexuality in marriage and its suggestion for freedom of labor and autonomy of women. Indian marriage is an authorized sale of female sexuality and reproductive struggle. It treats female sexuality as a commodity that is sold under regulated and specified conditions.

[In particular,] ... sexual violence and harassment in India is widespread, and is

perpetuated in public spaces, in the family or in the workplace. There is a generalized sense of insecurity in public spaces/ amenities/ transport facilities in particular, and women are often victims of different forms of sexual harassment and assault. (Source: Special Rapporteur)

According to Khokan Kumar Bag:

Women exploitation in the form of physical and mental torture on wives by husband is also common, mostly where women are simply a house wife and not associated with any employment. As a result, they are compelled to keep their head down in a speechless manner tolerating the cruelty of their husband helplessly. This ultimately makes them mentally disordered for which they often take the shelter of suicide or other means of malpractices that result very disgrace social, moral, ethical, and after all economic support to them. (Khokan Kumar -2012)

*Paro: Dream of Passion* takes sexual liberation of women to the stage of sexual celebration and mark the beginning of an entirely new era feminist discourse. Here is a woman who uses her sexuality as a bait to hook desired men in her life. She is not ashamed of her female anatomy, but her body is her greatest asset and the greatest medium to rise above her class. Paro initiates a trend in women novelists that was later followed by Shobha De and a whole new generation of writers.

Paro basically depicts life style, dreams and ambitions of two women protagonists-Paro and Priya Sharma. Both of them want to rise above their class and hope to live life on their own terms, no matter whatever sacrifices they have to make in this process. Paro may be guilty of

using her charm and youth as a bait to hook unsurprising male. Charm never fails and the victims include a former state middle aged minister, high profile businessman to a young educated son of politician. As the number is large so is the variety in their background and age. She has created the characters who are bold, vivacious and far ahead of other characters depicted in contemporary novels. Unlike the common, ordinary females they are neither afraid nor ashamed of their sexuality, nor take pride in hiding their natural physical instincts they rather celebrate their sexuality. Paro is an extraordinary temptress and attractive character in this story. Her father was in army and kept getting transferred which led her childhood in a boarding school in the hills. As a result she make unfriendly from her parents. This blankness of her early age makes ineffective her youth, her married life as well as her motherhood. She was the head girl in her final year. She was consequently go-getting in her childhood that she sought after to become P.M. of India but she could not complete her dream, because her thoughts were damaged and traumatized by her art master. She says:

But we had this art master-Marcus something. I loved painting, you know. I was good at it. I suppose I was very sexy-looking for a schoolgirl. Anyway, there I was, busy with my landscape, trying to get the right cerulean blue for the sky and the fucking Vandyke brown for the trees. It was during the Dussehra vacations. My folks were abroad so I stayed back at the hostel. There was no one else around. He was quite

young, this art master, and very good-looking in a long-haired way. Anyway, he tells me, “You look like a wood nymph.”

Then he starts getting sexy. . . . you know . . . and I don’t know what’s happening but I sort of like it. And then suddenly he’s on top of me, right there in between all those pine needles, and fucking me right and left. And there are crows going “Caw, Caw” in the trees. After a while I liked it. I liked it one hell of a lot.’ She chuckled softly. But I could sense some pain. (32)

There are a lot of unpleasant incident which create her life on bad terms. Later, she got married with Babu. Paro’s first husband Babu was not of good personality. Paro thought about marriage a thing which sounded too good to last, other than it didn’t. Even Paro decided suicide once. She accepts it before Priya:

‘I did this once before, you know’, she continued conversationally. ‘It was when I was married to Babu.’ She smiled dreamily, her eyes focused on some elusive spot over my head. ‘One night I returned suddenly from visiting Mummy in Delhi, to find no one at home. Bubu was in our bedroom, screwing our neighbour’s daughter. I wouldn’t have minded, but she saw me and began screaming, ‘Aunty’s here! Aunty’s here!’ (58)

These words clearly throw brightness on Paro’s character as well as that of B.R. who here represent men. It was not correct on Paro’s part to damage her physically so as to punish the other person. Paro represents the dreams of passion, glamour and liberation at the same time as Priya is a difference to this. Men are more often than not to blame for the difference in the man-woman relationship. She has suffered so much pain in her childhood that she is not troubled of pain anymore. Here Priya explain Paro’s bad terms form and says that Paro loves herself:

*Her fatal flaw was vanity. She loved self-dramatization. I sometimes wondered what she would be like, alone in an empty room; whether she would simply go limp and collapse, or posture and practice for her next encounter. She loved her body and cried like a baby at the slightest physical hurt. Yet once she drew blood and wrote her name with it on a novel to prove to me that she was not afraid of pain. (34)*

According to Namita Gokhale, “Sexuality and sexual mores are an extremely vulnerable area of human identity. It isn’t only the biology and animal instincts that are at work in the sexual arena social conditioning, the structure of the family, gender attitudes, all come into operation.”(Gokhale: From South Asian Women authors. **Online**)

Before long after, she leaves ‘Bucky’ Bhandpur as well and another time she finds herself in the hold of being alone. She is facing a number of legal problems of case filed touching her by her landowner, tenants and about her father’s will,

her divorce and her alimony. She another times establishes to live with Avinendra whose father is the Minister of state for industry. Priya finds out him with Paro in a restaurant in Bombay. *“He looked young enough to be her son. He was a thin youth in a white kurta-pyjama, with a straggly beard, and an ethereal look, and looked a sort of oriental Jesus Christ with a faintly obese Mary Magdalen.”* (43) Avinendra is spending his draw money in buying presents for Paro, jewellery, shawls, anything that might catch her attention, but is useless. At last, Paro’s relationship with Avinendra ended.

*Then, according to reliable channels, she found her way to the kitchen, found the jhaadoo, and smacked Paro with it across her face, leaving long red scratches across her cheeks. She then began attacking her randomly, on her body, her back, her hair, until her passion was spent.* (82)

One night, Avinendra and Paro came at Priya’s house at one o’clock of night. Avinendra was drunk very high and trying very hard not to appear drunk. Paro is a sight to look, her blouse is quite ripped open from the front and her breast is completely naked. The tatters of the blouse hung in neat lines on each side like curtains at a theatre. She is weeping copiously and abusing herself.

*‘Whore-whore-call me whore!’ she sobbed, still beating at her breasts. They shook like jelly, and six fascinated eyes stayed glued to them until she curled herself up on the sofa and abandoned herself to serious sobbing. ‘Is that what I left B.R.*

*for?’ she wept. ‘He had his whores and wanted me to take it. But I left him and his money—‘She began pulling at her hair now in her frenzy. ‘To hear this baby, who I love like my son, calling me a whore? To hear this?!’ Her face crumpled, and another convulsion of tears overcame her.*

Minister and Paro sit in a corner of the terrace at the party. After that, on the frequent requests of Avinendra, she does not join the party. She creates sexual relationship with the minister which seems abnormal because she is behaving just like a whore.

*“She left in an almost mesmeric trance, and returned more than an hour later with the strangest expression on her face. It was exaltation and bondage, a hypnotic, almost hysterical contentment. Paan stains darkened her mouth, looking most incongruous with the chic evening dress. She had tied a gajra to her hair, and another to her wrist. Mishra, too, was disdainfully sniffing at a fragrant white circlet of night flowers; she looked fucked, used, what Suresh would have called a G.B. road type. An unease, a pall, descended on the party, as if everyone sensed that something strange was happening. Five minutes after they returned, the entire circus had disbanded”.* (78)

At last, Avinendra get married with chief minister's daughter who has good relationship with their family for years. Even his future father-in-law is ready to bottom the demand for payment for a two-year course in a prestigious foreign university for some post-doctoral work and includes other dowry also. After Avinendra's marriage, she makes a decision to present a role in a trilogy. Nobody considers Paro good. She was resentful by man at all second. It was the cause; Paro sometimes fails to make out herself. *"And so, one day, after Lenin had left, and I was all alone in the flat, I looked at myself in the mirror. "Who are you, Paro?" I asked myself. And I knew I didn't know. So I started looking for myself again, deciding to follow wherever my search took me". (109)*

Paro is the injured party of self estrangement.

*All they wanted to do was make out with me. Seems their primal problem was that they needed a good fuck. Every night, somebody would be asking me out for dinner, or propositioning me without even the preliminaries. Even the bloody psychiatrist. And if there's one thing I'm certainly not on to these days,' she shuddered theatrically, 'it's men. That's one scene I don't need, thank you very much.' (110)*

The people, who came in the contact of Paro, call for only physical love. They used Paro as to use clothes for and threw away her from their life. Her dreams of passion are damaged by the males. Here is an occurrence where Paro shows resemblance between Clytemnestra and herself. Clytemnestra is a character of the play

in which Paro is going to perform the role of Clytemnestra.

*At last she decides to establish her life. Once again, she gets married with a European. It is Priya who finds an article of her marriage in a magazine at B.R. house. Paro gets married with Loukas Leoros but, according to her aspiration, Paro is not satisfied with her new husband. She returns India after some time. "I feel like a cat on a hot tin roof; I'm in heat; I need a man! And Loukas, as we all know, is a woman. But he's a dreadfully jealous woman. And of course I wanted to see Junior in the holidays". (156)*

There are many drawbacks in Paro's character which leads her to be an alienated figure. She never follows the traditions which are established for a woman in the society. It is the reason of her exploitation at many times.

Priya Sharma, the speaker of the novel, loved B.R., who is the boss of her company. Priya was angered her attitude as well as her personality. She says that: - *"Ivy, Mary and I loved him madly; and all of us hated Paro. She would breeze into the office every now and then, and appraise us through narrowed green-grey eyes". (5)* Priya is a heroic central character in the novel, is also estranged. She has one younger brother who is studying to become a doctor. She was the only earning member of the family. She faces loneliness even in her family. *"Anyway, those emotions were rarely directed at me. In actual fact I barely existed for her. Family circumstance had more or less forced me to take up a*



*secretarial course rather complete college; all our family savings went into making my brother a doctor.”(11)*

One day Suresh, Priya and Paro had been talking. There Paro told them I loved B.R. and he was also me because after all, he was my husband, at that moment Priya frustrated by her because she also loves him she speaks totally at full volume to Paro. She says that: “*you stupid women, I said clearly, ‘every word that I have written about you is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. B.R. loves me and He’s loved me for years, much before he even knew you, in fact.’*” (117)

As one examines the motive for so doing, one is no where the autobiography of the character called Priya Sharma is the portrayal of protest against patriarchal society. The real reason has been slipped in as a typical witnessed in such measure among men, the green eyed monster called jealousy and hurt. “*A month later, he was married to Paro. It took all of us by surprise. I have never forgotten, nor forgiven, a hurt. This book, too, is a vindication.*”(121) In terms of story it is extraordinarily simple. The entire plot revolves round two feminine characters- Paro and Priya. The social background of both has nothing in common.

At last we can say that *Paro: Dreams of Passion* is a satire about Delhi upper class and it deals with the upper crust of contemporary Indian society in Metropolitan towns. The novels of Namita Gokhale mostly pursue the

themes of relationship between two hearts under different situations. *Paro: Dreams of Passion* is a fine example of many relations on the basis of physical and mental too. A satire about Delhi’s upper-class, *Paro* has been described as “far more witty and genuinely irreverent than any of De’s novels”. (Gokhale. From South Asian Women authors. **Online**)

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