

**Socio-cultural Issues in Namita Gokhale's *Paro: Dreams of Passion*: An analysis****Sarika Soni**Research Scholar, Department of English MATS University, Raipur C.G  
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[drvpgawai@matsuniversity.ac.in](mailto:drvpgawai@matsuniversity.ac.in)**Abstract**

Namita Gokhale is an Indian novelist who builds up her works with a different vision. She creates her own signature on the contemporary Indian women's literature list with her frank presentation of the realities of life. Namita Gokhale's *Paro: Dreams of Passion* (1984) presents a study of love and sexual liberation in women of the Indian scenario. Through her characters, she depicts women and men's status in society and their relationships through real-time experiences. She covers urban life in her first novel, *Paro: Dreams of Passion*, which explores men and women's lifestyles. She succeeds in presenting alternative realities with her new woman voice 'Paro' who is searching for herself. Identity and self-autonomy with liberation. Man does not live alone in society. From birth through death, he is bound by many people. Some of these people are his family members, several are friends, and some are his group contacts, even though everyone else is unfamiliar and unknown to him. Social communication results in relationships and is recognized by society. There are two major figures of public stratification-caste and class. The character portrays herself as one with the courage and opportunity to act rather than asking for rights or promoting women's issues. Paro rebels against moral and social rules that identify women in society. Her life shows the reversal of sexual freedom. She enslaves men with her beauty and sexuality and seduces everyone she meets in her search for love.

**Keywords:** Namita Gokhale, Paro, liberation, Sexuality, Dream, Love, Passion, Freedom.

## Introduction

In the twenty-first century, Namita Gokhale has established herself as one of India's most influential female writers. She brilliantly portrays Indian women's impulses, dreams, and wants through her writings. She has shown women as autonomous individuals in the current environment. She has made contemporary Indian women the protagonists of her novels and captured the Indian ethos through her writing. As a feminist, Gokhale became popular with her novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion*. In order to live free of social constraints, Paro informs Priya that it was her teacher who ignited her passions as a liberated woman who wishes to live a life free from social constraints. She had no prior knowledge of sexuality. She was the only hostel occupant. She harbours lofty dreams but pursues them little. The irony is that she curses Marcus, her art master, for liberating her. If she had been sincere, she would have protested to the head mistress following the initial meeting.

Namita Gokhale is a remarkable name in Indian English fiction. There is a story in the book '*Paro: Dreams of Passion*' that depicts Paro's rebellion against the culturally imposed repression of sexuality. All her inhibitions and moral barriers ended, and she became a nymphomaniac in search of sexual variety. For Paro, sex is symbolic of a quest for self-identity as a free woman - the symbol and prototype of emancipation and an expression of individuality as a free woman. She so brilliantly pin points the quest for womanhood in her very first novel '*Paro: Dream of Passion*.' The novel gives emphasis on concrete individual existence and, consequently, on subjectivity, individual freedom, and choice. Putting feminist perspectives into practice has been one of Namita Gokhale's accomplishments. Women strive

for emancipation and equality. The first women appeared in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

On the contrary, she adores the entire situation. Gokhale appears to argue that women cannot be free from male dominance until nature endows them with certain faculties for physical fulfilment. It is expected that males will continue to arouse females, as Paro did. According to Gokhale's view, if a man can eat dung with a group of women, why can't a woman do the same? She seems to be arguing that since men can eat dung with women, why can't women? Even though he wrote him a letter, Paro felt no remorse for his actions. The outcome was catastrophic. She was discovered in a compromised situation with Marcus in her room. If she is ejected from the convent, it is her fault. No religion or social law permits such behaviour in a hostel. After all, she rebelled against the school's ethical standards, and the media is not to blame for publishing the story in the newspaper. The entire family suffered due to this. She met Babu at college and has no remorse for her past. She constantly thinks of prosperity to achieve independence. In *Paro: Dreams of Passion*, Paro is unafraid of her sexual behavior because she believes that women have equal rights in all spheres of life, regardless of whether our culture accepts them or not. All of her energies are directed at acquiring another lover regularly.

Educated Priya is the main character in *Paro: Dreams of Passion*. Her life revolves around her husband. Paro is closely followed by Priya. Priya longs for her husband's companionship. She craves her husband's attachment. "I am an Indian woman, I told myself, and my husband is my God, and I am not going to give up on him. So I called him." She hails from Mumbai. Her husband does not yield to her strong desire to do any job because her husband, Suresh, is an eminent lawyer. His ego is hurt. He is upset. He resists taking up a job. The novelist, Namita through Priya opines that "Suresh was very upset at me picking up a

job.” Suresh says, “Priya, think of my position in society. Suresh is unwilling to allow her to join a job due to his higher status as a prominent lawyer in society. The husband asks, "Why is her husband not earning enough for her to be able to take on such a job?" Suresh is hesitant to allow her to join because of his high social status. She marginalizes her eagerness to do her job. Their happiness may not be hindered by finances. But his attitude hurts her because her freedom is denied. He has not only marginalized her, but he has also argued with her about trivial things. He beat his wife, Priya, without valid reason. Who is responsible for her present condition is an issue to be discussed. A woman is responsible for her pathetic situation. As a result of the tyranny and torture of men in upper-middle-class families, Namita Gokhale brings attention to the abuse of women within those families. As a result, even today's middle-class woman is subjected to physical torture. In the novel, Priya is beaten by Suresh, who comes from an upper-middle-class and a well-educated family. As women strive to achieve equal status with men in all fields, they need to outdo their distinctive womanliness to reach their full potential. As an attorney, he knows all the rules and regulations of the law - beating a wife is illegal. It is suppression. He tortures her for male dominance and ego. He does not recognize her identity. As a lawyer from a metropolitan city like Delhi, he believes women have no identity. Atrocities on women continue in society for which the relationship between Suresh and Priya is evidence.

Despite her best efforts, she may not be able to live a happy life. As a result, Priya appears to be Paro in the novel, a rebel against the social and moral codes that women are expected to adhere to. To be autonomous, she disregards conventions and traditional values. She does not believe in age old patriarchal norms or irrational traditions and conventions. She opines, “I could never understand rituals, why something had to be one way rather than the other... who made these rules?” In other words, she waves goodbye to social codes, traditions, conventions, rituals, and authority, which compels women to become

vulnerable. She wishes to assert her individuality. In a male-dominated society, she establishes her place. But she turns out to be an adulterous woman who is against established traditions and conventions. Her husband's suppression causes Paro to fight traditional norms against which she is against. In times when she leaves her husband, she is seen having illicit relationships with Bucky Bhandpur and Lenin, as well as flirting with Shambhunath Mishra. She has failed in two marriages with B.R and Loukas in pursuing her freedom. Women are ruled by an external force that dictates her life and actions. She is not the decision-maker in matters concerning her and, therefore, is responsible for consequences. The world, masculine society, is responsible for her condition. Any amount of complaints and grumbles cannot reach the other end, and her voices simply pass unheard. This male world is embodied in a woman's husband who is in charge of her, and by default, responsible for her miseries. Within marriage, women reconcile in varied ways with the authority structure in the husband's family, thereby concealing gender inequalities in the marriage structure. Domestic violence, the brutality of the husband has kept it behind their flats and bungalows. All castes and working class women complained of domestic violence, with some justifying beatings as disciplinary measures. Upper castes recognized domestic violence as a valid reason for separation. Freedom from domestic violence was considered a middle class privilege, and hence their not awareness among the working class was even lower. More often, they sought help from neighborhood groups.

A complex spectrum of feminine individuality is vividly depicted by Gokhale against the backdrop of current educated Indian society. In her work, she explores conventional themes associated with female novelists successfully. It is not desirable for a woman to live among conventional people. She does not wish to be occupied solely with washing, preserving, family gatherings, restrooms, drawing rooms, and hallways. It is okay that some educated women lead pleasant lives and are truly intelligent. Priya compares Paro

to a small, sharp scorpion. The mistake that Priya made was to think that she was incapable of handling life and the world in the absence of Paro. Priya has no reason to envy Paro, who lacks genuine charisma and vitality. Given that Priya had the opportunity to pursue her own interests, there is no justification for the conflict between the two. One cannot comprehend Paro's constant victory. In her quest for self-identity, she manipulates and mutilates the men she meets, denying them their truths and values and undermining their superiority. Her unrest in life can be interpreted as a poignant and impatient protest by a lonely woman who refused to surrender her identity to a man-made world because she was terribly alone. A woman whose luminous screen of non-conformist gesture concealed an inner void that she could not fill despite numerous relationships, a woman who ultimately put her life at risk. This is a world created by humans. Everyone, man or woman, has a task to accomplish. Paro is emotional and sexual. In this culture, educated women like her find security. Not all marriages end in frustration.

Namita's novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion* is about exploring changes within oneself. Her woman protagonist, like Priya, is always willing and receptive to redefining attitudes and relationships shorn of undue romantic embellishments. She wants to free herself from traditional concerns and embrace a spontaneous approach to life. In this novel, one can trace the struggle of a woman protagonist who is seeking a meaningful definition of life for herself. She vociferously reveals the private truth about what women want. Namita's women protagonists feel their emotions strongly, yet retain a constant value judgment, about themselves and other relationships they have to live through. Though they belong to a different stratum of society, they possess inner independence to experiment. In the process, life yields self-knowledge, which teaches them that a woman's desire to succeed as an individual is not incompatible with her desire for love or the small pleasures of domesticity.

However, Namita Gokhale portrays the inner furies and rising calls for women's empowerment and emancipation extremely well.

## Conclusion

Throughout her work, Namita Gokhale portrays the struggles and pains of women in modern society, as well as their struggle between tradition and modernity. In literature, the concept of new women has developed differently, particularly in the feminist views of authors. Paro, 'the new woman,' who demands equal rights and status in sexuality and rights. With her new lifestyle, she portrays a rebellious woman who seeks self-autonomy.

*Paro: Dreams of Passion* concludes with Paro and Priya's deaths, and Lenin is taken aback by her demise. It is ironic that Gokhale fails to evoke the feelings of pity and terror in his readers despite his efforts. Here, she peers into her characters' minds while describing their exterior environment. As a result, she wrote novels that broke with tradition and elevated the female voice. To sum up, *Paro: Dreams of Passion*, a multifaceted odyssey through the passions and jealousies of a group of middle-class Indian women, particularly through the narrator Priya's and her friend Paro's experiences, vividly depicts the world of modern women in metropolitan centres. Thus, this novel is a work of fiction that challenges us to consider Gokhale's feminist elements.

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