



# Different Shades of Women's Love and Affection in Folk Tales of Vijaydan Detha

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## Abstract

India is known as one of the most diverse countries in the world, having their own unique treasure of folk tales. The diversity of India's culture ensures a wide range of folk tales as the culture of our country is based on traditional language and culture from different regions. Vijaydan Detha has been a renowned writer from Rajasthan who restored the oral literature of Rajasthan in the form of folk stories which are compiled in his excellent collection of folk stories namely *Batan ri Phulwari (Garden of Tales)*. Women centred stories are very popular among them in which he urges that man and woman are two indivisible wedges of society. The folk stories of Detha break all barriers which are constructed by male dominated society. He depicts lady character strongly and many colours of lady love is being offered in the folk stories like- "The Dilemma", "Press the Sap Light the Lamp", and "New Life". The paper is an attempt to explore how Detha highlights the extremity is feminine love. These stories revolve around the lady characters and their feeling of love which is experienced by a woman, an epitome of love and chastity in a typical Rajasthani society. The paper also sheds light on the issues related to woman dignity and self-respect mentioned by the writer that a woman is not destined to live exploited life and possess exploited love. He claims for complete freedom with dignity of love to the womanhood. The romantic form of love can be seen in his folk stories like in the story "The Dilemma" the heroine prefers ghost love and unusual snake love is accepted by the protagonist of another story "Press the Sap, Light the Lamp" as a paragon of true love in place of their husbands' unworthy love. In the third story "New Life" we can able to watch the same sex love, as Teeja and Beeja, both the girls succeed to secure their same sex marriage relationship by rejecting the societal norms. Thus, the paper deliberates upon many colours of love as eternal emotion which prevails everywhere in the repository world of folklore.

**Key-words:** Folk stories, Desire of love, Love vs chastity, Affection, Types of love in Rajasthani folklore.

## Introduction :

India is known as one of the most diverse countries in the world, having their own unique treasure of folk tales. The diversity of India's culture ensures a wide range of these folk tales as a culture of our country is based on the traditional language and culture from different regions. Literature has richest treasure of love stories either it is English literature or the writings in other language. The themes of love and affection have been integral to the folk stories. Over the centuries many aspects of love have been reflected through the stories and romantic love stands first. The English literature offers the vista of passionate love like the eternal love story of Romeo and Juliet, on contrary a tragic love of Antony and Cleopatra, unattainable love of Lyla and Manjnun, and timeless love in Wuthering Heights can be seen. Similarly, we have a vast treasure of mythical love stories that abounds Sanskrit literature, which is undoubtedly one among the richest source of exciting love tales. Folklores of India and the classical love legends of Hindu mythology are full of passion and sensuousness, they have an appeal of romantic love in us. In a similar vein Indian mythology has witnessed the spiritual love of Radha and Krishan. Before to describe the glorified love both of them, here it is needed to mention that the any aspect of love, especially the philosophical aspect of love cannot be easily understood by every hue of the society in any other discipline, but folklore is the right manner where every person can be blessed with the all colours of love in a simpler and interesting way, because folklore illustrates the practices and feelings of common people. Similarly, the spiritual love of Radha and Krishan prevails in the heart of every folk who is direct and indirectly connected with the lord Krishana, his birth place and the places where Krishna performed his mischievous acts. Consequently, when we are urged to go to Brindavan and listen to the melodious chant of "Radhe Radhe", definitely the supremacy of true and pure love can be felt there in the testimony of Radha and Krishan. Radha is considered the greatest devotee of Krishana and his intimate lover. All the Gopis had spiritual love feelings for lord Krishana, but he was blessed most with the pleasure of Radha's love. It is true that 'raslila' by krishana is nothing but the conjugal relationship of Krishana with all Gopis. So, it is considered that these fables or folk tales charge our imagination, capture the emotions, sense and sensibility, and particularly have been acted as a medium of entertainment since ages. The eternal fact is that the love is a situation where the man and woman have strong feelings for each other. According to the Oxford Dictionary, love is a "Strong affection that drives us towards the thing of our desires; inclination of the soul and heart; theological grace."

Love is not limited with two persons; it attaches family and friends forever as well. Although the conjugal love is a central motif of love folk tales and directly connected with womanhood which is broadly depicted by a regional writer Vijaydan Detha, a renowned writer from Rajasthan, restored the oral literature of Rajasthani culture in the form of folk stories and compiles them in his Bataan ri Phulwari (Garden of Tales). He also explores true romantic love in a very interesting manner as he includes supernatural elements, ghosts and animals like snakes to prove the chastity of true love through his folk stories. Thus, the paper deliberates the multicoloured love as an eternal emotion which prevails everywhere in the wonderland of his folk stories. He examines how the women in Rajasthani society get trapped in marriage with somebody, who is pathetically unsuitable for her. It is because of our patriarchal system. Women ideologically accept the man power but when it becomes intolerable, they are forced to raise their feelings and stand before male committed injustice. So as Vijaydan Detha pictures in his folk stories on the one hand, and on the other side stresses that the women need to have a lot of audacity to stand before man favourable society. Generally, the man lover is observed as the central figure in love stories but Detha depicts lady love minutely and his stories go beyond the imagination where the woman is witnessed to be passionately loved by a ghost in a story, "The Dilemma", and by a snake in the other story, "Press the Sap Light the Lamp". Both the stories are the types of unattainable love due to the tragic end of the lovers. The third story which is taken in this paper is "New Life" a story of same sex marriage relationship. In these stories vijaydan Detha depicts lady characters strongly. The present paper is like an attempt to explore how the writer highlights the extremity of a lady's conjugal love feeling. These stories

revolve around the woman characters and their feeling of love which is experienced by a woman, who is always considered as an epitome of charity in a typical Rajasthani society.

### **Illustration of love and affection in the folk stories of Detha**

Detha illustrates highest paragons of conjugal love which can be seen as a central motif in his story 'The Dilemma' a love story revolves around a ghost and woman. Generally, it is seen in both rural and urban area, women are destined to get married with a person who does not consider a woman more than an enhancement in beautification of his home. So is happened with the heroine of this story. The story starts with a returning marriage procession of a wealthy Seth's only son. They stop to rest under a *khejari* tree at the outskirts of village. There lives a ghost and when he sees the bride, falls in love due to her mesmerising beauty. What an ironical here that the husband, who should be encountering the same passion like ghost for his bride, totally busy to maintain accounts and thinks about only trades and profit. Consequently, within two days after marriage he has to plan a journey for five years as per his father's command because it would be auspicious for trade. On the other side the ghost has true love for the bride and meets her in her husband's disguise, but never wants to cheat her, so he discloses all the truth of his passionate love and asks the bride, "So now it's time for you to tell me what you want. After all, I haven't held back anything from you, even though I'm a ghost." In reply the bride thinking of about the fact that a woman is always considered like an object and without desires of her own self, cannot reject the extraordinary love of the ghost. As Detha writes the inner dilemma of the bride, "Her husband was the one who left her standing alone midstream. And when a ghost declared his love so ardently, so honestly, who could she refuse?" From that day both the couple live happily for next four years, when Detha writes in a proverbial manner like, "Time doesn't slow down when each night is so precious. And the days too flew by in the wink of an eye" signifies the happiness of loving couple. Their love succeeds as the bride becomes pregnant with the ghost's baby. This news was heard by the real husband and he returns at the time when the bride is about to deliver a child. The riddle gets deeper here who is the real husband and the ghost is not permitted to meet the bride and his girl child even the bride cannot utter a single word to express her feelings so is the writer indicates the hints about the women's unfortunate destiny as he writes, "But when did a woman ever get a chance to do what she wanted? For her it's just the bridal chamber and nothing beyond .....until the day she is taken away to the cremation ground." Moreover, the ghost, having true love for bride in his heart is captured in a water bag with the help of a trickster gadariya, it is mean that herdsman. The ghost's voice continuously comes out from the water bag as he says, "Bhagwan and all the gods of heaven are only a creation of man's fancy and need. The only thing true is this world is love, and only love."

In a similar way in another story, "Press the Sap Light the Lamp" Detha highlights the universal components of love, which can be placed primarily like affinity, devotion and passion. It is noted that intimacy or affinity stresses upon a strong bonding between the partners, while passion is seen as integral to sexual attraction. Commitment or devotion is a gradual development of emotions for each other, who are in love. The present story, written by Detha in a riddling manner, has a unique quality that is universality of love. Here in the story a woman prefers a snake love to her real husband, who is careless about her desires of love as a newly wedded bride. She is the princess who breaks faith with her husband after falling in love with a snake, even she is ready to be killed by her husband after the murder of her snake lover. Story begins with the fourth marriage of a thakur and the bride is left alone at the very first night in bridal chamber owing to her husband's obligation to return king's court. In the absence of her husband, the dissatisfied passion of love becomes painful and cannot be endured, so she chooses the snake-love. Thus, the amazing love story begins with the approval that the power of love can alter the natural occurrence, when the snake opposes the bride, "But how could the two of us live together? I'm a snake and you are woman," the bride replies, "A nagin is hissing in my heart. You cannot see her." This is the intensity of romantic love. Although at the end of the story snake lover was killed by her husband and after the disclosure of their love story, the bride too meets her destiny as Detha writes to advocate the supremacy

of true love as he says, "The same sword that had cut her love to pieces had now separated her head from her body. What greater happiness could there be than this?"

In the next story, "New Life", Detha depicts the exploited married life, of women and how they struggle to live with dignity, he believes that women can attain their love and complete freedom only when they cross the four walls of the house and step out into the open. It indicates that women need to have a lot of audacity to face and come over to get their self-respect in man favourable society, because the present story is based on same sex marriage, i.e., homosexuality.

In the story, a girl named Beeja is given upbringing as a boy by her father to attain a good deal of dowry in marriage. The girl, Beeja, also considers herself as a boy and she willingly marries with another girl named Teeja. So, both the girls Beeja and Teeja have entered into marriage relationship. Teeja, the bride of Beeja is unaware of her partner's sex till marriage, later on after knowing the truth both the girls decide to our come from this complicated situation and they accept their real self as girls in front of society too. But he, the greedy father of Beeja tries hard to hide whole circumstances cleverly by appealing the girls for sack of their family's pride and honour that is not to disclose the truth of their same sex marriage outside the house. He pleads with Teeja, "Daughter-in-law my prestige is in yur hands. Make your husband he sense and make her wear the cloths she used to." Teeja boldly opposes the unnatural demand of her father-in-law and says to Beeja, "We are the victims of this idea of carrying forward the name of the family. We have to root this out." Although she is very sympathetic towards Beeja's family and as her solacing ally. Both of girls refuse to surrender before the unusual laws of society, they want to be accepted as in their real self as women. This leads them towards their miserable condition. They are declared socially outcast. Detha, here presents the passionate love of the girls through heart touching conversation, when Teeja utters to Beeja in a similar way as Adam and Eve did after the banishment from garden of Eden, "You have been wronged more than I have. Both of us have been struck by the same lightning. Now we have to pay the price for it together." Here extreme harshness of society over women is highlighted consequently, the girls are forced to leave the village forever and banished from the so-called society. They go to mountain and succeed to get a palace having all worldly blessings with the help of chieftain of ghost. On the way to mountain the whole universe witnesses the depth of their passionate love as they unite physically and swallow the nectar through their lips, the raining clouds and lightning encounter a new gleam so is Detha claims, "If there was more pure and more sacred in the world than the clear water shed by the clouds, it was their intense love." This is the exceptional representation of same sex love, which is socially comes under the category of forbidden love. Detha skilfully crafts the supernatural element like ghost in his stories and here he proves the supremacy of homosexual love relationship as the ghost speaks after watching the courtship of both the girls, "You didn't mind the lightning, then why be shy of me? Witnessing your love has made my life meaningful." The amazing fact of the treasure of our folk stories that even the ghost is seen here as a protector and well wisher of true lovers either they are same in sex.

### Conclusion-

Thus, the paper deliberates upon many colours of love as eternal emotion which prevails everywhere in the world of folklore. So, love will continue to play significant role in folk stories as the society can be leaded in a better way.

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