



Marginalization of Women in Githa Hariharan's '*The Thousand Faces of Night*'

Dr.Mrs.Jayashri Ajay Aphale

M.A, SET, Ph.D.

Savitribai Phule Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Satara.

Abstract:

The Thousand faces of Night by Githa Hariharan attempt to portray the reality of contemporary woman in Indian Society Githa Hariharan is one of the well known Indian novelists, who projects the theme of marginalization of women in Indian societies Her novels explain how women were oppressed suppressed and silenced in the male-dominated society. The purpose of the present paper is to analyze the marginalization of women in Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand faces of Night*. In intends to present the voiceless women, who were silenced and entered to play the male-scripted roles of perfect daughter, wife, sister and daughter-in law and even mother in the patriarchal society. *The Thousand faces of Night* is a story of their women sita, Devi and Mayamma, who have witnessed the plight of Indian women and mal-practices and convictions of Indian society against women. Githa Hariharan traces the battles of woman in her relationship with men and society. It is the story of Devi's quest for a self identity. It portrays woman as weak individual longing for love and understanding but treated as slaves and were in ford to serve their family.

Key words: Patriarchal society, feminist, suppression, conviction, self-identity.

Indian English fiction seems to focus on the marginalized section of society after Independence The novelists tried to portray the different kinds of domination prevailing in the Indian Society. The post colonial woman writers such as: Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Namita Gokhale and Githa Hariharan talk about the deprived and the dehumanizing treatment of the downtrodden and the patriarchal cruelty indicting suffering of Indian women. Githa Hariharan observes human life with detail and concern. She is a sensitive writer who has taken sensitive issue of women in reality. Her novel '*The Thousand Faces of Night*' preoccupied with the problems of women. She highlights patriarchal brutality and how women are real subalterns whole voices were hundred by the colonizers-their husbands- who colonized them. Men colonized women by making them to move to the margin and rule over them by occupying the central position through hegemony.

Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand faces of Night* is a story of their women. Sita, Devi and Mayamma. It is basically a women centered saga. Devi, the protagonist is representative of the modern, intellectual women of the present era. Devi's mother her-mother-in-law parvatiamma, Mayamma the old family retainer, Uma and her grandmother all are female characters, who are marginalized by someone in their life. Hariharan forces the battle of women in her relationship with men and society. As a post modern novelist, she interrogates and subverts traditionally established ideas, belies concepts, and grand narratives approved by the modernists. She deals with matter like freedom, self-image, self-realization and quest for identity etc. Novelist narrates the stories of Devi Sita and Mayamma through linking them to mythological characters. The stories of these three women uncover the diverse dimensions of women's oppression. It is the story of Devi's quest for self-image. The battle of Devi with men and society, her inner and outer dilemma, tensions that woman had to face in her life. She very beautifully intermingles the lives of a foreign return young girl Devi herself sacrificing natural mother sita, and an old caretaker Mayamma.

Devi, the central character is neither on ideal woman like her mother, sita nor she is spiritually superior her mother in law. She is an ordinary woman, educated modern Indian woman who is prone to desire and ambitions in the society. She belongs to act, to take a controlled status of a wife in married life and does not make a compromise with her biological and emotional needs. Though Devi was born and brought up in a traditional Hindu Branting Family, she was educated and completed her master's degree in America. Devi's grandmother always thought her to be an Indian Traditional woman through her stories. Her stories were back drop to Devi's womanhood. She tries to instill the qualities like self-sacrifice, duty, endurance in her granddaughter. She told her the stories of Sita, Savitri, Anusaya, virtuous Female from mythology and on the other hand also explained her marginalized figures of Gandhraj ,Amba and Ganga. Devi explains how her grandmother teaches her sanskar and conventions. She Says: 'My grandmother stories were no ordinary bedtime stories. She chose each for a particular occasion a story in reply to each of my childish questions She had an answer for every question. But her answer were not simple, they had to be decodes a comparison had to be made, an illustration discovered and a moral drawn out.' (Hariharan 27)

Devi completed her education from US and now returning to India back on her mother's call. But in India she found herself a misfit around her relatives as She said "I sat with them, listened to their news bulletins of births mismanage, illness and deaths and answered their proising questions with evasive monosyllables" (Hariharan,14). Devi tried to adjust herself in her life in Indian and before that Sita decided a arrange marriage for Devi with Mahesh who is regional manger of a company soon the marriage became a matter of solitary confinements for Devi as she understood that she is living on the side track of her husband's life for Mahesh career is the most important thing in life and so Devi's marital life holds charm for her. They both have no emotional connection. She decided to take job but he does not permit him and asks her what will you do when the baby comes? (Hariharan 64) Mahesh admits the marriage is a gamble in which wife should

adapt herself to the consequences and should play the roles of traditional wife and mother at home But for Devi, " a marriage cannot be forced into suddenly being there it must grow gradually like a delicate but promising sapling" (Hariharan 49)

Mahesh was dominant enough to suppress Devi's all feelings, thoughts and preferences. She has no right to live as an individual. Her forced on is always restricted. Mahesh is a typical Indian traditional man who believes a woman should but be independent. In Indian society biological expectation from a woman are significant. In modern world also society hold a great importance to a woman giving birth to male child Mahesh is also such type of a traditional man who thinks of woman as a puppet in the man's hand. Devi expected marriage to be a perfect unification of two individuals. But Mahesh Like most of the Indian men took marriage to be a social responsibility and so refused the freedom to his wife devi. He and his father made fun of her dreams and aspirations. But Devi who is exposed to American socio-cultural life, revolt against patriarchal power of Mahesh when she realize Mahesh's hypocrisy and his patriarchal behavior, she leaves him and alopes with Gopal. She was traded to Gopal and rejected all the convictions of married life. Hoping to find her own emotional voice through music she moves with gopal sooner the excitement of new relationship fades away and Devi realizes the truth that Goapl is no better than Mahesh. He is also man and so behaves like others.

Mayamma is another significant female character in the novel suffered from male domination and oppression at its highest pack. She is the old family retainer in Devi's in law's house. She sacrifices all her wishes for the sake of her survival. Mayamma got married with all the boons and blessings at the age of twelve only. Unfortunately her husband turned to be very dishonest. on the other hand her mother-in-law was truly concerned ambusher her jeweler instead her. After the marriage some year passed but mayamma could bear no child and the mother-in-law started emplaning she taunted her for being no mother. Hariharan writes, " Mayamma had been thrown into the waters of her womanhood well before she had learnt to sums". Early marriage is a curse to Indian Society. When girls did not know what the marriage is? they get married. Mayamma was ill-treated by her husband and her mother in law became of her childlessness. She tolerates all torments and curses. She was subjugated by her mother in law. Mayamma was suppressed and silenced. At last Mayamma lave her home with painful memories. She reaches Parvati Amma's home where she becomes a caretaker. She is illiterate and is the greatest suffer in the novel but never complained of her grief and suffering. She is tortured by her mother in law for not bearing a child. After long layers, she gives a birth to baby boy. Her husband one day takes all the money and leaves the house. Mayamma's anguish and suffering increases after her husband deserts her. Mayamma continues to sacrifice and lives a tortured and humiliating life because she has no option to way out. Mayamma is given shelter by parvati amma, Devi's mother in -law and works as a family retainer. Her life is full of unhappiness suffering and hard work.

Sita, Devi's mother is another woman character, at the age of twenty one, goes to her in law's house with the desire to be a perfect wife and daughter in law. Sita had succeeded in being an ideal

wife, dutiful mother, and responsible daughter in law but at the cost of self sacrifice. Sita has brought a veena as a part of her dowry. As grandmother described, her parents had ward her talent even as a little child and had trained her with the best teacher they could find. she played so beautifully our household came to standstill but one when the pooja ghar was found undone (" The flowers has not been picked, the flower had beat been swept") her father in law came and shouted as her while she was playing veena, 'put that veena away. Are you a wife, a daughter in law? (Hariharan 30) we never saw her touch the veena again. She became a dutiful Daughter in law as the neighbors praised. Sita rosebush Gandhari (who blindfold herself knowing about her husband Dhrutrashta's blindness) Sita had submitted unwillingly in front of patriarchal domination her all photographs in which she poses with her Vena are burnt. She performed her duty as a woman at the cost of the death of the artist .The present Sita also sacrificed her life for others. The history of human civilization is filled with examples of female devaluation and marginalization. Being a victim of patriarchal society, Sita decided a arrange marriage for her educated daughter Devi is a tragedy.

Sita and Mayamma both had many difficulties in their self development. Both have suffered a lot and spent a painful life. But Devi is a rebellion and is not a passive acceptor of the traditional norms of society. She images herself as a strong woman. She thinks " I lived a secret life of my own I became a woman warrior, a heroine. It was Devi. I rode a tiger and cut off evil magical demon's heads. (Hariharan 41) Mahesh fails to develop an affectionate bond with Devi. So she refuses to suffer maturely like Mayamma and leaves Mahesh and elopes with Gopal. When she realizes that Gopal is also a benevolent despot she leaves him and returns to her mother.

Uma is another minor character she is Devi's cousin, who endures all her agonies and leads a miserable life she was buffered by her husband and her drunken father in law abused her physically. She was depressed and lived her life in dejection as a silent sufferer by tolerating all her destinies she met with thus every woman was subjugated in male dominated stereotyped society woman were enforced to more to the margin and the center was occupied by men through hegemony in order to slow their own identity and authority over women in the society. Women suppressed their own self identity in order to make their husbands identity. Women were represented as secondary beings by comparing with men and were subjugated as the subordinate to beings.

Though Githa Hariharan has focused on the marginality and subjugation of woman,she allowed her protagonists to strive and survive with dignity and determination and fight with all odds of life. Devi who is representative of modern intellectual women who eschewed patriarchal monopoly on one side and on the other side Sita, Mayamma, Uma adopt the existentialist heroic posture to confront the ordeals of life. Patriarchy is based on a system of power relations in which men controls women's production reproduction and sexuality. The method of patriarchy has prevailed in our society right from the ancient Vedic period. Gita Hariharan has carefully shown the Indian Social system and has depicted the realistic situation of Indian women's life. She

explores inferior status of women in traditional social order and system. She persecuted reality of Indian patriarchal bourgeois society that humiliated, tortured and silenced women from the days of Gandhari to the present day. She shows that the women of post modern age have begun to shape their own identity. It is shown that women have become aware of their own status and condition of life. They have begun to reject orthodoxy. They are dissatisfied with the institution of marriage where man rules over a woman. Taking in consideration the contemporary situation of women such as Gandhari, Damayanti, Amba, Ambika, and Ambalika from the great epic and compared them with Devi, Sita, Uma and Mayamma. She has skillfully presented pessimistic disappointed, sorrowful contemporary social life of women through these female characters. All the female characters have been victimized in such way that their individuality is under constant suppression. Hariharan has shown the marginality and tradition of all the textual as well as inter textual characters but has shown their revival.

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