

# Quest For Love And Lust In Namita Gokhale's *Paro: Dreams Of Passion*: A Study

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## **Abstract**

Namita Gokhale is an Indian woman novelist builds up her works with a different vision. She encompasses a unique positioning in the Indian women writings. This study focuses on a social world of many complex human relationships in Namita Gokhale's *Paro: Dreams of Passion*. She depicts herself as a female characters act with more courage and opportunity as opposed to requesting rights in the common society or featuring the issues of women. Her portrayal gives new bearings to the feministic novelist. Namita characters strongly challenge much sophistication in their life, neither desired for the recommendations of the male. They are autonomous to take choices throughout their life and they have the ability to change the social standards with their individual considerations. It also looks into the causes and effects of love and sexual liberation in the context of Indian women. In fact, the novel's principal reveals that human relationships, since many women and men live together and travel through life in their various classes and gender roles. *Paro* rebels against the moral and social rules that serve to identify a woman in society. She defies, opposes, and wants liberation from traditional values and lifestyles. It examines the quest for self-awareness and deconstructing femininity, particularly through the characters of *Paro* and *Priya*, and is notable for its fast-paced narratives, controlled purpose, and a style of keen observation, as well as the introduction of new characters and rapid changes in the story's scenes. It also looks at human passions like envy, vanity, lustful behaviour, and perverted love. Few women understand the essence of virtue and chastity and are committed to their families. She is restless due to her lower impulses.

**Keywords:** Contradiction, Love, Faith, Lust, Femininity, Relationship, Identity.

## **Introduction**

Namita Gokhale is one of the most famous women writers in India. She was born in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh in 1956 and she was brought up in Nainital. Namita Gokhale's first novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion* was published in 1984. She prepares her notes after choosing the subject of the novel. Almost all the women characters in Namita Gokhale's novels have a quest for construction and meaningful relationship with men. In the early 1980s, she was pioneered in the sexuality frank genre. The influence of Indian philosophy upon her mind is grand and admirable. Her image as an artist remains intact in spite of all the people she has met in her life. Quite often, her writing explores

a mixture of the probable and the improbable fact in her fiction. She asks questions indirectly so as to make the readers think on contemporary social, political and economic problems. There is no denying the fact that she is worried of cultural degeneration in society. This study reveals the advancement of women characters in Namita Gokhale's works, speaks to how these characters battle to lead their lives and how they change the standards of conventional society to lead their lives and how they make a picture of new women with their contemplation.

Gokhale's first novel, *Paro: Dreams of Passion*, created a stir by its frankness in the early 1980s and pioneered the sexually frank

genre, which made Shobha De famous. This novel reached out to a lot of people, which is a satire on Delhi's upper class. Gokhale became popular with the publication of *Paro: Dreams of Passion*. Here, she illustrates the difference between lust and love. Paro and Priya regard themselves advanced women of India and feel proud of their physical beauty. Actually, they have no ethical values and are badly criticized by their friends. Both of them fail to understand the importance of sincerity, loyalty, devotion and social discipline. However, there is a difference between them. Priya is prudent enough to realize her folly and vanity and returns to her husband after getting last warning from him. She has been warned by her brother too. She is just a puppet and a doll for B.R. as the latter has no true love for her. In *Paro: Dreams of Passion* she portrays the substances of the life of Delhi and Bombay and how two women are desirous of each other.

In the novel, there are two women, Paro and Priya. Paro is dependably herself yet at another level, she is somewhat emotional and she is not exceptionally keen. So she meets a miserable end. Paro and Priya are two various types of women. Priya was a kind of lady who holds her family together. Paro was a lady who could not have cared less and perfect lady is somewhere close to them both. In *Paro: Dreams of Passion*, B.R. does not spare the woman that comes to his net and yet remains sexually hungry. Since he leads a comfortable life in Bombay, he can provide job opportunities to the girls of his choice. The new modern women of India are forgetting Indian culture and imitate degraded Western women. They are not prepared to live within the four walls of house and hence want to enjoy adventurous life. They cross all limits of decency at times in the name of self-reliance. Many social thinkers fail to understand their definition of liberation.

Paro never realizes her foul deeds that she has done in the past. She does not repent for deserting B.R. or Bucky Bhandpur as she lives in the present. The past is dead for her. But Priya learns a lesson from her past and returns to Suresh for settled life. When she was in her

teens, she had to struggle for family expenses. She does not want to invite the same poverty and economic uncertainty again in her life. Being practical in life she devotes herself to Suresh though he often snubs her for her vices. Priya analyses the personal life of Paro and remarks:

This is the Paro who is but recently liberated from marriage and convention: she is still convinced that she is a young and desirable as she ever was. Her massive breasts, like the enlarged pores of her skin, have grown ponderous with age. Even her fingers have become fatter - but this coarsening of the body has also somehow catalysed a startling vitality of mind, a vigour that is as crude as it is real. Life has not tired her - She is undiminished, she has grown. She is still obsessed, loudly and glamorously, with questions that the rest of us answered, or decided not to answer, at some period around adolescence. (26)

Even Paro's friends fail to understand her sense of freedom. How is she a liberated woman? Does she raise her voice against exploitation of women? Does she know the ways of getting social and political liberty? On the contrary she exploits her lovers and wastes their money for personal pleasure. Future is uncertain for her. Priya aptly remarks:

Women's liberation isn't so chic any more, it has become a little dated, even irrelevant, like Trade-unionism to Socialism, as Lenin would say. Fashionable Women aren't liberated any more, it's all morchas and placards and sweaty types shouting about dowry and bride-burning. Paro has done it

all, she's left a husband and a lover, she has a small son of ambiguous parentage. She is a conversation piece at dinner parties, and it is considered daring and chic to know her. And she is, or thinks she is, my best friend. (26)

Paro's relations with Bucky Bhandpur are not sincere at all. She remains an adulterous with him too. The family friends openly blame her for her unfaithfulness though she gets a son from him.

As ill-luck would have it, she contests various legal property cases with B.R. and Bucky Bhandpur and yet survives the ordeal. Generally, Priya's husband handles her cases though many situations end in misunderstanding. There is no limit to her aspirations. Her earthly ambitions are responsible for her miseries. Quite often she reveals her past to Priya and shares her inner feelings with her. When she was a student of Convent School her Art teacher enjoyed sex with her. During Dussehra vacations she was alone in the hostel and he excited her. With passing of time, she too started enjoying the fun with him. Paro had been virtuous; she would have met the Principal of the Convent for her security. She could tell everything to her favourite teachers. Then the result was disastrous as the secret became known to Convent authorities. She was expelled from the school and her studies suffered a lot.

Paro never felt any shame while discussing her sexual feelings with Priya. Quite often she felt joy in her sexual encounters. Priya and Paro could handle Suresh easily. Due to his busy schedule as an advocate, he had no time to compare these two ladies so intimate to him. As Paro was really lustful, she almost used Avinendra for her gains. This immature Marxist failed to explain the concepts such as dialectic materialism, four stages of struggle, class war, fifth and last stage of the dictatorship of the Proletariat etc. and yet talked of Indian political scenario. Since his father happened to be minister of Industry, people talked with him

politely for personal gains. Priya never admired Avinendra's intelligence though Paro was close to him.

... Avinendra declared that he was a Marxist. He became more and more voluble, and articulate, after every drink. Suresh. who didn't normally drink on weekdays, tried very hard to keep pace? I slipped prudishly at my pineapple juice and watched the pathetic spectacle of my husband, a grown man, a professional, chamchaing and maskalagaing a callow youth whose voice had not even cracked properly. I decided to dislike Avinendra, and decided not to show it. (47)

Here, Gokhale satirizes the pseudo-Communists of India who led a corrupt life and yet condemned corruption of Indian political circles. Paro was absolutely free with this fellow known as Lenin. Actually, Lenin is a great name in Russian history as he raised his voice against the Czar of Russia (1917) and united farmers and labourers to overthrow him. But Paro's Lenin does not organize any rally against corrupt political leaders. Whenever Paro is angry with him, he wishes to be forgiven for his deeds.

Priya and Paro maintain good relations with friends as they wish to enjoy a comfortable life. They are well aware of the fact that people move forward in free India with the help of contacts. Avinendra had not been the son of an ex-minister, nobody would have bothered for hint. Shambhunath Misra had not been influential in his party. Paro would not have flattered him at all. Even Suresh is keen to develop relation with the important people so as to maintain a helpful circle for himself. Priya understands his tricky nature as ends are important and not the means.

Actually, Avinendra was good for nothing and pretended to be a research scholar and a follower of Lenin. On the contrary, he never takes up his research work seriously though the father of his wife expects him to

pursue his post-doctoral research abroad. In fact, Avinendra lives in the present and does not bother for the past and the future. He forgets his duty towards his wife when Paro cuts her wrists out of frustration. Due to his obsession for Paro, he reaches the cremation ground and behaves in a childish manner. Here he wants to revive the spirit of his dead beloved as he does not accept the fact that she is dead forever.

Like Avinendra, Suresh also calls Priya a 'whore' but she knows that her husband loves her from the depth of heart. Lenin's father does not want any scandal due to Paro's anger. It is true that she is hospitalized for treatment. Yet the political influence is used by him to suppress the tragedy. Now Priya becomes fully conscious of Paro's vanity. These days Priya fails to control her passion for sexual pleasures and often recollects R.R. making love to Paro madly. There is no limit to Priya's joy now as the image of B.R. adds to her bliss. Suresh is in bed with her and yet the image of B.R. haunts her.

Paro does not bother for the agony of Priya, Suresh, Avinendra etc. and continues to behave passionately every time. In a light mood she would say that "life was no longer worth living for" (62). In spite of panic and consternation she could manipulate the situation for her personal pleasure and glory. Priya calls it 'emotional blackmail.' She stands for frivolity and eccentricity. Actually, she had not been taught the value of ethical means and hence paid attention to physical beauty. She attended Yoga classes to remain fit and defy age.

Priya helps the readers to understand the vanities of Paro. However, the critics find little difference between Priya and Paro. As a matter of fact, Priya does not bother for the opinion of his brother and his family and hence asked to shift to family apartment in Andheri. She is equally conscious of her dresses and cosmetics. For B.R.'s company she can tell lies to Suresh and her brother. She thinks of her devotion to Suresh and yet fails to forget the physical pleasure that she gets from B.R. Attraction for B.R. is almost an obsession for

her and hence the cause of her agony. Even when Priya is alone, she recollects Paro and B.R. enjoying sex with each other.

Like Paro, Priya also has a fancy for glamour, money, status, pomp and show. For false and artificial pleasure, she can cross all limits of decency. She feels a mixture of fear and joy these days. As a mother she will have her identity as a perfect. Perhaps the child will create harmony in her family and Suresh paid due attention towards her now. All her relations were delighted to know this development in her. Yet she was afraid of uncertain future. She is wounded physically as well as mentally. There is no limit to her agony now. Fate proves to be cruel to her and kills her child. Fate was not favourable to Lenin and Paro these days. He was thinking of the causes and effects of class relationships and Paro felt dejection due to financial crisis. Yet there was a ray of hope in her.

Paro fails to understand that physical beauty withers with the passage of time. When Lenin is short of money, then are victims of social degradation. Priya becomes conscious of her status and financial gains. Like children, Lenin and Paro enjoyed their present as past was dead for them. When Lenin wins a lottery of five lac rupees, both of them enjoy the money without thinking of their future. Even the terrace of barsati is converted into a lawn. A party is arranged here to entertain friends though it serves no purpose. Here Shambhu Nath Mishra and Paro enjoy the moments of bliss and forgets others. Paro does not care for the agitation of Lenin. Priya finds no difference between Paro and the prostitutes of G.B. Road.

Priya simply feels sympathy for Paro as the former fails to appreciate latter's obsession for the old politician. As a realist, Gokhale accepts the remark: "Desh me has ab Rundi Raj chalta hai" (86). Through Paro. Gokhale satirizes the politicians who enjoy free time with the women without bothering for family norms. Here Paro behaves as a whore. There is no denying the fact that Paro forgot Lenin, Priya, Suresh, her son etc. in the company of Mishraji. Now she had relations

with many officers through Mishraji. Even Suresh felt the influence of her relation with this politician for some time. Paro and Priya lead tense life in spite of their wide social circle. Their worldly ambitions are responsible for their agonies. Every time they feel that something is lacking in their life.

Various forces make them feel frustrated. B.R. aptly feels that beautiful women have their weaknesses and attach undue importance to vanities and frivolities. It is useless to talk of liberation as women don't know the meaning of detachment and liberation. Buddha and Mahavir made serious efforts to realize the meaning of detachment and liberation. True liberation leads to a stage of bliss and contentment. Tolerance is attached with liberation. But a life of artificiality leads a person to his doom. One must be alert while leading normal life i.e., one has to rise above pleasure and pain, hatred and love, mine and thine.

Actually, Paro and Priya fail to resolve the aim of life. Generally, they fail to take strong positive steps. Suresh gives warning to Priya and yet she tells lies just because she fails to forget her past. Her passion for B.R. controls her total self. Her inner self aspires for B.R. and none else. As a matter of fact, B.R. is not loyal to any woman. Yet he remains free from the personal problems of his victims.

In Paro: Dreams of Passion, Gokhale illustrates the difference between good and evil and between lust and love. As a husband B.R. fails to tolerate the immoral conduct of Paro though continues to flirt with "omen himself. He does not want to revive his relations with her as she has gone far away from his world. In "Conflict in The Novels of Namita Gokhale: A Critical Study," Alpana Rastogi remarks,

... naturally the conflict arises between husband and wife. Both of them get separated without any feeling of remorse. Paro gets a son from Bucky Bhandpur and conflict soon arises between them. Now she chooses to live with Avinendra known as Lenin.

She enjoys life at his cost. As he loses his money slowly, she starts flirting with Shambhu Nath Mishra though she regarded him 'a Kala Kutta.' She does not spare even Priya's husband Suresh. One fails to understand her approach to life. She is always under stress and fails to adjust in different circumstances. (156)

Gokhale raises various questions in the mind of readers. In spite of her bitter experiences, she makes no efforts to analyse didactic questions. She has no time to think of virtue, righteousness, truth, fortitude and forgiveness. People like Bucky Bhandpur, Lenin, Suresh, Tony etc. are victims of her lustful conduct. Ethics of Rosie, Daisy, Savitri, Sita etc. is unknown to her. At times, Priya crosses limits of decency as she fails to love Suresh from the depth of heart. She does not understand the basic fact - A pole needs a wall for support. She leads a comfortable life with Suresh and yet tells lies to hide her lustful conduct. Her hatred for Suresh is not the least justified.

Like Paro, Priya is frivolous as she attaches importance to her whims and ego. If life is boring for her, she is to be blamed for that, not Suresh. Paro fails to tolerate the fact that Avinendra is getting married with a rich girl. Perhaps she wants to spoil the whole ceremony at Ramnagar. She feels shocked as nobody wishes her presence in the wedding. On the contrary Priya feels overjoyed while attending the wedding rituals.

Paro and Priya are the product of the age of information technology and capitalism. They are deaf to the voices of culture, civilization and ethics. In Paro, Dreams of Passion, Gokhale shows the triumph of capitalism. For example, B.R. continues to make progress in the economic world. He takes all pains to enhance the sales of Sita sewing machines. After earning huge profits, he launches Milan Mixi for the kitchen of his customers. Women like Priya feel tempted towards him as he maintains a costly house.

Priya feels shocked when Paro decides to play the role of Clytemnestra in the tragedy of Aeschylus. During the rehearsals she meets several actors who feel attracted towards her physique.

The thought of Paro illustrates the difference between culture and anarchy though she is to be ranked with Nana, Lady Bellaston, Shamela etc. Paro does not have positive approach to her and just survives in the frivolous world. Due to lack of intellectual and spiritual strength, she fails to realize the importance of natural abilities and talents. There is no denying the fact that she does not know the value of truth, forgiveness, fortitude, virtue, tolerance, celibacy, restraint etc. She never plans her future. Had she been reasonable in her approach, she would have settled with B.K. or Bucky Bhandpur. All the social and economic forces unite for her fall because she never plans her future. She proves that people are shadows following other shadows. Due to lack of surviving skills, she sinks in the sea of life. Life provides her many bright opportunities and she fails to make use of them for grand future. She proves to be a perverted woman and naturally meets her doom.

On the contrary Priya possessed basic wisdom and hence swims in the sea of life. At times she finds herself a victim of lust and then she returns to Suresh for shelter and support. She writes a diary and hopes to get her impressions published in the form of a book. As ill luck would have it, Paro reads them. The reason is panic and Priya speaks the truth. Now Suresh gets offended and asks Priya to live separately for some time. It proves to be an ordeal for her as she realizes the importance of

family life now. She had been a mother of a child; her family life would have been peaceful. The gulf between husband and wife proves taxing for her. Physical relations with B.R. fail to bridge this gulf and she writes letters to Suresh regularly. As his anger cools down, he gives her the last chance. As a prudent wife she surrenders totally and settles with him forever. Gokhale asserts the importance of harmony between husband and wife. After all faith is the basis of married life. She accepts adultery as a sin. Priya feels shocked with the sudden death of Paro. She loses her friend forever and the gap between life and death proves unbearable.

### Conclusion

In this conclusion finds that Paro: Dreams of Passion is a novel, which contrasts the two female characters. Paro's fundamentals are a little sloppy. She goes to great lengths to achieve her objectives. Priya is a firm believer in her values and lives her life accordingly. Gokhale, Priya, and Paro all have romantic fantasies that never come true. They are all powerful and magnetic in their personalities, yet their perspectives on life are vastly different. Both female characters rely on their physical beauty for social approval and possibly financial benefit. In Paro: Dreams of Passion, the love conflicts between Paro and Marcus, Paro and B.R., Paro and Suresh, Paro and Bucky Bhandpur, Paro and Lenin, and Paro and Shambhunath Nath Mishra are all plainly traceable. The novel tells the narrative of two ladies who are afflicted by a sexist society. It's a confessional description of the narrator Priya Sharma's and her friend Paro's experiences. It's a narrative about how they mock marital institutions, love, and desire.

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