Chapter II

PARO: DREAMS OF PASSION

As a feminist Namita Gokhale became popular with the publication of her novel *Paro: Dreams Of Passion* (1984). One cannot fail to understand Paro’s vision of freedom. The question arises – How is she a rebel? She does not accept the social code of conduct as prescribed for women by Hindu Shastras. Can she be called a pure woman? Can she be compared with Shakuntala of Kalidasa? Is she a pure woman like Tess? As a liberated woman, Paro, who wants to live her life without bothering social norms, tells Priya that her passions were excited by her teacher in the convent school. She knew nothing about sex before that. She was alone in the hostel. She had high ambitions in her mind and unfortunately does nothing to achieve them. The irony is that she curses her art master Marcus for taking liberty with her. Had she been pure at heart, she would have complained to the headmistress after the first meeting. On the contrary she starts enjoying the whole affair. Mrs. Gokhale seems to say that until nature gives some faculties to women for their physical satisfaction, they cannot be free from male domination. The males will go on exciting and exploitation ladies as happens in the case of Paro.
AS an advocate of women’s rights Namita Gokhale seems to say if man can eat dung with a number of ladies, why a woman not? Paro did not feel guilty at heart and even wrote him a letter. The result was disastrous. She was caught in her room in a compromising situation with Marcus. If she is expelled from the convent, she is to be blamed for this. No religion and social code permits a student to behave like this in the hostel. After all she revolts against the school ethics and the media is not to be blamed for circulating the news in the newspaper. The whole family had to suffer for this. In the college she meets Babu and does not feel any shame for her past. Everytime she is thinking of prosperity so that she can become an independent woman. Priya remarks:

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 practise 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.¹

Hardy’s Tess is an unfortunate victim of the lust of Alec. She becomes the victim of the cunning and wicked nature of Alec due to her ignorance. She gives birth to child before marriage
and fate is responsible for the misery of her life. When she is loved by Angel Clare, she wants to reveal her past to him again and again and that too against the wishes of her mother. She is guilty at heart but does not plan the sexual intercourse with Alec. On the contrary Paro is not ashamed of her lustful behaviour because she thinks that woman has also equal rights in every sphere of life, whether our society accept it or not. All her energies concentrate on getting a new lover everytime. A man is a puppet in her hands as she confesses: “I feel like a cat on a hot tin roof; I am in heat; I need a man” (Paro 126)!

She is almost a patient of nymphomania. R.S. Pathak aptly remarks:

Paro is thus a novel about human passions and their aftermath. Human passions owe their inception to certain incidents or accidents in life. Those who are able to sublimate their passions attain calm of mind, but most of them came to feel ... However, passions may have a deeper purpose in life: they may be in some cases mode of self-discovery. The characters of Paro and B.R. are illustrative of this point.²

B.R. who has no moral principles to guide his conduct, is the representative of male domination. Namita Gokhale through Priya remarks:
Sex had become, to him, more than, sport, it was a duty, a vocation, a calling. I sensed that it was with sex alone that he reached out of the world, and it was with sex that he shut out thought, emotion and feeling. Women could, perhaps, sense his immense sexual generosity, and come to him for succour and healing. And he allowed himself to be used as lamppost, or as a letter box for women to send massages to their husbands through. I don’t think he ever roused a woman; it was as though he were bound, by his code of honour, to ravish every female that he encountered (Paro 37).

This novel is different from the conventional novels of twentieth century. The following conversation between B.R. and Priya confirms this fact:

Is it a love story? He asked teasingly.

No, I [Priya] said.

What is it about, then?

Passion, boredom, vanity and jealousy, I said firmly.

Come. Love, tell me what it’s really about, he said.

Liberation, I hazarded (Paro 117).
Some people do not accept Paro as the symbol of liberation and emancipation. How is she a liberated woman? Even *The Gita* teaches the lesson of regular work with love and then remain detached with the result of work. Tagore has defined beauty in correlation to restraint and not a part of lust. Tagore remarks:

That is, if you want your desire fulfilled, keep it in check: if you want to enjoy beauty, be calm by quelling the lust of your appetite and purifying yourself. If one does not know how to subdue one's appetite, one will mistake its gratification for that of the aesthetic sense; what is a thing of the mind, one will crush with one's hands and think one has possessed it. That is why I said the practice of *Brahmacharya* is necessary for a proper arousal of the aesthetic sense.¹

On the contrary Priya as well as Paro do not have any feeling of restraint and decorum. They regard physical beauty as a means to enjoy physical pleasures. Tagore aptly remarks:

We cannot extract the joys essence from the heart of beauty unless we learn to be still in contemplation. It is the chaste wife steadfastly devoted to her husband, and not the wanton, who can realize the true beauty of love. Chastity is the serene restraint that enables one to reach love's innermost essence (Tagore 117).
But Paro remains restless only for the satisfaction of her lower instincts. She is just the example of lustful Epicureanism and gluttony. She is worse than Menaka who had come to disturb the meditation of Vishwamitra. She thinks of her physical needs and the satisfaction of appetites is meaningful for her. Her beauty is her weakness as R.S. Pathak remarks:

Since the novelist has a woman as the central character and the narrative is primarily concerned with what she observes, feels, and experiences, we may be tempted to get the impression that the main aim of the novel is to project or support some of feminist position. The basic theme of Paro, is however, nothing less than human predictament. It would be more correct to look at it not just as feminist work but as a woman’s agonizing search for her true self in the society which is still largely traditional and swayed by cultural and societal stereotypes (176-177).

Paro has studied in the convent school and must have read about the importance of virtue as mentioned by various scholars. Unfortunately, she does not feel that she is a victim of bloody passion and continues to fly on the trustless wings of false desire. Shakuntala loved Dushyanta and offered herself to him in the absence of saint Kanva. She gets a ring from the king and as
ill luck would have it, loses it in water. Dushyanta forgets her and yet she does not lose her restraint and discipline. Her passion remains controlled as Dr. Radhakrishnan remarks:

Love is not a mere affair of senses; it is kinship of spirit. Both Dushyanta and Shakuntala suffered, were disciplined by sorrow, and obtained the reward of a spiritual harmony. The youthful flush subsides: the gust of passion dies out. Love is won at a higher level and the brief glow of pleasure is turned into a steady life of bliss. Passion is linked with the sanctities of life. Nature and grace blend in harmony.

Dr. Radhakrishnan further says:

Love born of a sense attraction should be transformed into love based on austerity and control. While striving to reach heaven, both Parvati and Shakuntala had to skirt the edge of the abyss. Sex life is not inconsistent with spiritual attainment. Wild life or unrestrained passion is inconsistent with it. Sex life under law and restraint is spiritual in character. One can lead the life of a house-holder and yet be a hermit in temper (29-30).
Though Paro's sense of protest seems false but it cannot be denied that she not a follower of Women Liberation Movement. It is true that Namita describes the experiences of love and passion of the age of science. Women do not want to remain puppet in the hands of man. They want to come out of the four walls of the house. But they cannot be allowed to behave as Paro does. Most of the critics do not approve the behaviour of Bharati Mukherjee's Dimple in *Wife* as she feels dull in U.S.A. First she is not prepared for the birth of her baby and kills him in the womb. Secondly, she thinks of various methods of committing suicide. Finally, she kills her husband though he is not at fault. Such abnormal behaviour cannot be justified in the name of Women Liberation Movement. The modern women may refuse to go in exile with their Rama. They may refuse to behave like Savitri and face Lord Yama in the dark forest at night. They have every right to spend the money they earn. After Second World War Hemingway wrote the novels such as *For Whom The Bell Tolls* and *A Farewell To Arms* to highlight the love and devotion of Maria and Catherine Berkley for Robert Jordan and Fredrick Henry.

A few research scholars have analyzed the psychology of Paro. Like Lady Macbeth she is highly ambitious and R.S. Pathak remarks:

Paro is essentially the story of an irresistible and passionate, though outrageous, woman of the
same name. The novelist seems to have chosen characters like her precisely because they are psychologically more plausible and interesting. Then, there are strong reasons for such development as these characters take. Right from the beginning of the novel, Paro is presented as a proud, audacious and self-confident, ambitious woman with an assured cat-like grace (179).

Like Paro, Priya wants to get rid of her poverty and accepts:

Variations of this fantasy overcame me almost every night. I would awake disoriented in our small all-purpose hall-cum-dining-room, suffused with shame and contempt for the poverty and meanness around me. I would vow to rise from that mire; I would dream of grace, of beauty, and harmony, and I would resolve to brush my hair a hundred strokes every night before I slept (Paro 14).

So many people enter the life of Paro and she does not follow Indian tradition and goes on sacrificing them one by one. It is surprising that an Indian woman forgets the conception of chastity and devotion. As mentioned earlier, she starts enjoying sex with her art teacher in the convent school. Then, she returns to Mr. B.R. again and again for financial support as well as
sexual enjoyment. Even B.R. knows her passions, dreams and ambitions and does not hope for any sincerity from her. One fails to understand her likes and dislikes and obsessions. She thinks that she is young though she is losing the glamour regularly. She feels interest in life as and when she has a new fish in her net.

The only liberation that comes to her again and again is after leaving a husband as Priya remarks:

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 (Paro 26).

After getting a son from Bucky she gets tired of him soon. Now she lives with Avinendra (from Ramnagar, U.P.) known as Lenin. Even servants sarcastically call her a 'Asly Memsahib'. It is true that Paro has vitality in her character but it is a completely negative, 'excessive greedy vitality'. She feels no shame in borrowing money from Suresh. She knows that Lenin is short of money and yet enjoys a comfortable life at his cost. She was basically interested in the political contacts of Lenin and through him wanted to develop contact with politicians. Lenin talked of Karl Marx, corruption, politics, industry, administration etc. All these matters were ignored by Paro as she
wanted emancipation from the life of a faithful wife. Priya defines Paro's triumph:

... her triumph at this declaration of love. Mockery and self-satisfaction clashed in their green depths. Then, suddenly, she switched roles. She was now the free woman, symbol and prototype of emancipation and individuality. 'I am myself,' she said theatrically, 'and no one else. I depend on nobody. I am my own person' (Paro 48).

She is proud of her tricks, though Priya has no right to find fault in her character. Paro knows how to defend herself if somebody calls her a 'bitch' or a 'whore'. If somebody is helpful to her financially, she is really humble towards him and can offer anything to win his favour. The narrator remarks:

Paro had become an important woman, and I was wondering how to mend fences with her. The insidious web of friends, and contacts was coming into operation. We, too, had introduced several friends to Avinendra, who had helped them out with various little problems. These friends, in turn, helped us out in numerous little ways, and soon we had our own little house built in Greater Kailash (Paro 51).
Priya failed to approve the methods of Paro as everything seemed horrible to Lenin, Suresh and even to her. Suresh failed to admire her practical, tactical gains:

There were the elements of fascism, of a sado-masochistic psychodrama, being enacted. Lenin and Junior watched horrified, like children at a massacre, helpless, immobilized, and secretly fascinated. Suresh was quite pleased, at first, at the prospect of another such immediate and important contact. But he soon realized, to his consternation, that she was too infatuated to even think of immediate and practical tactical gains (Paro 82).

Shambhu Nath Mishra appeared likeable to her only at times. Otherwise she would call him "Kala Kutta", "Kala Bhooth" and "even Yamadoota" (Paro 88). Paro did not care for the tensions of Lenin. After all, there is no need of feudal classes in modern India. Paro did not bother for B.R., as she knew that her previous husband has understood her tricks and tricky nature. Paro is not glad to know the details of Lenin's marriage at Ramnagar. The most remarkable trait of her character is that she does not spare even Suresh who deals with her legal cases. Whenever Priya finds Paro kissing Suresh, she fails to tolerate this nonsense. Priya is always jealous of Paro.
A sinking boat gets the support of a straw and same is the case with Paro. Life is never boring with her anyway. It is true that fate brings various people in her company. She decides to play a role in a play and feels very enthusiastic playing the role of Clytemnestra on the occasion of Hindustani Theatre festival. There is nothing remarkable about this role of Paro. But she gets married with Greek citizen Loubas Leros who is a great admirer of homosexuality. Paro’s behaviour and even Priya’s conduct define some kind of liberation of women. If all women escape from home, the whole structure of society crumbles down. B.R. aptly remarks:

Women’s liberation? My author friend, can you in your book liberate me from the onerous responsibility of making love to every attractive or unattractive woman who uses me like a dildo to make her husband jealous? Can you liberate me from the financial burdens of alimony? Can you free me from the jealous possessiveness of the one woman I love? Can you bring up my children for me (Paro 144)?

It is true that Priya starts writing a diary and records the daily developments of life around her. Priya and Suresh read them and fail to understand this approach of Priya. Suresh fails to adjust in such a tense atmosphere and asks Priya to live separately for a few months. He is prepared to pay her regularly
for this as she talks of maintenance allowance. When Priya reaches Bombay, she recollects her responsibilities in the changed situation. Her brother and brother’s wife finally ask her to shift to her mother’s home. Now Priya realizes—what family life is and how children add pleasure to life:

I wondered what it must be like to have children. Perhaps my marriage might even have been saved if I had children. I longed to hug Prem’s angular limbs, to reassure his limpid eyes with my undying spinster-aunt love. I decided to endear myself to Dolly by taking charge of the children, and found to my surprise that they responded to my efforts (Paro 134).

Once again she starts living on her own in the Andheri left Bombay. Priya realizes:’” I am an Indian woman and for me my husband is my God” (Paro 137).

She tries her level best to forget the fantasies of her youth and her favourite novel Rebecca makes her realize:

Only, rereading it now, I felt betrayed, utterly betrayed. Rebecca had after all, done nothing wrong; the dazzlers in the new pulp paperbacks committed adultery almost as a rite of passage. Rebecca’s only fault was that she was strong, stronger than Max! Not very profound observations, I am sure, but for me they held the
blinding flash of revelation. My entire system of values was suddenly upturned (Paro 137).

Namita Gokhale creates the feeling of pity and fear in the hearts of readers for Paro. Similarly, when Priya is rejected by Suresh, the pathetic situation shows the female oppression. However, Namita Gokhale is a realist and describes the sexuality, like Khushwant Singh, of big cities like Delhi, Bombay etc. Here she has revealed the difference between the rich and poor. Priya does not earn much when she works for B.R. in the beginning of the novel. As she visits the lavish home of B.R., her ambitions grow and she feels lost in the music of his home. When he offers her a glass of wine, she does not refuse for it. When he leads her to his bedroom, she is almost prepared for the fun. Born in an ordinary family, she feels – she is “special somehow” (Paro 9).

Again, she returns in the life of B.R. when Suresh has to contest a law case in Bombay. As Namita Gokhale knows well the technique of stream of consciousness novel, she analyzes the psychology of Paro, Priya, B.R. etc. Once she recollects:

I could picture him slowly undressing her; my breath would quicken as he held each firm white breast in his long brutal fingers; I could see the glazed look in his eyes, as he sat astride her. Somewhere, our roles would be transposed and I would become her, and feel a triumphant power in his climax, and arrive myself at heaven’s
gates, to the feverish clutch of my index finger.
My mother, stumbling in the dark on her way to
the bathroom, would ask me grumpily why I was
still awake (Paro 14).

Priya does not want to come out of poverty with fair means.
Even at the bookstall she is interested in pictures on
pornography. Priya thinks of B.R. and regards him a meticulous
businessman and exacting professionate. When she is with
B.R., she does not think of her duty towards Suresh. Priya even
enjoys talking on sex with Paro. There is no limit to her joy when
B.R. invited her to come directly to his flat:

I would meet B.R. almost every evening, and
have dinner with him, with wine, candlelight,
roses and all the other trappings of a covert
romance. We would make love in anonymous
hotel rooms. I would punctuate his appointments
and draft short memos of passion in his absences.
We would copulate with a love that was both
urgent and tender; he would examine every pore
and crevice of my body with the wonder of one
who finds a treasure that has been washed back
from sea. But unlike Paro, he would rarely talk,
and never again about himself. Yet, perhaps, he
was, through me, talking to her, telling her
something, as in a letter that has been put out to sea in a bottle (Paro 39).

However, Priya is foolish to some extent, as she fails to analyze the following remarks of B.R.:

Men are very insecure creatures. They need a lot of love. And they need beautiful women. Unfortunately beautiful women are seldom designed to provide love (Paro 38).

Had Priya been a cultured lady, (though she thinks she is) she would have explained the above sentences to herself – Is she not a beautiful woman? If she is a beautiful woman, she is providing love to B.R. or not? Is the remark not sarcastic? Is she not being satirized along with Paro?

Though sometimes lust makes her blind and sex becomes more than a shameful sport with him but she is a victim somehow. She remarks about the males’ sexual exploitation of women:

Women could, perhaps, sense immense sexual generosity, and came to him for succour and healing. And he allowed himself to be used as a lamp-post, or as a letter box for women to send messages to their husbands through. I do not think he ever refused a woman; it was as though he were bound, by his code of honour, to ravish every female that he encountered. I think in a
curious way he needed me. The habit of servility was of course ingrained in me, and B.R. had of course been my boss. It was not long, nevertheless, before our adultery ran its course (Paro 40).

Soon she realizes:

I fixed an unblinking stare on B.R., hoping to shame him into confession. Wearily, mechanically, he edged towards me and held on to my obliging breast in a preoccupied manner. He breathed heavily, a caveman trying a dying fire, and moaned and duly went through all the motions and simulations of passion; but he couldn’t manage an erection. He seemed shamed and shattered by this inadequacy, and began flailing about wildly, and attacked me with even greater ferocity. Soon we were hinged; only, at the moment of orgasm, there was a distinct and embarrassing sound, like a motorcycle starting. He coughed quickly to cover up, and then both of us sat in silence again (Paro 41-42).

Dr. Rashmi Gaur has made several remarks regarding Priya and Paro in her article, “Paro: A Tale Of Two Ladies”. Dr. Rashmi remarks:
Namita Gokhale’s first novel Paro is a woman’s evocative commentary on the sybarite decadence of the Indian upper middle class. The novel lays bare its charm and banality, its privileges and cynicism, its schisms and intrigues before the reader through the sensitive portrayal of two women characters – Paro and Priya – who have been developed as foils to each other.⁵

One fails to understand how does Paro protest against the society “which has always tacitly supported campaigns to eliminate women” (Gaur 176). This remark of Dr. Rashmi cannot be accepted, as Namita Gokhale does not describe the campaigns of man to eliminate women. Secondly, Dr. Rashmi remarks:

Namita Gokhale presents before us the complex gamut of the feminine search for identity against the backdrop of contemporary educated Indian society in a palpable manner. She successfully touches upon the traditional themes of women novelist…(176).

It is true that the woman does not want to live with the traditional people. She does not want to keep herself busy merely in washing, preserving, family parties, toilets, drawing rooms, halls etc. It is acceptable that some of the educated women do not lead an unhappy life and are really exemplary wise. However one fails to understand how can Priya and Paro be called exemplary
wise? How can they be regarded ‘the beauty of devotion and sacrifice’? Do they find great joys in making love to their husbands? Are they matured and wise and prudent in the approach to life? Are their dreams of youth justified? How do these two women emerge as ‘emancipated beings’?, as Dr. Rashmi Gaur remarks. Priya uses a simile for Paro and compares her with “a sharp little scorpion” (Gaur 31).

It is Priya’s folly to feel that she cannot face life and the world without Paro. Priya has no sense to be jealous of Paro as the latter has no real charm and vivacity. The battle between two is not justified as Priya had every opportunity to take her own course. One fails to understand the sense of victory that Paro has everytime:

In her attempt to find her own selfhood she sets about mutilating, dominating men whom she encounters, denying them their truths and values and destroying their superiority (Gaur 177-178).

Then Dr. Rashmi Gaur calls Paro a lonely woman having an inner void:

Paro’s unsettled life can be interpreted as an impatient and poignant protest of a woman who was terribly alone and did not want to pilfer her identity in a man-made world, a woman in whose behaviour the luminous screen of non-conformist gesture had shielded an inner void which she
could not fill up despite innumerous relationships, a woman who ended up jeopardizing her life itself in the process (179).

Here a few questions arise – who creates inner void in the life of Paro? Who unsettles her life from the very beginning? Is she justified in her impatience and protest? Why is she terribly alone in her life? It is true that this is a man-made world. But then, everybody whether man and woman has his or her responsibilities to fulfil. Paro actually remains emotional and sexual and nothing else. Educated women like her find every kind of security in this society. All marriages do not end with a feeling of frustration. Bernard Shaw asserts through James Morell:

... get married: get married to a good woman; and then you'll understand. That's a foretaste of what will be best in the kingdom of heaven we are trying to establish on earth. That will cure of dawdling. An honest man feels that he must pay Heaven for every hour of happiness with a good spell of hard unselfish work to make others happy. We have no more right to consume happiness without producing it than to consume wealth without producing it. Get a wife like my Candida and you'll be in arrear with your repayment.6
Simone de Beauvoir explains the concept of marriage in his book *The Second Sex*:

Marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society. It is still true that most women are married, or have been or plan to be, or suffer from not being. The celebrated woman is to be explained and defined with reference to marriage, whether she is frustrated, rebellious, or even indifferent in regard to the institution (Gaur 180).

Thus, *Paro: Dreams Of Passion* is a psychological novel from the pen of Namita Gokhale. She analyzes the passions and expectations of middle class women like Paro and Priya who face troubles of life. Secondly, Priya finds relief in writing her own biography and through this action, Namita Gokhale establishes the fact that the difference between the art of biography and art of narration is decreasing rapidly. It is Priya who narrates all the incidents of the life of Paro, B.R., Bucky Bhandpur, Lenin, Shambhu Nath Mishra, Lukas Lerous, Suresh etc. Priya has no right to boast of her ethical values as she enjoys sex freely with B.R. even after marriage. Chance brings her in the life of Suresh who is an awakened fellow.

In this novel, Namita Gokhale satirizes people like Avinendra, his father, Shambhu Nath Mishra etc. who are not loyal to none. Through the wife of Shambhu Nath Mishra Namita
Gokhale passes a bitter remark: "Desh Me Bus Ab Rundi Raj Chalta Hai" (Paro 86). Even Lenin talks of corruption in the country but fails to take any action against the corrupt people. However, as a journalist, Namita Gokhale knows the defects of Indian democratic setup, where women are still oppressed.

The novel ends with the death of Paro and Priya and Lenin feels shocked on her death. But the irony is that Namita Gokhale fails to create the feelings of pity and fear in the hearts of readers. Emile Zola's Nana too dies a tragic death.

Here, Namita Gokhale peeps into the inner mind of her characters and at the same time describes their outer world. She seems to be a follower of Henry James, James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf. Virginia Woolf asserted her view against the traditional novel having defined plot and concentrating on 'comedy' tragedy, love, interest, and air of probability' and said:

Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being 'like this'. Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions — trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant show of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from old;
the moment of importance came not here but there; so that, if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style, and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the Bond Street tailors would have it. 7

She further said:

Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? We are not pleading merely for courage and sincerity; we are suggesting that the proper stuff of fiction is a little other than custom would have us believe it (Woolf 77).

So, Namita Gokhale had the courage to write novels against the traditional pattern and seemed to rise the voice of females. She does not imitate the Victorian novelists blindly. Regarding
the end of *Gods, Graves And Grandmother* one can assert that it does not end where it ends; it begins where it ends. To sum up, *Paro: Dreams of Passion*, a highly flavoured odyssey of the passions and jealousies of a group of a middle-class Indian women, especially, of the experiences of the narrator Priya and those of her friend Paro, visualizes the world of modern women in metropolitan towns. Hence this novel is a work of fiction which invites us to see Gokhale’s feminist facets.
NOTES & REFERENCES


2. R.S. Pathak, *Recent Indian Fiction* (New Delhi: Prestige Book, 1994) 178. All the subsequent references are included in the main text.


4. Radhakrishnan, *Kalidas in Living with a Purpose* (New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 1976) 29. All the subsequent references are included in the main text.


Chapter III

GODS, GRAVES AND GRANDMOTHER

Gods, Graves And Grandmother (1992) is a touching novel by Namita Gokhale, who adopts the technique of narration in first person and plunges into the depth of poverty of female world. Gudiya arrives in Delhi with her old grandmother known as Ammi. As Ammi is afraid of the scandal and disgrace in small town, she plans to settle in Jhansi. But a practical beggar advises her to come to Delhi as one can hope for a bright future in this big city. This beggar Riyasuddin Rizvi was a gentleman and often made reference to his aristocratic past. He carried the photograph of a beautiful woman with a sad smile though he did not tell anything about her to Gudiya.

She wrote this novel in 1992 after having recovered from a serious illness. It is entirely different from her first novel Paro: Dreams Of Passion and puzzled her due to unexpected reaction. Time changed but the basic themes remain the same. Like the heroin Gudiya Namita Gokhale accepts:

When enough time passes, and the dust settles on those troubled memories, perhaps I shall be able to embellish them with a veil of fabulism and mystery. Rendering the past acceptable, if not accountable, is a talent I inherited from my Ammi. It is easy to live in the present. Life ... has a