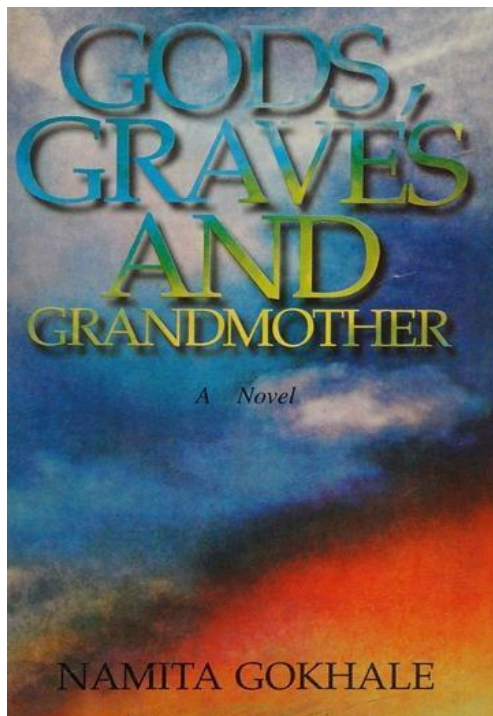


Book Review *Gods, Graves, and Grandmother* by Namita Gokhale, Penguin, 248 Pages. 1 November 2001. ISBN: 978-0141006994

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Introduction

Namita Gokhale, a significant woman writer from the tradition of Indian Writing in English has given a strong message of female solidarity in her mostly acclaimed novel, *Gods, Graves and Grandmother* (1994). The novel gives voice to the voiceless narrating the discrimination of women and their struggle throughout their lives.



Gender Discrimination:

Gender discrimination is a central theme of this novel which starts with the life story of Ammi, a woman who is a prostitute. Unfortunately she is expelled from the place in one scam and there is no one to support her. She lives the life of a woman who has responsibility for her granddaughter, Gudiya. Gudiya's parents deserted her when she was just a child. As a grandmother Ammi shows immense strength to fight back in such hardships. She does not lose hope, She builds up a small hut near the shrine of a small village. Though she is Muslim by birth she starts singing Bhajans and becomes a popular figure in a very short span of time. People visit the hut and attend bhajans and the place becomes a central attraction in the locality. The famous Brahmin astrologer Mr. Shastri too was fascinated by Ammi's presence which shows her strength as a character.

Even after her death he builds up a shrine in her name.

Gudiya: A transition from tradition to modernity

The life journey of Gudiya is one of the full challenges and hardships. She lives a life of a child without parents. They are only her Grand Mother Ammi and later Phoolwati who take care of her. She stands for a transition of a woman from traditions to modernity because earlier though she appears as a traditional woman who supports her husband later there is awakening of a modern woman can be observed at the end of the novel. She is self sufficient without support of her husband Kulki. She accepts every challenge in her life. She becomes a

role model for the modern generation of women. There is a strong message for women from her character that the women should stand against all adversities independently.

Quest for Identity

The females like Ammi, Gudiya are the victims of the patriarchal system of Indian society where women struggle for their own survival. Still both of them are not just silent sufferers but they rise above from the discrimination and start their successful quest for identity. Phoolwati too is another significant character who supports Gudiya like a mentor. She is always there to take care of Gudiya. She runs a stall after her husband's death successfully and sets a nice example for women to survive against setbacks. She is not like the traditional women who are afraid of men and do not raise their voice against them. However, she has courage even to reject the marriage proposal of Sundar Pehalwan, one of the slumlords from the village.

Conclusion

The novel is a must read for those who are studying gender studies. At the same time it is a masterpiece for those who enjoy reading novels because the setting of the novel, a village, the location of a shrine and other incidents are depicted in such a way that the readers feel like the incidents are happening in front of their eyes. The language of the novel is simple and lucid that makes this novel a good read for all.