

The Plight Of Young Widows In Psychological Approach With Special Reference To Indira Goswami's *The Blue-Necked God*

13

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Psychology plays an important role in human life. It makes the people's life in positive, negative way because the people's life depend upon their mindset, and based on the mindset, only people work to take decisions. Society and circumstance also play a vital role in the decision making of the people. The psychological approach reflects the effect that modern psychology has had upon both literature and literary criticism.

Goswami was not just suicidal, but had fallen love and married two men who were outsiders to the upper-caste Assamese. Her first marriage in 1965 ended because of caste differences and he was Assamese, but belonged to a different caste. Her second marriage in 1966 was with Madhvan Raisom Ayengar, a young engineer from Bangalore, who came to build a bridge across the Brahmaputra River. He met an accident and died, she became a widow in her young age. These things made her to write these types of novel, these novels are mix of fact, fiction, autobiographical and also psyche and physical deprivation.

This study concentrates about psychological deprivation of the characters of the novel, *The Blue-necked God*. The young widows and the characters are going to great mental deprivation. They are living in different situation and their ideas about life are different from one another, whose decision making also according to their situation. The protagonist Saudamini's story in the novel could well be understood as an ode to Saudamini. Goswami tries to portrait herself through the character Saudamini. Mental stress, isolation and loneliness, which are great causes of psychological agony among the widows in the Vrindhavan. They are a symbol of sufferers in the country, because they have to lose their

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family, happiness, likes, dislikes, enjoyment, and rights, everything including their gender discrimination of male and female. They do not even bother about their gender,

These women had long since crossed the barriers between men and women— both physically and mentally— and now they found no difference between the sexes. (TBG 148)

The protagonist Saudamini's mental deprivation and agitation in her life through society and its convention to lead their life in Vrindhavan, without interest. She arrives with her family, mother and father, because of her love towards a Christian youth after she becomes a widow in this young age of twenties. He belongs to different religion and her love is not fair in the orthodox family of upper class people. The novel starts with her blissful husband Subroto's memory in the Vrindhavan.

Her feelings about the widows life is very harmful, because it is very lonely and is a small dank room in the Dasarath Akhara she feels suffocating. There is no opening in any of the walls for the sun and air to enter; it has built in the underground. There is only tiny window for open and light enters, it denotes her involuntary action to come out of these superstitious and mythical beliefs of this society, and a thin stream of pale light poured into the dank room to give light to her life and this society. She is trying her best to forget her loneliness, but it is not easy for her.

She is very curious about the life of Radheshyamis and other young widows in Vrindhavan. She, herself scrutinise her own body, who feels the life of widows is very torturing one that is experienced by her past seven years. Even the mental imbalance and torture of the past seven years has not been able to leave any permanent mark on this lovely body. She tries to get familiar with this new life and place. She is inquisitive by nature and tries to know about the life of the Radheshyamis, the new temples of Vrindhavan. This life affects her mind a lot, which recognizes through the question from her mind in many places of the novel, she could not come to terms with the condition of her life or her situation. Was there anyone else, she wondered, who had suffered as she had, who had been compelled to face a situation like hers? (TBG 24)

According to this paper, there are different symbols to express the situation of the novel and characters 'dry smooth sand' symbolizes the smooth life of Saudamini with her parent but it is in dry manner; 'the peacock and their beautiful plumes' represents the beauty of this young age and body. 'Empty barrels is used for making in the patches of dirty stagnant water', which symbolizes the emptiness and stagnant in the life of young widows and old Radheshyamis. Anupama always try to know the inner self of her daughter, could hardly bear to think of the inner mind, or the soul's door, of a girl of such tender years.

The widows of Vrindhavan need some 'psychiatric help' because they are 'mentally ill.' Saudamini has not yet experienced of the man dying of starvation. These are the new things and experience in her life, when she accompany with her father for two months and working with him and helps sick or dying or destitute people. She feels sad about these people and Radheshyamis of Braj; she thinks they are poorest of the poor.

Saudamini and Sashiprova are meeting in the Jamuna River; Saudamini wants to speak with Sashi, who are the major character of this novel. They are the young widows of that society. This meeting is an important thing to understand the mindset of the young widows; 'a woman can understand another woman's feelings' like that a sufferer can understand another sufferers feeling and soul. According to this paper, this conversation is using to understand the mentality of these young widows. Saudamini has started the conversation with Sashi, she has wanted to sit and talk alone with her for a long time. However, she does not find time for it. They have planned to take bathe in the river, when they have climbed out from the water. Suddenly, Sashi has gone to the main point of their meeting, it is about rest of their life (future). Saudamini does not reply to this question, because both of them have their confusion to take decision about their life in the Vrindhavan. Sashi says, "I knew that you would not have a reply. I too have been plagued by uncertainties for some time. I hear that you have gone through a great deal of sorrow and suffering. Tell me, how do you propose to live out the rest of your days?" (TBG 62)

Saudamini tries to avoid the question of Sashi, later she gives a clear idea about the life with terror manner that is, follow the truth, and lose yourself in the truth. That is the ultimate truth of her life. Both of them have taken their decision about their life but they are fear to express their wishes to this conventional society. To live and love as they like, which Sashi first expresses in the discourse, an unwonted pain and mental suffering for some time now have plagued her. She is not like to live with Alamgarhi, because he is a eunuch and not end her life and world with this person. She is fallen love with some other one.

This conversation clearly shows the mindset and ideas of the young widows about their life. This society could not give peace to their souls because these young widows need their physical and mental consolation to their decisions. Their ideas of life are same, which overcome from this conventional or superstitious life. They have their rights to live, as they like, because they need their companion for their physical and mental deficit. The state and treatment of old Radheshyamis in the Vrindhavan are making these two women more mental scarcity. End of the conversation, both of them consoling themselves.

Again, her parent irritates Saudamini. So, she is getting restless and depressed. Anupama can recognize the mental agitation of her daughter, her unhappy and greatly depressed mind. The dispensary is still crowded with patients, and her father still attending to them. She jumps up the downstairs and sitting down on the ground, she sobs as if her heart is breaking. Suddenly, she shouts like mental imbalance person,

“I cannot spend my entire life like this, doing charity work... I am not a devi, I am an ordinary girl, and I cannot pass all my years in serving society like you... I am an independent person, and I fear no one and nothing! If you are thinking that I have changed, then... “ (TBG 71) She accuses everyone like her father and mother, because they are the reason for her present state in the dispensary. She thinks that everyone of this Vrindhavan becomes hypocrites, butchers to her. Therefore, she feels like a wounded bird, her mother is also accusing for her love.

The author gives a picture of lunatic to Saudamini in the ninth chapter of the novel; it symbolizes her mental agony and need of

psychological treatment. She is walking like a lunatic in the sands of Jamuna River wandering along aimlessly. Her appearance also like lunatic, she has not slept at all, and now, with her tangled hair and rumbled clothes. She compares herself with truly devoted pilgrims, because the Sound of Jamuna River is different from herself with them. For herself, the sound is fearsome and mysterious sounds that seemed to resound around her, but for pilgrims, which is the sounds of the wheels of the god chariots. The meeting of Saudamini and Charanbehari exposes their idea about one another. Here, the readers come to know the intention, of her and he is different, she shares everything with him. He always concern about her, for reason that she looks like his own daughter. He can easily understand her state very well about her mindset, depression, and disappointment. She always wants to know or meet the young woman like her in the Braj, so she enquires about the woman like her in the Braj, before. Both of them vary in this situation, because she does not want sympathy from him, but she wants something else. She talks about her beauty, but his mindset is very different from her, it may be her physical need.

... at this moment, sitting with this lovely young women, he felt absolutely no physical desire for her. Instead, he saw mirrored in her countenance the face of his young daughter... (TBG 78)

Charanbehari praises her beauty and grace, but his mindset is different. Because he likes her innocence and pretty faces, this resembles her daughter. He wants to make the bondage of father and daughter relationship between them.

Charanbehari enquires about the Christian Youth, he asks sorry for addressing the man with religion, and he wants know about his importance in her life. His separation makes her lonely and great mental deprivation and life of Vrindhavan never give peace and consolation like him. The memory of her husband Subroto is vanishing from her mind and life. It does not give any stimulation to her.

“No, it does not. In fact, I can hardly remember his face now.

All that has been wiped out by time. Yet, at times, it seems as though nothing else real, as though his memory is the only reality... “

(TBG 79)

She considers Christian youth only motivates and encourages her to lead and live her life, it denotes his importance in her life. She does not fall in love with him but she always wants his companionship, no one can understand his or her relationship. She feels that he is the strength of her life and mind. Therefore, she feels loneliness and isolation in the Vrindhavan. These types of loneliness and isolation make her a depressed woman in the society, but this society considers her untruthful woman. She has stopped her working in the dispensary. Her frustration affects everyone in the place because her sympathy towards the deprived, destitute people and destitute leper woman has changed in to agitation and frustration. Her behaviour is rare in her life; the last seven years seemed to have transformed her into a wandering old woman. She is unfamiliar with these types of loneliness and isolation. These are happening, ... only after her marriage with Subroto that Saudamini's ever present sense of loneliness had suddenly and mysteriously disappeared, because of love, maybe. And the liberation and strength of love. (TBG 94)

She wants to be an ordinary woman in the society like her mother, as a widow she could not live or lead a comfortable life. She has experienced a sense of distress and depression for many years. She says Rakesh that one year only happy and stranger to despair that time only she is being with Christian youth. Now, she does not get that peace, happy from these five thousand temples of Vrindhavan. For her everything becomes pale and unattractive, including her life, mind and body too. According to Saudamini, the meeting and friendship of Christian youth only help her to lead her life in the world. She says with Rakesh, as an artist he can understand her feelings thoroughly. She always self-checks herself, inner mind and heart. She always talks about the importance of Christian youth in her life, because she feels he is a part of her life. She feels if he is not there in her life it becomes more despair and darkness.

“... he brought me consolation and comfort as no one else had been able to do... Nothing helped, until I met him... that consolation would be complete, more than complete.” (TBG 107)

Her husband Subroto's face has now become a dim and hazy memory and another face has become bright and luminous. This is her doubt it is common for everyone or uncommon, because she sometimes feel herself as a sinful woman of this sacred land. The treatment of old widow by the monsters of the Vrindhavan in fifteenth chapter of the novel derives her to more mental stress. Her run towards the dark place symbolizes the dark is better than these type of life, the Braj is not secure place for these types of young women.

Everyone asks her stay with her mother because she is dead bed; she loves and concerns for her mother and her state. She cannot stay with her mother for a long time because the time is running out she must take decision about rest of her life. The unseasonal rain symbolizes the rebellious action of Saudamini, who gives a good path to other young women in the Vrindhavan. Her depression and frightening sense of loneliness makes her to ask many questions to other widows like her. Through that, she wants to know the decision of those people according to the situation. Because, she has heard about many selfless sacrifice stories in the Braj it becomes an immortal. She always wonders herself about she is a sinful woman her acts are sinful one. Her mind is thinking about these baffling ideas about sin and virtue, which becomes untold misery of her. She is ready to sacrifice all for the sake of love. Finally, she concludes herself as a dissolute woman.

She meets a middle-aged Radheshyami in the temple. She has told to know about some important things about the life of widows. She asks the question directly to the Radheshyami, about her husband's memory. She replies those memories are become foggy and hazy. Again, Saudamini asks, about physical hunger and recovering of old lost love, she wants only the truth. The Radheshyami becomes more quiet and looking like deer. She says about her experience to recover her love from other people in the Akrur Ghat. There the group of young men portrays her features, these are not fair, but she does not stop to go Jasmine garden. It gives happiness to her mind. The society does not allow her to think about her life after her husband, because they think there is no life for widows in the world.

In this novel, Goswami uses two major women characters to express the feeling and suffering of young widows in Vrindhavan. These characters are belonging two different social classes of upper and lower, which based on caste and family wealth. The protagonist of the novel Saudamini from upper class, another young widow is a representation of lower class is Sashiprova. The author tries to give a picture of women's low status in the society and it is common for upper and lower class women. This paper focussed on protagonist's suffering and her mental agitation. Next, Sashiprova's suffering and mental agitation are different from the protagonist because she does not have family and wealth. Her mentality is expressing the young widows urge as well as insecure life of these destitute young widows.

Sashiprova's character starts with the fourth chapter of the novel, she introduces as a young widow, but she has priest companion Alamgarhi it is common among the Vrindhavan. She helps his temple duties, household works and sharing their rooms. Both are benefitted by this arrangement. She helps Mrinalini and her family member to settle in the temple Behari Mohan Kunj. Sashi is young and good-looking; there is vast difference between Sashi and Alamgarhi. Her conversation with Mrinalini shows her dislike of these relationships and the life of old Radheshyamis. Mrinalini tells the great shock for Sashi, which is the sale of Behari Mohan kunj. She does not have any place for living in the Vrindhavan and the old Radheshyamis hovels are not secure for this young widow. She starts to think of her situation after temple has sold.

Her character and beauty shows from the words of Mrinalini, in the Jamuna River Mrinalini thinks about her body looks like this young and beautiful body of Sashi in twenty years back. In the conversation between Mrinalini and Sashi shows the mentality and suffering of Sashi in the Vrindhavan. Sashi feels secure with him in the name of *Jugal Upaasana* worshipping the divine as a couple. She personally feels this life better than live in a constant fear of her bleak future. His treatment toward Sashi is different,

“One day, he asked to disrobe completely in front of him and I did. He scrutinized my body thoroughly in the light of the lamp. Then he put out the lamp and went and slept on his own bed.” (TBG 59)

This paper already has discussed about the conversation between these two young widows of Saudamini and Sashi. This conversation only about their personal life and they need to take a good decision in their life. Here, Sashi expresses her problems and feelings to Saudamini that time she only gives consolation to Sashi. They feel truthfulness of the life leads them to lose their self. She is not interest to lead her life like this with Alamgarhi and like old Radheshyamis singing bhajans in the temple. She almost has shouted out the words, Alamgarhi is a eunuch, this is not end of the world for her, but the problem is that she has started to fall in love. Therefore, she does not want to marry him and lead this life for the last rites, she wants to lead a happy and good life in her future. Her voice becomes choking and sobs as if her heart is breaking she grasps Saudamini hands.

Each character of this novel has own mental deprivation, according to situation. Mrinalini is different from those widows, because she is an unmarried forty years old woman. She has a heavy burden in her head, to take care of her mentally imbalanced mother and half-sighted father and brothers are died. Her family is a very wealthy in the Vrindhavan once a time. Now, it changes a lot they lose their all properties even the Behari Kunj also. She becomes like her mother that happens in the time of her mother mislaid. She and her mother accuses her father for this beggar's state. Her father Thakur Sahib could not bear this situation, so he commits suicide. The artist Chandrabhanu Rakesh is different from other characters; he is a patriotic Indian citizen and he does not believe in caste, religion, and class division. Reason for his mental depression only about the degradation the profession and art Sculpture.

To conclude, a modest attempt has been made in this paper to analyse the plight of young widows in Indira Goswami's *The Blue-necked God*. In this novel, Goswami's young widows get their peace in two different dimensions: Saudamini gets her peaceful mind from her suicide, but here is the start for new way of life to the young of widows of the society. Sashiprova gets that peace from the words of Mrinalini, she does not want to make mistake again in the life, and she wants her life to lead in a virtuous path. For the Radheshyamis, they need support of the

society and family. In the family side, they must treat them as human being rather than object, family part also very essential for the life of Radheshyamis. If they get these things, they also lead their peaceful life forever.

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