

# The Depiction of a woman in the view of R.K Narayan in the Dark Room

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**Abstract:** *R.K. Narayan's view on the freedom of women in Indian Orthodox culture, where males hold to a high status and women are confined to their homes. In those days, it was a house with all kinds of rituals and traditions. R.K. Narayan subtly portrays this contradiction. He emphasises the fact that women are suppressed by the repressive elements of the current tradition. This article highlights the picture of New Woman under the oppressive circumstances and her tremendous struggle to achieve an identity for survival. R.K. Narayan developed the clash between tradition and modernity to establish the idea of New Woman. Savitri is a classic oppressor and is ruled by her husband Ramani, who realises her ideals by developing her identity, whereas Shantabai, an emotionally unbalanced women, is contemporary in rebelling and establishing her own identity against a male subordinated society. R.K.Narayan brilliantly tells about the feminist ideas by giving birth to the new woman.*

**Key Words:** *Tradition, modernism, new women, identity of oneself and feminist ideology.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indian traditions have moral ideals and ethics at the core of society. Wedded dependability is Indian values' most valuable and lasting. Every character is alive and genuine in The Dark Room. Savitri, her husband's quiet and obedient wife, suffered abuse and ill-treatment. But her unfaithfulness is unbearable. The Dark Room shows a genuine depiction of India's social life with modernity. Savitri is the primary character in the book. Savitri emerges as a typical Indian lady, submissive, obligatory, and naturally sacrificial. Savitri is extremely attractive and dedicated to her husband, marrying Ramani, who belongs to the middle class, and he is an Engandia Insurance Company's Officer-Secretary. He is a repressive and selfish spouse and, according to his will, rules his home. A dominating husband and father arrives in the first scene of the book. His home atmosphere is usually dull and his wife savitri, children and staff are constantly terrorised without cause. Savitri is mistreated by Ramani, her husband, but she does not know how to complain when she gains boldness and is unsuccessful. Ramani controls his family completely and this behaviour is enough for Savitri to cope with mental anguish. The Dark Room shows the workings of the masculine patriarchal system, the structure of moral values. Ramani says when Savitriclaims;Babu has fever: "No, he doesn't have it." Go and perform any kitchen chores, but leave it to me to instruct an adult guy. It's not a female enterprise." (P.1). The tone of the book is this remark and discussion between Ramani and savitri. The control of Ramani and the subservient character of Savitri is apparent. (p.2)

**William Walsh describing the many hues of the personality of Savitri:**

"Savitri is a middle class but not an educated woman who is heavily burdened by the immense weight of the Indian past, by her Caste, religion and her role as the wife and mom.... is an ordinary and friendly housewife; not very disappointed with her assigned portion, given at times to boredom with inefficiency, but increasingly oppressed by her loud, firm and elegant husband. (P.61) The protagonist Savitri is hitting Savitri with reality and helplessness: I have nothing in this world. What can a woman call her own other from her own body? All she owns is from her dad, her spouse, or her son's (p.26). Simone de Beauvoir, a French writer, philosopher, correctly states that: One is not born a woman, but becomes.

Pre-independence traditional values The Dark Room is called R.K.Narayan precisely. It is linked to the realisation of Savitri. Double in the book is the dark chamber - one in the house and one in the temple. The Dark Room is symbolically utilised and directly represents the limitations of freedom of choice and uniqueness. Savitri connects its significance with darkroom in the home. The chamber is black and at the end of the tunnel no light is waiting. Her value is insulted. According to S.C.Harrex, "The Dark Room represents the emotional and household claustrophobia that may arise from a marital orthodoxy that is limited." R.K. Narayan described Savitri's persona as a sign of bravery for respect for oneself and uniqueness. Women confront the difficulties of their self-identity search. Savitri is completely forgotten Narayan's wife follows social progress and the status of women in society.

Shantabai is Ramani's workplace mate from Mangalore and the extrovert of complaints. She's been married to her cousin. He's been a drinker and a player. She attempted to alter him, but she chose to leave him when he didn't change himself. Her parents did not accept her choice too, so she had to leave home. At some point in this difficult part of her life, she decided to be on her own. Narayan has shed light on Shantabai's existential problems. She was a brave woman who decided to face her fight and managed to finish her studies with the help of an aunt. When Ramani asked Shantabai about herself during the interview, she said: I had my B.A. three years ago. I've been drifting around since then. I have strange teaching jobs and I have been a fellow of a few rich children as well. All in all, it was a very big battle. Shantabai has investigated society's traditions and conventions. In abandoning her spouse and terminating her marriage, she opposes them. She points to the anchorless for an excellent conventional alternative value. ShantaBai also faced difficult circumstances in the search for self-fulfillment, aside from facing personal and societal disputes, to preserve and oppose familial ties and to restore herself. The proverbial butterfly, Shantabai is a lady that imitates her western counterpart. She is an educational and manipulative seducer who understands how to exploit the charm of a lady to gain the guy. One should remember the words of Lord Krishna to Arjuna: I gave you wisdom. You are now making the decision. You have the option. Do as you want. (The 192 Bhagavatgita) R.K. Narayan also very sensitively transmits that Shantabai is looking for her own identity as well. Shantabai is not strong enough to suffer more failures. Shantabai says: I feel like pacing up and down the entire globe tonight. I'm not going to sleep. I feel like I'm wandering the whole city and the entire river. I'm going to laugh and dance. This is my life philosophy (P 69). Khayyam said: "Why not know in this cosmos." I'm like a breeze in the trash" (p.117) It is obvious that ShantaBai succeeds in maintaining emotional independence, since her financial support relies entirely on Ramani's commitment to her. Ramani is the middle class representative. Savitri is humble and devoted like Sita in The Ramayana, the Epic, yet Savitri rebelled against the dominance of men With

Sushila George and V. NithyananthaBhat this reminds us: Revolt is not always a development and progress movement; it is sometimes seen as retreat, regression and compromise. The revolt of Savitri wakes her out of her soporific condition. But psychologically and emotionally it narrows her. She becomes a weary, emotional man, part of her dead. But what is living is neither battered or harassed. However, the luxury of rebellion is acquired individually and personally at tremendous expense.

## 2. DISTRESS OF OPPRESSION

Savitri has the guts to rebel against her spouse in quest of self-respect and identity. It finds itself. It discovers itself. She no longer believes in customs. She decides not to take food or shelter that she did not earn. Savitri laments: What disgusting creatures we can't live without assistance from God. I am like a bamboo pole that is unfit for support without a wall (p.146). In this context, A.Hariprasana states: It is in contradiction with the traditional ideals of ideal femininity in which it is a sin to speak with and defy your spouse and thus her new individuality. Her solitude makes her feel compassionate for the women who do not support or live without assistance. Savitri has been saddened by her husband's frequent reproaches, turned Savitri into reality and chose to leave the home and her spouse. She did not tolerate her husband's treachery and she was determined to commit suicide. She chooses to leave all her decorations empty-handed. She also leaves behind her father's jewellery, since she thinks that every man is the same and doesn't want to rely on any man. The failure of Savitri in her rebellion against the discriminatory Malgudi tradition instead of ending the movement, is an encouragement for future women. She returns with an understanding of what makes them subordinated to males and the reasons why their attempts failed. She correctly replies: "What is the difference between the prostitute and the husband and wife?"—the prostitute changes her men, but not a wife; they all earn food and shelter in the same way. (p. 93) (p. 93) Narayan is genuine about presenting his ladies as affected by traditions, conventions and other social beliefs. Walsh says that a lady in an orthodox Indian culture has been a perfect victim. R.K. Narayan's books dealt with women at the back of his thoughts and this ideology. (wauhx.p.122).

### **New Woman's Image**

When Savitri, via her servant Gangu, verified her husband's connection with shantabaiSavitri's inner self becomes aware and rebellious against conventional wifhood norms. She discovers her identity and the treachery of her spouse. Savitri openly began persecution of the conduct and sedition of her husband. She didn't accept his prevailing position. This is Malgudi's first voice to question the old patriarchal order. She exhibited her bravery to warn her husband against his tyranny. She metaphorically thinks of her future existence as living beneath the wide sky after leaving her spouse. But again, the dark chamber in the temple shows that outside the home is a comparable dark room. She recollected the destiny of her children and Savitri began to derail the black chamber. She thought of herself in that regard, "What are God's disgusting creations that we cannot live without support?" (p.141). Savitrirealises she's once and for all vanquished; the reappearance of Savitri reveals her return to reality. This event revealed that the significance of education for women and the need for financial assistance placed a woman's life as a right to live. The book succeeds in conveying the pride of a woman seeking individuality in accordance with the dignity of women. Indeed, Savitri's return to her home is not her defeat, rather she has strengthened her brave and independent self-identification. After her return,

Ramani's behaviour towards Savitri has totally changed: "Oh, I ought to have purchased you Jasmine!" Oh, how bad you're eating! Have some more ghee. Have a bit more. My daughter, eat good, become fat." (P.160). Ramani's tone above indicates the triumph of Savitri's rebellion against the loyalty of his spouse.

### 3. CONCLUSION

In the very phrase of R. K. Narayan, a middle-class woman in an orthodox society is a 'victim of her circumstances': she must either remain inside society via acceptance of its standards or she must leave them together, in this scenario, only with her own inner resources she can be sustained. In reality, both Shanta Bai and Savitri are considered to be balanced, both losing one way or the other and being victims. Savitri can achieve a minimum of economic independence. But it still remains emotionally bordered, while the emotional independence of Shanta Bai seems to be the 'wind along the waste' description of Savitri as a bampoo, but the economic situation of Savitri is unsafe. The failure of human aims and ambitions is supported by the themes of unpleasantness and sorrow of men and women in marriage within this broader viewpoint.

### 4. REFERENCES

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