

INDRANATH AND GIRIBALA - THE YOUNG ADULT DYSTOPIAN CHARACTERS IN THE MOTH EATEN HOWDAH OF THE TUSKER

By

MALAVIKA SHARMA

Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities, Pillai's Institute of Information Technology, New Panvel, Navi Mumbai.

ABSTRACT

Indian women have always been viewed as the object of desire. In the advent of Technological Advancement women are still thought of as inferior to men. Though there is an increase in the literacy rate of the girl child, it does not imply the emancipation of the girl child. Women are bound by the social customs and traditions. In this sense women are not empowered. The word empowerment is misrepresented as the increase in working women. In such a scenario Indian women writers in English have portrayed the challenges women confront at home, in the workplace as well as in their social interactions. Indira Goswami in her Novel The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker boldly describes the plight of the women especially the widows and hopes to instill change in the minds of the society. The present paper aims to analyse the characters of Indranath and Giribala from the perspective of Young Adult Dystopian protagonist.

Keywords: Empowerment, Plight, Widows, Change, Minds, Dystopian.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a substantial contribution to English literature by postcolonial authors in the form of fiction, drama and poetry. The involvement of these writers in reflecting upon their land and experience required them to reinvent the English language and English literary traditions. This was most effectively attained in the form of novel or fiction. As a literary genre novel is considered as one of the most suitable and prerogative literary forms of expression. Indian English fiction in this sense occupies its proper place in the field of literature. An important feature of the novel is the growth of Indian women novelists writing in English. Their appearance added a new dimension to Indian English novel. The dominant figures were Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai. But it was only in 1990s that Indian women writers in English gained popularity after Arundati Roy's acclaimed novel *The God of Small Things* (Roy, 1997). Till then the subject matter of most of Indian women writers dealt with domestic problems faced by woman. The novels therefore were considered inferior in subject matter and theme in comparison to the male counterparts. After 1990s women writers broadened their area of the self-sacrificing women toward conflicted female characters searching for identity. They portrayed the challenges women confront at home

as well as in their social interactions. The writers in a way tried to create an identity for their protagonist. The work of Indian women writers is significant in making society aware of women's demands, and in providing a medium for self-expression and, thus, re-writing the History of India. The aim of this paper is to explore the writings of renowned post colonial writer Indira Goswami who questioned the values, customs, and traditions and dealt with the representation of people of newly independent nation.

Indira Goswami a distinguished Assamese writer wrote under the pen name of Mamoni Raisom Goswami. She won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983, the Jnanpith Award in 2001 and Principal Prince Claus Laureate in 2008. Many of her works have been translated into English. This includes *The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker*, *Pages Stained with Blood* and *The Man from Chinnamasta*. She prominently tried to bring about social change through her writings. *The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker* (Goswami, 2004) represent the individual's expression for freedom. The question that arises in one's mind is to what extent Indira Goswami is able to create the Universal Appeal? In what respect her characters differ from other woman writers in English? In order to arrive at the answers to these research questions the present paper aims to analyse the novel *The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker* from the perspective of

'Young Adult Dystopian' novel.

The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker was translated into English in 2004. The novel deals with two parallel stories. A section of the novel deals with the plight of the widows and the revolt of the young widow Giribala. There is also the other section which focuses the disintegration of the feudal system of the post independence period. The character of Indranath, who is the future head (the Adhikar) of the monastery (sattrra) is representative of the feudal system. The Adhikar (head) is the landlord as well as the spiritual instructor to his subjects. The author sets the story of the sattrra (the monastery) in the last phase of its religious and social authority. This phase marks the beginning of the revolt of the peasants against the landlords under the influence of the communist. Indranath is portrayed as the protagonist who supports the cause of the peasants and therefore decides to give away their land. The common element that binds the two stories is the character of Indranath who is the brother of Giribala. It is through the characters of Indranath and Giribala that the author envisages the change of the traditional values and customs to occur in the minds of the youth.

1. Literature Review

1.1 International Status

'Dystopia' a literary genre became popular after the publication of Thomas More's novel Utopia in 1516. In this novel the author describes a perfect society free from all social and political problems. This depiction of a perfect society led the writers and historians interrogate utopia as term concept and genre. The birth of dystopian fiction, the opposite of utopia comes with the famous novel by George Orwell 1984 (Orwell, 1949) and Aldous Huxley Brave new World (Huxley, 1946).

Literally the word 'Dystopia' means 'bad utopia' that is a state in which the condition of life is extremely bad. The term was first used in a book by John Stuart Mill (Adams,2011). Dystopia is not simply the opposite of utopia. Rather it is utopia that has gone wrong or a utopia that functions only for a particular segment of society. The writer of a dystopian novel takes problems that they see in their world and exaggerate them to create a worst case scenario in order to warn society about these problems.

These novels can therefore be termed as satirical novels or novels that deal with social criticism.

The novels written in the dystopian genre were actually meant to be read by adults who could then reflect upon the adverse aspects of society and try and beget change. Gradually this literary genre became popular with children's literature and it was known as Young Adult Literature. Young Adult Literature became famous in the 1950s-60s. The protagonists of these novels are the adolescents who rebel against the existing social customs and traditions. As Roberta Trites explains, "YA novels tend to interrogate social constructions, foregrounding the relationship between the society and the individual rather than focusing on self and self discovery".(Trites,2000).

Women writers also delved into the Young Adult dystopian genre of writing where they focussed on the young rebellious girl, who has the audacity to make amendments in the present. But the rise of this rebellious young girl also depicts the loss of innocence of the girl child. As Sara K. Day et.,al., in Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction (Sara et.,al., 2014) says that young women in late twentieth and early twenty first century dystopian fiction embody 'liminality, straddling the lines of childhood and adulthood, of individuality and conformity, of empowerment and passivity'. They further say that these novels could be understood as 'representations of contradictions, of strength and weakness, of resistance and acquiescence, and perhaps, especially of hope and despair'. Baccolini classifies these novels as a 'Unique Contribution' to Dystopian Literature as the conclusions of these novels are 'open-ended' in contrast to the traditional "closed" endings of novels (Baccolini, 2004). Female Dystopian authors according to Baccolini 'allow readers and protagonist to hope' rather than remove them from the possibility of individual or social recovery. The best example of this aspect is the famous example of open ended feminist dystopias, Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale (Atwood, 1998). This hopeful feature of Young Adult Dystopian Literature sets them apart from Adult Dystopian Literatures. However as Basu, Broad and Hintz (Basu, Broad & Hintz, 2013) say that these novels are more cynical and 'oscillate between hope and despair'. This according to

critics allows for another opportunity to fruitfully explore liminality in Young Adult Dystopias.

The aim of this study is to analyse the concept of 'liminality' in the novel *The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker* and compare the difference in approach as a Young Adult Dystopian fiction.

1.2 National Satus

The Dystopian feature is also evident in the works of Indian women writers, where the protagonist explicitly or implicitly voices her disgust at the existing social norms. Though writers in India did not intend to strictly write in the Dystopian genre, of science fiction or speculative fiction genres, nevertheless their satire on the prevalent customs characterize these novels as dystopian novels. Critics so far have not dealt with the dystopian feature in any novels written by Indian women writers. It is therefore felt that there is a dearth of criticism in India with respect to Dystopia as a literary genre. But there is definitely criticism on individual aspects such as subjugation of women in society, the caste discrimination and the plight of widows or the marginalized. Shankar Kumar Bhattacharya in his article 'Caste as a Social Construct in Indira Goswami's *The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker* and *The Offspring*' discusses the discrimination prevalent in the society and ironically points out how it is the lower castes who willingly accept their exploitation (Bhattacharya, 2012). In another article 'Under the Shadow of Kamakhya' Debarshi Prasad Nath points out the intake of food as an indication of power and position in society. As he says 'eating is used as a symbol of power and is a subtle way of examining the relationship between women and men'. (Nath, 2014).

2. Significance of the Study

This study will help all of us to become aware of the existing inequality in the society as well as motivate and encourage the readers from all fields to realize the need for unity to fight for the cause. It will also awaken the youth especially the educated youth to boldly face the conventions and accumulate the courage and daringness to fight against the conventions.

3. Objectives

- To critically examine the novel *The Moth Eaten Howdah*

of the *Tusker* from the perspective of Young Adult Dystopian Literature.

- To understand the problems faced by women in the Indian society using the Dystopian concept.
- Motivating the youth to unite and fight for the betterment of the society.
- Providing the youth to scope for self analysis, self realization and self assessment in their routine lives and reflect upon the consequences of their actions.

4. Methodology and Plan of Work

The methodology for the present study will consist of interpreting primary sources. The findings will then be supported with critical essays on Indira Goswami which deal with some of the Dystopian elements.

5. Analysis

It is believed that change in the society can take place only if the youth feels the necessity for such a change. Goswami's characters are portrayed as the rising youth who suffer at the hands of existing norms and customs, but eventually picks up courage and convincingly move forward to bring about change. The idea of using the youth as the initiator of change marks a distinct shift in the prevalent genre of women writers in Indian Literature. Writers like Mahasweta Devi, Kamala Markendaya Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Sashi Deshpande, Bharati Mukherjee, Manju Kapur and Gita Hariharan have also focused their writings on the need for change from the present social customs. But their characters or the protagonist is the woman who is suppressed and revolt against patriarchal society. Indira Goswami has retained the perception of the repulsive woman but has also given prominence to the male protagonist of the novel, who is the youth of the modern era. It is the young man Indranath, the future adhikar of the sattra, in the novel *The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker* who realizes the foolishness of following the social customs and traditions. This includes the caste distinctions, the inferior status given to women and the horrifying rituals that widows have to follow.

His character is portrayed as the educated youth who questions the existing social norms and believes in human relations. This is the reason he saves the life of the

fisherman's son, who belongs to the low caste, from the jaws of death. The event occurs when Indranath goes to Guwahati (city) for higher studies. He shares a room with his other Brahmin friends. The incident is set on a cold winter morning in the month of December. Indranath was lying down as he was suffering from Malaria. The fisherman's son had brought some fish. Indranath's friends wanted to see the fish whether it was fresh and alive. The fisherman's son over turns the basket to show the fresh fish. The fish started jumping and one of them enters the mouth of the young boy. He starts screaming in pain as the fish got stuck in his throat. Nobody was ready to remove the fish bone as it meant that they have to take a second bath on a cold winter morning. Indranath suddenly jumps from his bed put his hand in the mouth of the boy and saves him from death. This incident indicates that human compassion is above all social customs and traditions. He is also shown as the person who is sympathetic towards the leper an outcaste of the society. His outburst at the indifference and ruthless behaviour of the higher caste is reflected in the following

'Indranath shouted, 'No religion left in this world! No righteousness or humanity left!' (The Moth Eaten, 312).

The seed of revolt is implanted in the mind of the protagonist Indranath at a very early age. His opposition to the traditional values becomes evident when he encourages his sister Giribala to work with Mark Sahib, a firangi (white) in collecting ancient manuscripts.

'He did not care much for those old-fashioned ideas about widows. He had seen the intense suffering and object misery of some of these tragic women, made widows at too young an age by callous fate, who took root and died imprisoned within four walls ...' (The Moth Eaten, 17).

So he is shown as 'not too unhappy' about Saru Gossainee, his aunt 'having somebody she could rely upon, to give her company'. (The Moth Eaten, 17). Throughout the novel Indranath is depicted as a thoughtful and rational person who is unable to fathom the disparity in the status of men and women. His encouragement to his aunt Durga and his mother to move out of the house and take care of the land is indicative of the reform he hopes to bring about in the

society. The women are horrified at his suggestion because it is not expected for a woman to look after the land. In anger Indranath burst out saying... 'You are nothing but ghosts pretending to be human beings...' (The Moth Eaten, 10).

At the same, the author presents the vulnerability of Indranath when he is unable to proclaim the relationship of Giribala and Mark. His optimism in the relationship is expressed only after the death of Giribala.

'Why brood so much over Giribala's suicide? It's better it ended this way! Otherwise that beef-eating white bastard would have dragged your family's name through mud! Indranath exclaimed. No, no! Don't say that! Please!...Speaking for myself, I wouldn't have minded if Giribala and Mark had united.' (The Moth Eaten, 311).

Indranath is conscious of the responsibility that he has for the people and the society. So there is always the inner conflict and the mental agony that he undergoes in his attempt to change society. His suicide in the final act symbolizes the protest for the oppressive society that killed his sister Giribala. It also reflects to the collapse of a system that was prevalent in India. It is the beginning of a revolution. Politically this revolution gave rise to communism, the working class.

In this respect the novel falls into the genre of the Young Adult Literature. The representation of the caste hierarchy, plight of widows and the outcome of the disintegration of the feudal system reflect the Dystopian feature in the novel. Indira Goswami's works are different in the sense that she does not present an exaggerated version about the current social scenario; rather she unequivocally presents the existing social norms and systems in order to awaken the reader and inspire them to change the prevailing subjugation.

In the novel the Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker the author points out the failure of arranged marriages that is marriages fixed by the elders of the family based on matching the horoscopes of the bride and the groom. The character of Durga and Giribala represent the imperfection in arranged marriages. The author critically draws the attention of the readers to the pretense of society of a

happily married couple who is deliberately tied up in a relationship as their elders have followed the traditional values and customs. In this sense her novel can be categorized as Dystopian as she indicates the readers the hopelessness in following a societal norm which is currently followed in India.

Arranged marriages are not uncommon in India. Today in India there are many families who prefer to marry their daughters to a person of their choice. The concept of arranged marriages becomes dystopic when the author shows the fate of Giribala and Durga the two main characters in her novel *The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker*. The marriages of Giribala and Durga are arranged by society, represented by the family members, who strictly follow the societal norms and customs. So it is society who decides who Giribala and Durga will marry and also it is society who decides how they should lead a life after the death of their husband. Any objection from the members of the family are overlooked and not given importance.

The Gossainee spoke with a broken voice. "She (Giribala) never wanted this marriage. She behaved.....". The women.....reminded her: "But, Aie (mother), you were also not very happy with this marriage."

"How could I be happy?That boy did nothing but roam about with Chaudhary's jatra party." (The Moth Eaten, 30-31).

The fake relationship of Giribala and her husband, her aunt Durga and her husband all point to the imperfection of selecting a groom and the consequence leading to imperfection in relationships. The portrayal of these imperfections in relationships is Dystopian as society represented by the elders of the family, believe that the couple is happily married.

Giribala is in shock when she comes to know after her marriage that her husband is involved with another woman. So her dreams of a happy married life are shattered. It indeed becomes painful for Giribala as she is treated as the other woman by her husband. She can neither turn down the relationship nor stop her husband for being unfaithful. Here again the author presents the Dystopian society where society itself is the antagonist. It is because of

the existing social norms and customs that Giribala is unable to revolt or express her desires. So society is seen here as actively working against the protagonist's aims and desires.

The sufferings of Giribala and her aunt Durga at the hands of societal rules and customs reflects the selfishness, the meanness, and the insensitivity of the people in the society. Here, the author clearly points out to the dubious nature of the people who on the one hand are sympathetic towards women and on the other curb the freedom of the women. Though the novel is set in the backdrop of the feudal society and is region specific, the problems faced by the widows, the customs that widows are forced to follow are Universal. This is true even today in the post modern era, where widows are subjected to discrimination, humiliation, disrespect and are given inferior status in society. In the technological era when the people around us that is the political leaders, the educationists, or the media address about the empowerment of women and believe in giving freedom, honour and opportunity to women in all strata of society, Goswami draws attention of all the readers to this gruesome reality of the society. Goswami points out how it is the woman of the village who make life miserable and intolerable for Giribala. All her movements are not only observed by the women, but it is being discussed, analysed and criticized. The day she is brought from her in-laws house she is harassed by the women. They all want to have a glimpse of her, curious to see the bodily as well as the emotional changes. But they are astonished when they are unable to find any such changes. And so the women question her mother in order to find their future plans and also provide some suggestions. Giribala feels suffocated and uncomfortable. In the Dystopian society woman become the enemies of woman. Survival becomes difficult for Giribala as she is treated as an outcaste in the society ...a voice cried out , 'Don't touch her! You women with sindoor. She is a widow now'. (The Moth Eaten, 27). Moreover, she is expected to satisfy the inquisitiveness of the neighbours by giving them the desired answer and also face condemnation.

'All the women had come with the sole purpose of hearing the harrowing tales of woe from Giribala's own

lips but she did not give them a chance. Like a streak of lightning she headed straight for the door of the room.....opened it with a jerk, entered and bolted the door from inside with the crossbar.' (The Moth Eaten, 30)

This act of Giribala is unaccepted in the society. So the women conclude that Giribala is not affected with the calamities that approached her. In other words she is callous; a girl who was unhappy with the marriage and so did not have any feelings for her husband.

The Dystopian world further becomes evident when the novelist gives prominence to the physical aspect of the women characters rather than to their social aspect. Women are seen as commodity that can satisfy the desires of a man. Indranath's attraction for Eliman (a Brahmin girl) is described from the perspective of her physical and sensuous body. When he remembers or dreams of Eliman he dreams of only her sensuous body.

The author ironically points out that this physical beauty of the women cannot satisfy a man's desire in a Dystopian society. Giribala laments at the thought of being neglected and considered as the other woman by her husband even though she was beautiful.

"After I came of age, all those Gossainees on the river bank used to tell me: you are an Angel, you are a sweet Angel! But do you know? That husband of mine, ...used to say, 'What's so great about your beautiful body?...You are nothing in comparison...I couldn't bind him to me with either my body or my mind.'" (The Moth Eaten, 295-96). It is as if she wanted to forget those miserable days with her husband that she eventually decides to revolt.

Her character is in sharp contrast to her aunt Durga who does not have the audacity to express her views and her desires. So she is shown as unwillingly following the societal norms and customs.

'Her mind has become a graveyard. Day after day it is a tortuous task for her to find something tangible to hold on to, to hold on to her sanity. All those customary rituals of widowhood that she performed till a few years back without much effort are now a source of fear for her. Amoti is soon approaching. A wave of

annoyance mixed with fear passes through her body.' (The Moth Eaten, 11)

She has been performing the customary rituals for many years as she has started believing herself as the outcaste.

She was considered inauspicious because of her so-called papagrahas-not one but three of them! Gradually these accusations and pointing fingers seeped into her mind and she really began to believe it herself.' (The Moth Eaten, 11).

It is obvious that the author clearly wants to point out to the inner turmoil in the mind of Durga in following the traditional customs. This inner conflict is the first step towards claiming individual identity. This also marks the beginning of the growing discontent in the society.

The restlessness and displeasure of the people especially of the youth finds a voice in the form of Giribala. The first sign of revolt from Giribala becomes evident when she shouts and screams at the women of the village in anger.

"You came here to see me, didn't you? You have seen me now. I am still alive! I will live on and have a better life than all of you...." (The Moth Eaten, 34)

This scene marks the beginning of Giribala's fight against patriarchal tyranny and the subsequent cruelty that is inflicted upon her in the name of tradition. She is the young protagonist who begins to question the norms and social customs laid down by the patriarchal society. In this respect the novel can be labeled as Dystopian Literature where the author deliberately chose the young protagonist Giribala to raise her voice against the oppression as it is understood that teenagers can make a difference to the society. The rise of the young, educated and responsible youth of the present generation is portrayed not as self contained individuals bound by their identities, but as socially constructed individuals whose involvement in the events in society leads to loss of their innocence (Trites 2000). Giribala's character is thus seen as moving from childhood to adulthood where social norms force her to show signs of maturity prior to her age. It is this maturity that helps her to regain the strength which allow her to express her individual wishes and desires. There are many instances in the novel where Giribala symbolically voices her disagreement to the treatment given to the widows. One notable incident is

when Giribala is tempted to eat mutton which goes against the social norms of a widow who is supposed to lead a sanctimonious life.

'Giribala darted into the palanquin room and picked up the pot of mutton cooked with black beans. She forgot everything....religion and rituals, wisdom or restraint....she started gulping it down in great haste...After her widowhood, she had taken only rice and pulses boiled with some vegetables, adding a pinch of salt and a little Ghee made from Cow's Milk. Her tongue had become dull and dry. She was fed up with this diet.' (The Moth Eaten, 144)

In a Dystopian society women are considered inferior to men not only in terms of following the social customs but also in the form of what is expected of a woman to eat. It is the intake of food by people in the society that decides their position. As Debarshi Prasad Nath points out in his article Indira Goswami's Under the Shadow of Kamakhya (May- June 2014) 'eating is used as a symbol of power and is a subtle way of examining the relationship between women and men'. Giribala's routine diet signifies her position in the society as one who does not have the power to express her desires. So her act of consuming meat symbolizes the power she has assigned to herself.

In another instance Giribala is seen as dreaming of a sexual relationship with Mark Sahib. It is considered a sin for a woman to think of another man after the death of her husband.

'She began caressing the cloth. It was soft and smooth like Mark Sahib's skin...so soft, so smooth...she rubbed the silk on her cheeks, her neck, her breasts...all over her body in a soft, languid movement of her hand...as if she desired to pull all the silk on to her, wrap herself in its softness...' (The Moth Eaten, 152)

Her final act of revolt is the climax of the story when she and Mark visit the ruined estate of a once prosperous Mahajan. Giribala speaks frankly of her fondness for Mark Sahib and her hatred for all the prayers that a widow has to offer to her dead husband's wooden sandals. She confesses that she has no sense of sin. She admits, "I cannot just exist, just for the sake of remaining alive, like Aunt Durga and Saru Gossainee".

(The Moth Eaten, 198).

It is through the character of Giribala and Indranath the Author is able to draw the reader's attention to the uprising of the youth. Giribala's rebellion can be identified as the individual's disgust and scorn at the social conventions that prevent her from leading a life of her preference. Indranath's rebellion on the other hand can be identified as an individual's attempt in bringing about a collective transformation. These two parallel revolutions converge at the point when the author highlights the caste discrimination as another Dystopian factor in society.

Both Indranath and Giribala scoff at the higher caste for strictly adhering to the caste inequality. The Dystopian aspect is apparent when the author points out that the lower castes willingly accept their exploitation. They consider the caste hierarchy as 'the natural order of things' (Bhattarcharya 18-19). So they are shocked and surprised when Giribala and Indranath mix freely with the lower caste. But both the characters fearlessly face the consequences of their action.

This is in sharp contrast to the portrayal of Saru Gossainee who is also a widow. Here, the author criticizes the patriarchal society's believes that widows lead a pious and religious life only when they follow the societal norms and customs. In this sense the author is a Dystopian writer. Saru Gossainee follows all the societal norms and customs because she secretly longs for Mahidhar and is attracted by his well built muscular body. She hopes that someday her close associate Mahidhar will rescue her from all the customs and rituals.

'She has observed for some time that this ripple of excitement would pass through her body whenever he came near her. She turned round and saw Mahidhar wearing the same dhoti that she had got for him when she had gone to Pathaldia to meet her disciples.Mahidhar was a handsome man..... Like other days, today also, he looked at her wooden bed. It was covered with an old, tattered endi chaddar.Today too she could not fathom the meaning of his glance towards her bed. (The Moth Eaten, 77-78)

At the same time the Author realistically points to the

helplessness of the present generation who realizes that it is difficult to fight the battle alone. Giribala's character is similar to the Dystopian characters as she is observed to be optimistic about her future when she is in the companion of Mark. All the non verbal signals that is reciprocated by Mark gives her strength to fight against society. But Mark's passivity or rather his inability to express his fondness towards Giribala verbally makes her feeble and helpless. When she finally gathers courage to tell Mark about her feelings for him, she is shocked and shattered to know the actual feelings of Mark. Her character therefore embodies liminality as she now contemplates suicide. She knows that it is difficult to lead a better life in the midst of the traditions and social conventions. Death is inevitable. So her fight alone in trying to bring about change in the lives and approach towards widows ultimately leads to her death. That is why the author describes her as a 'severed branch of a tree who seeks solace on the breast of her Mother'. She is severed because she is a widow, almost equivalent to an outcaste in the patriarchal society. Her death does not signify defeat or submission to the existing norms and rituals rather it is the beginning of the metamorphosis that the author hopes to find in the society. Giribala's death can therefore be seen as the awakening of the youth to change the society where women are free to pursue and express their desires.

Similarly the death of Indranath in the final act can be seen as the beginning of a revolution. His disapproval in following the social conventions does not always culminate in words and actions. Nevertheless it is deeply embedded in his mind. That is why he is always described as remaining silent and thoughtful.

'There were many things which Indranath did not like. They were beyond the limit of his tolerance, beyond his ability to act'. (The Moth Eaten, 261)

Indira Goswami has planted the seed of revolution in the minds of the youth. There are critics who view the sacrifice of Indranath and Giribala as failure to bring about change. They are of the view that Indranath and Giribala have surrendered to the existing system by choosing death as the only solution. But, the fact remains that the author did not want to portray a larger than life character by showing

the victory of Indranath and Giribala. Their revolt signifies that they are the leaders or the pioneers who have dared to bring about change, dared to express their views against the conventions. It is for the others to now reflect upon their sacrifices and move ahead with the revolution.

Conclusion

The character of Indranath and Giribala represent the inner conflict and turmoil that the modern youth has to undergo in order to fight for a cause. As it is an individual's struggle for liberation the death of the protagonist is inevitable. The Author therefore expects and hints at the necessity of unity in fighting for a cause. She opines that people should stand united in understanding the sorrow and the misery of a woman. By depicting a Dystopian society the author is critical of the existing social customs and rituals and hopes to awaken the youth to fight for justice and freedom. She feels that the Unity of the people in society especially amongst the educated youth would definitely bring about a long term and permanent transformation.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Malavika Sharma is currently working as an Assistant Professor and Head of Humanities Department in Pillai Institute of Information Technology, New Panvel, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra. She completed her Graduation and Post Graduation in English Literature from Mumbai University. She started her teaching career in 1993 as a lecturer in English in Degree College. She qualified her State Eligibility Test in 1995 and immediately registered for her Doctorate Degree under the guidance of Dr. Yasmeeen Lukmani in Mumbai University. She pursued her Doctorate programme along with her teaching career. She was awarded the Doctorate Degree in 2000. She has participated in many conferences National as well as International and has published papers in reputed Journals. In 2011 she won the best paper award for her research in project based learning. At present she is teaching communication skills and presentation techniques to the first and third year Engineering Students.

