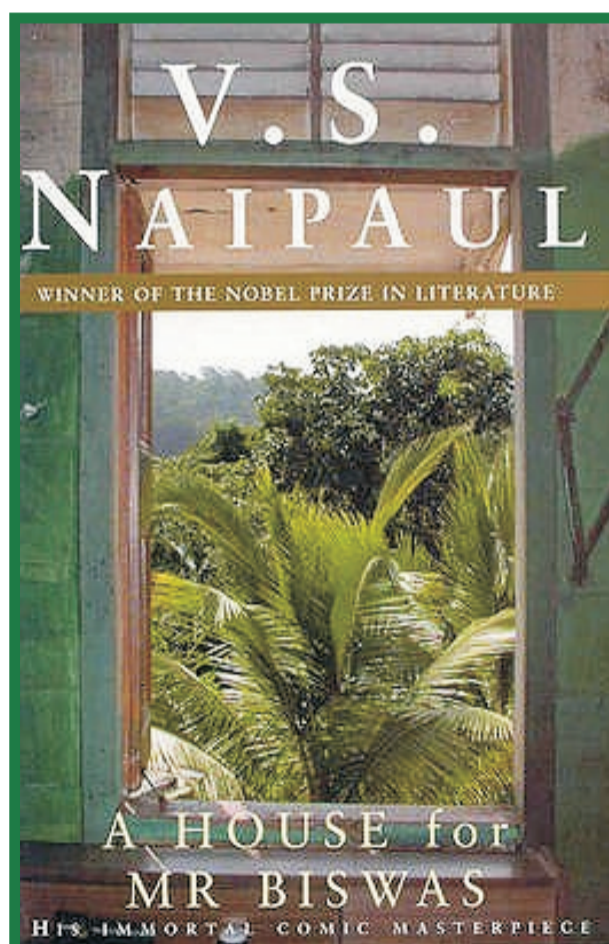
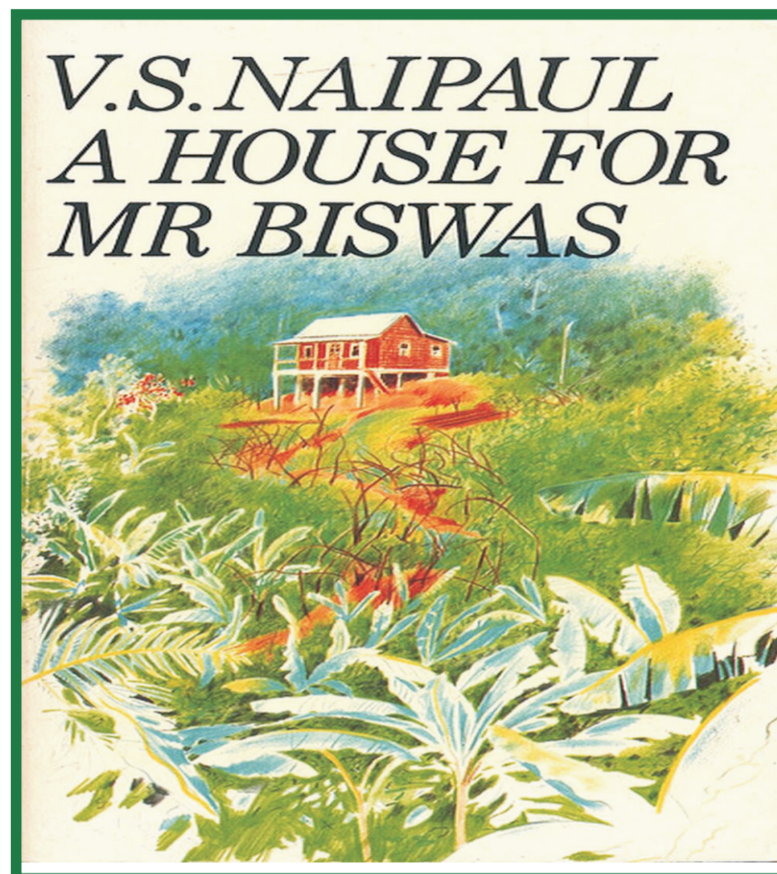
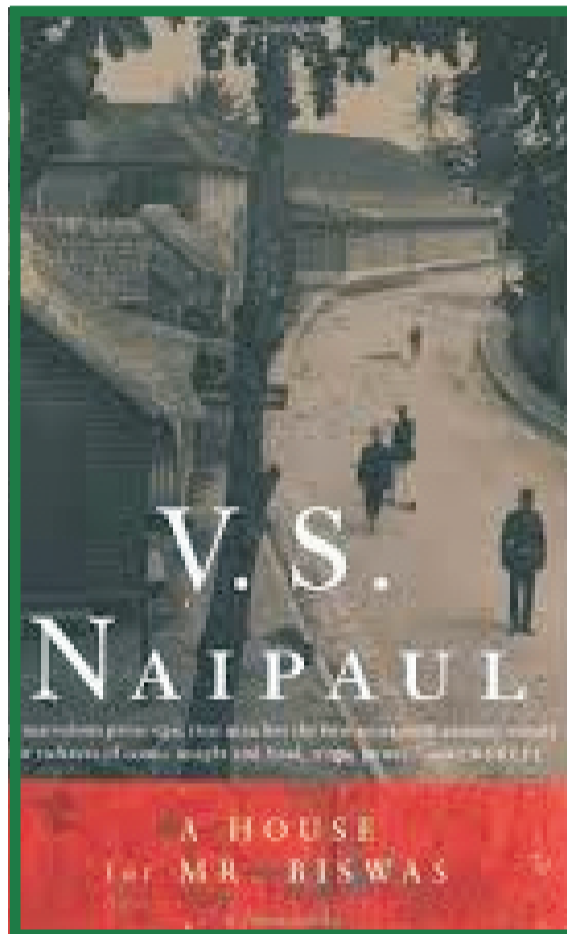


POTRAYAL OF SHAMA IN A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS



Abstract:-

In the past, fictional writers have started voicing the women's experience which were hardly considered. Different critical studies, have focused the attention of readers upon the world of women. With the change in time, writers started writing about women's endeavour for liberation. According to Robert. J. Stoller "Gender is a term that has psychological or cultural rather than biological connotations. If the proper terms for sex are "Male" and "Female", the corresponding terms for gender are "masculine" and "feminine; these latter may be quite independent of (biological) sex ." The term "Gender" is used to represent the social and cultural aspect of sexual differences. In this paper, the focus is on the potrayal of Shama and her emerging self as a representative tool of cultural and political scenario.

Keywords:-

Gender; Shama; Feminist.

Kajal Thakur

Assistant Professor of English ,
UIIT H.P.U.

INTRODUCTION

A House for Mr. Biswas, is a semi-autobiographical novel. It portrays the Naipaul's life experiences and ambiguous cultural backgrounds. While on top of these struggles, females have to bear the brunt of inequality and sexism. *A House for Mr. Biswas* is an account of the East Indian's situation in Trinidad. A study of the book on surface level, makes us feel that it focuses on the portrayal of the protagonist Mr. Biswas: His trials, marginalisation, exile and suffering from cultural identity. However, if we read text closely, we will find that numerous female protagonists figure in this work. In India patriarchy is just one of the hierarchies which keep females down, oppressed by the traditional system. An unmarried daughter -- seen as a spinster even in her late twenties -- brings shame upon her parents, and is a burden. But once married, she is considered the property of her in-laws. In financial matters, although women are permitted to work outside the home, their rights on any household matters have always been denied. A woman has to take charge of the kitchen, even if she is a wage-earning member of the household and holds a job outside of the home. Shama, is one of such female characters. She becomes a symbol of postcolonial feminist perspective. Shama, is the daughter of Mrs. Tulsi. The Tulsis family immigrates from India and lives in the Hanuman House. They possess their own shops, real estate, etc. with a strict hierarchy. However, the big family hardly contacts the outside world. Under the influence of Indian patriarchy, she can prove her existence by only relying on her family. She starts working in her mother's shop. However, she accepts her subordinate position there. When Shama is only 16, Mrs. Tulsis, who arranges everything for her, marries her to Mr. Biswas. However, she feels no affection for him. In a patriarchal Indian society, a woman is hardly allowed to have a say. Shama accepts the reality of her submissive position and marries Mr. Biswas. In a patriarchal woman is hardly considered: likes and dislikes. Mr. Biswas sees Shama as a facsimile of the traditional Indian woman who hardly portray their views firmly. So, he is more than happy to have her as a wife. As for males, they want a woman without independent judgment, so that they can assume the patriarchal role. Shama gets married to Mr. Biswas. Whenever, Mr. Biswas has a quarrel with the family, she tries to harmonize. She is not satisfied with Mr. Biswas, because of his poor status and dependency on her maternal business. She feels resentment against him, as he is fully dependent on Mrs. Tulsi for his livelihood. Here, we find her to be a self-respecting woman, struggling to have her own identity. In an Indian society the wife's respect in society, is attached with her husband's status. She too wants her husband to have his own independent status. She doesn't submissively accept her lot. She is ready to leave Tulsi family because she wants her husband to have his own identity. Shama leaves a deep impression on our psyche due to her ordeal. She rebels, at the very beginning against the odd behaviour of her husband, but later on like all traditional women succumbs to her husband's will. She accepts and obeys him like traditional wife because she is aware that, it is the only way to make her life more peaceful.

Shama, becomes a prototype of traditional females. Who is diligent, kind, loyal but dependent, obedient and sacrificing without any condition. She has a deep desire to be approved by her family, which makes her criticize, Savi when she cannot tie her shoelace before her sisters. She indulges in such behaviour, like mashing her daughters doll's house, only to get approval of her clan. Eventually, with the intrusion of Western colonialism, the traditional Indian culture begins to crumble. As a result shaking the very foundation of patriarchy's control over females.

The chains of social, moral and cultural, expectations burden a woman with endless obligations. Shama, a good wife and filial daughter-in-law and responsible mother, is no exception. She is a victim and has no respite. She conceals her dissatisfaction. She can't overtly express her dissatisfaction. She may be beaten by Mr. Biswas; or worse still, her husband may divorce her, and leaves her in financial despair.

Not that Shama submissively accepts it. She resists in a subtle ways, though which usually turns out to be futile. To Mr. Biswas, she doesn't say anything. When Mr. Biswas wants her to cook something for him, she rejected before her sisters; when she delivers a baby, she defies Mr. Biswas' patriarchal status, refusing his naming the baby. However, with time, her attitude towards Mr. Biswas changes. When they live at The Chase, Shama no longer looks weary or impatient. Even though she has no experience of managing a house, at The Chase she always behaves like an experienced housewife.

Thus, we can say that, Shama does exacts her rights as a female. However, she tries to rebel but uselessly. In the beginning Shama is reluctant to attend on her husband and when she does, she shows her unhappiness. However, as time passes, she feels no affection for Mr. Biswas but still she takes care of him and even tries to comfort him when he feels low. At the end of novel, when they move to a new house, Shama mellows down towards Mr. Biswas and her children. Evidently, this loyalty is the outcome of helpless situation for females. As the Tulsi family disintegrates. Shama has no respite or her own individuality as a woman. She is merely the accessory in Patriarchal society. Here we are reminded of Simone de Beauvoir famous quote: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman (de Beauvoir 1956)". Thus, she eventually submits to patriarchy with passing time. This essay elaborates the analysis of feminine image---Shama, a victim of patriarchy. Who has no choice to rebel. Even if she does, she struggles but in vain. However, because of word constraints, this essay just analyses Shama in *A House for Mr. Biswas*, which may be not enough. So further study could be made on a more detailed analysis of more females or compared the female images in Naipaul's different masterpieces. The need of this hour is to rise above the limitations and to deconstruct patriarchal structures through individual questionings. Only through this process of reinterpretation and interrogation new images will be created and new histories written. We should end

discrimination and move forward with visions of a better life where both men and women will live as liberated human beings rather than slaves to flaunt ego's.

REFERENCE :

1. Robert J Stoller, Sex and Gender: On the Development of Masculinity and Feminity (London: Hogarth Press, 1968) 9
2. TT Wang 2007, The Diasporized Women—A Postcolonial Feminist Study of A House for Mr. Biswas , Master's thesis, Huazhong University of Science and Technology. Retrieved May 8, 2011, from <http://dlib.cnki.net/kns50/detail.aspx?dbname=CMFD2009&filename=2009034281.nh>
3. P Luo 2000, "On the Theory and Practice of the Main Stream of Feminism." Zhejiang Academic Journal 6 (2000): 69-72
4. Postcolonial feminism, n.d., wikipedia, Accessed 28 May, 2011, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postcolonial_feminism
5. VS Naipaul 2002, A House for Mr. Biswas, Penguin Books, New York