

Brindavan: The Image of “Broken Homes, Shattered Hopes” in Indira Goswami's *The Blue-Necked God*

- Neha Arora

Abstract: Being born a girl in India (except few enlightened families) is still a sin and widowhood is a curse. A woman loses her status in the society, her right to exist and to be happy the moment her husband passes away. The stringent laws of our religions (especially Hinduism, in upper caste society) treat widows as untouchables and shun them from the society. They are prevented from participating in any religious or social ceremony and are often labelled as 'husband eater'. With many restrictions (physical and psychological) imposed on them, they are expected to lead a spiritual and chaste life. Often 'dumped' into the holy cities like Varanasi, Mathura and Brindavan, the widows are forced to eke out their living, live in isolation, struggle with economic insecurity and protect themselves from the human-wolves, as also, suppress their longing of emotional companionship. The paper looks into the case of such widows who have to sacrifice their desires and hide their tears under the garb of false smiles.

Keywords: Indian English Fiction, Marginal, Patriarchy

Indian English Literature has/is maturing in the postmodern period with the sudden spurt of writers from every corner of the country, with varieties of themes and experimentalist style. With no more influence of the West, the Indian writers are busy in developing new areas of writing that have the taste and flavour of their region, their people, and their concerns. To use the words of R. S. Pathak: “The modern Indian English is an accomplished and evolving genre and is trying, in the hands of its practitioners, a fusion of form, substance and expression that is recognisably Indian, yet also bearing the marks of universalism” (Pathak, 1). The regional writers contribute much in giving a national colour to Indian literature. As a result, the much cornered North-East India has also become vocal in the contemporary times. The North-East India is an under-represented region, due to the geographical, political and other similar reasons but at the same time, it must be accepted that off late there is a profusion of literature from this region with writers like Temsula Ao, Mamang Dai, Aruni Kashyap, Easterine Iralu etc. Like the socio-cultural environment of the eight states that constitute North-East India, their literature is also very diverse. By celebrating their traditions and folklores, the writers aim at exposing their cultural varieties, at the same time bringing their writings to the mainstream, thus connecting with the mainland. Talking about the Indian literature in terms of themes, even the women writers have become too vocal and bold in their subjects. They

have moved out of the shadow of the patriarchal set up, in themes, in style, in treatment. There is no more a pathetic kind of portrayal of the women folk and no more complaints against patriarchy. Santosh Gupta avers: "Women writers have eloquently voiced women's side of life – the experiences of man's 'other,' society's marginalized and silenced half. Breaking off from the traditional male-dominated novels that focussed on public subjects and public space, women's novels have brought to centre-stage the ignored and unexpressed lives that have been on the periphery of male lives" (Santosh Gupta, 23). The writers like Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawar Jhabwala, Uma Vasudev, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni etc are painting women in new colours. Their women are independent, intellectual and audacious. In brief, these women present the image of 'new woman' who dare to challenge the society and struggle to create 'a room of their own'. However, the contemporary Indian women writers do not confine themselves within the conservative goal of writing against the patriarchy. Their writings move beyond and explore the new themes and issues. Instead of questioning their position in context to the males, women have become more conscious of their identity and existence in the society. In the same vein, we can add a very popular name of Indira Ransom Goswami (1942-2011), the renowned writer of Assam with a brave heart to write about the unsaid, unmentioned issues of the society, issues that are preferred to be kept under carpet. As a writer, Goswami was always controversial; her entire oeuvre reflects her concern and involvement with the society she lived in. As a true representative of Assam, through her writings, she actively contributed in foregrounding the culture, tradition and even the social problems of her region. She drew the raw material for her books from her society around and we find much reflection of her personal life in her products. Goswami herself stated, "I try to write from the direct experience of my life. I only mould these experiences with my imagination". Honoured with many national and international awards like the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983 for *The Rusted Sword*, the Assom Sahitya Sabha Award in 1988, the Bharat Nirman Award in 1989, the Sauhardya Award from Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthan in 1992, the Katha National Award for Literature in 1993, the Kamal Kumari Foundation National Award in 1996, and in the year 2000 she won the country's highest literary prize the Jnanpith Award. She was also honoured with the coveted International Tulsi Award from Florida University for her work *Ramayana – Ganga to Brahmaputra* and finally awarded the Asom Ratna posthumously by the government of Assam. Goswami wrote extensively on the socially relevant issues and emerged as a champion of peace and harmony in the much troubled North-East. Her idea was to expose the politics behind marginalization through the bizarre social customs for creating an egalitarian society. Writing for the marginalised and addressing their issues with the aim of engendering social change, Goswami's major concern were the women, the politics of society and the rituals used as tools for female oppression. To quote Malashri Lal, "The common thread in Indira Goswami's

immensely diverse and rich oeuvre is the concern for women...Despite the complex interstices, I see no contradictions, only a holistic expression of India's many challenges to women's empowerment and a gifted writer moulding them into creative forms. (www.indiragoswami.blogspot.com). Her last book, *The Bronze Sword of Thengphakhri Tehsildar* deals with the tale of a Bodo woman who was the first revenue collector in British India, the other book *The Moth Eaten Howdah of a Tusker*, set in pre-independence Assam, projects the plight of three Brahmin widows – Durga, Saru Gossainee and Giribala belonging to the Assamese orthodox community. Even in her novel *The Man from Chinnamasta*, although focussing on the brutal practice of animal sacrifice in the Kamakhya temple, she blends the insensitive treatment of women in the society. Through the much different characters of Dorothy Brown, a woman in thirties, wife of Arthur Brown, principal of Cotton College, and Bidhibala, an eleven year old Indian girl, she manages to focus on the similarity of the women, irrespective of age, class and gender. Damayanti, the protagonist of her short story “The Offspring” is a widow of a young priest with two little daughters and tries to survive by weaving sacred threads. But the society is cruel towards her and leaves no stone unturned in assassinating her character. Similarly in another story “The Empty Chest” it is the protagonist Toradoi whose husband is in jail and she is seen an easy victim by the males to satisfy their lust.

Patriarchy often uses violence, either physical abuse or psychological violence to silence the protests of women. Lack of education and economic dependency are the major factors to categorise women as the subaltern group. Colonized, they become an easy prey in the hands of phallogocentric society to be sacrificed at the altar of male lust. The oppressive gender practices make the women 'other', allowing them to enjoy 'only' the peripheral role. Several women novelists of the nineties were involved in writing about the plight of women. Their writings give a sensitive portrayal of a major section of women of India who are left out of the feminist/liberation/emancipation movement, for instance, Indu K. Mallah in her *Shadows in Dream-Time* (1990) expresses her concern for the custom of *sati* in India. Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water* and M.K. Indira's *Phaniyamma* too project the helplessness of widows in the Hindu society. Indira Goswami attempts to explore the manner in which the politics of social construction affects the Indian woman. Through her writings, she attacks at the very foundation of the rituals and the unquestioned beliefs which perpetuate female oppression. Her autobiography, *An Unfinished Autobiography* is a 'representative of a whole host of issues women in the 60s and 70s faced' (Goswami, xiii). Her Saudaminis and Giribalas defy the societal norms laid down for high-caste Hindu widows.

The present paper is an endeavour to expose the hollow inhumane rituals prevalent in the India's Hindu society and reduce the ancient city of Brindavan, once known for the pious love between Krishna and his consort Radha and where God Himself descended to vanquish the evil, into a city where destitute widows are coerced into living a pitiable life. Considered inauspicious, the widows are ostracised by the society and are

forced into believing that dying in Brindavan is a means to salvation. Often they are taken over by some NGOs and in the name of providing shelter and food, the widows are exploited, physically and emotionally. In *The Blue-Necked God*, Goswami focuses on the plight of Hindu widows, commonly called *Radheswamis* in Brindavan. The autobiographical strain runs throughout the novel. In the plight of Saudamini and other widows, Goswami voices the pain of loneliness and confinement she herself faced in Brindavan after her husband's death. The real-life experiences add authenticity to the text and expose the ugly face of the city and the Hindu rituals. The holy city, the birth place of Lord Krishna has now reduced to become the 'city of widows'. The widows disowned by their families seek refuge here but the novel unravels the darker and unseen picture of Brindavan. Sara Barrera and Eva Corbacho very aptly write about the 'desexing' of the widows: "Widows in India have a pronoun problem. The estimated 40 million women widows in the country go from being called 'she' to 'it' when they lose their husbands. They become 'desexed' creatures" (Women Under Siege: 'The ongoing tragedy of India's widows'). The grim picture of these widows raise several pertinent questions: why is a woman's status always determined by the presence of a man? Why is she forced to forgo all pleasures of her life? Why does she lose the right to look beautiful? In Meera Khanna's words, "The widow is 'uglified' to deprive her of the core of her femininity. It is an act symbolic of castration. She is deprived of the red dot between her eyebrows that proclaims hers sexual energy". But ironically, the sexual cravings of men are not deterred by the lustreless lives of these women. For them, women are merely bodies to be devoured, and women without any male-protection are always an easy prey.

Kusum Ansal's *The Widow of Vrindavan* too exposes the unhappy state of the widows and also of Vrindavan, a city that was once seen as 'an abode of God' to seek peace, is now a place where hopes of the homeless widows are shattered. She comments that "More than the spirituality and sanctity of this sacred city what left its impress upon me was the greed of the pundits, the commercialization of religion, and its brutal exploitation of the vulnerable and weak" (Ansal, 5). The deterioration of Vrindavan and the despicable condition of the widows disturbed the thinking minds and compelled the writers across the country to raise their voice against victimization of women in the name of religion. Ansal writes, "In an Indian context, to get married and widowed is the easiest way to exploitation" (5). The Hindu society imposes stringent restrictions in the name of religion on widows which they are forced to follow. Helpless, they often resort to prostitution (the only refuge for the widows, unwed mothers, abandoned women) that gives a veneer of respect to them. Leela Dube's essay, 'Caste and Women' talks at length about the 'duties and responsibilities' of Indian woman (of all castes and class). Also she mentions the 'special' code of conduct to be observed by the women who are 'expected to change their lifestyle drastically after they are widowed. They are required to observe strict rules of purity and pollution while preparing food, to give up the consumption of foods which are *tamasik* –

which raise passion and desire – and to forego a 'proper' meal in the evenings' (Dube, 7). She further elaborates that widowhood is considered as one of the 'source of impurity' and hence 'widows are not supposed to perform the *pūja* of family deities; they do not cook the pure food offered to these deities' (10). In the same vein, Ramrakh Simg Sahgal opines, "In our society widows are considered useless and harmful. If widows were treated with respect and affection by their families, 75 per cent of them would happily lead a pure life". (in a journal, Chamd, a woman's magazine started by Ramrakh Simg Sahgal of Lahore in 1922 in Allahabad) Goswami's novel is about the plight of Radheswamis of Brindavan who suffered not just poverty and hunger but sexual exploitation as well. The place where once Lord Krishna revelled with his Gopis, the licentious young men would now throng near the young women with lustful eyes.

Like butchers examining animals before buying them, the young men would make these young widows strip off their clothes in order to examine their bodies thoroughly and make sure that they were without any blemishes. They had found those unfortunates who had been widowed at a very early age and whose only immediate problem was hunger because they had not eaten anything for days. (Goswami, 8)

Especially the young widows are made to stand at crossroads by the society – their urge to live life in happy companionship and the expectations of the society to lead a moral and confined life in the *ashrams* are always at loggerheads. No one bothers to understand that the cage, be it of gold or iron, is a cage. Brindavan has emerged as a 'refuge' for the upper caste widow. Anees Jung describes Brindavan as: "the streets of this medieval holy town are littered with the shrunken figures of women, bedraggled, and dressed in dirty white, divorced from love, family and home" (Jung, 73). The sex trade flourishes, generally covertly in the name of religion. The novel depicts the perversion of moral values and ethics among the present age people who use religion as a tool to be used as per the need. *The Blue-necked God* is a story of three women, in different circumstances but interwoven with the common thread of misery. Goswami focuses the plight of Hindu widows in Vrindavan commonly called Radheswamis. She herself suffered the pain of widowhood and her own experiences in Brindavan added the colours of authenticity to the novel. In the age where man-woman equations are being re-defined, Goswami's novel presents not just the story about a widow Saudamini, it is also about the middle-aged spinsters like Mrinalini who have the responsibility of their old and ailing parents, about Sashiprava, another young widow who lived with Alamgiri, the priest and also about other widows living in Brindavan. Goswami presents a conglomeration of destitute women who have been abandoned by their families and seek refuge in Brindavan. The book unravels the hypocrisy of the Hindu society and also the commercialization of the sacred places. The unethical practices of rituals compel the already miserable women to lead a wretched life. In brief, the travesty of our faith in religion is exposed. Vrindavan is seen as "the abode of God. Widows who reside here attain

Paradise.” (Ansal,14). Dr Roychoudhary and Anupama, parents of Saudamini, had the desire to spend their last years in Mathura. Unfortunately, their coming to this holy city was burdened with the sudden widowhood of their only daughter, Saudamini. In the first few paragraphs itself, Goswami reveals the main reason of Roychoudhary's coming to Mathura. It was rumoured that soon after becoming a widow, Saudamini was involved in a love relation with an unnamed Christian man and this 'behaviour was completely unacceptable to the orthodox and God-fearing Roychoudhary family. So, they resolved to take her to Brindavan in the hope that 'a few years at Braj might change their daughter's mind and bring her face to face with the realities of her life' (Goswami, 2). The irony is noteworthy: they expect to seek comfort in separating their daughter from her love and that too in a city known for love and compassion. Saudamini is too young to understand the intricacies of life; all that she wants is companionship. She cherishes a forbidden relationship with a Christian youth. It was expected of her to internalise the traditional laws as set by patriarchy. Engulfed in the 'shadows of unknown shadow' (9), she ultimately surrenders/resigns before the social conventions. Saudamini's first appearance is too poignantly described, especially, if her young age is kept in the mind:

...she was not wearing *sindur*, the mark of a married woman, in the parting in her hair. There was no *mangal sutra* around her neck, nor was she wearing any toe rings, other signs to show that she was married. She was not wearing the stark white sari of a widow either since young girls did not wear those nowadays. (7)

Even the dreadful picture of the city is nauseating. The buildings were in ruins, the narrow lanes vanish 'mysteriously' symbolizing the dilapidated condition of women whose lives crumble into pieces and come to a mysterious end with the death of their husbands. The lanes of their life that start with their marriage turn suddenly into a blind alleys, leading to nowhere the moment they are widowed. The *radheshyamis* lived in 'small and dilapidated rooms that looked more like pigeon holes than human habitations...grossly undernourished, and wore dirty and faded old dhotis' (20-21). They were kept like beggars – begging for alms, for happiness. On Saudamini's statement that since they all are *radheshyamis*, they 'must have been assured of at least two square meals a day' (21), there was a burst of laughter and she was later informed about the various ashrams working in Brindavan where these widows are provided 'shelter' by the owners who grow 'fat' on the earnings of these widows. So the scene was completely business-like. They were 'compelled to sing even if they were starving. They had to sing the Lord's praises as loud as they could even if they were on the verge of choking' (23). But the fire of hunger could not prevent their concentration getting diluted – they were singing the *bhajans* only physically, mentally 'their eyes would turn to the line of vegetable vendors' (24). They would throng near the rotten, dried up vegetables and scream, 'Give us some donation to keep us alive. You people live to eat, but we need to eat something in order to live' (22). It was

to quench their hunger and to have the so-called 'secured' existence that the widows took to become *radheshyamis*. Saudamini too was given a small room at the back of the building. It was dark, there were no openings in any walls, she felt suffocated. But 'to her relief she found that there was one small opening...the tiny window (through which) a thin stream of pale light poured into the dank room' (13). No aperture in the wall implies no escape in her life but a tiny ray of light coming through the window could be interpreted as the little comfort she received in the company of the unnamed Christian, the small dark room signifies her dark life without a husband or partner/companion. Her life was filled with unending loneliness and she was unable to 'come to terms with the condition of her life or her situation' (24). She even attempted to divert her feelings by joining her father in nursing the ailing people/ sick pilgrims but all her efforts were in vain. Her tender age yearned for a company, a company of a loving heart but all that she was given was seclusion.

Shashiprova is another widow discussed in the novel. She found refuge in the company of the temple priest, Alamgarhi. Initially she helped him in the various duties of the temple but later 'she had started sharing his room' (37). And Goswami mentions that 'this was nothing new' (37) since 'many priests had kept destitute widows in their rooms before this. Both parties benefitted by this arrangement' (37). The widows looked for support and the priests profited through their bodies and their earnings. This kind of arrangement was known as *Jugal Upaasana*. Both Shashiprova and Saudamini were caught in the whirlpool of the uncertainties. After the temple was auctioned, Alamgiri and Shashiprova had to part and life became all the more miserable for Sashi, due to her age and beauty, together with her status of being a widow and with no man for support. Men became aware of her 'unprotected state' (89). How pitiable! Till she lived with Alamgarhi who was a eunuch, no one dared to look upon her but with their separation she had become vulnerable 'living in the midst of human wolves' (32). A woman's (a single woman's) condition is worse than a eunuch!!! Through the character of Mrinalini, Goswami projects yet another angle of woman suppression. She is a forty year old, unmarried daughter of Thakur Sahib, whose life is devoted to take care of her ailing parents, a mother who was insane and a father, who was blind. Once enjoyed the days of luxury, the Thakur family was now reduced to pauper. However Mrinalini is the image of strong woman who does not give up, despite all economical and personal hardships. But at times she too feels low and defeated and her 'mind was filled with an unknown fear, and for some time past, she had been overwhelmed by a feeling of helplessness. She felt like a beast of burden, like an over loaded donkey at the end of her tether!' (41). She yearned to become a wife, a mother but all her dreams were locked up behind the mask of a stern woman. Her brothers had fled leaving behind the responsibilities of their parents and Mrinalini 'sacrifices' her desires to fulfil her filial duties. Goswami expresses her concern for the needs of the women, who are expected by the cruel society to relinquish their desires to safeguard its false pretence.

Mrinalini wanted to marry, like Saudamini, and Sashiprova too felt an inclination towards another man. If the former was waiting anxiously for her Christian lover, we see 'Sashi's twenty year old heart and body trembled with an unwonted, heavenly joy and near ecstasy when she saw the young Swamiji.' (90) The young widows too cherished a dream of living their lives as any other normal woman. Saudamini bursts out saying: "I can not 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!" (71). The Christian man she was involved with was the only source of happiness, of hope that propelled her to live on. She was bewildered and perturbed and even calls her parents 'butchers'. Trapped in the cruel rituals, she feels "a peculiar darkness seems to be engulfing my entire being and life..." (79). She does not want sympathy; all that she desired was the fulfilment of her 'golden dreams' that were shattered with the sudden death of her husband. In her despair, she screams:

I am a very ordinary woman...A peculiar sense of distress and depression has dogged me all my life except for one year. For one short year, I was a stranger to that despair, that sense of discontent. Those untrammelled and blissful twelve months are still vivid in my innermost mind. My soul and mind were liberated, and I was free and eminently happy! (105)

In the present, her life is 'like a bundle of old discoloured clothes' (105). With the death of her husband, it seems that all the colours of her life had been washed away.

She came to a conclusion that she was a dissolute woman. She had lost everything that was important in life. Yet here she was, willing to sacrifice all for the sake of a love that could only bring untold misery. (166)

Waiting for her companion, her loneliness found vent in her interactions with Rakesh to whom she poured out her feelings completely. The 'unspoken yet unmistakable anguish', the 'sense of loneliness and isolation', the 'tumultuous and confused mind' (94) that engulfed Saudamini could also be felt in Sashiprova's and Mrinalini's lives. They both were too tortured by 'an ever-present feeling of loneliness' (95). Mrinalini was the 'keeper' of her parents and Saudamini was the 'responsibility' of her parents but Sashi had no one. All the three were like parched earth, waiting for the downpour of love to revive their lives. Mrinalini wanted to be a mother but instead she was nursing her ailing parents. Saudamini lived in a fantasy world cherishing the dream of being with her lover while Sashi was satisfied in her relationship with Alamgarhi. But unfortunately a vacuum was created in their lives due to the hypocrite brutal social laws. The *radheshyamis* confess of feeling the 'softness of *chameli* petals' inside the bag while counting their prayer beads and this itself indicate the physical and emotional needs of *radheshyamis* who had to abstain from every such human desire because of their widowhood.

The end of both, *The Blue-necked God* and *The Widow of Vrindavan* is

pathetic. Tapasi, the protagonist of Kusum Ansal's *The Widow of Vrindavan* was also a lost soul who lost all hopes in this hypocrite world. Her own people betray her trust, she was abandoned in the dark alleys of Vrindavan, taken up by the ashram people and dies a painful death in the end – the pain was not just physical but emotional too. Like Goswami, Ansal too has a negative image of this holy city, where 'pathetic, crushed, broken and banished widows' are huddled together (Ansal, 17) as hunger was the greatest reality of these widows. Tapasi questions to herself: 'Who was she? Just a name...a woman...a widow with no past and no future' (64). Saudamini was taken by her father to meet her Christian lover. The night was very tumultuous. She was 'obstructed at every step' by the 'ferocity of the storm'. The river Yamuna was 'in her most terrifying form' and the 'mighty and angry waves' attempted to prevent her from going across the bank. Says she, 'today the storm out there and the tumult in my heart have become one' (Goswami, 177). Indeed, Goswami juxtaposes the inner and external storms and makes the two one. However, later the lull in the Nature brought a pause in her mind too and 'a nameless sorrow tore her heart apart. Was this really what she wanted...' (179). Her union with the Christian lover, for which she anxiously waited for years, ultimately turned into a meaningless meeting. Then suddenly, the clouds disappeared, the sky cleared, the storm stopped, peace re-stored in the nature and Saudamini felt as if 'all the closed windows of her soul opened up, and her confusion cleared' (181). She asks her man to go back and in the morning 'her white widow's cloth...entangled with the colourful *chaddar* of a woman with a living husband' (182). Saudamini and Tapasi die but in their deaths, they leave behind some significant questions to be probed into. Tapasi's body was left abandoned on the railway platform, no one paid attention to it (yes, from 'her' she became 'it'), like her life, her death also did not affect any one. The body was wrapped in the old newspapers, to be discarded after use. The title of Goswami's novel is thought-provoking. According to the Indian mythology, Lord Shiva drank poison obtained by the *suras* and *asuras* in *samudra-manthan* that made his neck blue, giving him the name of *neelkantha*. Here in this novel, the land of Lord Krishna (the god of usually associated with fun, frolic and love), is devoid of such emotions. The nectar of happiness is sucked out from the lives of the widows, instead they are filled with the poison of loneliness. Their right to live life is snatched from them and are compelled to lead a cribbed, cabined and caged existence. Ansal questions: "The poor souls. Tired, defeated minds struggling with pain – gathered under one roof...What had their religion saddled them with anyway, other than an oppressive seriousness and an anxiety of the future?" (Ansal, 82)

In conclusion to my argument, I would like to quote from the Publisher's Note, that Goswami "highlighted the exploitation and poverty of widows dumped in a 'sacred' city to eke out their days in prayer by uncaring, callous families under the guise of religious sanction and tradition" (Goswami, v). Indian society is full of such Tapasis, Saudaminis, Sashiprovass and Mrinalinis who have been made too weak and helpless to swim against the tide. It is time to look deeply into their blank eyes, to

understand the empathy implicit in their deep voices when they sing, to realise that 'the *bhajans* are not sung by people with hearts full of devotion, but by hapless, wretched people who have fallen on hard times.' (Ansal, 30) Brindavan emerged as a hub for flesh trade where widows were forced (often) into prostitution and the ashram-heads 'owned' them and acted as pimps too. The deterioration of ashrams is clearly evident as now they are no less than brothels. What kind of life is promised to the widows who manage to escape from the funeral pyre of their dead husbands but are coerced to burn in the fire of exploitation, loneliness and insecurity till their last breath? If the custom of *sati* is abolished, then why the woman is expected to mourn until the end of their lives? Mohini Giri compares widowhood to a state of 'social death' and it is this constant abuse of widowhood needs to be checked and steps should be taken to re-integrate them into community.

References :

- Ansal, Kusum (2004). *The Widow of Vrindavan*. Trans. Masooma Ali. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India & The India Today Group.
- Barrera, Sara and Eva Corbacho. Women Under Siege: 'The ongoing tragedy of India's widows'.
- Dube, Leela (1996). 'Caste and Woman'. In. *Caste: Its Twentieth Century Avatar*. (Ed.) M. N. Srinivas: Penguin.
- Goswami, Indira (2013) *The Blue-necked God*. Trans. Gayatri Bhattacharyya. New Delhi: Zubaan Publications.
- Gupta, Santosh (2006). "Fashioning the Narrative: Indo-English Novels by Women Writers." In *New Concerns: Voices in Indian Writing*, ed. Sushma Arya & Shalini Sikka (23-36). Delhi: Macmillan.
- Jung, Anees (1987). "Mothers and Children." In *Unveiling India: A Woman's Journey*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, p.73.
- Krishnaiah, B. (2011) (Ed). *Image of Woman in the Recent Indian English Fiction by Women*. New Delhi: Prestige.
- Pathak, R.S (1994). *Recent Indian Fiction*. New Delhi: Prestige, pp 1.
- Sahgal, Ramrakh Simg. *Chamd*.
- Swami, Indu (2011). *Exploring North-East Indian Writings in English*. New Delhi: Sarup Book Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- <http://www.indiragoswami.blogspot.com/2008/10/indira-goswami-and-womens-empowerment.html>.

