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## Girija, an Empowered Woman in Particular Reference to Rajam Krishnan ‘Lamps in the Whirlpool’

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**Abstract:**

*The paper focuses on the life of a protagonist Girija, is a typical middle class Brahmin girl, She has completed her post graduation. She worked as a teacher in a village school. She is inspired by her students and Colleagues alike. Girija is married to swaminathan only to do the duties of a Hindu wife in a Brahmin family. Swaminathan’s mother is much a central character as Girija. Because, she treated her daughter-in-law as a slave to do her duties. Girija has to follow the ‘madi’ rules and Acharam instructed by her mother-in-law. Her husband is not so caring about his wife. After seventeen years of her married life she used to do only the house hold works. Even she is not having time for relaxation. Rathna, her husband’s niece visited her once. Girija awakened by the talk of Rathna. One day, her husband throws the plate because the food is not palatable. Girija is irritated by his arrogant behaviour. For the first time she does not like to please him. Girija leaves, from her home. She wants to spend some time on the banks of the river Ganga. She meets the pilgrims Gowriammal and her husband.*

*Girija also meets a spiritual widow in Rishikeshi. She heard the tales of the pilgrims. Girija confesses to that woman about her situation and later asks her to take her life in her hands and act with clarity. Girija returns after four days. She is not allowed to enter the house by her family members. She is torn between her worry for her daughters. She seeks a job with a run who is running a home for refugee children. She worries about her daughters. when they grow up are not destroyed by the family regimen. She wants to keep in touch with her children. Then Girija transforms to a new empowered woman.*

The status of women in our society is the true index of its cultural, social, religious and spiritual attainment. It is one of the most important facts for estimating with precision the degree of civilization attained by a particular society. Men have not been fair to the fair sex. The male domination and the female submission takes place unknowingly because the gender inequalities have evolved over the one million years and if gets institutionalized. The psychological conflicts between the genders reinforce the inequalities.

Rajam Krishnan is known for writing well researched social novels and life of people usually not depicted in modern Tamil literature poor farmers, salt pan workers, small time criminals, Jungle dacoits, under trial prisoners and female laborer’s. She has written more than 80 books. She was a translator of literature Malayalam to Tamil. In their anthology of women’s writing in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century, Susie J.tharu and K.Lalitha credit Krishnan with “having set a new trend in Tamil literature referring to the extensive research that Krishnan did in evaluating social conditions as background for her writing.

In 1973, she was awarded the SahityaAkademi Award for Tamil for her novel VerukkuNeer. In 2009, her works were nationalized by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

The novel Lamps in the Whirlpool byRajam Krishnan is totally feministic in theme. The language and the treatment used by the author shows clearly the male-dominated society. And the ‘madi’ rules and so on. It is the voice of many a depressed women cutting across language and culture. It shows the readers about the sufferings of women. Woman is everything for the family. She plays multiple roles a lovable wife, affectionate mother and an unselfish daughter- in -law of all.

In the beginning of the novel

“Girija was intensely charming, she was

Utterly unselfish, she was excelled

In winning the hearts of the family members

Totally she was an Angels’ (LW Pg. No.1)

The women status in India especially the daughter- in- law treated as an Angel by the family members if she is unselfish. Otherwise she is not considered as a human being.

In this novel, the novelist Rajam Krishnan depicts the protagonist Girija as an unselfish daughter-in law. But her sincere work is not recognized by her mother- in-law and even from her husband. She was treated badly and she has to adhere the madi rules strictly to serve for her family. She belongs to the orthodox Tamil Brahmin family. She is from the middle class. She is educated well. She has been married to Mr.Swaminathan only to regard being a dedicated wife and daughter - in- law.

Though she has completed her post-graduation and worked as a teacher in a village school for nearly eight years. She inspired the students and colleagues. After being married to Mr.Swaminathan, she resigned her job. During the eve of her marriage, she was decorated by her mother in law's costliest Gift a pair diamond nose rings and earrings. Girija's parents astonished their heart filled with happiness. They thought Girija's life will be a prosperous and happy one. They did not expect anything to go wrong in her life.

After her marriage, she used to follow 'madi rules' & 'Acharam' she gave birth to two daughter's one son. After the seventeen years of her marital life she is serving her mother-in law with uncompromising dedication.

The mother – in –law without any sort of tenderness in her heart. She used Girija as a slave to maintain all her house hold works without any relaxation. The character of Indian men is not aware of his wife as a person at all. Later she got awareness that she was dominated by her mother-in law, & her madi rules. By the help of Ratha, a bold girl her husband's niece visited her once. She came to Delhi to do her Ph.D., in the Delhi University. She came to Girija's house of to stay for few days. So many questions were asked by Ratha about the pitiable condition of Girija of her slave life. She kindled her emotions. She asked her Graduation and so on. Totally Girija is aware that she is treated & tuned as mute by her husband. Totally she is like a slave. One day, Girija's husband behaved terribly to Girija. The only reason is that the lunch is not palatable. He throws away the plate and a glass of water.

Girija is shocked by his unkind behaviour towards her. She is not in the state of mind to please him. He insulted her goes away. After the bitter incident. Girija hoping that she may get some relaxation from the tragic situation of the house. She wants to spend some time on the banks of the river Ganga. There she has a chance to meet an old age couple that came for pilgrimage and stays in Haridwar.

After their talk, she learned that GowriAmmal, the wife of the elderly man has been treated badly by in the earlier period of her life. But she hides everything about her ill treatment. At this time the elderly man due to his old age totally depended his wife GowriAmmal. After that Girija meets a spiritual widow in Rishikesh who came to know that she is a third wife of an old man and in her sad tale was that her step son who was a menace to her youth. After the death of her husband. She came for pilgrimage and the lady wants to stay in Rishikesh itself for the remaining days of her life. She started to help a sanyasi in the field of medicine as an Ayurvedic healer.

Girija was totally surprised that woman about her situation and finally asks her to take life in her hands. She must acts clearly. After the incident Girija's mind was totally changed. After four days she returned to her home the neighbor's and the family members of Girija talked about her absence for the past four days. They talked about the situation of the three children the old woman.

The mother -in- law & her husband are not allowed to enter the house and charged her with infidelity same her husband told her daughters and son that Girija is a mad woman who has run away. She is totally depressed. After that she wants to meet Ratha, her husband' niece in the hostel then Rathna gave her shelter & convinced her. But Girija is worried about her life and especially the life of her children.

She is very much worried about her daughter's (Kavi&Chaar) the next day Girija's mother-in- law came with the help of her servant maid Maya to give the certificates, Jewels, clothes of Girija. Her husband stayed in the car itself .And also she gave a cheque of Rs.10, 000 from samu. After this bitter time. She is convinced somewhat by Rathna. Girija pledges her chain which is bought by herself before her marriage.She got an employment with a nun running a refugee child. But she wants to see her daughters only for the reason when they grow up; they are not destroyed by the family regiments.

The widow whom she met in Rishikesh lights the lamp in the life of Girija.Girija saw one of her relative cum neighbour Rojamani, her mother- in- law's friend. Roja Mani treated her as a daughter by her mother in law. Rojamani pretended that she follows madi rules and Acharamwithout any reason. She interferes in Girija's family often used to talk about Girija. It is very pity that Girija's mother in law believed Rojamani is purely orthodox. Rojamani lied that she did not see Girija in Haridwar.

To conclude that Girija's life does not exist anymore after her wedding. Education has not given her any rationale of her life. She becomes a slave in following only the rituals. She does not find relaxation. She lost her freedom, self-respect. When well-educated woman like Girija sung in such torpor. Rajam Krishnan through this novel she asks us not to think atomistically. The existence from her family members.

Girija is, in fact afraid that the choice she has to make of giving up her children. In our Indian life “Motherhood is everything”. It is uncompromised one in any situation. At the end of this work. Girija wants to keep in touch with the children. It is very important that Indian woman must to learn to balance between the two extremes. Girija is well educated. But she lost herself identity as empowered women by the rules of her family members. The family members would not remain that even Girija has heart and her likes.

**Reference**

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