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## **Authenticity of Liberal Feminism in Namita Gokhale's Texts**

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**Abstract**--Liberal feminism abbreviates women's right and their empowerment. The aim of this study highlights liberal feminism in Namita Gokhale's works *The Book of Shadows* (2001), *Priya: In Incredibile Indyaa* (2011), and *Things to leave Behind* (2016). The features of liberal feminism exhibit the women protagonists' grief and exertion to attain their goal and their responsibilities. Namita Gokhale is a multifarious writer, and her popular works are *The Book of Shadows* (2001), *Priya: In Incredibile Indyaa* (2011) and *Things to leave Behind* (2016). Indian Fiction in general as well as in Indian English Fiction, both original and in translation (Gupta, 2020). The selected works have the issues of liberal feminism ideas that reflect throughout her writing. In Namita Gokhale's works, the major protagonists that represent liberal feminist attributes are Rachita, Priya, and Tilottama. Each character has the reflection of liberal feminist ideas through their life. The notable thinkers of liberal feminism are John Stuart Mill, Mary Wollstonecraft, Betty Friedan, Rosemarie Tong, Susan Moller Okin, Martha Nussbaum and Zillah Eisenstein. The methodology of the study adopts the concepts of liberal feminism proposed by Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, Rosemarie Tong's *Feminist Thought: A Feminist Comprehension*, John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women*, and Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. The results of the study evaluate with other studies regarding liberal feminism. Future study recommendations are the quest for identity, emancipation, love, parental care, male chauvinism, alienation, marriage, and education.

**Keywords**--liberal feminism, emancipation, protagonist, empowerment, society, and justice.

## Introduction

Liberal feminism has a strong reaction from the rights to reinforce equality. Its reactions are strong towards gender equality, individual liberty, and empowerment. Liberal feminism asserts that women are not an instrument for the welfare of children and men (Foley, 2007). It deals with freedom for individuals such as freedom to be alive, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and so on (Wijayati, 2020; Hariharasudan, 2020). From these explanations, it means that someone should live the life of their choosing. Mill correctly tells that women can get whatever they want by themselves. He tells "... It arose simply from the fact that from the very earliest twilight of human society, every woman (owing to the value attached to her by men, combined with her inferiority in muscular strength) was found in a state of bondage to some man. They convert what was a mere physical fact into a legal right ... Instead of the irregular and lawless conflict of physical strength. Those who had already been compelled to obedience became in this manner legally bound to it" (Mill, 1984).

The accomplished Indian writer Namita Gokhale's select works *The Book of Shadows* (2001), *Priya: In Incredible Indyaa* (2011), and *Things to leave Behind* (2016) are incorporated in this study in terms of liberal feminism. The purpose of the study is to identify the characteristics of women through liberal feminism ideas justified by the theorists. The study done by Flax reveals that liberal feminism has three purposes. The first is to analyze the problem of women in society and family. The second purpose is to understand the power differentials between men and women. The third purpose is how to overcome the problem (Flax, 1981). Liberal feminism's perfect liability includes equal opportunity for self-development. This study discusses liberal feminism with the major concept of freedom of individual means women noted follow their desire based on their interest (Greenberg, 2001; Haryanti & Suwana, 2014; Ioana, 2013).

Most feminists have identified the goals of women very clearly through the works of feminists such as John Stuart Mill, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Rosemarie Tong. As a liberal thinker, Mill expresses that "the subordination of women, which deprives them of freedom, is an unjust violation of the principle of liberty" (Mill, 1984). Mill abbreviates that women are concentrating on their freedom on the right path to attain their freedom. Likewise, this idea reflects in Namita Gokhale's *Priya: In Incredible Indyaa* (2011) through the character of Priya. She mentions that "It all works out in the end usually,' I said to myself, loud enough to be heard. I deserved the good now, and I would get it" (Gokhale, 2013). Liberal feminism seeks to develop the skills and abilities of women (Tong, 2014). Rachita's life is a reflection of Tong's idea about liberal feminism. Rachita tells "We all need a change,' I repeated to myself, like a mantra. ' We all need a change" (Gokhale, 2011). This shows her lack of liberty to walk freely in her life.

The rest of the sections include a review of literature, theoretical framework, methodology, and conclusion. The second chapter, a review of literature gives

ideas to know about liberal feminism and also proves there is no research has done before concerning liberal feminism in Namita Gokhale's works. In methodology, the theoretical framework explains the functions of liberal feminism. The discussion deals with the comparison of other studies regarding liberal feminism. In conclusion, it sums up all sections and mentions the findings and recommendations of this study.

## **Review of Literature**

This part deals with the studies of liberal feminism conducted by many authors in various works. Review of literature gives a theoretical framework by reviewing various related studies and theories ([Homburg et al., 2009](#); [Schaap et al., 2009](#)). There are many issues regarding feminism, and liberal feminism is one among to analyses of women's life. The notable thinkers of liberal feminism are John Stuart Mill, Mary Wollstonecraft, Rosemarie Tong, and Betty Friedan. This section explores the literature in terms of liberal feminism.

### **The studies related to the concepts of John Stuart Mill**

John Stuart Mill is a renowned liberal thinker, and he has written so many works, related to liberal feminism. Various authors adopt his theory for their studies. For instance, the study of Tofik Kurohman abbreviates liberal feminism through Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd* through the character of Bathsheba. Kurohman explicates Mill's ideas reflected in the protagonist Bathsheba who is brave, strong-minded, hardworking, determined, responsible, and independent. Kurohman mentions that women have to be given equal liberty to do something, especially to go to work. In this way, Kurohman adopts Mill's *On Liberty* concept of liberal feminism ([Kurohman, 2020](#)). The study of Eidelweis highlights liberal feminism in the movie "Joy". In the movie, the main character Joy comes under the concept of liberal feminism. She is an employee as well as a housewife. She sacrifices her dream of taking care of her children and family. Also, she has no time to take care of herself and explore her dreams. Joy finally decides to pursue her dream, not caring about the obstacles and opinions of others. The author has adopted Mill's *Essays on Equality, Law, and Education* in this study ([Eidelweis, 2018](#)).

The study of Sipahutar affirms that liberal feminism is responsive and, it is related to the individual rights of women, but this system of society does not allow women to make their decision according to their wish. The author analyses *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* in which Annisa is the protagonist. She struggles hard to lead her life according to her wish and fights for her equal rights with her brother because he does not allow her sister to decide independently. The author abbreviates liberal feminism through the protagonist Annisa and utilizes Mill's liberal feminism concepts ([Sipahutar, 2018](#)). The study of Foley affirms liberal feminism through Weldon's famous work *Praxis*. The author explores the condition of women in which society perceives the highest role of women is to be a wife and a mother. This study reveals liberal feminism through the women characters who are suppressed by their husbands. To explore the problem of the study, the researcher has used Mill's liberal feminism theory.

### **The studies related to the concepts of Mary Wollstonecraft**

Mary Wollstonecraft argues in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* that equality of opportunity and rights should be extended in every area of life. Wollstonecraft's feminist idea aptly reflects in Aenun Nahdiyati's study. This study focuses on the work of *Miss. Potter*. The main character Miss. Potter has liberal feminist characteristics. Miss Potter likes to choose her life partner as she likes, but her parents do not allow her to get married as she wishes. So she determines to fight with the age-old tradition of patriarchal culture (Nahdiyati, 2009; Hariharasudan & Pandeeswari, 2020). The study of Desmawati analyses the different types of liberal feminism reflected in the novel *Little Women*. This study informs that women have the same authority in this modern era like that a man in performing economic, social, and political functions (Mohan, 2014). Liberal feminism reinforces the integration of women into the active role in society, demanding women's equal rights, opportunities, pay, status, and respect in public and private relations (Jansi Rani et al., 2019). Wollstonecraft's idea shows the importance of women in every aspect and encourages them to strive for equality. She indicates that capitalism is the cause of women's oppression and depicts it through the role of women characters in the novel. In the article, the protagonist intends to buy a Christmas gift for her mother with her hard-earned money. It also describes the ability of women who can fulfill their own needs by working hard and utilizing the opportunity to fulfill their dreams (Desmawati, 2020).

### **The studies related to the concepts of Rosemarie Tong**

Rosemarie Tong is a famous liberal feminist thinker. Her work *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (2014). Tong's framework of liberal feminism struggles to release women from an oppressive gender role (Tong, 2014). In this way, Tong's liberal feminism theory reflects on many women characters in the following studies.

The study of Eidelweis represents Tong's theory in the work titled *Joy*. The female protagonist *Joy* decides to enter into the new world. The new world represents liberty from breaking the patriarchal shackles and attaining her dream. Also, this study focuses on equal liberty, gender justice, and mono androgyny. Moreover, Tong's liberal feminism thoughts are used by Kusuma in his study *Liberal Feminism Values in Kate Chopin's Story of an Hour*. This study aims to find the liberal feminism values in Chopin's Story by analyzing the character of Louis Mallard. There are two purposes in this study. The first is to reveal the subordination and oppression of women. The second is to unveil the liberal feminist attributes inherited in the character of the protagonist (Pompella et al., 2003; Oliveira et al., 2021; Amichai-Hamburger et al., 2008). Mrs. Mallard's life after her husband's death is discussed with the theory of liberal feminism. The men can go outside, work, study, and do everything that they want. In contrast, women must stay at home to not study, and they become uneducated. She wants to have privacy as a human being. As a result, she breaks her fear of getting freedom and chooses to walk into a new life (Kusuma, 2015). The study of Hastuti and et al., discuss working women and their life. Liberal feminism that exists in this movie *North Country* can be identified by Tong's theory. Josey is an important character who uses to earn money by working in the mine. Furthermore, in the

workplace, she struggles to face the other workers because she works where many men are working. In the mine, Sherry is another woman who is treated wrongly by some men in the mine. This reason makes Josey bravely fight for equal rights (Hastuti et al, 2018).

Nur Azizah study focuses on the concept of liberal feminism in the film *The Post*, and it analyses Tong's ideas of liberal feminism. Tong's view of women's freedom through opportunities to become full persons grounded in the view that because individuals generate ideas and achieve goals, no custom should prohibit the exercise of personal freedom. This study has discussed the feminism of equal rights, feminism of fear, and feminism of personal development to identify the representation of liberal feminism in the researcher's article (Scheyvens, 1999; Holmström & Röing, 2010). In the movie, some people think that woman cannot be a leader in a big company. The protagonist, Katherine, breaks the stereotype and emerges as a good leader in the company. Katherine portrays the image of women who can be good leaders both in social and family life (Azizah & Fitri, 2020).

### **The studies related to the concepts of Betty Friedan**

The notable liberal feminist Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* (1963) is a popular work, and many researchers utilized her theory for employing liberal feminism. For instance, the study of Wulandari has utilized Friedan's liberal feminism ideas as a supporting theory to find the reflections of liberal feminism in the novel *A Woman is No Man* (2019), written by Etaf Rum. The author discussed the reflection of liberal feminism in Arab women's life. It deals with how inferior women become superior. For instance, in Arabian countries, men take the upper hand, and women should obey them. Because of this, they are forbidden from receiving education. The protagonist Deya opposes the conventional norms and stands firm in receiving her higher education (Wulandari, 2019). The study of Nahdiyati quoted Friedan's theory in *Miss. Potter* movie. In that study, the researcher analyses that woman combines with the values of masculine and feminine traits. Friedan's values reflected in the study are rational, courageous, patient, and gentleness (Hariharasudan & Gnanamony, 2017). Also, the study discusses that in this condition, women can improve their lifestyle in society.

Louise has used Friedan's liberal feminism ideas in the work *Coming of the age Samoa* by Margret Mead. This study of Louise explores the vestiges of nineteenth-century racism that form a part of Margaret Mead's legacy to western liberal feminist thought even today. This article also shows how several feminist practitioners of social science used science to legitimate their feminism. This study has adopted Friedan's comments in *The Feminine Mystique* that Mead's writings, infused with Sigmund Freud's ideas, "glorified the mysterious miracle of femininity, which a woman realizes simply by being female". Nonetheless, Friedan recognized that Mead has a "profound effect on the women in [her] generation, the one before it, and the generation now growing up." Mead is the central character. According to her, western nations were not the only ones to consider men and women fundamentally different from one another other cultures considered their men and women fundamentally different as well (Chakraborty & Maity, 2020; Horwitz et al., 2005). Indeed, constructions and

manifestations of sexual differences varied so much from culture to culture that it is no longer possible to account for these by appealing to biological notions of innate maleness or femaleness.

Sajjadul Karim's article draws Friedan's liberal feminism ideas in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. The study aims to identify the attributes of liberal feminism in the character of Pecola, with the liberal feminist thinker Friedan's ideas. Pecola fights loneliness, rejection, hatred, and struggling with blackness. Friedan's ideas focus on women's race, class, and gender. The themes identified by the researcher are the quest for identity, freedom, the nature of evil, and the power of the powerless (Karim, 2017; Pandeeswari et al., 2020).

There are ample ideas related to feminism, but only a few ideas focus on liberal feminism. It is evident from the above studies, that none of the research has been done under the concept of liberal feminism in Namita Gokhale's works. This shows that the taken study is unique. This encourages the researcher to take this issue in the study to figure out the freedom of women and their emancipation in Namita Gokhale's works *The Book of Shadows* (2001), *Priya: In Incredible Indyaa* (2011), and *Things to leave Behind* (2016) through the characters of Rachita, Tilottama, and Priya.

## **Method**

The methodology is an important aspect, which gives unique information about the study. It is also included in this study to understand the ideas of liberal feminism reflected in Namita Gokhale's selected works. The notable thinkers of liberal feminism are John Stuart Mill, Mary Wollstonecraft, Rosemarie Tong, and Betty Friedan. Further, the researcher employed Namita Gokhale's notable works such as *The Book of Shadows* (2001), *Priya: In Incredible Indyaa* (2011), and *Things to leave Behind* (2016) to exhibit the liberal feminism in the selected texts.

### **Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique***

Betty Friedan is a famous liberal thinker, whose ideas are utilized by many authors in their studies. Nicholas Lemann says about Friedan's views that "Feminism is diverse and contentious, but, in its current manifestation, it began with the work of a single person: Friedan." Friedan is also one of the key founders of the National Organization for Women (NOW). Friedan has established many ideas about women's empowerment. All her views about women are very encouraging that kindles women to liberate themselves from their oppressed state (Yulianto et al., 2020).

Friedan tells, "The only way for a woman, as for a man, to find herself, to know herself as a person, is by creative work of her own. There is no other way" (Friedan, 1963). She says women have to stand on their own to exhibit their strength. Likewise, Namita Gokhale portrays the character of Priya in the novel *Priya: In Incredible Indyaa*. Priya is a middle-class woman who married a minister. After marriage, her husband tells her to change her way of speech, style of walking, manners of eating, and her wishes. Because her husband feels that she should change her lifestyle from a middle-class woman to match his upper-class

lifestyle. As he is a minister, he thinks that his wife should live according to society's perception of the minister's wife. However, Priya says, "I didn't want to change the course of my life, I want to stand on my power" (Gokhale, 2013), which represents a liberal feminist attribute that reflects she does not want to change her middle-class life. She lives her life as she likes. Similarly, the minor character of this novel Poonam criticizes Priya, for which Priya tells herself, "Why? 'Don't be so pathetic Priya Kaushal, be yourself, don't act that might build you to act for your complete life'" (Gokhale, 2013). This clearly shows that she lives her existence with her aspirations. Furthermore, she never rehabilitated her life for others.

Moreover, Rachita, in the novel *The Book of Shadows*, is an acid victim. After that incident, she is determined not to reveal her amorphous face to the outer world. She then acquired some time to change her life, from that incident. Rachita tells herself that, "I could surely face the world again and stand again with my same face... my eyes still smart only when I am angry and extremely irritated" (Gokhale, 2001). She strengthens herself and starts her life as she likes. She gets rid of all memories of her past. She tells that "I felt disquietingly alive. My repertoire of memory had run out: I had acquired, achieved, possessed myself again" (Gokhale, 2001).

Friedan tells that there are many "women not even went outside from their home except to shop, chauffeur their children, or attend a social engagement with their husbands" (Friedan, 1963). This reflects through the character Tilottama. She is the protagonist of Namita Gokhale's *Things to Leave Behind*. Tilottama's life started to change after her marriage. "Tilottama had little time for the child. She found her boring and suspected her of being dull. 'Enough of babies,' she told herself..." (Gokhale, 2016). She doesn't even care about her life and dreams until the birth of her baby, because she completely involves herself in household works. Gokhale tells that "Life changed for Tilottama too" (Gokhale, 2016). This shows that not only Tilottama, in the novel, suffers but also many women, after their marriage, start to overlook their dreams to take care of their family.

### **Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Right of Women***

Mary Wollstonecraft is a famous thinker of women's autonomy. Wollstonecraft emphasizes that through education women can procure freedom. Wollstonecraft says "if the women are educated and have more opportunities they can achieve in their family life both as a mother and wife" (Wollstonecraft, 1792). Moreover, she tells about the importance of education that "to face the struggle towards the women the society should give the political rights and economic for the women and also education like men get" (Wollstonecraft, 1792). Education is a basic human right, but Tilottama struggles to get even primary education. Even then, she strives hard and fights against her husband in fulfilling her desire of receiving an education. When her mother-in-law forbids Tilottama not to learn English, she comforts herself saying, "Don't look back, Tillie, Look forward, to things yet to come. Never return to what has been left behind" (Gokhale, 2016). This rebellious nature of Tilottama represents Wollstonecraft's idea of liberal feminism in which women fight for their needs, especially in terms of receiving education.

Wollstonecraft appreciates men who support women as their equal counterparts. For instance, Wollstonecraft explicates that “I love man as my fellow; but his scepter, real, or usurped, extends not to me unless the reason of individual demands my homage; and even then the submission is to reason, and not to man” (Wollstonecraft, 1792). This reflects in the novel *Things to Leave Behind*, in which Tilottama’s uncle and Nain Chand, her husband, help Tilottama achieve her goal. Namita Gokhale in *Things to Leave Behind* states that “Nain Chand both feared and respected his wife. Tilottama is unlike anybody he has ever known. There is self-assurance about her, a spontaneous fire, which all her demure posturing could not hide” (Gokhale, 2016). Tilottama also encourages her husband. Tilottama has decided to educate herself. Her uncle teaches Tilottama, imparted rudimentary knowledge of numbers and maths. She hired a tutor, a liberal pundit, to teach her to read and write. He charged fifteen rupees a month and visited her twice a week. The men in Tilottama’s family represent Wollstonecraft’s idea of natured men supporting their women in achieving their dreams.

Wollstonecraft’s famous thought about liberal feminism that, “My dreams were all my own; I dearest pleasure when free” (Wollstonecraft, 1792). Likewise, Rachita, in *The Book of Shadow*, after attacked by acid, wishes to lead her life in isolation. Without the help of others, she fulfills her responsibilities and wishes on her own. Rachita, about her life, states, “a firm hold on anything, even reality, hurts less than a timid halfway encounter. Pain is a pre-condition to life, a prelude to joy. It is a teacher, not a tormentor” (Gokhale, 2013). Rachita not depending on anyone; even her family and friends think that she needs solitude and motivates herself to come out from what has happened to her. Moreover, she doesn’t hesitate to face society but courageously trains herself to face society with her unstructured face. She does not think that her life is over, but she reshapes her life. She became free as Wollstonecraft said “Make them free, and they will quickly become wise and virtuous” (Wollstonecraft, 1792).

Furthermore, Wollstonecraft tells that, “The greater number of people takes their opinion on trust to avoid the trouble of exercising their minds, and it took me quite a long time to develop a voice, and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent” (Wollstonecraft, 1792). Similar to the words of Wollstonecraft, Namita Gokhale’s *Things to Leave Behind*, projects Tilottama’s struggle to achieve her dream to come true in reality, and she tells that “I fight. Fight with all. Till I achieve my goal. Till my dream come true. I fight” (Gokhale, 2016). Tilottama fights with her life to get her dream come true and also for her child. For Tilottama, education is more important in life. When she fights with her family, her relatives were left speechless. At the time, she finds her strength.

Priya does not wait for the opportunity. She does her work as she liked even when her husband dislikes it. Here Wollstonecraft’s theory reflects that she reveals “I do not wish women to have power over men, but over themselves” (Wollstonecraft, 1792). Tilottama, in the novel *Things to Leave Behind*, does not blame others for her unimproved life, but she blames herself and starts improving herself. She finds her inner strength and starts thinking about the ways to achieve her dream (Hariharasudan & Gnanamony, 2017). Even her mother-in-law does not support her, but her husband gives her a hand to achieve her dream. So liberal feminism

theory is not about fighting with the men and their position, but the real meaning of liberal feminism theory is to let the women move on their way.

### **John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869)**

John Stuart Mill is a famous liberal thinker whose ideas reflect women's freedom in society. Many studies utilized the theories of Mill to reveal the women's condition and their life. About the family life of women, Mill states that "women need the freedom to raise their children" (Mill, 1869). Mill's view reflects in Namita Gokhale's *Priya: In Incredible Indyaa* through the life of the protagonist Priya. Priya in her life strives hard to teach and raise her children in a good way. Moreover, she also allows her children to choose their needs as they like because she thinks everyone has their freedom. Even as a mother, she is taking care of her children's decisions. This reflects when she talks with her husband about their son's future. Suresh is the husband of the protagonist Priya. Priya tells her husband, "our sons,' I correct him whenever he starts on this script. Suresh gets confused sometimes about whether he's addressing an audience or just me. 'And our sons are not a statistic, Suresh. Or a vote bank. Or just me'. And as their mother, it's my job to worry about them" (Gokhale, 2013). Moreover, this reflects in Namita Gokhale's *Things to Leave Behind*. The protagonist Tilottama encourages her daughter Deoki and tells her, "I'm here now, daughter,' she said, 'and you don't have to worry about anything anymore" (Gokhale, 2016). She wants to educate herself and also her daughter. Tilottama wants her daughter to be educated at the right time. She is not tired to fight with her life.

John Stuart Mill tells that "There is no means of finding what either one person or many can do, but by trying — and no means by which anyone else can discover for them what it is for their happiness to do or leave undone" (Mill, 1869). Likewise, Tilottama's husband also discovers his wife's interest in education. Her husband tells about his wife's strength that, "Tilottama was not like a woman, somehow-she had a core of brute strength surrounded by an almost endearing naivety" (Gokhale, 2016).

### **Rosemarie Tong Feminist Thought: A Feminist Comprehension (2011)**

Rosemarie Tong is another famous thinker of liberal feminism. Her thoughts are suited for many pieces of research to disclose ideas of liberal feminism. Tong's main idea about liberal feminism is "Liberal feminists wish to free women from oppressive gender roles—that is, from those roles used as excuses or justifications for giving women a lesser place, or no place at all, in the academy, the forum, and the marketplace" (Tong, 2011). This view reflects on the character of Tilottama, who is a vital woman character in Namita Gokhale's *Things to Leave Behind* (2016). After the marriage life of Tilottama, her life has changed. So, she starts to hide her real life because she has no friends in her new atmosphere. However, as her life seems to be empty, she does not wish to continue in a silent atmosphere. So, she decides to learn and communicate in English by encouraging herself that "Never be afraid, and do what you want. Not what you like, but what you want. Always depend on you, never on others" (Gokhale, 2016). However, she is not allowed to go outside her home, and she has only a limited space to achieve her dream. After marriage, she has only lesser freedom, but that is not longer.

Tilottama broke her oppressive life and starts to lead her life as her wish. This life of Tilottama is more suitable to Tong's general purpose of liberal feminism is "to create a society which, is equitable and careful of the freedom for the self-development so that women and men can improve themselves" (Tong, 2011).

This idea of Tong is also suitable for the character of Rachita in the novel *The Books of Shadows*. Rachita violated from her workplace, and also her acid thrown face is not accepted by society. So she decides to lead her life alone, away from her family members and workplace. Despite this, she has a strong will to lead a life on her own, representing Tong's idea of liberal feminism.

The above explanations divulge that the texts of Namita Gokhale abbreviate confirmation to the theories of liberal feminism. Many incidents are exhibited regarding liberal feminism by her in the selected texts, and all the incidents have a link with liberal feminism. Finally, the authors' exploration of liberal feminism in the select texts of Gokhale is highly visible.

## **Discussion**

Liberal feminism theory has been reflected in many studies. Some studies are related to liberal feminism ideas. The studies are compared with the outcomes of the present study for getting a deeper understanding of the current research.

The study of Cici Hafsa Sipahutar abbreviates liberal feminism in *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* (2019) novel written by Khalieqy. In this study, the author affirms liberal feminism through the protagonist Annisa. According to Tong, the notable liberal thinker states liberal feminism is an individualistic form of feminist theory, which focuses on women's ability to maintain their equality through theory own action and choices. This reflects in this study, through the protagonist Annisa. In her family, she faces unfair treatment because her family member does not allow her to ride a horse but her brothers are allowed to ride. Here, Annisa does not have the liberty to ride a horse and her mother insists that she is a girl and she only has to perform household activities (Sipahutar, 2018). Likewise, in Namita Gokhale's *Things to Leave Behind*, the protagonist Tilottama wants to learn the English language and maths but her mother-in-law does not allow her to study. Her mother-in-law insists Tilottama that to do all the household activities and it is the only duty for Tilottama told by her mother-in-law (Gokhale, 2016).

The study of Sajjadul Karim encounters liberal feminism in *The Bluest Eye* written by Toni Morrison. The protagonist Pecola is victimized because she looks ugly. So she is faced with the problem not only by society but also from the workplace. Morrison mentions several issues of the black women's liberation movement, concentrating her overall theme of white society affecting the black experience negatively. This study focuses on Mill's idea about liberal feminism that, society holds the false belief, that women are less physically and intellectually capable than men (Karim, 2020). Similarly, in the life of Rachita, she is not ready to face the world with her acid-attacked face. She is suppressed by her family and also by society like *The Bluest Eye*'s Pecola. Towards the end of the novel, the

protagonist Rachita emancipates from her depressed state and reveals to the world that she is strong physically and psychologically (Gokhale, 2001).

The aspects of Liberal feminism reflect not only in the works of fiction but also portrayed in movies incorporating liberal feminism (Mohan, 2014). The study of Aenun Nahdiyati explores liberal feminism ideas in the movie “Miss. Potter”. The main character Miss. Potter wants to marry as her wish but her mother doesn’t allow her daughter to choose her life partner. Her mother tried to untie her daughter from patriarchal culture. But she started to react against her mother and proves that she can lead a life on her own. Here the researcher shows the reflection of liberal feminism (Nahdiyati, 2009). Likewise, in Namita Gokhale’s *Priya: In Incredible Indyaa*, the protagonist Priya wants to lead her life as her wish. She also likes to marry as her wish but traditional values make her marry as her family wish. After her marriage, she is struggling between her life and her family. But in the end, she emancipates herself and starts to live as her wish (Gokhale, 2013).

Andrew Foley’s research also explores liberal feminism in the movie “Praxis” through the life of Protagonist Praxis. She is subjugated by her children and husband. She fights with her family to attain her goal because she thinks that family is different from her dreams (Foley, 2007). Similarly, in the novel, the family members of Tilottamma oppose her dream but in the end, she liberates herself in attaining her desires. In this way, she represents Praxis character in the movie discussed by Foley (Gokhale, 2016).

The liberal feminism theory has been elucidated by many researchers, and the application of liberal feminism differs from one study to another. By analyzing the various studies by various authors, to conclude, the liberal feminism ideas by notable liberal thinkers reflect in women characters of Namita Gokhale’s selected works *The Book of Shadows* (2001), *Priya: In Incredible Indyaa* (2011), and *Things to leave Behind* (2016).

## Conclusion

This study focuses on the ideologies of liberal feminism in Namita Gokhale’s works *The Book of Shadows* (2001), *Priya: In Incredible Indyaa* (2011), and *Things to leave Behind* (2016). To analyze the dogma of liberal feminism, this study has taken the notable thinkers of liberal feminism; they are Betty Friedan, Rosemarie Tong, John Stuart Mill, and Mary Wollstonecraft. Finally, the methodology of this study gives the results that reflection of liberal feminism can be found in Namita Gokhale’s selected texts. The limitation of the study gives ideas for future researchers. While studying, the researchers have found some ideas of liberal feminism that support men. It gives future researchers, the scope to employ this idea in their research. Also, future studies can be carried out on the ideas of alienation, psychoanalysis, feminism, social identity, and so on.

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