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Book Review: Vagina: A New Biography

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**Vagina: A New Biography, 2012, Naomi Wolf, Virgo, London, 400 pages, Paperback
(Rs.550)**

Reviewed by Harasankar Adhikari¹

Women's happiness determines a happy family, which is part of what ensures a particularly peaceful family life. This includes the procreation of future links and their nourishment towards a prosperous and progressive world because women are combination of nature and energy. Naomi Wolf in her book, **Vagina: A New Biography** has elucidated the ooze of sexual health and sexual life of women with evidence of neurobiological studies. It is a most recent testament to all professional dealings with women's sexual health and gender studies. In the introduction part of this book she has been given a lucid notion about vagina (Goddess Array) from the religious and cultural points of view.

In part-I of this book she describes the vaginal nerve network, vaginal orgasm and emotions of happiness and unhappiness in relation to sexual feeling and satisfaction. The various parts of vagina and neural pathways which connects for electrical impulses have been neurologically discussed with some evidence. The vaginal nerve network is unique for every female and for this reason the vagina is considered as a brain. Secondly the sexual satisfaction is different to all of the women. But the male nerve network with penis is in singular form. Wolf justifies that women's confidence, creativity and sense of interconnectedness depend on their sexual satisfaction and it is controlled by the secretion of dopamine and oxytocin hormones. The transmission of dopamine in the brain is stimuli which, influences the sexual urge of a woman. Thereafter some fatty foods, exercises and taking alcohol accelerated the secretion of dopamine. Further the experiments have been stated that affiliation/attachment to a particular man or a women influences the secretion of the particular hormone in female brain. That's why in romance/romantic relation there is no function of emotion. It is an action/reaction of dopamine.

Part-II of this book deals with the vagina- brain connection and an obvious connotation of vaginal injury has been stated as brain injury. In case of rape Wolf has elucidated with evidence-based studies how vaginal injury is done desperately to imprint the female brain and mind. Neurobiologically the magnitude of suffering from vulvodynia- burning sensation in vagina has been discussed as an impact of poor sexual health among victim women. The changing notions of the vagina has been noted as the liberalization of particular organ in many forms where the women sexual health is the prime factor of satisfaction.

The Third part of this book denotes the vaginal response in various situations and points out that sexual violence against women aims to create 'bad stress'. The stress brings some forms of sexual difficulties. Thus sexual insults hamper the creativity in every sphere in their daily life. The bad stress is the cause of suffering from emotional and intellectual sensitivity in long run. This part also deals with the history of thought about the vagina in manifold ways. Pornography is a politic and the watching porn causes sexual dysfunction among males and females.

Part-IV elucidates the vagina and vulva in terms of the mechanics of orgasm. The discussion turns towards feminism in a positive manner because it has broken the heterosexual

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association of female sexual awakening with dependency on a man. Antifeminists argue that women's sexual fulfillment without man is unnatural. The sexual orgasm has been explained as vaginal opening variously in terms of both western and eastern culture (Tantra & Tao). The rejuvenation of sexual health is based on some therapies according to the people's own culture. In concluding part of this book the author reminds us that female energy, creativity and connectivity depend on female sexuality. The proper nourishment and care as well as protection of vagina would be the hidden secret of sustaining humanity. A large section of female population at their menopausal stage is in mental depression because they feel their sexual life has ended. The book gives many suggestions for rejuvenate their sexual life.

Lastly the book is authentic because discussion and explanation have been done through the use of several neurobiological and psychological studies and it has been synchronized through scientific and factual data and case experiments. But the author has not discussed whether there is any relation of the female dress code in their sexual arousal or satisfaction. It might be helpful to clarify the causes of the rape/sexual violence against women in present context in India where a part of male population argues it is due to the provocative female dress code.