

SCOPE OF FEMALE CHARACTER OF SHOBHA DE NOVELS - A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Shobha De is one of the most famous Indian women writers in English. Her fiction always tries to reveal the character of women. She is a great supporter of open-ended narration of incidents and episodes. She has portrayed the women characters of variety imaginatively in her novels, trying to find their existence, meaning of life, their identity and their unfulfilled love and emotional self. The important point to be acknowledged about her novels is that her novels particularly *Socialite Evenings* and *Starry Nights* are full of women characters. The novels seem dominated by female characters having full of crowd. After analyzing her novels, it is indicated that her main concern is on female characters as protagonists. Less is mentioned about secondary female characters. She has depicted the women in pairs and their concerns on their individual happiness and selfhood pleasures. Her novels are based on women psychology revealing the accepted norm that women are jealous and enemy of other women.

Key words: Feminist, Perception, New Woman, Fulfillment, Fidelity

INTRODUCTION

Shobha De being a prominent post-colonial woman novelist writing in English, she has inched a special identity for herself in the galaxy of Indian English literature. Shobha De novels is one who has created absolutely different patterns of female characters. Their female protagonists are fighting hard for their rights in a patriarchal society. Their women protagonists at times are struck between tradition and modernity they often reflect the changing paradigms of the society. Tradition has a very strong hold over the Indian society and even a stronger hold over its women folk. Traditional rules and norms bind the Indian women in nearly every quarter. Woman is the preserver of the family and so she makes all kind of sacrifices for the welfare of the family. However the narrow outlook of patriarchy towards women has greatly changed

with the passage of time. Education played an important role in bringing Indian women into the mainstream of development.

Sobha De's novels portray the suffering of women from predestined fate that of being a daughter, a sister, a wife, a daughter in law and even mother, it is pity to be living among one's own people on one's own land; therefore problems in their life arise out of sense of oneness and being self-possessive. Although, both women writers do not disown their traditional roles and life, they are found being disowned by their own people and own society. The issues of disowning and always being at the receiving end as far as the plight of disowning are concerned, they portray through their women characters. The women protagonists of Shobha De do not depend on men and emerge them with a new identity coupled with matured thought process. They do not hesitate to knock at the doors of modernity, and are willing to emerge themselves as New Women who seek unhesitatingly a new world of theirs, for their own self and identity.

Shobha De's novels female characterize the new Indian woman's voice. 'New woman' needs to investigate self-identity, looks for freedom in all periods of her life reinstates the regular portrayal of Indian women. The requirement for women to look for their individuality is the message in her novels. Indian women were dominated since ages. They were under the influence of man. Various viewpoints were responsible for women concealment; they can be categorized as cultural edifying, traditional, etc. In Indian patriarchal society, Indian women have consistently been educated since her initial days that they need to follow her mate and family. Her folks offered her no choice to think about her own individuality. In Indian culture, the introduction of a young lady youngster is never gets a welcoming reaction nor from the guardians nor from the society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Raj Kumar Tharu [2023] This study examines the degree to which Shobha De infuses feminist consciousness into her female characters. Furthermore, it enhances understanding of urban Indian women's psychology, which demands equal rights for women in finding a meaningful place for themselves. In her novels, Shobha De explores the relationship between Indian women and their male counterparts. She has a wonderful gift for engagingly discussing delicate topics related to human relationships. The theme of her writings is standing up for women's rights and raising awareness of women's oppression. In Shobha De's novels, the female protagonists are charming, poised, and self-assured. She explores the feminine mind and diverse heterosexual, homosexual, and sexual practices in her works. The research

project in this study, which is based on a qualitative research approach, uses both primary and secondary data.

Dr. Ravindra Kumar Singh [2023] Shobha De is a wonderful writer because of her extraordinary ability to communicate about extremely delicate aspects of the human condition. She has a unique ability to convey the complexities of interpersonal interactions, particularly those between men and women. Some in India with more conservative views have spoken out against her openness on the subject of sexuality. People are aware of some of her many qualities, but on the whole, they have no idea that she is a complex, multifaceted individual who can deftly juggle a wide range of skills. Traditional readers' opinions on the subject matter of her literature are the last thing you should consider, in my view, so don't bother listening to them. It's likely due to her rising widespread renown as a writer of imaginative prose. Most of her fans like her for two reasons: the content she covers and the unique way she presents it.

Dr. Bhavana Arora [2022] The term 'New Woman' evolved to signify the woman's Awakening towards realization of her place and position in family and social milieu. Moved by an inescapable inner compulsion to be individual in her own right, this new Woman has been trying to advocate woman's right, status and power at par with men on the grounds of 'equality of sexes.' In Indian English fiction, women novelists have powerfully voiced their protest against the patriarchal hegemony. Shobha De, a luminary in the realm of modern English literature in India writes from a definite feminine perspective. She is the best seller novelist and a freelance writer for several newspapers and magazines. As a writer she is adorned with extraordinary ability to discuss sensitive aspects of human life. Shobha De has enlightened and enriched the galaxy of Indian English fictional world with her great works. Her mélange of themes, variety of characters, startlingly captivating thoughts, all are forcefully and colourfully expressed in a racy style.

Manisha B. Suryawanshi [2021] Shobha De is a famous novelist. Her novels deal with female protagonists, their search for identity and their sufferings. The women characters are rich, educated, and confident still they suffer due to patriarchal customs and traditions. They go through hardships, heartbreaks, treachery, their husbands being unfaithful, cold and other men being the same yet in the end the entire female characters rise like a phoenix. But in end they rise like a phoenix. Shobha De writes about women from elite class. She talks frankly about the desires of her female characters.

Analysis of New Woman in Shobha De's Novels

Socialite Evenings, is perhaps the first novel of Shobha De, is about the expedition of a well-known Bombay socialite Karuna, from a clumsy middle class girl to a self-reliant woman. Karuna is born in a filthy clinic in Satara, a remote village in Maharashtra and does not remember much of her childhood except for the strict caution of her father. Her mother, who was preoccupied with domestic chores, does not devote much time to “know” her daughter. Karuna’s life starts only when they travel to Bombay because of her father’s transfer. She meets Anjali, a prominent socialite and the wife of a well-off playboy. Karuna’s world changes and she starts tracing a career in films and holidays abroad. When she gets married to Bunty, a rich business man, the family acknowledges him because of his community status. But Karuna soon discovers that he is a perfect “husband material”. She gets jaded. Shobha De’s excellent and sophisticated women of the upper class family gets fascinated by the social institution of the marriage and family for the sake of money and admiration as seen in “Socialite Evenings”.

Modernism And Shobha De’s Novels

Shobha De’s novels have a unique identity that the title of the novels start with ‘S’, and she uses the city Bombay as one of the characters in her novels, further she introduces a new variety of language called ‘Hinglish’ in her novels. Peter Barry in his book Beginning Theory opines that, “Modernism rejects the distinction between ‘high’ and ‘popular’ art which was important in modernism, and believes in excess, in gaudiness, and in ‘bad taste’ mixtures of qualities. She has adopted a kind of writing that has always been referred as pornographic and that is the new variety introduced in the postmodern era. Shobha De’s novels depict the life of urban women in India. Her choice of subject is always the life of women who is related to media, cinema or ad agency. It is very interesting to know about the women who belong to one of these fields.

Shobha de ’novels and feminism

There is no need to introduce the experienced and popular Indian novelist Shobha De; novels she is India's best-selling author and needs no introduction. A 1948 Maharashtra native, she was well versed in both Delhi and Bombay. She procured her certificate from St. Xavier's. She acquired her certificate in psych. Starting in 1970, she worked as a journalist for publications like Sunday and Megacity, and as a Consultant Editor for Stardust and Society. Even now, in her sixties, Shobha de is looked up to as a fashion icon. As an independent essayist and journalist for a few significant distributions, she became well-known and well-respected in her field. Shobha de is renowned for her daring screenplays.

Some Peeps Into The Novels Of Shobha De

Anjali in Shobha De's 'Socialite Evenings' marries Abe only because he is rich and none of them bothers if the other one is having affair or physical relation with anyone else. Karuna, the lead character of 'Socialite Evenings' leaves her husband only because she has got bored with her married life and doesn't hesitate to have sex with her husband's friend. Mikki, in 'Sisters', breaks her engagement off with Navin when she doesn't find it fruitful. In 'Starry Nights', De describes Indian film Industry 'Bollywood', where the sole aim of everyone is to make money. Asha Rani, the lead character, also chooses the easier way of nudity to get stardom and money. Economic independence of women has given rise to divorce as well.

Identity Of Women In Shobha De's Novels

Shobha De's books describe the new Indian women's voice. „New woman“ needs to investigate self-character, looks for opportunity in all periods of her life re-establishes the traditional portrayal of Indian women. The requirement for women to look for their distinction is the message in her books. Indian women were ruled since ages. They were affected by man. Distinctive viewpoints were responsible for women concealment; they can be arranged as societal enlightening, traditional, etc. In Indian man centric culture, Indian women have dependably been instructed since her initial days that they need to pursue her life partner and family.

METHODOLOGY

Examining feminist awareness in seven novels of Shobha De Socialite Evenings, Starry Nights, Sisters, Strong Obsession, Sultry Days, Snapshots and Second Thoughts is the main objective of this research work. Both primary and secondary data have been employed in this study project, which is based on a qualitative research methodology. The aforementioned Shobha De fictions will serve as the primary sources, while the secondary sources will heavily be drawn from other authors' analytical, interpretive, and critical writings. Because of this, the research's analytical and interpretive approach will be crucial. Concepts like "feminist consciousness," "feminist," "female psychology," and "patriarchy" will be examined with the use of reference materials that are accessible in libraries and online. Following the analysis, the researcher will look into the literature on Shobha De's novels while considering their applicability to their research and the writings of knowledgeable scholars. I'll examine or investigate some scholarly English- language journals from India and other countries. Shobha De's fiction will be examined as part of the study. Additionally, information from both primary and secondary sources will be obtained and examined. I'll use online content from sources like blogs and websites.

RESULTS

Shobha De novels is a fearless feminist novelist who promotes the sexual freedom of women as a fundamental human right because she depicts her female characters as revolting against and challenging patriarchal perceptions and treatments of sexual relationships, which are, in general, the foundation of the man-woman relationship in the family and society. When viewed from the scientific perspective of the biological aspect, physical relationships can be viewed as necessary human attachments between a man and a woman. However, a failure to appropriately assimilate this necessity can lead to a number of difficulties in the man-woman relationship. Through her fiction, Shobha De advocates sexual freedom as an indication of women's advocacy for gender equality that men and women have the same level of sexual freedom in all aspects of life. This is why she creates female characters who are as strong as men and who have affairs with multiple men simultaneously or at various times. Males in Indian society have long been socially acceptable for having multiple wives and extramarital affairs, whereas the situation for women is quite different on the same issue. In her fictional works, which exemplify the "new woman" (Bhavani 3) of contemporary upper and middle-upper classes, Shobha De, as a woman, rebels against such sexual discrimination. The evolution of women and their temperament has consequently altered their relationships with men such as their husbands, fathers, and sons. Females have sought their new space and function in the family and society as male chauvinism progressively recedes. The gradual elimination of sexual discrimination will inevitably define a new relationship between men and women. In De's fiction, women are no longer the instruments of men; in some instances, they are even stronger and more powerful than their male counterparts. Her female characters, in an effort to break the traditional concept of sex, violate established sexual societal norms; however, as Divya C. argues, "De never justifies her protagonist's violation of moral codes, but instead emphasises women's emotional need to be loved and cared for.

The man-woman relations in Shobha De's novels work appear to have become problematic when one gender attempts to subjugate the other in any way possible, and this treatment of gender discrimination is most likely to elicit several causes of the revolt, which the women characters in *Second Thoughts*, for instance, are depicted as having assimilated. Shobha De's depiction of humanity relies significantly on the treatment of one sex over the other, taking into account the reactions to those treatments. Due to their vested interests, almost all of the main characters in *Sisters* have established illicit physical relationships, causing family tensions.

Maya's marriage to Ranjan is deceptive because he is incapable of satisfying her desires for affection, caring, and sex. In *Socialite Evenings*, Karuna's quest for self forces her to spend time with multiple male counterparts, preventing her from having a happy married life. Linda and Asha Rani's homosexual relationship. The novel *Starry Nights* by De indicates "a revolt against the patriarchal, traditional setup of our society". This opposes the heterosexual relationship between a male and a woman. In *Sultry Days*, in contrast to her other novels, Shobha De focuses more on masculine characters. Nisha is a strong, career-focused female character, but the novel also deals genuinely with the male characters who are the focus of the plot. But Sujata, who in the same novel defines life in her own way, defying even her spouse, is a prostitute with numerous relationships with men. The plot of *Strange Obsession* revolves around the lesbian relationship between. In Shobha De's upcoming novel *Snapshots*, women are bored with their relationship with their spouses. The novel reveals that they are preoccupied with sensual pleasures and challenge the patriarchal system by seeking relationships outside of marriage

CONCLUSION

Thus shobha De's women characters search for independence makes them fiercely career-oriented unlike the traditional women who always rely on men for all kinds of moral and economic support. Almost every female character in shobha De's novels desire for power of controlling money-matters enjoys power of controlling money- matters and battle to control power of money-matters. Shobha De's images of the new woman resemble the ones depicted in the day to-day wall-posters in public streets. De's women work to make themselves economically independent. They are usually well established women with high profile careers.

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