

RESEARCH ARTICLE



ISSN

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2636 (Print); 2321-3108 (online)

FEMINISTIC PERSUASION IN SHOBHA DE'S NOVELS

C. RAJESWARI¹, Dr. N. GEJESWARI²

¹Guest Lecturer, Department of English. Bharathidasan University College for Women. Orathanadu, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu. India.

²Assistant Professor, Department of English. Bharathidasan University College for Women. Orathanadu, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu. India.



C. RAJESWARI



Dr. N. GEJESWARI

ABSTRACT

English education was introduced to India in the nineteenth century, serving as an ideological force behind social reform and control. Women were the chief upholders of a rich oral tradition of story telling, through myths, legends, songs and fables. English having no place in those women's daily lives. Another problem is writing in English not at first a common form, because the majority of women had less access to education than men. The women authors are mostly western educated, middle-class women who express in their writing their discontent with the plight of upper-caste and class traditional Hindu women trapped in repressive institutions such as child marriage, dowry, prohibitions on women's education, arranged marriages, suttee and enforced widowhood. In order to unfold how contemporary women novelists voice themselves for women, the novels of Shobha De, and Indian woman novelist in English has been analysed.

Key words: Feminism–Self-identity, Women Emancipation.

"The situation of woman is that she is a free and autonomous being like all creatures, nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the other."

-Simone de Beauvoir

In India the revolutionary zeal of women was an indispensable part of our culture. Our puranas present a whole constellation of women like Sita, Savitri, Draupadi and Anasuya who had waged wars and still emerged successfully.

Shobha De, the all-time favourite of the booksellers, and the curious readers. She has been granted a receipt of utmost love from the afficianados of Indian Literature in English. She has won commendable place in the heart of readers. She is quite bold as regards her controversial views. She stands apart from her counterparts of India through her unique way of presentation. Shobha De is

basically a feminist who has portrayed the true picture of women's inner-self-their, lust, sensation, sex pleasure etc. Women in her novels are represented as sexually liberated and free thinkers who have been termed as 'New Woman.'

"The New Woman is a blend of physical freedom sexuality and stamina with feminist self assertiveness and traditional domestic femininity a woman who can combine pleasure, career and marriage. They are eager to participate in pleasure as they would do in play, work etc"

Shobha De wrote her first book in 1989 about rich housewives, bored with their loveless marriages. She used to subtleness in the women depicted in Indian novels. Her first novel Socialite Evenings. It tells the story of Karuna, a prominent Bombay Socialite to escape the nightmare of a broken marriage, failed relationship and a mentally disturbed woman.

The character Anjali, De's brand of feminism when she says: "Men feel terribly threatened by self-sufficient women. They prefer girls like me - dependent dolls - you should try it - see how much more you can get out of him that way." In De's 1997 self help book for Indian women. *Surviving Men: The smart woman's Guide to staying on Top*, she gives similar advice. She tells her readers to "thrive on stealth and secrecy" in a marriage; in order to "train a man to any level of competence." She suggests women use "a) food b) sex c) food and sex." The idea that De's books are liberating for women makes most Indian feminists see red.

Many educated women echo Dewan's disavowal of De Roshan shehani who used to teach college - level popular culture courses says, De only writes about the petty concerns of the elite. There is this notion that Shobha is breaking barriers for women, but we try to counter that, because what she does is so limited." Shobha De is often compared to Jackie Collins, but she's more like Madonna a master at reinventing herself as a brand, and constantly using her sex appeal, money and connections as Marketing jods.

Starry Nights tells about, Aasha Rani, the ravishingly beautiful sweetheart of Million, makes one fatal career-move. The story also says about high stakes, drive by ambition, lust, greed and hate. In *sultry days*, rainy Bombay day Nisha, an impressionable teenager meets God in the college canteen and falls in love with his ragged, bearded looks and crude, streetwise manner. It is in this way that their long and passionate romance De's style is her own. It means her style is direct and forceful. She calls a spade a spade. She has her own knack of depicting people, events and places.

Her another popular novel *Second Thoughts* was published in 1996. It deals the bitter sweet love story for the Nineties, a young middle-class Bengali girl Maya who marries a Bombay based foreign returned Bengal boy. But the peculiar thing is that the young bride is more fascinated and in love with Bombay than at the prospect of having married Ranjan. Maya learns to survive the sultriness of not only Bombay but also her marriage. Her novels offers a slice of urban tales. *Second*

Thoughts it seems that for the first time she correlates past and present in to one whole.

In De's *Starry nights*, Aasha Rani is inducted into the glittering Bombay film world by her own mother. Aasha Rani's mother (Amma) is a strange character who in her hunger for fame and wealth goes all out to sell her daughter's chastity. She takes Aasha Rani from one film producer to another wearing indecent dresses to draw on their weakness and have them sign her daughter in their films looking only at her physical assets rather than her acting talent. Aasha Rani undoubtedly succeeds and flourishes in the film industry using her body as a bait for catching big producers and directors' attention. As she confesses to film financier Kishenbhai: You financed and produced my first film Kishenbhai, but you extracted payment from my body."

Apart from her writing novels, is more interested in writing non-fiction in the forms of autobiography, memories and essays related to love and life. However, Shobha De's stories are real stories, still happening in life. Human relations based on gender distinctions, masculine domination, women's predicament relating to tradition and modernity are all important issue.

Shobha De's women characters in in most of her novels like "*Socialite Evenings*", "*Starry Nights*", "*Sisters*", "*Sultry Days*", "*Second Thoughts*", are represent the picture of a new women. The Modern Indian woman who is at the centre of fiction of Shobha De. She is no longer a model of vedic or pre-vedic woman. She is model on the Past-Aryan woman who is portrayed passive in nature and accepts the dominance of men in society.

Shobha De believes in a very frank narration of incidents and openheartedness. Nothing is reserved in her fiction. It is in this respect she differs considerably from other Indian Women Novelists in English. Since the researcher seeks to explore and explicate the over all images of women appeared in her novels, it is a fascinating study from the Indian point of view.

Shobha De as a vamp author because she tries hard to delineate the factual sex. Which so many women novelists have denied to present it in original form. Her women characters fight against

the male macho maintaining individual dignity thought at times they have become slaves to womanly desires.

She portrays a variety of women from the traditional, Subjugated and Marginalized to the extremely modern and liberated women. The novels of Shobha De serve to attack the orthodox conservative and hypocritical persons. The women characters are of the age group between the adolescent the middle-aged. The main aim of the characters is to build "Human Relationships". The crisis and tensions in her novels make the characters more lively and earthly.

De's women are sexually liberated and free thinking women. They can easily combine pleasure, career and marriage. Therefore, they seem to be perfect, bright and fearless companion to the modern young men. Further more the readers of Shobha De's fiction seem to be the people who have curiosity to know the life and behaviour of the modern rich people.

Particular women in social life circles. De is more interested in the predicament of women. She presents the vital reality and makes one aware of their counterparts in the patriarchal society. However, it is an important fact that though De's novels are crowded with female characters, the analysis of the novels reveals her focus is only on the women protagonists and the other secondary characters are simply mentioned. So, the images of women that appear in her fiction are often related to the showbiz people. In order to satisfy the taste of her readers who appear to live in a world of romance, Shobha De presents romantic and Feministic persuasion images of women in her fiction. These highly ultra - modern women lead luxurious and glamorous life. They are economically independent and free from social and moral restrictions.

De's women in novels that followed – show a continuation of similar behavioural traits of the new woman. They are all darling women and have lots of stamina to face the stress and strain of the high society they live in. They are not afraid of facing every brick thrown in their way in their endeavour to lead lives on their own terms. Power, money and fame are the three biggest aspirations of the new

women. They are ready to take up every challenge which lies before them to get what they want. Nothing matters to them as long as they can enjoy life. They refuse to look on man as their superior. They are darling lionesses on the prowl, out to attack everything that comes to hinder them from catching their prey. This is the new Feministic Persuasion of the modern woman which De daringly brings out in all her novels.

The image of the new woman now emerges much clearer than before. This woman belongs to the class of the independent women who have no consideration for the social bindings and who consider marriage just a relationship for one's convenience. She is determined to make it clear that she does not want to be confined to one particular place, the home, like the traditional Indian women nor is she even like those modern women who are educated, have ideas of independence but could go no farther than merely contemplating their new ideas. Karuna's character is a trendsetter for the rest of the women who want to live life the new way. De presents realistic, factual details about the acquire a new life for themselves. Throughout the novel De directly and satirically attacks the men of the Indian society for their derogatory attitude toward and the uncivil treatment of their women folk.

De has given a full throated message in her novels that no man should underestimate women and that the new woman is here to stay and men beware of the new reality. It can therefore be said Shobha De's women are realistic to the core. She has successfully drawn the image of the New woman who resides in the aristocratic world of Indian high society. This image is not of the weak and submissive woman fearing her domination by her husband. This new woman is dynamic, strong and highly confident. She no longer lives at the mercy of the family and society. She in fact represents a newly emerging class of women who are sure of their minds and body, and who can comfortably demand their pound of flesh from their partners and the society on their own terms.

References

Primary Source

Shobha De. *Socialite Evenings*. New Delhi: Penguin Books. 1989.

Shobha De. *Sisters*. New Delhi: Penguin Books. 2013.

Shobha De. *Second Thoughts*. New Delhi: Penguin Books. 2013.

Secondary Sources

Alphonse, Karkala. "Indo-English Literature in the Nineteenth Century", London: 1970.

Das, S.K. *Life and Letters of Toru Dutt*. London, 1921.

Dhawan, R.K. *Indian Women Writers*. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 2001.

Gupta, G.S. Balarama. *Indian Writing in English*, Hyderabad: Jiwe Publications, 1975.

Iyengar, K.R. Srinivasa. *Indian Writing in English*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1973.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. New Delhi: Penguin Books. 1983.