

MEN AS VICTIMS OF MATRIMONIAL INFIDELITY IN NOVELS OF SHOBHA DE

Mr. Manbir Singh

PhD Student, Dept. of English, Faculty of Media and Humanities, Manav Rachna
International Institute of Research and Studies, Faridabad, Haryana (India)
Email ID: manbirsingh8333@gmail.com

Dr. Shivani Vashist

Professor and HOD, Dept. of English, Faculty of Media and Humanities, Manav Rachna
International Institute of Research and Studies, Faridabad, Haryana (India)
Email ID: shivani.fmech@mriu.edu.in

Abstract

Shobha De is the author of a best-selling trilogy of books that began with her novel, *Socialite Evenings* (1988), and continued with *Starry Nights* (1990) and *Second Thoughts* (1997). Shobha De lives in New York City with her husband and two children (2001). Shobha De and her family now reside in New York City (1996). Shobha De is an inhabitant of the Indian city of Mumbai (1996). Beyond these best-selling novels, De has served as editor of other renowned journals, including *Stardust* magazine and *Society* magazine as well as the *Celebrity* magazine. Her writings mirrored the militant phase of feminism in Indian English literature at the time of their publication, which occurred at the time of their publication in the 1950s and 1960s. "A pioneer" in her field as a writer of "popular fiction," having written more than 100 volumes in her writing career as a writer of "popular fiction." She considers herself to be "a pioneer" in her field. Her second claim to fame is that she claims to have been "one of the first Indian women to analyse and write about the life of the metropolis woman," which she describes as "one of the first Indian women to examine and write about the life of the metropolis lady." It's evident that Shobha De is a fantastic writer, and her work has some very novel concepts as well as some absolutely stunning strokes of illustration. In her works, the female characters have endeavoured to establish a masculine worldview via the medium of her books, and she has been successful in this endeavour. The typical view of woman in our society is that she is a lesser entity who has always been under the care and control of males, as shown in myths and legends.

Keywords: *Socialite Evenings*, metropolis, myths, popular fiction, female characters

1. Introduction

Shobha De is one of those Indian English authors who has carved out a separate niche for herself in the literary world of India, both as a journalist and as a novelist. Women's psychology, marriage infidelity, social and sexual relationships and delicate parts of human existence are all depicted with a touch of open-heartedness in her novels, which has made her a famous author.

She demonstrates this as a result of her schooling and due to the effect of western culture on Indian culture, customs, and interpersonal relationships. De personifies the predicament that so many Indian women authors have found themselves in throughout her works. She has always been one of those modern-day female writers who are now expressing themselves openly and fearlessly, so generating a new picture of the male as victim figure in the process of writing. De makes an effort to show the new woman who is fearless, ambitious, and aspirational, who obsesses over her aspirations and forces them onto the male-dominated society to acquire a proper acknowledgment of her identity and achieve success.

In many ways, De's approach to men as victim of marriage infidelity shows pain and ambitions is similar to that of Simone de Beauvoir, a French feminist who concentrated on the struggle that exists in the female mind over her role and status in modern society: Female empowerment is well underway among contemporary women, who are starting to assert their independence in natural ways. However, they are still far from achieving the fullness of human existence as a result of their efforts. Because women in a feminine environment raised them, their natural destiny is marriage, which entails a strong sense of subjugation to men, as male status plays a vital role in economic and social activities. Her works have elevated the stature of the modern woman, who defies the centuries-old tradition of submissiveness by her actions.

She is blunt and direct when discussing sex, men, and sexuality. Her female characters use their physical prowess to compete with their male counterparts in every sphere of endeavor where the latter have enjoyed uncontested superiority and dominance for millennia. Women have been portrayed differently across art forms. Compared to Shobha De's works, it becomes clear that Shobha De is attempting to expose women's misunderstanding of their freedom and mocking women's way of asserting their individuality by posing as men rather than concentrating on female empowerment as a whole. While both men and women have criticized several of her books for depicting female sexuality outside of marriage in an open manner, her writings never support such immorality as the new standard of behavior.

Furthermore, she asserts that if women ignore immorality, whether situational or ambitious, they are doomed to failure and subsequent misery. So-called contemporary women who engage in free sex and live fashion behavior are shown to be unworthy of respect and disdain by the author, who expresses her disgust and hate for their unethical and socially inappropriate behaviour. She discusses the issue in family and society that has emerged from the liberation of women with erroneous beliefs. In this paper the themes of men as a victim of marriage infidelity, marriage, patriarchy, and the quest for identity, as well as the struggle for survival and marginalization, as they appear in her novels *Socialite Evenings* (1989) and *Second Thoughts* (1996), to trace the emergence of the 'new woman' and investigate the factors responsible for the transformation in the psyche of an Indian woman to become a New woman by redefining her identity and carving out a niche in her life

2. Objective of the study

- This paper aims to investigate, identify, debate, and interpret marriage themes in selected novels by Shobha de and situate them within the context of Indian marriage as a whole.
- Identifying and analyzing the topic of marital infidelity as it pertains to thematic components of the chosen narratives

3. Research Methodology

An exploratory and descriptive research strategy will be adopted in this study to fulfill the research objectives. The primary goals of this study, as the title suggests, are to identify, investigate, analyze and interpret men's marriage and matrimonial: a critical analysis of selected novels of Shobha De. Hence, the data collection for this research would be done primarily and secondarily from the sources.

4. In the narrative, there is thematic analysis

At Socialite Evenings, the Image of a Woman is changing. Men in Socialite Evenings have several characteristics in common with their counterparts in other books, and these characteristics are discussed here. In the first place, they are motivated by a strong need for extreme sex. They are frequently successful because women in the book rely on males for their sexual fulfilment, even when they are financially independent of their male partners:

De's depiction of the woman's sexual reliance reflects a more practical style of male domination than the one shown in the novel. The heroines start as sexual libertines, which is a good thing. Nonetheless, they are all victims of the "I-cannot-live-without-a-male" mentality. When Anjali falls in love with the gay Kumar, she gives up her job, her freedom, and even her spouse. Gul, Ritu's evil stepfather, goes so far as to humiliate her in front of others. In Socialite Evenings, the heroines are drawn to the masculinity of the male lead because of his appearance.

The story is a study of the power dynamic between men and women. Its author has converted this source material into a story in which Man can imagine himself without the presence of a woman. She is unable to imagine herself without the presence of a guy. Moreover, she is just what man declares... she appears to the male primarily as a sexual person in her basic appearance. For him, she is sex - and no less than real sex at that. Rather than being defined and distinguished about man, a woman is defined and differentiated in relation to herself; she is the incidental, the inessential, and the essential.

In Socialite Evenings, there are some nice guys among the cast of characters. They are, nevertheless, indifferent to the sentiments of their partners, as a consequence of which they are unable to satisfy or make their wives happy in any way. Karuna's nameless husband, as well as the spouses of her friends, are all faithful to the following statement:

To a greater or lesser extent, this pattern was repeated by all of the spouses of acquaintances.

They were not wicked individuals, but what they did to our lives went well beyond the realm of evil. We were relegated to the status of second-class citizens. Everything that was important to us was reduced to insignificance. This was the message: 'You don't really matter, except in the context of my other priorities.' It was assumed that our needs came second to theirs in terms of importance. And therefore, in some ways, we should be thankful for the fact that we have a roof over our heads and four square meals every day. During one of their regular confrontations, a friend angrily recounted how her husband would mock her with the question, 'What did you marry me for?' "All you were searching for was a way to feed yourself." And here was this lady, a competent surgeon, who was feeling degraded and demoralised to the point that she was willing to accept half of what he was telling her. The truth is, I can't help myself. He brainwashes me on a regular basis. My sense of obligation and indebtedness is heightened.'

As a result, the male characters in *Socialite Evenings* show little concern for their female counterparts, who, in turn, show little concern for their male friends or spouses. Shobha De has presented the male characters in her books in a feminist manner, as she has done in her earlier works. A masculine character like this assists her in making deceit the norm.

Explain the foundations of marriage and provide support for the following statement: "Marriage and family are the means by which society controls promiscuous sex and the dissipation of man's energy, which could otherwise be directed and used in many other usual channels, without at the same time suppressing sex. "The novel's female protagonists are attracted to males only for the sake of experiencing orgasms, and if they reject them, it is because they are incapable of providing such an experience.

When Shobha De released her first book in 1989, *Socialite Evenings*, she painted a picture of Indian women being marginalized at the hands of their husbands. Karuna, the protagonist, throughout the story, is shown as a self-assured and potentially assertive woman who strives to achieve independence in all aspects of her life, including love and marriage. As a newlywed, she uses sex as a powerful tool for obtaining pleasure and success in her life. On the other hand, Karuna's life begins on a depressing note since she marries at a young age and becomes disinterested in her husband, who prefers his mother over her. The realization dawns on her that the life of an Indian woman is "a tired generation of wives with no aspirations left; marriage was like a skin allergy, an irritation to be sure."

Society Evenings 65 is a series of social gatherings. Although her strict father slaps her for giving a bad reputation to the family, she continues to pose for newspapers and doesn't stop until she achieves her goals. She goes on to win the Ad Club prize for the next year due to this. She loves to work as a free-lanced writer. Since it gives her more flexibility, she begins to make commercials and eventually becomes a contemporary, independent lady. Indeed, gaining professional success was a lifelong ambition of hers. Shobha De portrays Karuna as a strong, independent woman who can overcome the limitations of her upbringing and pursue a modeling career, which is still considered unacceptable by many traditional Indian families. Karuna

achieves financial independence and a desire to carve out a space for herself in the highly competitive and professional world, therefore establishing her independence. Karuna attempts to demonstrate how Indian women are forced to accept and are denied the right to live as individuals. In her words, "I am made to feel compelled and indebted," she makes this clear: The fact that I insist on working and contributing to the household's operating expenditures has turned into a war is terrible" (Socialite Evenings). Karuna takes on a variety of identities at various periods to feed her emotional and psychological thirsts. As a model, a housewife, a social woman, an actor-writer, and a paramour, she has a diverse range of roles.

Karuna is fascinated with the concept of "status," to the point that she feels embarrassed of her middle-class background even as a result. She asserts her dominance over patriarchy while also searching for her 'identity. I need to feel claustrophobic (Socialite Evenings). She marries only to relieve boredom, and she walks out of the marriage with the same ease. Is it possible for a woman to leave a perfectly safe marriage because she is bored? Karuna, the primary protagonist, is far from being a b*tch; in fact, she is way too rational and well-intentioned.

On the other hand, she is the kind who sees her marriage for what it is: a waste of time. Her spouse is not a batterer, nor is he an alcoholic, nor is he a gambler. Even though she has no compelling cause to abandon him, she does so. For her, a lack of communication is a solid enough reason to be upset. She doesn't provide any justification for her action, nor does she cast fingers or assign blame (Shobha De, 1998)

Through Karuna's story, the writer hopes to attract her readers' attention to the all-pervasive ailment known as 'lack of communication' between husband and wife or between two close and dear ones. This ailment is more widespread in our cosmopolitan towns and cities than in other parts. Psychologists, too, believe that this state of things is directly responsible for many mental diseases that plague our society today. During a Janamashtami party hosted by Karuna's friend Anjali, she meets Krish Mukherjee, "a hot-blooded Bengali rebel from the late 1960s. who had flirted with all the right things – poetry, theatre, and politics" (Socialite Evenings 164), who is also a "pretentious advertising executive, whose wife actively assists him in his extra-marital affairs." (Socialite Evenings 164) Described as "a great person" by Karuna's husband, Krish is described as "a timid, sensitive, messed up man with whom she quickly fell in love" by Karuna (Socialite Evenings). Krish begins wooing Karuna from their first encounter, and their tumultuous relationship lasts for three long years, during which time her husband is completely unaware of their connection. When Karuna's husband scolds her for having an adulterous affair with Krish, she does not follow the adage that "quiet is the best policy" (Socialite Evenings 180). Instead, she responds, "If you had not imposed him on me, this would never have occurred." She expresses her feelings of emptiness and the termination of her marriage. Through this story, the writer suggests that a woman should be realistic in her life, control her impulses and wants, and maintain polite behavior.

Shobha De demonstrates that even the most minor female characters can reinvent themselves

in an infinite number of ways. The attractive, lively Ritu from *Socialite Evenings*, who left her second husband for a smuggler Gul and goes on to work as a pimp, recruiting "virgins for him and his colleagues," is one such figure (*Socialite Evenings* 220). She lives a sick and slavish existence, and to get relief from it, she conducts a "half-hearted suicide attempt", in which she consumes a handful of pills combined with a shot of scotch to end her suffering. She has a strong belief in the ability to manipulate sex and tells Karuna to have "a dull spouse at home, and an exciting lover on the sidelines - perfect...can have both" (*Socialite Evenings* 173), as well as inspiring her to make "several difficult choices" (173). She is oblivious to the distinction between "a wife and a mole" in her words. By portraying Karuna as a contemporary Indian married lady who emerges with a new identity and changing image, De emphasizes the necessity of self-introspection and its limitless potential to modify one's own identity and life. "Ladies in *Socialite Evenings*," written by Suman Bala, explains how Shobha De's women struggle in an androgynous society because they don't nurture genuine emotions but rather plastic ones, as Suman Bala explains in her piece. During this passionate celebration of the body, all of the ladies put aside their usual sense of morality and their old, weary, and oppressive sexual movements. Shobha De has done all she can to portray the underlying desires of Indian women, whether they live in rural or urban areas, in the most effective manner imaginable. As a feminist writer, De devotes her books to the challenges that women face, and she approaches them from a feminist perspective centered on fundamental human rights.

5. An Interpretation of Shobha De's *Socialite Evenings* as a Prototype of Resistance Culture

This style of unpretentious, victimizing, and self-pitying feminism should be replaced with a more powerful and assertive form of feminism. Naomi Wolf used "power feminism" to distinguish it from the more traditional "victim feminism." In the post-feminist movement, power feminism is one of the sub-themes. Strong women who aspire for strength are the center of power feminism, rather than women who wallow in the ashes of their previous wounds.

To shatter this skewed and deteriorating image of women, Shobha De writes stories in which female protagonists seem to be stronger than male protagonists. It is common for women to be portrayed as victims in our culture. Due to the effect of a patriarchally controlled society, these images have been inculcated in people's minds. As a result, any transgression of this process is regarded scandalous and unacceptable. A strong woman is seen as a danger to the rest of society. Shobha De defies stereotypes in her writing by presenting women inside the framework of victimized women, as she does in her novels.

Shobha De is a modern female writer who is particularly attentive to the plight of women and their challenges. Having had the chance to meet women from many walks of life as a professional journalist, she shares a unique perspective on women's issues with her colleagues and readers. Women's themes such as identity crisis, gender conflict, marriage, and psychological trauma are at the forefront of Shobha De's books, which she writes about as a

primary concern.

Even though Shobha De employs post-feminist theories in her story, De is conscious of the reality of the Indian social milieu. For the same reason that postfeminism is an extension of feminism, resistance culture and rebellion are features of postfeminism. Earlier in his article "Popular Culture and Social Control in Late Capitalism," David Tetzlaff spoke about this feature of resistance-culture in more detail. In his view, an individualized revolt is continually affirmed, as Tetzlaff maintains. These uprisings eventually coalesce into a totalitarian movement. As one rebel theme, Shobha De's heroes represent the vindication of independent revolt against the established order. In the beginning, Shobha De's ladies are subjected to servitude; nevertheless, they finally gain control of the situation, and their fight is brave and honorable. It is shown in the film *Socialite Evenings* that Indian women are portrayed as victims of servitude, subordination and marginalization at the hands of their husbands and that these images are polluted. Shobha De's works do not level a broad assault on males in particular; instead, she calls into question the structures that support and encourage the oppression of women. Shobha De's female characters are fearless and rebellious, and they confront the position that fate has placed upon them with a tenacious spirit. They demonstrate their dissatisfaction with society's use and work hard to show their individuality.

This dramatization of the life of Karuna, a renowned Bombay socialite, tells the narrative of how she overcomes the horrors of a broken marriage, unsuccessful romances, and a mentally ill sister to reach a decent place in society. Karuna begins her career as a model, then transitions into writing, and eventually establishes an advertising production firm. She encounters a diverse range of individuals since her career is centered on interpersonal interactions, and she gains valuable insight into the tangles and tussles typical in human relationships. After many chapters, it becomes evident that Karuna has been involved in an unfulfilling marital relationship. The relationship between Karuna and her husband is devoid of emotion, and it is weird and mechanical in its mechanics and structure. She soon understood that her marriage was doomed from the start since she had married the wrong guy.

In patriarchal cultures, women are routinely penalized for expressing or behaving according to their desires. The protagonists in Shobha De's novels likewise suffer due to such cultural constructions. Everyone in *Socialite Evenings* is intelligent and poised, even the main characters. They are acutely aware of their advantages and disadvantages, as well as their shortcomings. These ladies have a remarkable ability to portray their power in front of the community by concealing their flaws and transforming their weaknesses into strengths. They take pleasure in and feel honored to be a member of the exclusive group. Even though the female characters in Shobha De are generally confronted with problems, hardships, adversity, and barriers, they do not give up on their dreams and visions for their lives. When it comes to their personal growth, they are very independent and firm in their approach. When Karuna decided to abandon her middle-class upbringing and pursue a modeling career against her parents' desires, her problem unfolded. Because she has had a broken marriage and other affairs

with men, she has gained a thorough understanding of the psychology of men. It is encouraging that she recognizes the necessity of setting her priorities, even though it causes her difficulties. Despite her modernism, she makes an effort to be flexible and understanding, which is typical of an Indian lady in her position of power.

Shobha De's female characters consistently outperform their male co-stars. Because the women are confident and self-reliant, the males feel humbled and intimidated by them. Her ladies are outspoken in their opposition to the conventional image of Indian women, regardless of the profession in which they work or live. "Shobha De shows the confident, entrepreneurial, ambitious, and individualistic modern woman who wants attention, equality, and peace; not on compromising terms but on conditions equal to those of a man," writes R. K. Sinha.

As genuine sources of oppression of women in Shobha De's fictional universe, mismatched marriages, conventional rules of behavior, and a patriarchal social order are projected as the natural forces of oppression in her imaginary world. In her writing, Shobha De focuses on developing female characters that are comparably far more free from moral and societal restraints than the average woman, who is subservient and docile. Although these characters may not represent most women, their actions and attitudes reflect the developing tendencies among modern Indian metropolitans in general.

6. In *Second Thoughts*, the concept of femininity is redefined

Second Thought is a genuine portrayal of the mind of traditional Indian men and women and their relationships with one another. It tells the narrative of Maya, a young middle-class, educated Bengali girl whose love for Bombay leads her to marry Ranjan, a foreign-born Bengali guy who has returned to his home country as her husband. However, because of Ranjan's persistent disregard for her needs, she is forced to invent a new strategy for surviving in the bustling metropolis of Bombay. The obedient Maya eventually launches a caustic assault on the fake Indian marriage system by forming a 'relationship' with her next-door neighbor Nikhil, attending college. An Indian woman's awareness is explored in Shobha De's novel, which follows her as she is trapped between the nature-culture wheels on the one hand and dragged apart by the centrifugal actions of Ranjan, her husband, on the other, and by the centrifugal acts of Nikhil, her lover, on the other. Although the work is set in modern culture, it implicitly explores the dilemma of a neglected woman in an Indian traditional household. Although Maya's affair with Nikhil may seem to be appropriate at the time, maybe reconsidered with progressive thinking in mind. When Ranjan is no longer of service to her, she is left with no other choice except to leave. Even the title *Second Thoughts* is pretty descriptive when it comes to the protagonist's connection with Nikhil, which is a good thing in this case. Also shown in the narrative is Shobha De's exploration of new possibilities in a married woman's life to find fulfillment outside of her marriage. Shobha De's books must be concerned with the issues, situations, values, and way of life of Indian women. She thinks independently and has a highly autonomous mind, rare among women. The writer raises concerns regarding the assertion that

we are the proud products of the twenty-first century, yet at the same time, we continue to preserve and nurture the long-standing norms and traditions. The position of men and women had scarcely changed in that long-standing pattern, which had become all too familiar. The advancements in the status of individual women may have occurred, but in the context of marriage, man remains the lord and master, and a woman is forced to submit to his wishes.

The main character, Ranjan, has studied overseas and has settled in Bombay. yet he places limitations on his wife's activities to protect her from danger. She is unable to go anywhere in the city on her own. She is not permitted to live in the home in the manner she wants. The S.T.D. facilities, as well as the phone, are locked up for her. Rajan provides Maya with "nothing more than financial support, a decent place to live, and three square meals a day," as described by Shobha De, who captures the middle-class psyche by exposing various facets of Ranjan, such as his attitude to hold on tight to the purse strings to control his woman, his complete control even over the use of an air conditioner.

The following are Second Thoughts: His "sex drive" (258) is insufficient to provide for his "sex-starved" (257) wife. Second Thoughts 75 expresses Maya's desire to be "free, alive, reckless, and insane," as well as her desire to visit the beach "to get drenched in the waves, to laugh [and] to do a wild dance" (Second Thoughts 74), but instead finds herself "very much alone." Because she has no way of communicating with her family, her quiet, isolated pain is exacerbated further. Shobha De shows that when the parents on either side of the girl's family accept patriarchal values, this may produce a great deal of uncertainty and feelings of instability in the girl's psyche, which can negatively influence her life in the in-household. law's "Girls can only be molded if they stop thinking of their parent's home as their own," Mrs. Malik asserted at the time of her marriage (Second Thoughts 226). a sentiment shared by Maya's other sister Chitra, who believes that "a girl has to cut the cord with her family quickly and identify with her in-laws." (Second Thoughts 226). In my opinion, the sooner she accomplishes this, the better." Women who cling to their own families for an excessive amount of time, according to Chitra, "never succeed in adapting to their husband's folks" (Second Thoughts 75). Because of her marriage to Rajan, Maya has become a lonely person. She provides sufficient justification for her plight – "I don't have a single friend I can talk to, I miss my parents, my home, my environment, and most of all, my freedom" (Second Thoughts 192) – by stating that she wishes to fondle, laugh, talk, sing, walk, see, feel, and enjoy her life with someone, particularly with her husband, and that she misses her parents. She finds it difficult to comprehend someone's remark that "being married implies giving up all you've known as a carefree young lady." "And for what?" you may wonder. (192)

In the end, Maya does not accept Rajan's 'house' as her 'home' because of Rajan's lack of love, affinity, and devotion to his house and his family. The home, she recalls, "was how I referred to this area, even to myself, whenever I visited." I'd never had a place to call home. This is my house. This is our home. She is always referred to as "the home" - impersonal, remote, and chilly. Kolkotta remained the location of residence. "The house where my parents grew up"

(Second Thoughts 227). She wants to have a sense of belonging to her spouse and his family to be free of her loneliness. However, "Nobody is a person she does not consider to be hers. This includes her spouse, mother, mother-in-law, or any close friend. Certainly, everything changed in Maya's life shortly after her marriage, and she is reduced from a free and flitting person to "a full-time domestic worker without compensation" Second Thoughts (Second Thoughts 154), which is much worse than "a resident cook, or a professional caterer." It is mostly due to the function of "a decent wife [who] must learn to adapt and sacrifice", which is important. According to Rajan, looking at strangers might be harmful since "the same guys you spend hours staring at could be the ones who come on your door with chloroform to rape and rob women like you" (88). Shobha De satirizes the masculine ego and patriarchal views of so-called highly educated Indian men who never trust their marriages and annoy them with adultery and immorality in this satirical comedy.

Maya's misery, enslavement, isolation, and deprivation transformed her into a confused person who could not make any decisions about her life or her circumstances. As a result of Maya's loss of belongingness, physical discontent, emptiness in her marriage, and the influence of Mumbai's repetitive existence on her mind, she begins to think of Nikhil, the little son of her next-door neighbor, as a rescuer from her dragged marital life. Nikhil takes advantage of her predicament and uses her for his purposes. Despite the fact that Maya likes her connection with Nikhil, including their sexual relationship, since it relieves her loneliness and mental anxiety, she stays faithful to her husband. She is embarrassed, ashamed, and guilty about her relationship with Nikhil, which has lasted from the beginning of her life. Her husband's impatience, her ignorance, her lack of experience and boredom in life, as well as Nikhil's continuous and aggressive lobbying have all combined with compelling her to confront an extremely hazardous and embarrassing scenario in her personal and professional life. The moments after she learns of Nikhil's engagement, she stands at her front door "motionless and thoughtless" (Second Thoughts 288). Much more painfully than her "uninspiring existence," she came to terms with the futility of the relationship (Second Thoughts 171). "The more I gazed at the spilled soup, the funnier it seemed to me," she says at the end of the story, referring to her determination to restore her relationship with her husband, Rajan, via her efforts. I was well aware that I would have to start again from the beginning. What's the big deal? "I had all the time in the world at my disposal now" (Second Thoughts 316)

Shobha De has done an outstanding job in demonstrating via her work that pleasure in family and life is a valuable asset that can only be obtained by abiding by principles and not by accumulating wealth, material possessions, or engaging in illegal relationships. She has implicitly shown that peaceful marriage life is the most significant component of one's life. As a result, the writer supports marriages founded on mutual understanding, respect, and a feeling of sacrifice between couples. After accurately depicting the life of a middle-class housewife, her adultery caused by a heartless mother-fixated husband, the book maintains the old traditional Indian values that are the only way to achieve success in one's career and life.

7. The starry nights

The male characters in *Starry Nights* give the impression that they live in a feminist story, which is true. Even minor characters, such as the protagonist's father and uncle, represent the negative aspects of the male gender stereotype. Her father, as well as the majority of the other males in the narrative, is as follows:

'Men are all the same - they're just animals...'

You have a fulfilling life. He is kind to you - by which I mean that there is no violence in your relationship. Akshayji does not hit you or anything like that. What more could you possibly want? On the morning after the wedding night, the romance comes to an end. Men enjoy a wide range of options. For a marriage to succeed, both partners must engage in sexual activity. A man's relationship is over the day he believes his lady has lost interest in sex, and thus in him, and he begins hunting for another woman. The bed has the last say in everything. I'm lying in bed. If he discovers that you are cold, you have lost him.

Shobha De's ironic portrayal of a conflict in a man-woman relationship is a work of art. Nayantara Sahgal's approach to the man-woman connection is founded on her deeply held belief in the 'new humanism,' which has that women should not be seen as only sex objects but as men's equal and valued partners in all aspects of life. Her idea of a free woman exceeds the confines of economic or social independence and takes on the form of a mental or emotional attitude toward life. Sahgal's women aspire to construct a new order based on unique norms in which women may be themselves without being condemned for it, in which there is no need for deceit, and in which character is measured by the purity of the heart rather than the chastity of the body. When women and men fail to develop a relationship based on mutual communication, friendship, and equality, it seems that estrangement and subsequent divorce are unavoidable consequences of their failure. She beautifully depicts the young souls torn apart by the compulsions of marriage and the lure of a newfound love throughout her story. Even though Vishal's wedding had failed, he is denied satisfaction in a liaison with Gouri, the Bengali businessman's wife, who finds security in an arranged marriage but requires and establishes a relationship with Vishal based on sexual desire in her novel "The Storm in Chandigarh" (1969).

Vishal develops a stronger relationship with Saroj, the wife of Inder, who is having an affair with Moro, the wife of Jit, while Vishal is away on business. According to the hypothetical circumstance of youthful hearts being torn apart by the compulsion of marriage and the call of new love, marriage is more than simply a sexual connection; it is also a relationship of equal friendship. The vast disparity between two civilizations and two ways of life causes a sense of disbelief in the minds of those who encounter them. Due to the novel's profound exploration of the heroine's psychology, "Wife" distinguishes itself as a one-of-a-kind literary achievement.

The centuries-old traditions of family and marriage have been put under immense duress today. David McReynolds makes the following observation on the dissolution of the family: "A person

cannot discover his or her identity inside the family - because that institution is disintegrating."

One of the most significant elements contributing to the breakup of families is the widespread promiscuity in sexual relationships. Another reason is that, due to gaining access to the labor market, women have discovered a level of economic independence that makes marriage less critical, resulting in a rift between a man and his wife. R. W. Desai's novel "Frailty, They Name Is Woman" is a powerful description of the man-woman interaction. The Indian lady, as shown in this work, is genuinely indicative of the transitional period of Indian society, which is torn asunder by traditional values, the country's rich past, and contemporary liberal principles, which the Western culture has influenced chiefly. In the following lines of "That long quiet," Jaya takes a risk by challenging the traditional picture.

Having followed her husband into exile, Sita is now in exile herself. Savitri is hounding Death in an attempt to retrieve her spouse. Draupadi bears her husband's suffering stoically, claiming, "What do I have to do with these mythological women?" I am not deceiving myself. (68) In the human setting and human society, sexuality is virtually always associated with something other than pleasure and reproduction. It manifests itself most often in power and domination, and it is felt and expressed by every human person. The "History of Sexuality" by Foucault discussed how our beliefs about sexuality are shaped by the social structure and social constructions surrounding us. According to him, having a free and open discussion about sexuality is virtually essential for personal liberty. Daphne Patai had this to say:

Shobha De's observations are consistent with those of all of these experts. She asserts that there is still a significant degree of misunderstanding regarding sex and sexuality even in this day and age, even in the heart of urban India. Despite all of the sex discourse on television and in our movies, we are still asexual. The amount of information individuals have about their bodies and the possibilities of exploring physical pathways as a pair is astounding, even in this day of increased transparency.

De's goal is to elevate sex to the top of the priority list. Her subject matter is restricted to upper-class metropolitan life located in cities. She enjoys these social strata since she is familiar with their frivolities and amenities and their hypocrisy and lack of ethical standards. When it comes to sexual views and relationships, this class is pitifully raw and unsophisticated, despite having access to the most luxurious and convenient amenities in life. She has said that sex is the foundation of all relationships. It is necessary to deal with it in a free and open manner.

The women in De's books are aggressive, dominant, and forceful in the act of sex and other aspects of their lives. Her female colleagues talk and practice sex with an uncommon level of honesty. They are the ones who break all sexual taboos. She encourages both male and female clients to explore in various ways and with energy, believing that this is vital for finding one's sexual self and identity. As a result, De wrote books in which the roles of man and woman were inverted. Her female partners take the lead in sexual encounters, while the male partners attempt to keep up with them. In every one of her books, there is a breakdown of marriages resulting

from extra-marital relationships. Her ladies are bold and dashing, and they are not afraid to get into an extra-marital relationship with a man they like. The upper class's contemporary way of life provides them with many possibilities to meet new individuals.

This paper demonstrates De's sarcastic portrayal of some themes via a struggle in the man-woman connection, which is reflected in her work. Her main characters include Malika, Karuna, Aasha Rani, Alisha, Anjali, Rita, Sudha Rani, Amrita, Swati, Surekha, Aparna, and Reema unrestrained and uninhibited sexual behavior. In their pursuit for a sustainable human interaction on equal terms and their assertion of control over their bodies and minds, this group of women tends to suppress the differences that distinguish the presence of their distinct feminine identities. The final result is that these women depart from their true motivation, masked by the modern allure presented by their deviant conduct. They do this because they have a false and ill-conceived image of women's independence. Men in De's novels treat women as though they are entirely inconsequential. Wives fed up with their husbands' self-absorbed indifference and male supremacist mentality resort to extra-marital relationships to relieve their unhappiness. Men become aggressive towards them due to their unsatisfactory experience with them. Shobha De has written this essay to demonstrate that such types of relationships and sexual excursions are not a solution to the challenges faced by repressed and subordinated women.

8. Conclusion

Shobha De believes in telling the truth about happenings directly and with complete openness of heart. Her tale does not include any snobbish remarks about Indian culture or traditions; instead, she defends the actual values of Indian customs and traditions. Traditionalists in India, on the other hand, despise her for making such public pronouncements on sexual issues. She has had an overwhelmingly positive response to both her fiction and nonfiction. And she has received acclaim not just in Europe but across the globe, with the majority of her works being taught in institutions throughout the Western world. She has become a symbol for bringing attention to the many viewpoints on women's rights and emancipation in the current world. Extra-marital affairs of women, according to her, are a form of resistance or protest by women against the breakdown of conventional and moral norms in society when women are denied the ability to live on an equal footing with men. Her ladies are adventurous and gutsy in finding other relationships outside of marriage to fulfill their natural needs. To get the social and financial advantage, they are not apprehensive about utilizing sex as a deliberate technique.

On the other hand, her women fight with all their might for their excessively generous ideals in a patriarchal society dominated by males. In their attempts to establish themselves, women have been known to flip the patriarchal system on its head. Avenge their abusers by questioning the established order of societal taboos and molding their destiny by making decisions that benefit them personally. They do not believe in suffering in silence, and they will stop at nothing to attain the pinnacle of happiness and achievement. The ongoing battle of her women against

enslavement, servitude, and exploitation is disconcerting and arouses sympathy in readers' minds. It also raises awareness in women to redefine one's life to meet the problems that life throws at them. Her works are infused with feminist ethos, which redefines man-woman interactions in current Indian culture to live in harmony. Indeed, Shobha De "as a writer is frank beyond our vision...gifted with the amazing capacity to explore every delicate topic in her writings," as the New York Times put it, "has a candor beyond our comprehension" (KR Srinivasa Iyengar, 1983:85).

References

1. Das, Bijay Kumar. "The Author and the Text: A Study of Shobha De's Snapshots". Critical Essays on PostColonial Literature. 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2007).
2. De, Shobha. *Socialite Evenings*, (New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 1989).
3. De, Shobha. *Second Thoughts*, (New Delhi Penguin Books India Pvt.Ltd, 1996).
4. De, Shobha. *Selective Memories: Stories of My Life*, (New Delhi, Penguin Books India (P) Ltd., 1998).
5. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Indian Writing in English* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1983).
6. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans.and ed. H.M. Parshley (London: Penguin, 1974).
7. Milton C. Albrecht: „The Relationship of Literature and Society“, *American Journal of Sociology*, LIX No. 5 (March 1954). Pg 425-36
8. David McReynolds:“Hipsters Unleashed”, in *The Beats*, ed. Seymour Krim(Greenwich: Faucett, 1960), Pg 20
9. Dilip Boob, *India Today* (Special No), Sex and Single Woman- an exclusive Survey, Vol xxx, No 18 Sept 26,2005, Pg 70-72
10. Shobha De: *the Illustrated Weekly of India*, 6th Nov. 1992
11. Bai, K. Meera. "Tradition and Modernity: The Portrayal of women by women writers." *Indian Women Novelists*. Ed. R.K. Dhawan. New Delhi: Prestige, 1991. 35.Print.
12. De, Shobha. *Socialite Evenings*. New Delhi: Penguin, 1989.Print. Faludi, Susan. *Backlash: The Undeclared War against Women*. London: Vintage, 1992. Print.
13. Gamble, Sarah. 'Postfeminism.' *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*. London: Routledge, 2001. 264. Print

14. Genz, Stephanie and Benjamin A.Brabon. Post feminism: Cultural Texts and Theories.Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012. 68-172. Print
15. Grimke, Sarah. Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Conditions of Woman. New York: Burt Franklin, 1970. 10. Print.
16. McRobbie, Angela. 'Notes on Postfeminism and Popular Culture: Bridge Jones and