

HARBINGER IN FEMINIST MOVEMENT

Dr. P. Prabavathi,
Professor of English,
Hindusthan College of Arts and Science,
Coimbatore,
Email: prabavathi.08@gmail.com,

Abstract

Shobha De is an eminent and most popular Indian woman writer in English and feminist writer. She is a gifted novelist with the extraordinary ability to discuss very sensitive aspects of human life tactfully. It attempts to make comprehensive critical comments on her fiction with an emphasis on the image of the woman portrayed in her novel. The way she narrates each and every aspect of the human relationship in general and man-woman relationship, in particular, is superb. She is a writer who believes in a very frank narration of incidents and absolute open-heartedness. She has carved a niche for herself in her writings. She concentrates on women's problems and gives a new approach to them. A socio-political movement which Feminism advocates involved active participation by women to demand their rights. It can be considered a movement which is fought against female oppression under patriarchy. There are various ways by which a woman can be victimized or we can say that victimization of woman can take place through various ways like caste, color, race, attitude towards motherhood, etc. The Feminist movement was actually started by white women who basically hailed from the middle class in Western Europe and North America. This trend accelerated in the 1960s with civil rights movement and the collapse of European colonialism in Africa, Third wave feminism advocate for equal rights for the girls and taking charge of their own Sexual fulfillment.

The new generation of feminism embraces beauty and power of women's sexuality to achieve their needs. They consider sexual pleasure human right. Many writers in India have talked of pleasure and its manifestation. The heroines in her novels rebuild their lost fortunes; make all efforts to look glamorous by losing weight and spending money in massage parlors. They try to look and act differently from the conventional and traditional women. They love to fall in love with their looks by which they try to attract people.

As a feminist writer, Shobha De's novels raise a strong protest against the male-dominated Indian society where women have derived the freedom to act and live according to their will. In this fast-changing world, the role of women in society has been changing fast, affecting greatly the Sexual monograms and social norms prevalent in society. She reacts against the male

culture and strongly detests the marginalization of women. She is the first woman to explore the world of urban women of higher social strata. She has worked for the complete emancipation of woman. However, Her stories are real stories, still happening in real life. Human relation based on gender distinctions, masculine domination, women's predicament relating to tradition and modernity are all important issues. Shobha De, through her ordinary stories, brings out the reality of our world around us. In all her novels she represents the picture of a New-Woman. It is a fascination study from the Indian point of view. The emphasis is on the image of a woman with critical comments regarding the new emerging woman of modern cosmopolitan India. She portrays a variety of women from the traditional, subjugated and marginalized, extremely modern and liberated women.

Keywords: *man-woman relationship, feminism, female oppression, marginalization.*

Shobha De is an eminent and most popular Indian woman writer in English and feminist writer. She is a gifted novelist with an extraordinary ability to discuss very sensitive aspects of human life tactfully. It attempts to make comprehensive critical comments on her fiction with an emphasis on the image of the woman portrayed in her novel. The way she narrates each and every aspect of the human relationship in general and man-woman relationship, in particular, is superb. She is a writer who believes in the very frank narration of incidents and absolute open-heartedness. She has carved a niche for herself in her writings. She concentrates on women's problems and gives a new approach to them. A socio-political movement which Feminism advocates involved active participation by women to demand their rights. It can be considered a movement which is fought against female oppression under patriarchy. There are various ways by which a woman can be victimized or we can say that victimization of woman can take place through various ways like caste, color, race, attitude towards motherhood, etc. The Feminist movement was actually started by white women who basically hailed from the middle class in Western Europe and North America. This trend accelerated in the 1960s with civil rights movement and the collapse of European colonialism in Africa, Third wave feminism advocates for equal rights for the girls and taking charge of their own Sexual fulfillment.

The new generation of feminism embraces beauty and power of women's sexuality to achieve their needs. They consider sexual pleasure human right. Many writers in India have talked of pleasure and its manifestation. The heroines in her novels rebuild their lost fortunes; make all efforts to look glamorous by losing weight and spending money in massage parlors. They try to look and act differently from the conventional and traditional women. They love to fall in love with their looks by which they try to attract people.

As a feminist writer, Shobha De's novels raise a strong protest against the male-dominated Indian society where women have derived the freedom to act and live according to their will. In this fast-changing world, the role of women in society has been changing fast, affecting greatly the Sexual monograms and social norms prevalent in society. She reacts against the male culture and strongly detests the marginalization of women. She is the first woman to explore the world of urban women of higher social strata. She has worked for the complete emancipation of woman. However, Her stories are real stories, still happening in real life. Human relation based on gender distinctions, masculine domination, women's predicament relating to tradition and modernity are all important issues. Shobha De, through her ordinary stories, brings out the reality of our world around us. In all her novels she represents the picture of a New-Woman. It is a fascination study from the Indian point of view. The emphasis is on the image of a woman with critical comments regarding the new emerging woman of modern cosmopolitan India. She portrays a variety of women from the traditional, subjugated and marginalized, extremely modern and liberated women.

She doesn't believe in describing her women characters as love slaves or mere helpmates at home. Women characters in her novels are represented as sexually liberated and free-thinking who have been termed as, "New Woman". She talked about the self-realization of women. The high class. Educated, sensible women became the protagonist in her novels. These new class of women whose lives were not infested by problems dowry or poverty. These Indian women lived a blessed life as far as material standards are concerned, but there was something wanting, some vacuum in their lives. These Women were facing the problems of identity. They show concern about basic human problems and to them

Their women are the victims of a male-dominated society. In her novels, men are not always sinners or oppressors. She explores the problems of women through her novels. She has raised woman's issues and strove to reach to their solutions as well. In all her writings De represents new morality, according to which woman is not to be taken as a mere toy, an object of lust and momentary pleasure, but man's equal and honored partner. Women character undoubtedly reveals their feminist ideology. She explored the lives of bored housewives and their loveless rich husbands and family. Her novels mirror the lifestyles of the elite and the middle classes of the urban world. She draws our attention to women's exploitation, decimation, and emancipation.

In *Socialite Evening*, the first novel of the author. is about the journey of a prominent Bombay Socialite Karuna, from a middle-class girl to a self-sufficient woman. Making a feminist approach, the novel gives as the picture of the marginalization of the Indian women at the hands of their husbands. The novel presents the institutions of family and marriage existing in the wealthy class of the Indian Society. An enduring theme in the novel is the search for identity and selfhood; Karuna suffers due to the callous and non-responsive attitude of her husband. Her

husband treats her as a mere object subjected to his will, as a result, there is a complete loss of her identity. Her entry in the glamorous world of modeling and friendship with Bunty is the act of rebellion. After marriage, she established an extra-marital relationship with Krish revolts against her insensitive husband and finally divorces him. Similarly Anjali, a young Socialite, about suffers much because of her incompatible marriage and her husband's oppressive attitude, Here, Shobha De's attack is not against the individuals, it is against the system that favors men and causes women's subjugation and marginalization.

The advantages resulting from the states of marriage are that the two sexes may reciprocally satisfy the natural desires which are felt equally by each... that they equally submit the exercise of the reproductive organs to a healthful regularity; that they may equally perpetuate their common species; that they may equally by respective duties provide for the children proceeding from their mutual union; that they may equally assist each other throughout life by reciprocal affection

In all three phases, Karuna was to be affected and her life readers paint out the rebellious instinct.

Karuna in her childhood days she was the only child with a discipline problem bath at home and at school. She did not like giving to school by train or bus. Whereas in his way other girls are dressed in uniforms. She wore her girdle hipster style. Her sisters preferred to concentrate on their percentages whereas she preferred to discover Bombay and Bumbayites. Karuna's swords clearly expose how. She protested to follow the traditional path of etiquette and manners and the ways that come in the way of her total development as a woman.

She comes across that her companion is presently the regular Indian partners who aware monotonous stimulating as well as qualified. He is not ready for introspection. The regular Indian female's matrimonial living is to her; A worn out age group of among the females no imaginations existence. (10)

In this way, She grew-up there developed in her the emotional urge to identify with the outside world, the modern crowd and the fascinating world of affluent girls who had everything. She was not interested in her studies like her sisters and other classmates. She was associated with her college friend charily and also acted as a model for agency much against her father's will.

It has been the desire of Karuna to get rid of her middle-class background and iniquity of her life as the daughter of a middle-rung government official. It this occasion she meets Anjali a prominent socialite and the wife of a wealthy playboy. Anjali is an independent lady, rich, confident and beautiful. She has everything the modern woman needed; Anjali makes Karuna think that the fashion world can bring wealth. Freedom and status in her life and would help her to fulfill all her desires. So she freely indulges in the fashionable world of modern life introduced to her by Anjali, middle-aged prominent socialite. Karuna showing herself in the glamorous

world of modeling and friendship with her boyfriend Bunty is the act of rebellion against the accomplished traditional norms of society. Although in the novel, Karuna's psyche developed through protest and defiance. On the other hand, she seemed as „revoltingly self-assured disgustingly self-sufficient. The author depicted Karuna as an ability woman, able to surround her bet in life and launch into a kind of lifestyle of modeling and independent Journalist essays, that is still not acceptable in conventional Indian society.

Karuna life has three phases. The quest to know about herself, which started towards the end of that first phase, is stopped abruptly with her marriage. It is under the situation in the second phase and springs up in the third phase after the separation from her husband. The cause of Karuna's mother fear is very obvious because in a patriarchal male-dominated society. It is the father who chooses the profession of their children. When children do something appreciable the credit goes to the father but when they do something mischievous, only the mothers are responsible. Mother plays a very significant role in a child's life but it stops when a child grows up and wants to take up a decision related to his profession. In brief, important decisions, are taken by others, not by the mothers.

In childhood life, Karuna wanted to do something different. She was an attractive and new modern girl. She does not want seen other girl from her class she was like 36

Anjali desired to be a wealthy person in her life:

Karuna without getting the permission of her parents performed in many add films and stepped towards her new life with the help of Anjali. But no one easily understood that her father wanted to control all his daughters in the same way. He never talked to them directly and tried to know about their likes and dislikes. In the male-oriented society, fathers crush girls' sense of Individuality in order to impose their male authority on them. Their earlier lives exploited by their fathers or father, figures, make them react irrationally and violently. Karuna and Anjali both were suffocated in their early life due to their father's dominating nature.

In this novel male-dominated society no one cares about the dreams of a female whereas it is father or husband women have to suppress their ambitions inside them. In her married life to Karuna was not happy. Her marriage is a failure since it is loveless and without any enjoyment her life was Joyless. She feels that she has married "the wrong man for the wrong reasons at the wrong time."

Some women mutely tolerate this situation and spend their whole life in a suffocating atmosphere. But here Shobha De's women are different as they do not 37

. She has only a formal relationship with her husband. Although she never calls her husband by his name but in a derogatory term such a „Black Label.“ There is no intimacy between them. The relationship between them is totally deprived of mutual understanding, love, and affection. Here given an example of how she protests about her meaningless marital relationship:

Being ahead of family, they are expected to look after everyone and should take care of everything but the contrast to this they are most negligent and least bothered. In the beginning, Karuna tries to Adjust and make a compromise to her marriages. But her open rebellion comes forth when she admits her extra-marital relations just in front of her husband. She tells her husband's very frankly:

Karuna's husband is unable to look deep into the biological need of Karuna's female self. There was no meaningful conversation between the husband and wife. She detested the stand-offish and callous attitude of her husbands who often kept themselves busy in drab, monotonous activities like reading the business pages of *The Times of India*.

She rejects the idea of second marriage and in the same way proposed to Ranbir Roy. There is a contrast between Karuna and her mother in their attitude towards the institution of marriage. Her mother stands for traditional Hindu woman while Karuna is young modern Indian women in her attitude. The women like Karuna's mother her subordinate status in the society for they accept passively everything that comes to them by fate or tradition.

Henceforth, she indulges in promiscuous sex and makes her husband either to tolerate or ignore it. She openly accepts her deviant behavior and challenges her husband. She further paints out to her husband that his failure to understand her as a woman is the real cause of her unusual and unacceptable behavior. Although she goes a step further by giving divorce to her husband. She decided to lead a single life because she wanted to assert her individuality. The struggle of Karuna, therefore, does not remain confined only to her but become a representative struggle of modern women to be free and self-reliant.

After her divorce, her husband meets her and expresses request to come back and live with him. It is traditionally believed that finally, woman ignores the cruelties of her husband as she thinks he certain privileges over her. But Karuna's response is shocking and unexpected because she firmly asks her husband to go away.

In '*Socialite Evenings*' the author *has* presented the theme of marriage and family in a very critical manner. She is of the view that the concept of marriage is changing day by day due to inevitable modern circumstances; Marriage is no more a matter of chance. It has become a matter of choice in the aristocratic and high profile metropolitan culture. The concept of marriage is related to the concept of family because both are reciprocal to each other. Family cannot exist without marriage. In spite of its biological features, it unites two separate human beings altogether to live under the same roof and share each and everything whatever comes in their way.

Shobha De's novels represent the new Indian woman's voice. A New-Woman is in search of self-identity seeking liberation in all walks of life, replacing the tradition image of an Indian woman.

Work Cited

Ruth Robbins, Literary Feminism [London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000]

Shobha De, Speed post.

S.P.Swain, "Shobha De's Socialite Evening – A Feminist study, Feminist English Literature.

K.Meerabai, "Feminism as an Extention of Existentialism woman in Indian English Fiction".

Indian women Novelists, ed. R.K. Dhawan.