
SEXUAL IDEOLOGY OF MODERN WOMAN IN SHOBHAA DE'S *STARRY NIGHTS*

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Abstract

In the current orientation, one of the ongoing problems amongst women is sexual domination. Speaking about sex, created a bad climate upon women. It made them psychologically inferior and this inferior and emotional pressure led to lots of trauma. In fact, different forms of social oppression upon women are basically the outcome of the sexual oppression. So the main intention of this conceptual paper is to bring out how Shobhaa De, an outstanding literary writer, who is labeled as “Radical Feminist”, emerged to speak on sexual issues with particular reference to her novel *Starry Nights*, who thereby creates an awakening amongst women, is the main focus of this paper.

Keywords: *ongoing problems, women, oppression, outstanding literary writer, etc*

Ideologically the word “sex” according to Oxford Dictionary meant as, “Sexual instincts, desires etc., or their manifestation”. It is also one among the objective of human life, where our culture gives more importance to it. This can be justified with the words explained in our scriptures about “Kama”,

Being the cause of the body, sex satisfaction is as useful as food. It cannot be denounced. As for sustenance and strength of the body, food is essential, likewise for healthy sex.

As sex is compared to food, it means that all human being need sex. So one must understand that it is something special that has to be shared in a smooth way.

But today the main core of the problem for the woman is sexual domination of men. Many sexes manic, not only pollute the purity of the three letter word, but they also spoil the life of many women. As Graham Greene said,

‘Men's violence', ‘sexual violence', ‘rape', ‘incest', ‘sexual abuse of women and children', ‘woman battering', ‘woman slaughter', ‘woman killing', ‘frawen (woman/wife) mishandling’, ‘the male peril’, ‘sexual terrorism’, ‘outrage’, ‘unspeakable horror’, sexual harassment’, - these are some of the words woman in several cultures and different times in this century have drawn upon to describe their experiences of men's violence” (23)

So most women considered sex as a filthy one and were unable to talk about their sexual experience. But the trend and time have changed the women's voice. Today's modern women demands and talks for her sexual liberation and fights against the patriarchal setup. So this paper ventures to study briefly on modern women's sexual ideology with particular reference to Shobhaa De's *Starry Night*.

Shobhaa De, an Indian Feminist writer, is a clear-headed multifaceted personality. She is considered as an X-rated writer, as "sex" is a unifying theme in her novels. Yet she deserves a great appreciation for her courage of writing about sexual imagery in her novels, who thereby bring out awareness and takes the effort to make women like men, through her novels.

Starry Night is an example, where De like western country, boldly overthrows the sexist ideologies of women hood and let them free for their growth and self-fulfillment. She also makes women be aware of how they are being treated by men in society and thus awakens woman to constructive action and play the game of men to defeat them.

Starry Night is a story about a young Aasha Rani, who struggle in the hands of men, from the dirty world of the film industry, at Bombay, later becomes a great star. Though she faces various ups and downs in her profession and personal life, finally ends with a note of hope and confidence that Aasha Rani would become a ruler of the film industry and their studio.

Sex though it's not a central theme of this novel, it gives varied scope and place for a woman to express her sexual liberation and thereby demand true equality with men. When a man has sex with a woman, he feels superior, active, dominating and satisfaction. Once he relaxes, fails to care or worry, whether, she is, also equally satisfied or not. This again makes a woman inferior and sick. So in order to while away this inferiority with men, in terms of sex, Shobhaa De suggests through her *Starry Night*, to have free sex. So that a new world can be created as,

Women and men would abolish all sex privileges and sex burdens and would strive to set up the reorganization of the common humanity of women and man as the foundation of law and custom. (158)

Deserted father, exploiting mother, selfish younger sister, thus loveless life in the family gives a great depression to Aasha Rani and forces an urge to search for her an Identity. Later, at the age of fifteen, enters into the film world, under the guidance of her mother, Geetha Devi, where the protagonists meet Kishenbhai, a great producer. Geetha Devi felt that the tie-up with great persons like Kishenbhai would fetch her daughter more opportunity, fame, and money. So utilizing the chance, Amma propelled Aasha Rani to have free sex with Kishenbhai and she too though for the first time, without any inhabitation had a sensuous relationship with him. in an occasion when Kishenbhai asks her, "Aren't you afraid?" She replies him coolly. "Of you? No. Not at all. Why? Should I Be? (SN, 09)

Here the novelist through the protagonist conveys that one should not be threatened of sex, as the fear itself would kill us, so instead suggests to rejoice it.

Very soon, the luck favored Aasha Rani as the film with Kishenbhai got success. Soon she became a center of attraction and this made Amma force Aasha Rani be the bedmate of producers and distributors so that she can keep the tracks of success.

Unfortunately, Sheth Amirchand, a member of the parliament came in contact with Aasha Rani and the affair started growing. She proved her smartness and pleased him to his need and attained a good impression. He demanded her again and again and she also longed to have sex with him. She says, "She wanted more, much more..." (100). Here not only men, even woman demand more, for sexual appetite. However, as Aasha Rani was both intellectual, in physical and mental, so Sheth fetched her more chance in the film Industry. Under his influence, her career reached the top and soon she became as one among the most wanted star.

When Kishenbhai came to know the affair as a possessed husband yells at her. But Aasha Rani to protest against men like Kishenbhai boldly challenges and shows her hatred towards men replies as, "All of you are just the same but wait, I will do to men what they try to do to me." (SN, 13)

Here the novelist indicates that modern women like Aasha Rani, have started learning the tricks of men and has utilized their learning to wield men in women's hand.

Aasha Rani's conscious very often took to the past and reminded her about Akshay Arora, as he was he the only man whom Aasha Rani loved sincerely and wanted to have him as her life partner. She also recollected as how they were summoned as "Lucky pair" in the film Industry that made them very closely, like husband and wife. Further thought, how she was cursed, humiliated and insulted by Malini Arora, wife of Akshay, for having abducted her husband and as her curse was to come true, Akshay ditched her and hit her severely in front of all the socialites. Deprived of true love and insult before all socialized peoples, made her sick and shame that push her to commit suicide.

Though Aasha Rani tried to evade him from her mind, it was very difficult for her. So in order to divert her mind, she had a sexual encounter with various men, without any inhibition. Yet she was more disturbed by her loneliness, protection less and boredomness which made her to automatically think of her childhood as how her father deserted her, the mother in order to take care of her daughters took up prostitution and in order to earn more money, how Aasha Rani was forced to act in Blue films. She also recollected how she was sexually maltreated at the age of seven by her uncle Gopala Krishnan. Later, gets married to Jay in New Zealand and begets a female child, but her happiness was short lived as very soon, she meets the despair once again when Jay had an affair with his Nanny.

In fact, this loveless, betrayal, incomplete childhood and disappointed life one after the other, together created a deep vengeance against men and so in order to beat all the men with their own game, acted as a sexpot and made all the sex maniac men's to fall under her feet, in bed. She first read the men and knowing his weakness, got succeeded by seducing him. then

initiated her lovemaking and used the tricks and tactics to make him completely surrender under the control. Even without any age bar, she derived pleasure from any men and then planned to destroy them. Sometimes even men got afraid of her, yet being unable to forget her once again they go to her and thereby being trapped. To make them surrender, she uses three "B's", Beauty, Body, and Bed, and fights with them. Finally, Aasha Rani was the one who always won the battle.

Even other women characters like Linda, Sonali, and Sudha Rani were sexually emancipated. In short, the women characters in the novel are depicted as beautiful, bold, wild, lusty and considered sex and sensuality as a part of their life. According to these women, as said in De's Snapshot, "We don't dismiss it. We don't find it dirty. Sex doesn't threaten us. I am not afraid to fuck. I feel sorry for all of you woman hanging on so desperately to outdated ideas of purity, morality, chastity. It's pathetic." (226). In this way, these women characters support the radical feminist's proposal by replacing the patriarchal system upside down.

These conventional characters through changes the culture and tradition of the society and brings out the western culture breaks the women's sexual ignorance and marginalization in terms of sex and thereby demands same rights and pleasures as men do. These women characters may look like a flaunted characters, in the eye of orthodox men in real, they are liberated modern women who break the sexual taboos and speak what they feel in open-hearted; without any afraid, inhibition and thereby demand a mature attitude of sex.

To wind up, the ideology of modern women character is not only to enjoy by having free sex but also present an insight of women's emotions too, as men fail to look into the hearts of women. One should never consider sex as filthy one as, said in Snapshots, "Sex is no longer the most dreaded and despised three letter word in India, is enough to celebrate." (3).

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