

Manifold Multitudes of Women in the Writings of Shobhaa De

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Abstract

The evolving views on the man-woman connection are a significant theme in today's fiction. The traditional Indian legacy places a high value on the family unit, which has inspired many Indian novelists to explore many aspects of human relationships. Researchers and academics are discussing how women are represented in literature. It has been suggested that their socioeconomic rank has influenced the portrayal of women in literature. The standing of women has never been the same... However, the truth remains that women worldwide have always had a lower social status, often even that of an enslaved person. The patriarchal society, where men still hold the upper hand, bears the entire weight of responsibility for this condition of affairs. As a result, it would be naive to assume that men are only responsible for the marginalization of women in society. Despite the stereotype that depicts women as helpless and passive victims to the whims of men, there are times when women actively participate in the oppression of their fellow women and help to perpetuate the cycle. Shobhaa De has been one of the few Indian women novelists who has balanced a successful writing career with a fulfilling home life since she began her literary career as a novelist. Shobhaa De's female protagonists all belonged to the elite class of the metropolitan, and she wrote about socialite women. She is, in fact, successful at both levels of the business. On the other hand, the author has recently tended to be more introspective and philosophical about life beyond the glitz and glamour of urban society, particularly the fair sex. As one of the most mettlesome and unreserved Indian women writers, Shobhaa De imagines coetaneous women breaking away from established norms either to satisfy their emotional demands or for a better way of life.

Keywords: Human Relationships, Women, Patriarchal Society, Emotional Demands

Shobhaa De's work has delved into the diverse experiences of women from all across the globe. Her works focus on the characters' search for meaning, identity, and unfulfilled emotional lives. This study aims to shed light on marital troubles through the author's works... One little step toward understanding Shobhaa De's female characters from the perspectives of their families and communities. Because she is a woman, Shobhaa De is more conscious of the difficulties faced by women. She provides the essential reality and makes the readers aware of the sorrows of women and the injustices they suffer from their male counterparts in the patriarchal society. As a result, the women in her books are shown as real people. In her stories, Shobhaa De depicts modern metro women in quest of their own identity and rejecting the institution of marriage. Her novels, written by socialite women, re-define marriage by replacing mutual faithfulness with free sex and demeaning men as beasts, exploiters, rapists, and wife-beaters. Sexual perversions like homosexuality, extramarital relationships, and even relationships before marriage were all depicted. Shobhaa De demonstrates several vital themes in her works, such as the concept of an emerging woman, the clash between tradition and modernization, and the escapist from the established convention. Over and above all of this, she speaks candidly and openly about sexuality and the perversion of sex.

When Shobhaa De writes, she does so as a woman, not according to the stereotypes of other women imposed on her by the culture. In the beginning, Amrita was a free woman in many ways, and she was also brave and forceful. She became virtually a slave to Minx, "the dreadful," as the storey progressed. Her identification as a woman caught in the crosshairs of a problem should not be overlooked. These works attempt to challenge and dismantle the dominant patriarchal narratives about women and develop an alternative female identity in which women play the role of both men and "free women." A person could argue that gender identities cannot be changed at will. However, Shobhaa De's female characters are excellent examples that demonstrate that a reversal of roles is, in fact, beneficial. It is possible for women in today's world. Indian women, particularly in the marriage context, have to deal with many mental and emotional issues as they try to adapt and compromise between two different cultures. After the colonial era in India, women were supposed to be educated, fashionable, and knowledgeable about modernity and

emancipation, yet they were still confined to a traditional marriage existence. Shobhaa De has done an excellent job capturing the anxiety Indian women feel due to their failures. Shobhaa De's *Second Thoughts* explores the thorny issues of male supremacy and Indian society's unwillingness to recognize a sexually free woman as a full member of society. As a storey about a young woman navigating a world marked by a rapid social, cultural, and historical change in contemporary India, the author has again brought up the pressing issue of women's liberation. Even though she fails to find new means of determining her destiny based on the logic of cultural transition, she manages to survive the spiritual claustrophobia by submitting to the social norms of the time. A self-identity crisis is a common theme in women's fiction, and Shobhaa De is no exception. In reality, because they depict women divided between tradition and modernity, her novels should be studied from a sociological and psychological perspective. Resentment has been expressed against Shobhaa De's novels for using sexual imagery, but underneath the surface lies an in-depth study of the feminine psychology that is so deftly conveyed.

Shobhaa De made attempts to show that Indian marriages are based on stereotypes. The only way Karuna thought she could fill the void in her life was to have an extramarital relationship with her husband's friend Krish. Defiantly and openly, she takes a stand. Divorce is the result of this illicit union. After her divorce, she focused on her career and worked hard to achieve success and fame. Women's self-confidence is critical, even after marriage, according to Shobhaa De. In a second marriage, she did not want to get sucked into the maelstrom of marriage. Karuna, as a freshwoman, challenges the social standards of her time.

In a patriarchal culture, women's subordination is a symptom of a hierarchy of social and moral norms between the sexes. As a result, women have been reduced to mere objects. Karuna's husband treats her as if she were a mere substance, a pawn in his game. Shobhaa De's female protagonists exemplify modernity's prevailing materialism and lack of spirituality. This inner tension pushes modern Indian women to take refuge in various identities for a bit of respite from the pressures of their daily lives. As a result, these women lack a sense of self-identity. There are also men in De's writings who abuse and discard women, so it is not entirely fair to blame women for everything. An Indian husband who permits his Indian wife to travel overseas can be found in the pages of the *Socialite Evenings*. As a result, Shobhaa De's work depicts a woman's fight against a predatory patriarchal culture. However, her vampiric feminism philosophy offers no hope for the deviant and fallen women who, in their attempt to escape male dominance and achieve uniqueness, meet with failure and are victimized somehow. Rather than offering real solutions to the plight of women in a patriarchal society, she merely raises more questions. It is common in Indian society for a woman to marry the man she will spend the rest of her life serving and give up her individuality to please everyone. It is not just males who are revolting against the institution of marriage, but women. It is refreshing to see Shobhaa De's women as free-spirited individuals who seek a niche in their lives through sexual adventures. A quest to find their place in the world through exploits and sexual encounters.

When a woman's spiritual and emotional needs are given equal weight to those of her socially acceptable material requirements, she discovers a greater sense of purpose in life. Women's personalities are primarily shaped by their quest to find meaning in their lives. A key theme in Shobhaa De's writings is the idea of female domination. However, when it comes to "aberrations," the concept of supremacy takes on a new significance. When it comes to the game of gender supremacy, these women believe that they can not only outsmart men but also have their way in every situation. Ritu played this game in *Socialite Evenings* and *Asha Rani* in *Starry Nights* Women like this are still fixated on males. These men know how many men they should utilize and when to stop. For their ability to enthrall males, Ritu and *Asha Rani* is well-known. Shobhaa De argues that sex is necessary for everyone, regardless of age. Despite the oppression and unfairness they faced, she argued that they had a right to demonstrate. They are prepared to look after their safety, even if that means leaving the house where their husband lives. They began putting their desires ahead of those of their husband. Class, caste, and religion have no bearing on the difficulties faced by all women. The author aims to eliminate women's exploitation by encouraging economic independence for women, who should make themselves economically helpful to their families. In order to change their actions, women will have to alter their thoughts. Shobhaa De, unlike other current Indian women novelists writing in English, passionately opposes the idea of one-sided and conditional compromise, thinking that a woman must struggle for her rights and establish her worthiness in all aspects of society. As an Indian woman, you should never feel inferior to your male colleagues because of this kind of independence.

Despite a society's outward appearance of supporting women's rights and pushing for their liberty, the situation of women is universally unchanging. An all-male value system forces her to face isolation, acerbic irritability, frustration, and isolation. Recurring themes are seen in Shobhaa De's novels, such as family and societal maladjustment leading to inner disintegration and causing women to look for emotional outlets outside of their families and communities. Even if marriage is a compromise, the novelist believes that the woman should know her financial situation before deciding her marital position. To lead a peaceful life, one must be able to balance one's own needs with those of society. Even though Shobhaa De is among the most widely read Indian authors writing in English now, professional literary critics despise her more than any other of her contemporaries in the field. Shobhaa De's works have some remarkable aspects that even her harshest critics cannot fault, which should be emphasized. Throughout Indian history, the concepts of marriage and love have evolved dramatically. A modern upper-class female protagonist is depicted as she is, not as she should have been, in Shobhaa De's novel. She portrays the lifestyles of young people, notably those from the upper class who no longer value loyalty and steadiness in romantic relationships. However, the portrayal of the relationship between the lovers or the husband and wife gets too frank and vulgar to be entertaining. It irritates the senses and diverts concentration. Marriages no longer include emotional components. A marriage contract is like a contract signed to owe any property or a certain amount in a bank account.

An important issue raised by Shobhaa De is the attitude toward marriage that older and younger women take. Angry with men and relieved to be alone in the absence of males allow these women to live life without the constraints of societal norms and expectations. An imaginative Shobhaa De ponders such a scene. Inventing their frustrations with males and their husbands, these

women particularly unleashes a torrent of sex animosity. These upper-class women's primary purpose in life is to have fun. Hence they are opposed to the social norms of traditional society and the joint family system.

First and foremost, they wish to keep their mother-in-law away from them while also trying to control their husbands. Many women in the affluent social strata are no longer afraid to talk openly about their sexual preferences and experiences, even in public. Most women marry young and quickly become tired of their partners. In order to maintain their family, they look for new relationships outside of marriage, renewing one's love life outside of marriage without upending one's family structure. Furthermore, Shobhaa De's impudent and unapologetic books show her readers a world that most people have no idea exists and can only dream of achieving in their lifetime. Shobhaa De manages to create a world that the readers have only glimpsed on the screens of cinema halls, and television sets seem a little more reachable and within reach of the readers. When it comes to Shobhaa De's fictitious world, women rule. Almost all of her books have female protagonists. Throughout her writings, women are a central theme, either directly or through a tangential connection. Her literature focuses on women's behaviour, feelings, and reactions in various settings. A wide range of women is depicted in her work, from the modern, assertive, young and emancipated to the traditional Indian homemakers. The feminist perspective is an integral part of her work because of her focus on contemporary women's lives and the immediate difficulties they face. Shobhaa De, despite the sarcastic tone, casual attitude, and depersonalized style of her literature, does not appear to be apathetic to women's issues. Her concern for women's suffering and marginalization may be seen in how she has organized and structured her fictional discourse. She does not pretend to be a feminist, but she is sensitive enough to uncover numerous ways women are subjugated in a male-dominated world. Shobhaa De's fame as a writer is primarily attributed to her ability to portray the issues that women face in her stories and poems. As a result of this divergence, Shobhaa De's fiction depicts a different type of woman than the usual female protagonists.

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