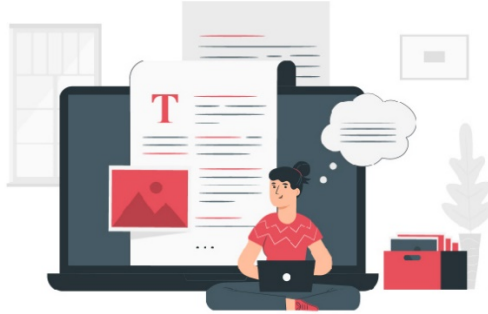


IMPACT FACTOR: 7.86

ISSN 0976 - 8165



THE CRITERION

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL IN ENGLISH

12th Year of Open Access

Bi-Monthly Refereed and Peer-Reviewed
Open Access e-Journal

Vol. 12, Issue - 5 (October 2021)

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ISSN 2278-9529

Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal
www.galaxyimrj.com

Fictions of Shobha De: Human Delineation, Pursuit of Self-interest, and Liaison

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Article History: Submitted-29/08/2021, Revised-13/10/2021, Accepted-14/10/2021, Published-31/10/2021.

Abstract:

This paper shows how Sobha De picturizes the inherent human traits of giving priorities to themselves in a practical backdrop. De's main concern, in most of her literary works, is to portray her characters' naked reality that many of the litterateurs (un)intentionally happen to conceal superficially. This research work also examines the reasons and circumstances that play fundamentally a significant role in determining the sorts of human relations established as the consequences of self-centered tendencies of the people. To analyze the human nature of self-interest in the case of establishing relations, this paper has applied the Freudian theory of psychoanalysis and some of its interpretations by renowned literary scholars. Some of the major fictions of Shoba De have been used as the primary sources of the research work, whereas both online and offline materials written on De's major fictions have been used as the secondary sources of data. The research paper concludes that most of the fiction of Shoba De manifest that liaison is the consequence of the inherent human nature of self-interest.

Keywords: delineation, feminism, liaison, naked-reality, psychoanalysis, self-centered.

Introduction

Shobha De (1948) is a modern Indian woman novelist, and a one-time popular model, columnist, and journalist as well. She founded a Bollywood gossip magazine *Stardust* (1971) that is known for introducing Hinglish to a larger audience. Under her editorship, the magazine primarily had covers and headlines covering the scandals, coupled with pictures of the famous actors of the contemporary Indian film industry. In most of her works ranging from print journalism, television programs as well as fiction writing, women-related issues like fashions, glamour, affairs, freedom, etc are always raised with great enthusiasm. The major concern of

most of De's novels are the identity, freedom, passion, lust, and revolutionary character of the urban Indian women by and large. Her fictions seem to have addressed the fact that the majority of humans by nature are logo-centric in all the ways possible: some people express this nature whereas others keep it hidden keeping into mind many of the things happening to and around them. Shobha De attractively waves in her fiction the human story of inner desires having freedom in social and other issues including the sexual relations also which are most often suppressed due to ethical, legal, social and many reasons as such. That's why she is best known for her "depiction of socialites and sex in her works of fiction; moreover, she writes the same kind of sexually charged books with celebrities and socialities as the protagonist"(Betigeri); and for this, she has been referred to as the "Jackie Collins of India"(Fineman). Her fictions primarily delineate human beings, especially women who strive for their self-identity in their family and society. This very nature of self-interest of the human being in general and women, in particular, determines the relationships of every kind among the people they live with.

Delineation of women characters in Shobha De's fictional works is an attempt at women liberalization that primarily enables them to stand boldly in front of the social, psychic, and gender barriers. In this regard, Ankita Shukla opines: "Shobha De presents women that range from traditional, subjugated and marginalized to the extremely liberated women who are presented realistically no matter whether she presents an urban woman or a rustic one. Her characters reveal the plight in the present-day society". Shobha De uses the issues related to power, greed, lust, and sex as the central theme of her writings in which she describes the sides of the country that her readers beyond India rarely encounter (Khan). Her characters stand for the inner wishes and desires of almost all the people of having maximum freedom in their all walks of lives which can't be simply enacted due to social norms and barriers regarding sex, ethnicity, morality, religion, poverty, age, social status and many issues like these. Her women characters do not seem to be feeling uneasy in expressing their sexual desires, thus they try to redefine the sexual perception that has remained an affair of a closed room for the centuries in the eastern world including India itself. "Their reference to the sexual act in unambiguous terms shatters the traditional image of women who are considered to be submissive, docile, calm and meek"(Mishra 18). Shobha De is also known for her style of presenting the story in an erotic way that has been the reason for her larger number of readers, but this is the very reason why she has been a controversial writer in India. Whatsoever, her fictions are capable enough to raise the

voices against the traditional Indian society in which people in large numbers do not want women to be presented erotically due to their stereotypical thoughts. Despite that, through her fictional writings, De intentionally wants to break and challenge the traditional Indian perception of women.

The male-dominated society elsewhere is habituated to looking down at women in several ways. Some societies are gradually assimilating the theory of equality in their practical lives too but some still stand firmly arguing and quoting religious as well as disciplinary practices. This effort in itself is an embodiment that males want to be at the center of all the controlling mechanisms for which the sexual discrimination seems to have been caused. More interestingly, the fact is that the desire of remaining in the controlling positions is equally prevalent in the females as well, but sadly the patriarchal structure of the South Asian countries, in particular, India for example, has stopped women from showing that they want their role and characters to be redefined. In her writings, Shobha De gives this opportunity to her women characters who try to delineate humans, including themselves significantly with her perception that liaisons are directly related to the very nature of the human beings of giving more importance to themselves.

Review of Literature

Shobha De, one of the prominent Indian feminist woman novelists has revolutionized the ways women are portrayed in Indian literature written in English. Her approach of presenting the female characters is always brazen and fearless. Thus, De seems to have brought out the female inner voices as a kind of challenge to the traditional patriarchal society that sometimes accuses the novelist to have been "a soft-porn writer as well; but the very fact is that her women characters are comparatively stronger, more ambitious, materialistic, and more importantly, primarily public figures with romantic notions"(Chakraborti et al.) than those of her male characters. The male characters Shobha De presents in her novels belong to upper-middle-class families. They are presented as having a desire of promoting themselves to social elites. This very nature of De's characters is an indication that they are self-centered. She presents them as the ones who take marriage as a dull and soul-killing act. This is, of course, another reason that her characters fail to maintain better relationships with each other. In her novels, *Second Thoughts*, *Socialites Evening*, and *Starry Nights* Shobha De portrays the characters as having

relationships of conflict. This very tendency of women has contributed to the emergence of feminist empowerment, especially in the above-mentioned family types. De's fictional characters prioritize themselves first on one hand, and on the other hand male characters also remain reluctant to the issues of women. Therefore, her characters both males and females have short-lasting personal and sexual liaisons. In *Socialites Evenings* (1989) Shobha De mentions the determinants of the man-woman relationship in which both the sexes try to show their dominance over the other:

Eventually, every relationship is a power struggle either on an overt or subliminal level...Control over the situation has been a male prerogative over the centuries. Women's destinies have been determined largely in that context alone...It is time they were made aware of their potential and power. Shakti needs to be harnessed, directed, and exploited for the furtherance of overall human development. The very concept of the sexes locked in eternal battle is negative and destructive...When one talks of shakti unleashed, one also remembers the two connotations of shakti—the destructive avatar is as potent as the creative one. It is in maintaining the state of equilibrium between these two opposing forces that can lead to creative and dynamic harmony...Men will have to come to terms with women's power (111-113).

In her novels, Shobha De offers a new approach to the man-woman relationship. She presents women characters as the prey of marginalization at the hands of men in Indian society. She voices against any kind of women- exploitation and domination that she loathes strongly. The exploitation of women by men is due to men's psyche of male chauvinism which is one of the major reasons that determines the man-woman relationship. As a byproduct of discrimination, the relations between the two sexes get worse that contributes to the emergence of the sexually liberated and free-thinking woman in the man-woman relationship as shown in the fiction of Shobha De. T.S, Ramesh and R. Vanitha in their article entitled *From Margin to Centre: A Case Study of Ennoblement in Shobha De's Socialite Evenings* mentions that De's women characters try to challenge the patriarchal hegemony for the fact that they are not treated the same as their male counterparts in Indian society, for example. The writers further explain the man-woman liaisons and their consequences:

To women in India, freedom is out of the question. In order to strip off their abject status, they raise their voice against the lignification of women. When women long for true love, women in the patriarchal society tend to be gutty. Keeping this in her mind, De's Karuna in *Socialite Evenings* is against other women. She is a self-conscious modern woman. (51-52).

The male-female relationship among and between the family members as picturized by Shobha De is primarily female-dominated for the reason that "they seem to use their sexuality as a woman against the male dominance" (Baig 2). Therefore, women are the protagonists, in the novels of Shobha De. Moreover, they are portrayed as bold and ambitious women who seek to get victory over their families which is culturally patriarchal in India. These sorts of women character long for minimizing the image of the male characters. De presents her women characters "as transgressors, who violate the social order and don't want to be subjected to male ostracism"(Shushil 47). In her novels, *Starry Nights* and *Strange Obsession* Shobha De has advocated even lesbianism. In both of these fictions, the central protagonists have either been exploited by men or felt unfulfilled sexually, but they find immense pleasure in the arms of other women. Thus, the novelist focuses on the woman- woman relations as well.

The man-woman relationship Shobha De shows in *Socialite Evening* is not pleasant and healthy enough to tie up all the spouses together. Karuna, Anjali, and Ritu from different families try to escape from the nightmare of a broken marriage and failed relationships for the simple reason that they are all self-centered who always dream of having complete freedom. Their journey for the "self" continues which causes Karuna, in particular, to be a hollow woman of the modern wasteland. She gets divorce to live independently with her parents because her relationship with her husband gets worst after she refuses to continue with her pregnancy. After all, she does not seem to have realized that "a man's personality can be judged in a true perspective only when one goes into the interior more than his exterior behavior" (Ponezhil 51). The relationship between the spouse, thus, gets worst, if there are grave disagreements on the matters of sexual relationship and conceiving a child.

The issue of sexual relationships plays a vital role in the married life of the spouse for the simple reason that it minimizes their physical distance by creating bondage of emotional feelings as well. Every happy married life is heavily dependent on how close the spouse are to each other. The failure in understanding each other's thirst for physical relationships is prone to invite

conflict in their life. Shobha De has highlighted the same aspect of the relationship in her novel *Second Thoughts* in which she presents the tensioned marital life of Maya with her husband Ranjan Mallik, who has been reluctant to his wife's sexual desires. That's the main cause of deterioration in their relationship of husband and wife. Maya feels lonely, bored, and exasperated by Ranjan's attitude, who is too preoccupied with himself and his job as a promising bank executive. Due to her husband's failure, unwillingness, and negligence in establishing the physical relationship, Maya is bound to have a second thought of being loved both emotionally and physically. Thus, she gets close to another younger man named Nikhil, who respects her desires, and finally, they establish a sexual relationship. The second thought that Maya has, is nothing but the consequence of her husband's weakness of loving, caring, and fulfilling her physical passion. David Carr, in his article *Freud and Sexual Ethics*, observes how sexual relations hold other sorts of relations equally importantly in the family and society: "sexual activity is no longer simply a form of personal pleasure-seeking, rather it acquires a new significance in the context of some relationship with other human beings involving the sort of altruistic relations and sentiments"(363).

In *Sisters*, Shobha De talks about the illicit relationship of Hiralal, Leelaben, Mikki, Navin, Binny, Alisha, and Dr. Kurein to disclose the reality of illicit relations and affairs and liaisons of the so-called upper-class people and business community. The series of unethical physical relationships seems to have developed in the novel for the fact that each one of them has put their vested interest at first. The relations between and among the characters are shaped by how they treat each other. Mikki is the only daughter of Hiralal and his wife Maltiben. She stops despising and gets united with Alisha, half-sister, after knowing about the conspiracy hatched by the most trusted employee of the industries. Thus, "Shobha De presents a hypocritical liaison of the upper-class people"(Book Review: *Sisters* by Shobha De).

The man-woman depiction, Shobha De, makes in most of her novels is based on the kinds of women belonging to middle and upper-class Indian families. Both types of men and women who are aware of their family code of conduct; and those who never take such things really seriously for having complete freedom in their lives are portrayed in De's fiction. In *Sultry Days*, the first types of women, Nisha's mother, for example, have been depicted as the revolutionary people who are aware enough to revolt against ill-treatment to them. They are presented as protesting their husbands' extramarital affairs to have a continuous happy marital

life; but on the other hand, the second category of women characters, Sujatha for instance, have been shown as the one who wants to have their own lifestyle by setting own rules. Working "as a prostitute she does whatever comes into her mind" (Ambadkar 453), and thus, she stands for a woman who likes enjoying complete freedom in life. Divya C. observes that Shobha De describes the demented wanderings of a split self in a quest for wholeness in *Sultry Days* in which Nisha is consciously struggling for socio-psychic emancipation. De's novels explicitly emphasize the powerful self in putting up a heroic fight in a hostile milieu. To her, the 'self' is more powerful in determining the relations with the people around her.

Shobha de portrays the sensual behaviors of the modern Indian women in her novel *Snapshots* in which a strange and awkward group of six leading women are presented with unhappy sexual lives with their married husbands. In this fiction, the novelist presents women as the ones who are quite frank in sharing their experience of sexual intercourse that contemporary Indian society would consider illicit and unethical. Once again, De's focus is on the sexual freedom of women, but the fact, as the novel shows, is that "morality is redefined in terms of social and economic status" (Vijayakumari and Geethanjali 184), which is one of the most important foundations of relationships between the spouse and among the family members. Women characters in *Snapshots* are attached to money, sex, and freedom. Thus, by revolutionizing the traditional sexual practices, De highlights that man-woman relationships are not only social-ethical matters but also monetary, sexual liberal issues. The lady characters in the novel feel that "there is nothing wrong in seeking new relationships outside marriage and challenging the patriarchal system"(190). This very outlook of the women portrayed in *Snapshots* is one of the major causes of the deteriorating, and unhappy relationships between wives and husbands in upper middle classes family in India.

Methodology

This research paper has been prepared as a qualitative research paper for which the selected fictions of Shobha De have been used as the primary sources of data. De's fictions- *Socialite Evenings* (1989), *Starry Nights* (1991), *Sisters* (1992), *Strange Obsession* (1992), *Sultry Days* (1994), *Snapshots* (1995), *Second Thoughts* 1996) were studied for the analysis and interpretation of the theme of the research paper. For a broader sense of understanding the articles available, both online and offline have been used as secondary sources of data. The

recent, as well as earlier interviews on YouTube of the novelist regarding the issue raised in the paper, were also used for bringing the updated views of the novelist Shobha De. This research paper might be taken as a secondary source of data for future researchers interested in delving into the mode of communication that is affected by the inherent human characteristics about which this paper has talked. This paper will contribute to the understanding of Sobha De's emphasis on the psychological level of the human mind for the portrayal of the characters she chooses.

Results

Shobha De is a bold feminist novelist who advocates the sexual freedom of women as a basic human right for she presents her woman characters revolting and challenging the patriarchal perceptions and treatments on sexual relationships which is, by and large, the strong base of man-woman relationship in the family and society. Looking at the scientific point of view of the biological aspect physical relationships can be taken as necessary human attachments between man and woman, but the failure in assimilating this necessity aptly can invite plenty of obstacles in the man-woman relationship. Shobha De advocates sexual freedom through her fiction as an indication of women's voice for gender equality that males and females have the same level of freedom in all walks of life regarding sexual issues as well. That's the reason why she presents women characters as strong as that of a man, and they have affairs with more than one man simultaneously or at different times. Having more than one wife and extramarital affairs by males in Indian society is a socially accepted practice for ages, but the case of women is quite different on the same issue. Shobha De, as a female, revolts against such partiality of sexual practices in her fictional writings that embody the "new woman"(Bhavani 3) of modern upper and middle-upper classes. The transformation of women and their temperament has, thus, redefined their relationship with males like husband, father, and son. Females have sought their new space and role in the family and society in which male chauvinism has been gradually disappearing. The gradual disappearance of sexual discrimination is bound to shape a new man-woman relationship. Women in De's fiction are no longer the puppets on the hands of males, rather in some occasions they are shown even stronger and superior to their male counterparts. Her female characters, in the attempt to break the traditional concept of sex, turn to violate established sexual societal norms as well, but as Divya C. opinionates: "De never justifies her

protagonist's violation of moral codes but focuses on women's emotional necessity to be loved and cared" (542).

The man-woman relations in Shobha De's seems to have turned problematic provided that one gender tries to suppress another in the ways possible, and this very treatment of gender discrimination is most likely to invite several causes of revolt that the women characters in *Second Thoughts*, for example, are presented to have been assimilating. The human delineation Shobha De has made is heavily dependent on the treatment of one sex over the other keeping in mind the reactions of those treatments. The illicit physical relationships have been established by almost all major characters in *Sisters* due to their vested interests that have created family tensions among them. Maya's marital relationship with her husband Ranjan is deceptive because he is unable to address her desires of love, care, and sex. Karuna, in *Socialite Evenings* has to undergo the company of several male counterparts for her search of 'self' that deprives her of having a happy conjugal life. The lesbian relationship between Linda and Asha Rani in De's novel *Starry Nights* is an indication of "a revolt against the patriarchal traditional setup of our society" (Dhanda). The latter revolts against the heterosexual relationship between man and woman. Unlike in other novels, Shobha De talks also about male characters with more focus in *Sultry Days*. Nisha is a career-oriented strong female character but the novel also deals realistically with the male characters who are kept at the center of the story. But Sujata, in the same novel defines life in her own style defying even her husband, has relationships with many men as a prostitute. *Strange Obsession* moves around the story of the lesbian relationship between Meenakshi and Amrita (Ambadkar 453). Women are bored with their relationship with their husbands in the next novel *Snapshots* by Shobha De. The novel discloses them to be obsessed with sensual enjoyments and they seek relationships outside marriage challenging the patriarchal system.

Discussion

Shobha De's approach of portraying the women characters of the upper and middle class in particular, as the violators of established patriarchal norms, is guided by Sigmund Freud's "psychoanalytic investigation that stresses that human nature embodies some traits which yearn to satisfy the impulses- like aggression, the ego that drives him towards pleasurable experiences and needs for getting love" ("Freud's View On Human..."). Freud argues that there is a

significant relationship between human behaviors and the society from which an individual grows. In other words, it can be argued that the characteristics of a person are the product of the treatment that a particular society gives him or her. No man gets into rebellion unless the societal structure compels him/her to do so. In that sense, the revolutionary women characters created by Shobha De are the victims of the patriarchal Indian society from which they want a kind of emancipation. Segregation existing into any of the forms, naturally, produces the necessity of some kind of revolution sooner or later. Women in India in the particular and entire Indian subcontinent in general, are under huge pressure of sexual discrimination that has stopped themselves from enjoying their rights and proving that they are equal to man in all the issues- even in having freedom for establishing physical relationships beyond their spouses. This is the reason why Shobha de depicts her fictional female characters as getting involved in extramarital affairs, which is almost an accepted practice for males for the ages with the provision of male polygamy in India. Through her novels like *Snapshots*, *Strange Obsession*, and *Sultry Days*, Shobha De has advocated for female freedom in sexuality for the simple reason that making love as a virtue, is a result of sexual sublimation.

The significance of sexual relationships for maintaining a better man-female relationship has also been highlighted by psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud who opines in his book *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* that "normal copulation leads to the release of the sexual tension and contemporary extinction of sexual instinct" due to which the relationship between the partners goes on well. Therefore, liaison, a matter of intimacy fulfilling the needs of sex partners- husband and wife, for example, keeps the relationship cordial and honest with each other. The failure in addressing this aspect of human needs- both physical and psychological compels them to revolt against one another. Shobha De's novels are also criticized for their 'vulgar' presentation of the women characters who seem to challenge stereotypical and traditional perceptions regarding the sexual behavior of the women. The female protagonists in her novels are shown with frank sexual activities, and most of their actions are thought to be immoral as well as illicit. But, Carpendale and Kerb observe that "morality is less associated with one's thought" and "it is revealed in an individual's actions". The women characters in De's fiction do not seem to consider themselves immoral or even erotic but they just have made a genuine effort for their liberation from the patriarchy in practical lives like those of the males. Their revolutionary temperament, in this sense, is only for a delineation that all humans- both male and

female deserve the same degree of liberalization. Shobha De's portrayal of women characters, in particular, who are guided by their self-interest of establishing multiple physical contacts is very close to Freud's theory of human development which explains the sexual instinct and death instinct are historically under restructuring phenomenon of human nature (Zilbersheid). According to this theory perception of the sexual affair has continuously been changing and Indian society has also had a sort of comparatively more frank sexual treatment at the present than those of the past generation. De's characters have resembled this kind of restructuring concepts on sex and sexual affairs. Talking about the importance of sexual affairs primarily between the spouse, Dr. E. Bhavani in her article *Feministic Images of Women In Shobha De's Novels* mentions that "in *Socialite Evenings* Karuna establishes an extra-marital relationship with Krish revolting against her insensitive husband with whom she gets divorce ultimately. Similarly, Anjali, a debutant, doesn't have a happy conjugal life due to incompatible marriage and her husband's oppressive attitude".

It's the power – of all kinds- that plays a vital role in determining the relationship of one person to another. The man-woman relationship also revolves around power. An individual possessing the power of some specific kind holds a distinct position in society. Money, youth, beauty, sex, etc. can offer power to both man and woman. When it comes to females, they can show the power of their beauty, youth, and sexual appeal as well. These are the things that give the relationships with their male counterparts a shape. Shobha De's novels emphasize the value of equivalence of power. R. Rajalakshmi observes that the collapses, in this balance, create some kind of tension in society, and double-dealings and hypocrisy predominate. Significantly enough, the term 'power' has been reiteratively used in Shobha De's *Snapshots*: "That's why we are here: to satisfy their lust, not for sex but power. Power over women. Power over us—you and me. If they buy your sex, pay for you, they feel like kings"(43). This is how De presents her female characters to have been controlling the males through their power of sex that most of the males strive for. The sexual relationships De's female protagonists make are not merely intended to providing physical and mental gratification to males, rather they have been used as a powerful tool to keep their male counterparts under control. Karuna and Anjali of *Socialite Evenings*, for example, are remarkable when measured against men. They are "powerful enough to revolt against every unfair treatment on them for they have tremendous self-confidence" (Ramesh and Vanitha) for proving themselves as far as man-woman relationships are concerned.

Shobha De rhetorically tries her best to reveal the moral breakdown of modern Indian society amid the accusation of being a soft porn writer but she seemed to be more focused on advocating women liberalization in the expressive forms. She promotes the ladies to break the traditional, patriarchal, and dogmatic practices that are still in existence in the names of moral codes forced on the females. Due to this, the majority of Indian women, in particular, are facing the problem of an identity crisis. That's why De's female protagonists are "delineated as women of substance, self-substance, and having free spirit"(Kumar). In her novel *Starry Nights*, she depicts the modern women's search for identity in a male-dominated society. Asha, one of the major characters in the play feels shattered after she has to maintain affairs with many men, despite that she doesn't run away from her life's accountability and, is committed to having a better future. Likewise, Alisha in *Sisters* resolves to fight for her 'self' and 'share' in her father's business. She has been depicted as someone who searches existence and identity with money than human relationships, but in contrast, her half-sister Mikki considers blood relations more important than the rest of the things. The lustful relationship of two young sisters namely Minakshi and Amrita has been portrayed in De's other novel *Strange Obsession* in which the novelist explores the inner and psychic reality of her characters.

The man-woman relationships in Shobha De's novels are found to have been completely shattered. Her women characters discuss and practice sex with unusual candor. The chemistry of bodies has its relevance in De's novels. Males in her novels are painted in gloomy colors. They are very passive, unresponsive, involuntary unable to take action for the way things turn out. She has powerful eyes to see what we do not notice and has absorbent ears to hear voices that escape mostly our ears. She brings forth the issue of heterosexuality, homosexuality, sexual behavior, the psyche of the woman, and her problems to portray the relationship between man and woman on practical ground. In her novels, Shobha De deals with social realities like the problems of the individual in a growing materialistic society, degradation of human values in relationships, lifestyle, and thoughts, which appear to be too harsh, brutish, crude, and uncivilized. In her novels, sexual relationships are like four-wheel drive sex-in-all directions. It offers a vehicle for building links to another person and at the same time, it is pleasurable proof of these links. It can function either constructively or destructively and often does both. The relationships in Shobha De's novels are based on sex, money. V. Saraladevi observes that the women characters of Shobha De consider their sexuality not as a burden but as an effective

weapon in the power game of relationships. To them, sex is not just confined to the body rather it's the symbol of power that determines the overall man-woman relationships. Saraladevi further opines that the female protagonist of De keep on with their unhappy marriage for the sake of their comforts and indulge in mechanical relationships treating sex as the ticket to keep the marriage not to be broken. This drifting nature does not allow them to take marriage seriously. Thus, they seem to focus much on self-importance that is more likely to damage their marital 'relationships that can get better if there's complete trust and equality among the spouses' ("SHOWSHA", 00:11:55-00:11:59).

Conclusion

Most of the fictional works of Shobha De vividly portray her as a strong feminist writer even though she has described herself as 'a gender-neutral', and 'bad feminist' arguing that 'she equally stands for a man' ("SHOWSHA", 00:05:18-00:05:32) as far as rights and human rights are concerned. By this, the novelist means that she depicts both the male and female characters as they behave or are behaved by each other in societal life. The depiction of women as revolutionary figures in her novels, in that sense, is an act of presenting the real-life situations of women who are victimized and suppressed in the name of various rites rituals as well as traditions. Traditionally, the patriarchal society has deprived women of many of their rights and responsibilities as well. Shobha De challenges it and depicts her women characters, in particular, who try to break these demarcations so that they could also stand in an equal status like those of the men in the society. Thus, Shobha De delineates the human tendency as it's noticed naturally in all of the sexes that tend to be self-centered in this or that way. This human nature is the root foundation of the liaisons among themselves. De thinks that relations among males and females are the causes of actions and reactions. It has certain kinds of expectations from each other; the failure in doing the same for each other results in bad relations. A woman gets revolutionary provided that is suppressed and exploited more than she could bear. De's female characters revolt socially, professionally, and sexually too, for they are deprived of those natural rights. According to Ghai et al., "Nisha in *Sultry Days*, Aasha in *Starry Nights*, Karuna in *Socialite Evenings* suffer from humiliation as far as their social, economic, and cultural life is concerned"(676). These women are fully capable of struggling but they compromise and realize their existence towards the end for the simple reason that liaisons come out of the actions and reactions from the two

sides. The novelist shows females as "new women' who "rise like a phoenix indulging in unconventional sexual behavior to challenge and reject male dominations" (Ghai et al.,678) of all kinds. De depicts realistically the socialites and sex in her fictions that primarily delineate women striving for their self-identity in the society and the family they live in. Their search for identity and self-recognition with equal status like that of men is guided by their very nature of self-interest which is a natural human characteristic that delineates their relationship to each other. Shobha De's novels thus revolve around the human liaisons that are outcomes of human traits of the search for self-identity for which her women characters always strive.

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