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Feminism in Shobha De's 'Socialite evenings'

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Abstract

The Novel 'Socialite Evenings' by Shobha De is an expression of rebellious spirit that makes Karuna discontent with her middle class origins. The girl who can have her own identity and hold the belief on the principles of equality, freedom and justice without any discrimination on the ground of sex. For her marriage becomes 'increasingly meaningless' and lovemaking a listless affair'. Unlike traditional Indian women she doesn't feign love to get control over her husband. However, like modelling she cannot dislodge her husband from her life on the plea that he is a bore. This boredom leads her to extra-marital relationship, breaking of marriage and finally to the space she has been carving for so long. Writers feminist attitude directs the way towards the new exploration of female soul and psyche. It provides some controversial issues and modern practice of the world. She celebrates sex and globalizes her feminist stance, based on new moral values which make us agree to validate Shobha De as a women writer, of course a feminist.

Keywords: Feminism, freedom, justice, independence, identity and dissatisfaction

Introductions

Shobha De, the all-time favorite of the booksellers, and curious readers has been granted a receipt of utmost love from the aficionados of Indian Literature in English. She was won a commendable in the heart of readers with the varied titles as well as severe criticism, in view of the fact that she lays at our feet a critical analysis and the new moral values concerning her feminist attitude against the backdrop of varied sex affairs in this new world. She is quite bold as regards her controversial views. But her feminist Stance keep an eye on the sensual desire of human beings which she prominently registers in her best sellers.

Shobha De's rise in the ideal world. Of literature as a versatile writer, demonstrating the timeless truth that human is more. Important than the man or woman.

Women since early days of civilisation have been subjected to ill-treatment, persecution and torture. As soft targets they have been put. Even to violence. They have chiefly been considered object for gratifying sex desire by men and in this their willingness has seldom been considered. In matters of deciding something their opinions are hardly been. Sought for or thought fit for any consideration. They have been struggling hard to free themselves from the male oppression. In fact, they have been, in most cases, nobody. Whether it be social, political or economical, power has been centred in men. And the women have been denied their access to it. Men have been dominating and. women have been forced to feel alienated depressed.

This paper puts try to go into a world cruise of Shobha De's feminist attitude in terms of the new moral values against the men domination.

Feminism

Feminism as a movement has its origin in the Western countries where women had freer atmosphere and received. Education on larger scale than the less. Privileged women of the countries of the Eastern world. Education provided them the privilege to be aware of themselves, especially of their rights. The women of the oriental countries, however, more or less, remained confined to the four walls of the houses. With the spread of education and greater freedom, now available, even oriental women have started raising the voice of protest against oppression of any kind. The scenario, indeed, is materially changing. Processions exhibiting solidarity of women are increasingly becoming a common feature. Women frankly advocate their concerns, and forms and practice. Their vision represents a major break with the existing male-defined world.

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They wish to have their own point of view building their autonomy as individuals and as a collective power. Equality, freedom and justice are central to the movement of feminism for bringing about a radical change in society.

Feminism can be understood as a vision playing a pivotal role in breaking male hegemony in all known spheres of life. In a broader sense, the feminist revolution involves a total integrative restructuring of society and human relationships which will bring about a social change where participation in male-dominated activities is understood to be necessary to the pursuit of struggle for women's causes.

The Text

Shobha De in her first novel *Socialite Evenings*, portrays the journey of Karuna, the central female character, from an ordinary class to an affluent one. This Journey is quite uneven in which she comes across a number of odd experiences and finally it helps her to find a self-reliant and self-sufficient woman. Karuna was quite dissatisfied with her middle class surroundings at her parents' home. She hates being middle class. She derides middle class standards and moralities. She can't bear to have inadequate facilities, and express her feelings in:

I was terrible self-conscious and awkward and resented with all my being my middle class origins. (page-10).

The dissatisfaction had a creeping feeling on her which fills in her a yearning to be rich and socialite. Karuna's discontentment with her middle class origins, in fact, guides her to decide who she will marry and even in choosing a job of her choice. She doesn't allow her parents to interfere in these. She is rebellious. Thought of modelling, she knows, doesn't suit her at all, she wouldn't leave this. She thinks, she would be able to find a way - a fulfilling way, indeed, which will bring her peace and necessary money. Even in her relation with Bunty (her boyfriend) she feels incompatibility. However she allows it in a quite vague and uncertain way.

The rebellious spirit that makes Karuna a girl, who can have her own decision. In matter of choosing a carrier and partner unlike the traditional girls who didn't have any say in such regards. She has liberty to do things she likes and what she thinks would be better for her. However, her identity asserted. When she is humiliated by Anjali the person who introduced her to the world of modelling. She resolves to go to the USA to find out about herself and experiment with her adulthood. This quest for identity finds expression. In her words:

I was going to find out about myself. America was supposed to be my experiment with adulthood. (page 51).

While choosing America she is no dilemma about any discrimination on the grounds of sex there. Men and women are treated on the principles of equality, freedom and justice.

However, Karuna is not yet sure about her marriage with Bunty. She needs time to think over the issue of such major concern of her life. The thought of marriage was troubling her mind. But soon she realised that her choice has been a wrong one. Her marriage becomes 'increasingly meaningless' and lovemaking 'a listless affair' 'a vague habit' and 'a passionless mechanical encounter'. Karuna has her own views about marriage. For her marriage is 'one in which the two of us were perfectly in tune'.

Karuna is very different from traditional Indian women whose chief concern was how to place their menfolk. She

doesn't feign love to get control over her husband. However like modelling she cannot dislodge her husband from her life on the plea that he is a bore and she doesn't have interest in him, this leads her to extra-marital relationship, breaking of marriage and finally to the space she has been craving for so long. Free from the enslaving ties, she feels like a queen and got an opportunity to search her soul and she realises that she has been. Built of no ordinary clay. Like any other married woman, she feels depressed and insecure when she learns that her husband taken another woman. Soon, all these feelings die out. Anjali helps her to come out of this depression. Karuna takes up some odd jobs but soon with Anjali's help, she takes up another lucrative job. She prefer to live with her parents and looks after their needs with great joy. This time, she finds. Absolute independence which she will not renounce at any cost.

Quite impassively she turns down her husband's proposal to come back to him. She thinks that she has earned her independence. She would be foolish enough to accept the proposal of Girish, the art filmmaker, even though much of their interest were common. She has a firm belief that marriage. Demands sacrifice which she, now, would never do.

Conclusion

Shobha De's novels are entertainments rather than novels proper expressing sagas of bed-hopping, chronicles of high society and low ethicality, drawing room manners and barn door morals. In her novel *Socialite Evenings*, Shobha De glaringly declares that she is a writer of concurrent India - very different from the other novelist or the time.

In this novel, Karuna emerge as a woman of a strong will power having her own individualistic approach to life. She is a representative or modern Indian women. consumed by freedom, equality and justice which the feminists have upheld so earnestly and keenly as their guiding principles.

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