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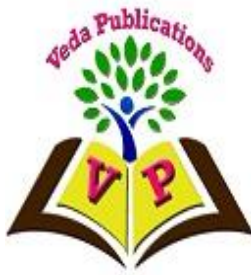
LITTLE WOMENS OWNNESS: FROM DEFENCE TO EXCAVATE IN THE SELECTIVE WORKS OF INDIAN WOMEN ENGLISH NOVELISTS

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ABSTRACT



It would be inappropriate to substitute realism in Shobha De's frank narration with the tags like 'vamp feminism' because her purpose is not to depict the women who can get anything by using their beauty or sex as a means rather she has tried to underline the hardcore reality behind sex, which so many women writers in the present day have refused to do in a factual manner. Pandeya (2000) asserts that--Shobhaa De in *Starry Nights* has graphically depicted the Bombay film world and how could Bollywood be complete without sex and fleshly pleasures (Pandeya 200).

Keywords: *New Woman, Insurgent, Audacious, Substantial.*

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Beautifully dressed in her white attire, Aasha attends the premiere show of 'Bechari Begum' with a hope to meet Akshay but she does not find any sign of Akshay's presence rather she happens to meet Abhijit Mehra, the son of an influential entrepreneur named Amrish Mehra. Abhijit is the chief sponsor of the show. Seeing Aasha, he sends her a message for a meeting. While she was honoring Abhijit at the show, Abhijit touches her warmly to express his interest in her. It is a game in the elite circles where the affluent guys seek the company of star heroines to fulfill their bodily pleasures. In the urban societies, women turn out to be victims to the extramarital relations as is seen in the case of Kishenbai cheating upon his wife and Abhijit enjoying intimate sessions with Aasha while he is engaged to Nikita. After Aasha's suicidal attempt, Abhijit again tries to take advantage of her fragile health and desolation by coming closer to her. He meets her at the Film City studios where he urges her to get to his suite in New Zealand. After attaining so much of money, wealth, and fame by all means, a time comes in Aasha's life when she starts looking desperately for a soulful companion. She finds herself estranged from acting and feels as if she has been caught in a vicious cycle of sex and career and maybe true love can bring her some solace. She tries to renew her relationship with Akshay for which she is even ready to put her acting career at stake. She uses every fraction of the time to be in the company of Akshay by annoying her producers.

The situation becomes so much that Amma has to come back to look after again her dwindling career though deep down she is after her daughter's money and fame. Aasha is devastated when her dream of marriage to Akshay does not meet the

reality. Aasha attempts to commit suicide by swallowing sleeping tablets though she is saved because Amma and Kishenbai take her to the hospital timely. Media makes most of Aasha's alienated situation. Even journalist highlights issues of Aasha's decision to quit, to marry Akshay and to have his baby. The news of Aasha's suicidal attempt enhances Akshay's acting career as his role in her suicide attempt is widely discussed in newspapers and film magazines. Some people call it simply bizarre and others call it indeed spiteful. Akshay's wife Malini plays the role of a true wife who in order to rescue her husband asserts that it is always Aasha who always tries to seduce her husband. Amma advises Aasha to forget Akshay and move ahead in life. Like in the case of other new urban women of De, with every passing experience of her life, Aasha grows wiser and more realistic. Vats are of view states that, -the novelist delineates the psychological journey of Aasha Rani through her experiences; with every experience, she emerges more and more sensible (60). It is her sense that she tries to come out of despair in her love for Akshay and concentrate on her work.

Though she goes to New Zealand on Abhijit's insistence, this short stay changes the entire course of her life. It is here in Wellington, she happens to meet Jamie (Jay) Philips who impresses her with his awareness of movies and cine stars. When Jay proposes to her, she is surprised and marries him. Jay is a loving and creative husband. Aasha experiences a sense of respite and safety with him as he loves her craziness



as well. A daughter named Sasha is born to them. Jay suggests her that they should go back to India with their small family but Aasha is unwilling as she wants to stay away from the bitter memories of past. She has received sincerity and devotion from her husband which she could never expect in any of her romantic affairs, so she does not want to remain clung to her past. But, finally, on Jay's insistence, she agrees to go back to India. The day when amma comes to know that Aasha is still alive, she decides to make Sudha, Aasha's sister a star by turning her into a pricey thing for Sethji. She tells Sudha: "You have everything in your favour-age, looks talent. Make the most of them. Don't throw your career away like your stupid sister did" (SN147). Both Aasha and her mother are the examples of the fact that relationships move back and forth so quickly in high society. Amma surprises Aasha with her manner of receiving her daughter, son-in-law, and granddaughter. Women in Shobhaa De 'S books are madly in love with men who are macho. The sissy type of men does not matter to her (the gay' or the chocolate' boy like Amar in *Starry Nights*). Hence crueler the man, the more is he desired by the woman. Beatings and other cruelties behoove them. Jealousy is a recurring theme. Aasha Rani and Sudha Rani want to possess the same man-Amar.

De's new women Aasha Rani and Sudha have learned well the art of using their physical relations with men to satisfy their desire for material wealth. They are quite aware of the fact these men are the real brutes in blemishing

their career and life. Still they are unable to keep themselves away from them. They maintain their connections with an objective to quench their emotional and bodily needs and in harvesting a blooming flowering employment in the cine industry. Another important aspect of De's new women is that they are considerate even towards those men who oppress them in their dirty love games. This is seen when her heart starts pounding on seeing Akshay dying in front of her. On the contrary, male characters in the novel have no value for their female counterparts.

The meeting between Aasha and Sudha towards the end of the novel is an appropriate instance to show that regardless of so much moral laxity to climb the ladder of success, somewhere in her conscious, Aasha still values relationships. Aasha Rani instantly forgives her. Repetitive sexual & psychological abuse continued existence despite a succession of shocks and separation from a loving husband cannot restrain Aasha's inborn instinct to live an independent and successful life. The way Aasha boosts her sister Sudha to fulfill their appa's dream by reestablishing their studio and making films is an appropriate illustration of the same. She is self-motivated towards becoming a dutiful mother and wishes for her daughter Sasha to become a star which is a dream cherished by so many cine stars. Bringing out the difference between the modern woman and a traditional woman, Narinder Neb in his article entitled, *Feminist Stance in Shobha De's Novels'* rightly states that, --the attitude of modern women like Aasha Rani may accept the responsibility



of her daughter like a traditional Indian mother but they do not have the earlier respect for traditional institutions as such (175). The new women of De do not feel culpable about their moral laxity and attitudes or to put it another way the question of morality and ethics cannot stop them from marching ahead successfully on the difficult road chosen by them. Karuna in *Socialite Evenings* expresses her own inclination towards the art of modernization and symbolizes complete independence of womankind from all types of patriarchal reticence. She very well comprehends how women in Indian society have been relegated to an auxiliary place yet; she despises the distant and insensitive attitude of her husband.

These notions of Spacks are seen in the minds of Shobhaa De. She, as a writer, abandons psychological or cultural differentiation without second thought. When she comes out with series of accounts for women. Shobhaa De's texts points out the truth without any mask against phallogocentric heritage. She, through her writings, helps the readers to understand her works by biologically determined females of the species with male mind.

The Post Colonial Writers have portrayed pain, hardship and struggle in their writings at the beginning. They show life of dependence. Also they show how their protagonists live at the mercy of the patriarchal man in their lives. In fact, they have shown their heroines with less dignity, identity or individuality. Later, writers like Anita Desai and Ruth Parawer Jhabvala projects their protagonists as

independent and how they live life of their own. They have inner struggle and with it they try to discover the real self through their inner natural potentiality to show they do not want to submit themselves to anyone's injunctions. They want to assert their position as human beings equal to men. As a result, they show scuffle between age old traditions and emerging new ideas. Most of the Indian women writers have brought out how the family and society responsible for deteriorating relations. But, the fierce protagonists of Indian women writers struggle to attain selfhood to show that they are non-conformist. In fact, the protagonists are projected not as an object and they go ahead to attain their goal with their strident endeavors. Though the double standards of patriarchy may give them mental trauma, they try to overcome their agony with their audacity. Most of the Indian women writers talk about Liberal Feminism. Its aim is to achieve equality between man and woman; it stresses more on the strength of an individual to change biased practices against women. It works within the framework of the society to bring women into it. Liberal Feminism has its saying to focus on individual who uses her abilities not only to help but also to help women thereby become equal with men in society. Indian women writers, who fall into Liberal Feminism, work for an individual woman who has the ability to determine her role in family and society with freedom to attain selfhood. It, therefore, aims to remove the historic structure of patriarchal law that has denied women's rights. The major



stress is on equality of women. In short, it helps to bring equality between women and men in the framework of existing social systems.

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