



Comparing And Contrasting A Few Of Shobha De And Preeti Shenoy's Novels

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Abstract: The present chapter inspects parity and disparity of the characteristic features of the fiction of Shobha De and Preeti Shenoy. Similarity between the write up of these two novelists is the emergence of new woman who has eventually liberated and carved a niche for herself. The dissimilarity is that the novels of Shobha De are based on Radical Feminism whereas the fiction of Preeti Shenoy is based on Liberal Feminism. Shobha De and Preeti Shenoy are more or less contemporaries. There are similarities in writing different women oriented themes between these two writers. They have emphasized emancipation, self and identity, empowerment of women and the evolution of new woman in India. These fiction writers have highlighted the impact of the rise of feminism in India. The emergence of new woman is depicted through their female protagonists. The conventional woman of India is totally different from the traditional woman of India. They have shown outstanding perceptiveness and compassionate vision into the poignant world of women. They have guided their female protagonists towards self-definition and self-realization. They have instilled in their female characters a good sense of feminine identity. Their books are about the search of women for their identity. It is an examination of the feminine consciousness, and an awareness of their lives' complications being women. Their writings highlight the role of protagonists in creating a place of their own.

Key Words: Sujugation,Oppression,Empowerment,Dissimilarity,Parity

Introduction: Shobha De and Preeti Shenoy are more or less contemporaries. There are similarities in writing different women oriented themes between these two writers. They have emphasized emancipation, self and identity, empowerment of women and the evolution of new woman in India. These fiction writers have highlighted the impact of the rise of feminism in India. The emergence of new woman is depicted through their female protagonists. The conventional woman of India is totally different from the traditional woman of India. They have shown outstanding perceptiveness and compassionate vision into the poignant world of women. They have guided their female protagonists towards self-definition and self-realization.

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Their female protagonists are modern, educated, and self-reliant middle-class women. The writings of Shobha De and Preeti Shenoy are unique. They vied for originality and identity. In their novels, female characters are delineated as strong and independent beings. These have freed themselves from the constraints of the patriarchal society. They have also liberated themselves from the restrictions of traditions and norms which are imposed on women. They have their own worries and guilt, indicating that they have attained a level of awareness and essential truth.

Women from the traditional background are contrasting when compared to the new women of India. They are adaptable, accommodating, malleable, and service-oriented in general. A conventional woman who follows tradition can even put her happiness on hold for the sake of her family. She is always willing to serve her family without reservation. To her, the well-being and happiness of her family comes first. She sacrifices all her aspirations and joys for the benefit of those who entrust her with the honour and prestige of family. New woman is not submissive. She is unwilling to tolerate and forego in the way that a typical woman would do. She intends to present an image of herself as a free individual who rejects all forms of conformist beliefs. She is prepared to overcome any obstacles that stand in the way of achieving her goals. She defies current moral rules and societal norms that tend to place women in a secondary position in society. New women defy the conventional societal norms that keep them subject to male dominance. They are eager to build their own distinct individual identities. They yearn for their privacy and manage to get it over all odds. The New woman is demanding, aggressive and lives on her own terms. She is rebellious and a go getter. She does not conform to the rules and regulations of the patriarchal frame work. She desires to sculpt a place for herself. She is assertive and makes sure to have an identity of her own. These writers have brought out the image of empowered, liberated and strong woman. Their protagonists are female. Their stories revolve round these women. They are meek in the beginning of her novels, eventually they become self-reliant and confident.

Feministic Views in the Selected Fiction of Shobha De and Preeti Shenoy:

Shobha De and Preeti Shenoy do not refer their female characters as slaves and subjugated women. They are not portrayed as mere homemakers. When it comes to representing women in their stories, they seek to mimic or portray their feminist perspectives. A more in-depth examination of their works indicates their opposition to the stereotype of women who are unable to live their lives and do things the way they desire. Female characters in their works are portrayed as sexually active as well as liberated. They are individuals who have wide perspectives. They are "new woman". They discuss the autonomy of women in every field. Their women are from upper class. They are educated and women with reason. They live their lives according to their terms and conditions. These women are not anguished with dowry or poverty issues.

These Indian women lead luxurious lives, yet they experience void in their existence. These women face identity crisis. They are bothered about the fundamental human issues especially of women. Their freedom is curtailed. They are concerned about women who are suppressed in the form of mother, wife, sister, daughter, career oriented and home maker. Patriarchal society has harmed the rights of women. Men are not always portrayed as oppressors in their fiction. Their novels highlight the age old issues of women in India. They have advocated understanding and fighting for the rights of women. They are in search to find answers for all the questions raised by women against male hegemony in the patriarchal society.

Novels of Shobha De and Preeti Shenoy symbolize the emerging voice of the Indian woman. The New woman seeks self-identity and liberation in all aspects of life, substituting the stereotype of the Indian woman. Their novels emphasize the importance of women in search of their identities. Shobha De and Preeti Shenoy are disdained for the unethical and socially inappropriate actions of their female characters. These writers feel that women need not imitate like men and behave like men to attain equality and liberty. A study of their works serves to broaden and guide our attention to significant issues impacting women to reduce the second grade citizens in the Indian society, which is particularly noteworthy in the present era, in terms of gender discrimination.

Marriage is revered in the Indian culture as a spiritual connection between a man and a woman. All these illusions of marriage are destroyed by these writers. Their novels delineate liberated women with their strong self-identity.

These writers are more concerned about the problems of women as they belong to the same gender. They bring to light an important issue and rouse everyone to the plight of women and the inequalities perpetrated against them by the male-dominated society. The fact is that their novels highlight female characters and their issues. They primarily write about urban women in their novels, and rural women and their problems are hardly discussed. They are completely disregarded. Most of their novels are protest against the patriarchal Indian society. It denies women the right to freedom of articulation and action. They become rebellious because of tyranny, suppression, and marginalization.

The protagonists of Shobha De, Karuna in *Socialite Evenings*, Mallika and Alisha in *Sisters* and Maya in *Second Thoughts* have commonalities with Preeti Shenoy's female characters, Nisha in *Tea for Two and a Piece of Cake*, Diksha in *The Secret Wish List* and Vipasha in *It Happens for a Reason*, all these are strong and bold in expressing themselves. They are independent and fight for their rights.

Karuna is a bold woman. She fights for equality. She strives to attain empowerment. She wishes to be free of the constraints of society. Her father opposes her aspiration to become a model. She does not want to be stifled by parental expectations. She wishes to realise her ambition of becoming a model. She goes against her parents' aspirations and pursues modelling. Her first step towards freedom has come to fruition. She meets Anjali, a model who is well-known in the modelling industry. Karuna aspires to build a name for her in the world of showbiz.

Marriage of Karuna is a failure. It is devoid of love, happiness, and bond. They do not have any mutual understanding. She considers herself to be married. She feels that she has married a man, who is totally in contrast. She has married, "the wrong man for the wrong reasons at the wrong time". Her husband is a typical Indian husband: uninteresting, boring, and uneducated. He is not built for self-reflection. Her husband is a typical Indian husband: uninteresting, boring, and uncivilized. He is not a man who introspects.

Shobha De interprets marriages in India as an elergy which every wife has been tolerating for generations. The new woman of India is bold and defiant to face the turbalance of India. Karuna rightly expresses, "marriage is nothing to get excited or worried about. It is just something to get used to" (*Socialite Evenings* 68) Over a period of time, the New Woman becomes accustomed to this stereotypical social institution known as marriage. She despises the obstinacy and insensitive attitude of her spouse, which typically consisted of dull and uninteresting routine like reading business pages of a newspaper. In spite of these flaws, a husband for an Indian woman is a safe abode and a pillar for his wife. Indian wives should not think beyond these materialistic facilities which are provided by their husbands. Karuna says, "We were reduced to being marginal people. Everything that mattered us was trivialized.roof over our head and four square meals a day." (*Socialite Evenings* 69)

Shobha De portrays the Indian male as a person who is frightened by the assertive women. He is unfit and imperfect as a husband since he has a dearth of these characteristics of an ideal husband. He fears to lose control over his independent minded wife. Eventually compels him to employ a variety of defence measures. He desires to retain his prejudice and domination over his wife. He follows different techniques in order to suppress his wife. Karuna's husband treats her as if she were a piece of substance, a mere object and subservient to his will. Karuna tries to escape from the fetters of marriage; she gets into extra-marital affair with her husband's friend, Krish. She indulges with him in indiscriminate sex. She longs to live with him. She is bold enough to express her love towards Krish in front of her husband. She walks out of his life and lives with her parents when she learns that Krish has sexually exploited her. She aborts her baby which she conceives. She represents new woman, who is least bothered about the norms of the male-dominated society.

Karuna of *Socialite Evenings* has similarities with Nisha of *Tea for Two and a Piece of Cake*. This is the story of a middle-class girl; Nisha. She is described as plain Jane by the author Preeti Shenoy, who is from middle class. It is about the changes brought in her life by her love and marriage. She is a 26-year-old woman. She is employed for a travel agency. Her best buddies are Chetana and Akash. Though she is from a humble background; her marriage with a prosperous businessman Samir, the CEO of a travel agency transforms the course of her life.

In a subtle sense, Samir's character portrays patriarchal hegemony. Shenoy portrays the protagonist Nisha, as a person who is completely dependent on others. She finally transforms into a self-sufficient personality. She loves and marries Samir for his broad-mindedness. After marriage his attitude towards Nisha changes. He expects her to wear salwar kameez when his mother is around. He advises her to leave job and become a homemaker. He feels that a woman's life should revolve round her husband. He shows

disinterestedness to have children. He blames her for becoming a mother for the first time. He leaves her, when she becomes a mother for the second time. Nisha is a mute victim of the suppression of her husband.

She realizes that its time for her to be independent. She starts a catering service with the help of her ex-colleague, Akash. She takes care of her children. She refuses to take alimony from her husband. She gets financial independence. The patriarchal society blames women for divorce. She stands strong against all odds of her life. She sleeps with Akash who is almost five years younger than her. She refuses his offer to marry her.

The female protagonists of Preeti Shenoy initially believe in marriage institution. They marry out of love and respect but not for financial security. Once they realize that their men are oppressors then they leave them and do not marry again but get transformed into independent human beings.

The female characters of Shobha De are ruthless, courageous, independent, and rebellious. They go against the societal norms and regulations. They do not believe in being virgin before marriage. They do not feel it necessary to live with a single man in their lives, but many. They use men as stepping stones to success. Shenoy's female characters are submissive and diffident. They gradually transform into empowered women. They attain financial independence on their own.

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