



BLEMISHED RELATION IN *SECOND THOUGHTS*



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ABSTRACT

Shobha De was born in Brahmin Saraswat family in Maharashtra on 7th January, 1947. She completed her graduation from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, in Psychology and began her career as a modeling for the adds like Ponds, Bombay Dyeing, which made her very popular face. Shobha De also worked as a freelance writer for several magazines and newspapers. Shobha De wrote the novels like Socialite Evenings, Starry Nights, Second Thought and Sultry Days which are included as course materials in comparative literature in many educational institutions like in University of London, and also she participated in many literary festivals. Shobha De wrote the novels, which shade the lights on the issues like complicated relationship in marriage,

*glamour, modern society and urban issues and so on. It should be noted that, her most of the novels are starting with the letter 'S', and writing with a valiant, her novels characters play a very bold role and very dashing faces situations. Shobha De in her novels exposed the breakdown of modern society's marriage system and marital relationship which leads to frustration, loneliness and various social conflicts. In Shobha De's **Second Thoughts**, the story starts up with the character Maya, she is young and attractive middle class girl have a arrange marriage with Ranjan.*

KEYWORDS

Shobha De, Second Thoughts, Modern Society, Fiction, Ranjan

RESEARCH PAPER

The present paper focuses on the sufferings of married woman Maya, who gets married with Ranjan. In the novel **Second Thoughts**, Shobha De focuses on the problems of women in the patriarchal society, men-women relationship and their fading love, dissatisfaction in marital relations. Maya as a central figure of the novel is very carefully presented by Shobha De; she portrays the modern realities, where the man is leader, women the sufferers then also she try to find her own identity. Maya when gets married with Ranjan and leaves her parents home and enters into husband's home, where she is very happy and eager to see a new big Mumbai city. She feels free into this role of wife and very eager to be a wife now after a daughter till it was. She is very happy and gets shifted with her husband Ranjan in Mumbai. Maya was from Calcutta, and Mumbai was very new to her, a city which she dreams for new things to see. But very soon Maya experiences the lack of expectation in sex, mental harassment and here she becomes a silent sufferer.

Alba Saxena rightly points out that

“...Second Thought is realistic representation of the psyche the traditional Indian men and women. Although they claim to be proved products of the Twenty First century, but deep down they still cherish and nourish the age old norms and traditions. In that much familiar pattern, the status of men and women has hardly undergone any change.” (The Fiction of Shobha De: 261)

Maya a very good looking middleclass background girl from Calcutta, very eager to get married with Ranjan, a handsome ambitious man, completed his degree from the American University and having a very wealthy family background. After marriage with curiosity Maya get shifts with Ranjan to Mumbai.

Shobha De has portrayed the character Maya as an ideal wife in this Indian tradition based society. There is determination of woman in the traditional period where she should follow old traditions or individual views. Therefore self identification is seen as diffidence to confidence. Women are not naturally inferior to men not due to lack of education they are dominated by male society, if though women education is more than man, their self-respect, ego problems are raised, according to male society, women should step back, she should not be taller than man. Woman should not be superior to man, this superiority disturbs him and try to make his wife inferior by insulting her and taking revenge or behaving sadistically towards her in the nights.

Maya trapped in this arranged marriage is been treated as ideal wife, who have no rights to put forth her feelings, emotions before her husband. Her likes and dislikes are never entertained, only for the sake of his mother Ranjan gets married with Maya. She is not free to take decisions of her life, she feels very lonely in her married life and finally opens her mind with her friend Nikhil, who is her neighbour, gives moral as well as physical support. After

having friendship with Nikhil, Maya leads a very happy life, because Nikhil supports her, understands her feelings. Maya is being attracted towards her lover Nikhil. She cannot differentiate between her husband and the lover, Maya is always neglected and dominated by her husband and attained by her lover. She was unable to find the happiness and satisfaction between marriage and extra marital relationship, which makes her life disturbed. Marriage is a matter of trust, sharing, caring affection, companionship, togetherness, meeting of two bodies-souls and minds.

Maya tried to share her feelings, her loneliness with Ranjan, "...Ranjan I've been so lonely... all alone in a city that isn't mine. In a house I don't still feel I belong to..." (134)

Ranjan never understands Maya, she attempts to create closeness with Ranjan but he always moved on and treated Maya just like a maid. Ranjan never understand that apart from food and shelter, she desires for love, physical attachment instead of Ranjan, Nikhil showered these things on her which she always expected from her husband Ranjan, Nikhil took full advantage of weakness of this lonely lady and crossed the limitations.

Shobha De defines marriage as

"... Marriage to me connotes commitments and surrender, merging with, blending, overlapping and combing. It is a symbolic relationship where one feeds on the other depends on the other, needs the other..." (3).

Ranjan gets married with Maya only for the sake of his mothers need, he has no interest in Maya. Maya shares everything with Nikhil. Nikhil started calling by her name instead of Didi, Maya also enjoyed his company. One day Nikhil cross the limits and kissed her lips, Maya felt that "...may be I was going crazy. I did not want to think of consequences. I refused to assume responsibility. I really didn't care one way or the other. I felt free, lunatic, wonderful ..." (375) while enjoying the physical pleasures door bell and phone rings but Maya ignores it and say's that "...I wanted to swallow Nikhil completely...suck him into my womb inch by inch. I want it; oh so desperately make him mine, make him me..." (379).

Physical pleasures, caring, loving, sex is the base of marriage. Ranjan never showered these things on Maya. Sexual satisfaction is the basic need of life partners but instead of that Ranjan every time reminded Maya of her duties for his mother and asked her to follow his mother footstep. They both lived as strangers under the same roof and never did anything together. Ranjan was not at all interested in her; he married her just because of his mother's choice. He provided Maya "nothing more than financial support, a decent house to live in and four square meals a day..." (263) maintained rigidity in sex affairs "... In bed they have been brothers, sisters or flat mates. [Because he] was devoid of any passion..." (251) Maya was always depressed and frustrated due to Ranjan's loveless attitude towards Maya, which makes her loveless, very lonely. Maya feels that "...Nobody needed me absolutely nobody. My parents no

longer thought I belong to them. My husband belonged to his mother. It was unlikely that I would bear children who would belong to me. And I did not have a single true friend to call my own..." (372-73). this loneliness, frustration makes her depressed and gets attracted towards Nikhil, who is her neighbour. She is slowly alienated from her husband. Maya was involved emotionally in Nikhil in search of companion she considers another man as substitute to share her love, feelings.

Jaydipsingh Dodiya in his article "Second Thoughts A Critique" remarks that the institution of marriage in India as

"In Second Thoughts" Shobha De brilliantly presents an "explosive tale of love and betrayal" at the surface level and the hollowness and hypocrisy lurking behind Indian traditional marriages at the deeper level. Thus the novel focuses on the hollowness of Indian marriage" (The Fiction of Shobha De, 281)

Shobha De in this novel throws light on traditional Indian marriage where woman is silent sufferer. She portrays the story of her female protagonist operating within the framework of a male dominated and tradition bound society, where there is inequity between the two sexes. Woman protagonist is a realistic center figure of the novel and has started surrendered herself to Nikhil and dissects the life inside the cage because Shobha De's woman character is dissatisfied in marriage relationship, due to this boring or forced relationship might be indulge into extramarital affairs.

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