



Study about views on man-woman nexus in Shobha De’s Socialite Evenings

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Abstract : 'Socialite Evenings' by Shobha De is set at the backdrop of Mumbai high society. This is all about the lives of bored housewives of rich families whose husbands remain busy with their work and wives choose the option of extra marital affair. Their marriages are often seen as loveless one. Their husbands are often seeing their wives as matter of respectability rather than their life

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partners. Karuna, the central character of this story is bored with her life with husband and now she want to get rid of her boredom by writing a memoir. Her memoirs become successful and she achieves a lot of fame and pride in her new venture. She become a socialite and uses this prominence to get a job of advertising copywriter or a creator of a television channel. This novel was critically acclaimed but truly a masterpiece.

'Socialite Evenings' by Shobha De may seem abnormal to some persons. But as a matter of fact this is an interesting book with a combination of vague and conflicting images. This enables its readers to see India in a clearer way. The characters of the novel have some unique fashion, which is the character of Shobha De's style of writing.

Shobha has pictured the woman not only as protagonist but also as motivating factors in society. Karuna’s marriage is a failure since it is loveless, joyless and bridgeless. She hates the stand-offish and cruel behavior of the husbands who often kept themselves busy in drab monotonous activities like reading the business pages of a newspaper.

Karuna, the main character and narrator of Shobha De’s Socialite Evenings is not concerned with the lot of women. But here that concern changes to ‘I am the good thing’ and even this ‘I’ does not stand for any commitment to spiritual and moral values but it is a good quality because it can be dressed up and presented as an extremely marketable product over the media. Karuna’s obsession with ‘I’ and ‘the good thing is me’ becomes clear when the journalist of a foreign



magazine comes up with a proposal to make a documentary with Karuna’s experiences as the focal point of such a film.

Even during the period when she has been divorced by her husband and has to move from one place to another in search of a job, her solo concern during this stage, too, is how she can shake off her middle-class background.

Karuna’s husband is inadequate and incomplete since he lacks the traits of an ideal husband. Karuna’s imaginary craving for the fulfillment of her physical desires finds reflection in her fantasies. Anjali’s fancy place in Malabar Hill where Karuna usually goes is symbolically the projection of her fancy, her dream which is reality.

Karuna faced all difficulties but she did not protest but obeyed her husband dutifully. Her husband is not a cruel person and he even throws away all her sins, like her affair with Girish.

Later also when she leaves her husband’s house and starts living with Anjali the idea of keeping the baby does not sink into her system firmly. Once again the consideration is herself-whether her parents would accept her with the child. She gives an inkling of her thoughts after her husband has talked to her at length about the settlement. But the moment her friend Anjali hears of such an ‘idea’ germinating in Karuna’s mind, she decides to nip it in the bud. She tells Karuna, “Don’t be crazy. A baby is a life-long responsibility.”

Women in Shobha’s novels symbolize the overpowering materialism and the lack of spirituality that characterizes modern age. With the crumbling of moral and ethical values there is an inner conflict which drives the modern Indian women to take shelter in different identities for momentary solace. Girish, the great art filmmaker, exhorts Karuna to take life more seriously and commit herself to some serious thing like cinema.



What Girish implies is that Karuna should take her role of Shakuntala in his film more seriously. Even her intellectual pursuits suggest that she is capable of involving herself in anything serious, for her preoccupation is with only cross-word puzzles and newspaper-chess.

It appears that Karuna has just a formal relationship with her husband. Intimacy between the husband and the wife is lacking for Karuna who never calls her husband by his name but derogatorily as Black Label.

Anjali throws off the traditional conventions of moral values. She enacts a marriage of her choice with Abe. Karuna too discards conventions and she had extra-marital relationship with Krish. Even she dares to restrain her husband from a week long sexual orgy with Krish Kukherjee in Rome.

When Karuna's husband comes out with a package deal containing an assured income and all the luxuries which she had until now been enjoying, her only remark is the package sounds sweet. Similar is the case with Anjali, her second marriage to the homosexual Kumar is nothing but an exchange for the Porches, emeralds, holidays and so on.

Conclusion : The dilemma faced by the female characters in *Socialite Evenings* is the outcome of their own undoing; their blind urge to emulate the elite and in this process, they are uprooted and wander aimlessly in the jungle full of female devourers. In the beginning, these women discard the social norms and march ahead on the path of emancipation and liberation and once they achieve their desire, they find themselves all alone and feel lost. With no support and no clear path outlined for them, disillusionment sets in and plunges them into dilemma, now they have two choices to make- either to come back to their roots or to continue suffering. Shobha De's "women characters who endeavour to liberate themselves often meet with disaster

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