

PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY AND HUSBAND-WIFE
RELATIONSHIP IN SHOBHA DE'S 'SECOND THOUGHT'

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Abstract

Woman is submissive and obedient in the house of parents as well as father in law. She respects husband and other members of the family, tradition, and social laws. She thinks of welfare of husband and attends him all the time. As a human being she has some dreams and challenges of career. But when she realizes that her emotions, dreams and sentiments are turned to the dust she rapidly advance to change her way of life by violating norms of the society.

Keywords – society, husband-wife relationship, dissatisfaction, violation of norms

Introduction

The male Dominance in the Indian society is witnessed in the every corners of life. And same is reflected in the writings of male writers. The women are shown followers of Indian culture, tradition, and moral laws of the society. Moreover we find them very submissive and obedient. In the 20th and post 20th century the women writers have been resting their feet on the port of literary scene. The dawn of women voice against the male dominance in the society began to become louder. The women writers are mainly concern with the women's feelings, emotions attitude, and their own thinking. It does not mean that the role of the men being is minimized. The women community has become conscious of their rights and they step further to fight against the unjust norms and customs. Therefore we call it is the time of modern spirited woman who attempts to establish her own identity.

What type of modern woman is? She is a middle class woman who is too confident, positive and her mind always moves in the direction of inventing truth of life. We may give her a name 'New Woman'.

Shobha De's 'Second Thought'

In the 'Second Thought' Shobha De elaborates human nature and inner self of the human being. She tries to peep deeply into women's motivation, feelings and inner working of the mind. One may underline pathos and anxiety of a married woman in this novel. The protagonist, Maya, a middle class Bengali girl marries to a Bengali man Ranjan who resides in Bombay. Being innocent Maya has attraction of the city life. Her fascination of Bombay spells over and she marries Bombay clad, Ranjan. Maya is under the impression that she is fortunate girl for marrying a man who resides in Bombay.

Pre-marriage situation

The dialogue between Mrs. Malik and Maya in the formal meeting before their marriage conveys us their pre-marriage situation. On seeing each other they liked each other very much. Maya says "I'd met him just once in a formal gathering and I have to be honest and admit that I liked him. He liked me too—that's how we got married". Mrs Malik also eagerly discloses her mind in the words 'We wanted the right girl, educated. I think we have made a right choice'. One may underline Mrs. Malik as an orthodox type of woman when she declares that Maya would not be allowed to work outside the house. Maya is textile designer. Maya married Mr. Malik with challenge and some dreams but her success seems failure in her life because her husband is very much suspicious by nature. But she has to behave as per the rules of family forgetting her career. She is denied of enjoying freedom of deciding her future in the post marriage era. 'Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains'. (Rousseau, 1953:15)

Maya and Ranjan-contrasting characters

The novelist presents qualities of Maya's husband, Ranjan to show contrast between wife and husband. Ranjan is insensitive man to his wife which is generally not expected by any wife. Maya's mind is always full of good thoughts regarding her husband. She does lot of efforts to attend him thinking that service to the husband is service to the god. Forgetting Maya as a human being Ranjan, all the time is busy going in finding mistakes of Maya. This type of attitude may be viewed as childish. Ranjan's moderate thought prevents the readers to recognize him as an educated man in foreign. Her demands are also thrown in the dustbin under the illusion that Maya is secondary to him being a woman. One can underline disillusionment in the character of Maya when he does not give place for her dreams, desires and emotions in the corner of his heart.

Rajan's cool married life enforces Maya to be very curious to know his past life with girls. In response to her Ranjan tells that he had tried to make friendship with them but it failed. Frankly but rather reluctantly he reveals her that he had failed in love making with six girls. Knowing failure efforts in love with other girls and women she feels surprised and shocked. Maya's intention is not test his purity but to know whether he is warm blooded husband or cool like ice. It reflects that Maya is psychologically of sound mind as other women are in their married life. During their sex honeymoon at hotel in Mahabaleshwar Maya tried to unbutton his shirt. In spite of responding her physical desire he asked her to wait for some time. It is her life like a sterile pond where there is no single drop of water. This awful event had caught her in whirlwind because she realized that she would not be the mother. Ranjan's sexual weakness, inferiority complex, scanty passion and emotion have made Maya to feel life in the desert as plucked blossom rose.

Husband -Wife Relationship

Human existence and relationship are reciprocal to each other. Man learns a lesson of living and lesson of spending life through only relationships. The basic question how to live is discussed in literature. Internal as well as external relations are rightly presented though literature. In the connection of relationship Watson states,

None is more vital and enduring than those human relationships of home and family. Love and marriage, the joy and parental hood and family ties, are the bases of all that is best in life-the supreme happiness. (Watson, 1951: 239)

Maya deals with a caged life like a parrot in the golden cage. She is given everything except emotional and physical needs. Being sceptical he views nobody should be entertained in the house. Everything he does as per the command of his mother. He may be named as the worshiper of the mother. He does not tolerate Maya's interference when he discusses something with his mother. Maya is strictly prevented from mixing with other men and women and going out of the house. She has to remain happy with the material things which are provided to her within the four walls. The Human-beings in relationship are attached to each other "emotionally, sentimentally, spiritually, and intellectually." (Collier English Dictionary, p. 467)

The husband-wife relationship in the Indian culture is presented in sublime manner. Examples of sublime relationship between the husband and wife, presented in Indian myths are Ram and Sita, Krishna and Rukmini, Harishchandra and Taramati, Gautam Muni and Ahilya, Ramkrishna and Shardadevi and Satyavan and Savitri. There is nothing to do with economic independence or material things. There is no question of individuality. No sense of devotion and dedication results into frustration and unhappiness. The ideal principle of the husband and wife is distorted and deformed by Ranjan. Ranjan is under the impression that Maya should feel comfortable in the decent house. But some evidences prove that he believes in the words and not the action.

Maya is not allowed to use modern facilities like STD, air-conditioner, and T.V. Maya has not been given treatment as human being but as an object by her husband Ranjan and his mother. There is no more choice left in Maya's life except repentance. The novelist, Shoba De presents him as the leader of the age old social principles and fixed taboos. Maya could not enjoy free life even in her parents' house during the infancy. Therefore she married Ranjan to get away from Calcutta and her parents. She desired to lead free and uncontrolled life after marriage.

Relationship of 'Purpose and interest'

Shobha De deals with the relationship of 'purpose and interest'. (Singh, 2002:91) There is a strange sense of game of emotions and passion in human relationship. Maya's college friend Nikhil Varma brings a new turn in her life. He is skillfully successful in winning her mind through efforts and moral code. Consequently, Maya avoided his advances at the initial stage. But realizing life full of misery she began to respond him. She started enjoying life in the company of Nikhil by saying good bye to the regretful life. Maya also wandered at Malbar hill with him. She did so in order to establish her own free identity against the norms of the society.

Human relationship is bound to undergo through unavoidable changes. If a person is not happy within the family his or her dissatisfaction leads to create hollowness. "Dissatisfaction in life and unsatisfaction in love are the outcome of hollowness in human relationship." (The Times Of India, 15 June 1999) One day he entered her house and kissed her. The stroke of his fingers on her body made Maya to feel in him refined man with energy and cheer. But Nikhil's engagement with a girl, Anshu left her motion-less and shocking for a while. The husband like Ranjan is unable to fulfill the desires of his wife. He does not have sense of devotion and understanding. Ranjan and Maya belong to opposite nature. Suffering in Maya's life goes beyond her tolerance so she violates norms of the society. She wanted to continue her relationship with Nikhil.

Conclusion:

In 'Second Thought' Shobha De represents character of Maya against the dominance of husband. There is a story of married life from the wife's point of view. The image of the woman has been projected as a victim. Maya is a middle-class well educated and sensitive woman. Realizing in competence of Ranjan as a man and husband she dared to go on outing with Nikhil. Shobha De depicts relationship between man and woman which requires care and special treatment because it is delicate.

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