

# Hidden Angle of Woman in Shobha De's Novel Socialite Evenings

**GADDAM SWARNA LATHA**

Research Scholar, Department of English  
JNTUA CEA, JNTU, Anantapur

**Dr. V.B.CHITRA**

Professor in English  
JNTUACEA, JNTU, Anantapur

## Abstract

*Feminism focuses on women suffrage, self-identity, liberation, gender inequality in Patriarchal society. Shobha De is a glorious feminist Indian novelist elevated to heights by her fantastic portrayal of characters taken from real life experiences. She is a multi-faceted personality. Her novels deal with women subjugation, marginalization, exploitation. She openly and frankly discussed about a sensitive issue sex as her topic who dare not dealt with. Her writings reflect the present life style of some elite class women and their obsessions, disappointments and insecurities. Being woman and Psychology student, she understood the inner feelings, emotions, their thirst for self-respect and attaining individuality. Most of her novels contain female protagonists striving for liberation and act according to their imagination. In her novel Socialite Evenings, it is clearly viewed how the protagonist struggle to attain self – identity and become a top socialite. This article explores the hidden anguishes of woman who is subjected to subjugation and is not allowed to express her ideas and feelings emerges out and how their internal motives probe her to attain respectable position. In this novel the protagonist Karuna, who came from a traditional family married to ordinary man comes out from bored, listless, lifeless married life by breaking all clutches to become a top socialite in her advertising profession. By this De makes all her readers to think about originality that when any one is tied and beaten out in the name of culture and custom for long periods then their internal other angle comes out for their survival.*

**Keywords:** Hidden, Marginalization, Feminism, Liberation, Individuality, Obsessions

Feminism is a word coined by French Philosopher Charles Fourier in 1837. Earlier it was referred to female characters or qualities but now it is used in a wide range which opened up more opportunities for women. It also focuses on women suffrage, identity, liberation and equal rights in Patriarchal society.

In India, we are living in patriarchal society, where male plays dominant and independent role over female. In olden days women were confined to household works and looking after their children. Women were given less importance in financial matters. No value to their emotions, feelings, wishes, likes and dislikes. Some of the female writers emerged from their suppressed condition to express their pitiable condition, yearning for liberation, self-identity, self-respect and to abolish gender inequality.

Feminist writers in India are Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy and many more also dealt with feminist problems and tried to enlighten the women.

Shobha De is also one among them. She is eminent novelist, columnist and author. She is multi-faceted personality. Her creativity in creating characters is very appreciable. As a contemporary writer she has witnessed the present-day women's struggle for identification and understood the psyche of women. The women in her novels question, react and respond to the situation instead of accepting the things right away. She has portrayed the women as self-expressive, self-reliant women who exhibit their abilities to overcome hurdles to fulfill their desires and pleasures without any hesitation. They were shown as quick-thinking women. She concentrated on elite class women rather than lower class women Karuna, the protagonist of the novel *Socialite Evenings* has to cope up from free tender teenage girl to robotic married life who had high expectations on marriage. But within a year her married life burnt to ashes by boring, mechanical, listless, self-conscious and self-centered husband who treated her

as a status symbol and was neglected by him. He didn't give any importance to her feelings and emotions. She became a puppet in her husband's hands. As she vexed up with joyless, lifeless, listless life, she wants to come out at any cost. In this context Shobha De portrayed the Karuna's character as very expressive, thinks maturely and introspects about her husband asking herself: What was wrong with my marriage? What had gone wrong?

Now that there is some distance, I suppose I can hazard a pretty accurate guess.

My marriage went sour because I'd married the wrong man for the wrong reasons at

The wrong time. My husband was not a villain.

He was just an average Indian husband-unexciting, uninspiring, untutored. (P 73)

Her hidden anguish guides her to develop extra marital relationship with her husband's friend Krish. Here the author clearly depicted the inner angle of womanhood of Karuna emerges out in loving Krish to fulfill her pleasures breaking all conventional boundaries in which she has been chained with till then. Karuna flies to London to meet Krish there concealing the truth with her husband what her real intention is! She spends some time with her sister Swathi. De's respect towards our traditional marriage is clearly seen when Swathi tries to convince Karuna by telling the importance of marriage and the relationship between husband and wife. Karuna gives a deaf ear to Swathi, her sister.

When Karuna's husband unexpectedly lands in London to thrash the things out with her, she accepts her adultery without any guilt. She confronts and admits that she wants to be with Krish in Venice:

There is a good chance that I will feel thoroughly disillusioned after that.

May be he will have some truly foul personal habits that will disenchant me.

In which case it will really be A Death in Venice. (P 229)

By the above lines De explains us how Karuna's suppressed hidden anguish driven towards adultery from soft-natured house wife.

On the other hand, De created another character called Anjali, Karuna's college mate by whom she was

influenced by and introduced to fashion world belonged to conservative Jain family married to Muslim one. She gives divorce to her husband and quickly goes to second marriage with a rich homosexual person called Kumar. De portrayed the women capabilities in Anjali's character. Anjali emphasizes the fact about her husband that she has done a favor to him in marrying him and she also made her husband feel insecure about losing her. De here mentioned lesbian culture also what some people are going with. In Janmashtami party Anjali tells the power of 'Lord Krishna' to Karuna and her other friend and how Lord Krishna motivated her and her beloved Krish towards divinity.

The dissatisfaction crept along with her desire to become a self-reliant and self-sufficient woman. Karuna, the rebellion didn't act according to the external forces which acted upon her but she behaved according to her motives. Karuna at the end has achieved her goal by becoming a prominent socialite in advertising field, television and production world after her divorce and also become financially independent. De at last shown Karuna as a lone person waiting for someone who are dearer to her heart in spite of her active position in her profession. Though she attained such a place as a socialite, as a human she was thrown into darkness.

### Conclusion

De is a versatile feminist writer has portrayed the women protagonists excellently in expressing their ideas, emotions, feelings with consistency in acquiring what they wish for. She didn't allow the fate to win over her women. Shobha De is an outspoken, over active, extravert in her character construction. In her novels, as the story proceeds, the protagonists gain maturity, self-confidence, commitment. *Socialite Evenings* is an open-ended novel which makes readers to think and imagine about Karuna's character by leaving alone when the party is going on outside. Hence one should learn to live in reality.

### References

1. De, Shobha. 1989, *Socialite Evenings*. New Delhi: Penguin Books. 73.
- De, Shobha. 1989, *Socialite Evenings*. New Delhi: Penguin Books. 229

2. Chandra Subhash, 1991 "Family and Marriage" in Shobha De's Socialite Evenings, 247.
3. Rao, Alapa Purnachandra " Urban Women in Shobha De's Ficion" Presige Books, International, New Delhi, 2013
4. Syed Hajira Begum :Redefining Womanhood in Shobha De's Novels [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340247794\\_Redefining\\_Womanhood\\_in\\_Shobha\\_De%27s\\_Novels](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340247794_Redefining_Womanhood_in_Shobha_De%27s_Novels)
5. Bhavya L: Women Identity in Shobha De's Novels with reference to Socialite Evenings [http://www.iraaj.in/journal/journal\\_file/journal\\_pdf/14-440-152300610964-66.pdf](http://www.iraaj.in/journal/journal_file/journal_pdf/14-440-152300610964-66.pdf)
6. Dr.Aiswarya M: Post feministic Reading of Shobha De's Socialite Evenings-A Prototype of Resistance Culture<https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2103310.pdf>
7. Dr.Amit G.Ramteke: Feminism in Shobha De's 'Socialite evenings' <https://www.allstudyjournal.com/article/791/4-2-43-597.pdf>
8. Dr. Awadhesh Kumar Mishra: Portrayal of Women Characters in Shobha De's Novels <https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT1134712.pdf>
9. Prema: Karuna's Quest for Identity in Shobha De's Novel Socialite Evenings <https://www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR1901284.pdf>
10. Monika Gupta: Creation and Criticism [http://creationandcriticism.com/modern\\_urban\\_life\\_a\\_study\\_of\\_shobha\\_des\\_socialite\\_evenings\\_by\\_monika\\_gupta.html](http://creationandcriticism.com/modern_urban_life_a_study_of_shobha_des_socialite_evenings_by_monika_gupta.html)
11. T.S. Ramesh : From Margin to Centre , A Study of Ennoblement in Shobha De's Socialite Evenings <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/CTBIJIS/article/view/18438>