

**Human Relationships in Shobha De's
*Socialite Evenings***

Ms. C. Rajeswari

**Guest Lecturer, Department of English. Bharathidasan University College for Women.
Orathanadu, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu. India
rajisrisuresh2015.rs@gmail.com**

Dr. N. Gejeswari

**Assistant Professor, Department of English. Bharathidasan University College for Women.
Orathanadu, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu. India**

=====
Abstract

In Man's existence in this vast world many kinds of human relationships are entangled altogether. Among such relations are in the form of father-son relationship, mother-son relationship, husband wife relationship, love-beloved relationship. There is a great importance of family in making and continuing these human relationships because family lies in the core of all these relations. For each and everyone, family is the source of peace and happiness, progress and prosperity, enthusiasm and encouragement. Since a man has to play different roles from time to time he has to be evolved in different relations. A man is many things at the same time, he is grandson of someone, grandfather of someone, son of someone, father of someone, husband of someone, brother of someone and the similar situation is with women. There is no question of human existence without human relations. Human relationship is the essence of the continuation of human existence.

Keywords: Shobha De, Socialite Evenings, Human existence, Male domination and Woman Empowerment, Relationship.

Among the different genres of literature in India novels have credit for observing some of the most important trends of human relationships in compassionate and sympathetic manner. In Indian English writing novels are basically based on such presentation in which the entire stories and plots resolve around the presentation of various kinds of human relationships. Meenakshi Mukherji, a well-known critic of Indian fiction, comments on the importance of fiction in making human relationships live and miraculous:

Indo-Anglican fiction which has served for so long as a file of documents of Sociology or anthropology or educational theory must now be regarded as literature and evaluated as such.

She has led great emphasis on the subject matter of the novels because she is of view that human relationships are the core subject matter of the novels.

In Indian writing in English, R.K. Narayan is perhaps the first authentic novelist to observe various kinds of human relationships in detail. He makes distance from his contemporaries Mulk Raj

Anand and Raja Rao in the delineation of different kinds of human relationships. These three novelists are the classics in the presentation of hopes and aspirations, failure and frustrations of human being in terms of projecting various kinds of human relationships. Their presentation has a traditional and conventional outlook and they do not go beyond the limits imposed by tradition and culture. On the contrary the modern Indian writing in English are highly characterized by such kind of human relationships which are not familiar and frequent occurring in past. The writings of modern fiction writers in English are highly fabricated by different shades and colors of modernity-modern diseases-disrespect of elders, break away from traditional and cultural roots, ostensible display of behaviour in making human relationships.

Modern novelists in India, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Rajkamalsha, Pankaj Mishra, Anitha Desai, Kiran Desai, Gita Hariharan, Shobha De, Bharathi Mukherji have presented human relationship in their novels in abundance. They vary from the traditional approach of their predecessors in many respects. They have total disregard from the cultural loads. They would like to define human relationship in entirely new way. Among them, Shobha De brings her to be the champion of presenting the new concept of human relationships by departing her away from the traditional and cultural outlook. In her novels, she breaks the concept of morality in every respect. She wants to redefine father-son-relationship, mother-son-relationship, father-daughter relationship, mother-daughter relationship, husband-wife relationship, lover-beloved relationship, man-woman relationship in detail.

Shobha De's novel *Socialite Evenings* is full of such kinds of human relationships which have a sense of modernity in the depiction. There is a moral discord, ethical breakage, disrespect of cultural values. In the portrayal of different kinds of human relationships, she finds an opportunity to highlight the suffering of women, journey of women from 'ignorance to knowledge' and 'innocence to experience'. Through the portrayal of these relationships Shobha De finds an opportunity to dive deep into human emotions and passions by projecting some real truths of human existence. In *Socialite Evenings*, husband wife relationship and extra-marital relationship are projected in realistic manner through the portrayal of the central character Karuna. The relationship between Karuna and her husband is the core subject of the study about the theme of love, romance, marriage and divorce. Here Karun is certainly the representative of modern woman. Her life and journey from 'Innocence to experience' is quite capable of protecting of the theme of bewilderment and hollowness on the one hand and her extra-marital relation gives us a clue of freedom and openness which she would like to enjoy. Bhargavi P. Rao rightly remarks about the character of Karuna in these words:

Karuna is the hollow woman of our modern wasteland. Her kind are sick as they are unable to face the shocking realities after discarding the veil the protective purdah. Religion does not give them solace as in the case of her rural counterpart. She feels 'Oppressed' in spite of her freedom. The right kind of feminism can give them solution as well as solace.

The relationship between Karuna and her husband lacks the proper magnitude because it has no sense of devotion for each other, respect for each other mutual understanding and love and affection for each other.

On other hand, the relation between Anjali and Abe has some different problems. Anjali has dominating partner. She controls the emotions and passions of her husband. She is in search of a suitable life-partner. When she got satisfied with Abe and found Abe useless after sometime, she does not hesitate to leave and reject him and comes in the arms of Mr. Kumar. Ritu's relationship with her husband is something different. Ritu exploits her sexual break through her female body her romantic attitude etc. in order to keep her husband within her reach. She controls her husband with female superiority. She tells Karuna, how she manages to control her husband.

Make them feel you have done them a favour by marrying them. Make them feel in secure let them think you will walk out on them if they don't toe the line. That is what keeps them in their place.

Karuna is isolated from the traditional Indian heritage and its social implications. She rejects the importance of male values in her life. This is a social and moral disorder and it has been conceived and viewed by Shobha De as 'Candidness or openness associated with empowerment of women in the wake of modern society. It is a reason that the relationship between Karuna and her husband and Anjali and Abe has failed to realize the proper dimension.

In fact, Karuna is marginalized at the hands of her husband. She hates the lifeless and callous attitude of the husband keeping the latter busy in monotonous activities in their routine life. She acknowledges the confinement of women with "Roof over our heads and four square meals a day" with regret. Karuna's husband is an incompetent and inadequate person who does not possess qualities of an ideal husband. He turns to several defense mechanisms when he realizes the loss of dominance and control over his self-affirming wife. He exhibits his male chauvinism and power-assertion through inflicting atrocities upon his wife. It is his self-conceit and ego, which retreats him from free exchange of views with his wife

Though married and living as husband and wife they never develop intimacy and love which is the essence of a married life and even when they have a daughter of their own relations. Abe is a womanizer and Anjali is also pervert in attitude always in hunt of a new mate for new experience. After divorce from Abe, Anjali frolics from man to man finding no satisfaction, emotional or otherwise, and gets hurt in the process. Her search for a man who can provide emotional and financial stability ends in her marriage with Kumar Bhandari, a homosexual, but the marriage turns out to be fairy tale wedlock. However, she maintains that relation and takes refuge in spirituality. Her own sought out fulfillment in religious enactment shows her acceptance of the idea of a traditional Hindu wife. Similarly Ritu, a dashing and modern girl, living in her youthful imagination, desires to treat "men, like dogs ... conditioned through reward and punishment". She indulges in open relations with males. She is never faithful to her husband. In her view her husband lacks "drive and general unadventurousness". Ritu's husband being a Chartered Accountant, she remains associated with him as a wife because she finds financial security in him. The emotional relation between husband and wife are dry. To please him, she makes her husband feel superior by calling him 'darling'; she pampers him in public, presses his feet sometimes. She pretends cleverly to be with him deeply attached. "All this works like *jaadu*". This act however doesn't reveal her fidelity and belongingness to her husband.

Their Pseudo feelings keep them bounded together but Doth find chances to flirt with new selected companions quite ignorant of each other.

Primary Source:

Socialite Evenings: Penguin Books India (Pvt.) Ltd., New Delhi (1989)

Secondary Sources:

Adhikari, Madhumalati: *The Equation of Power in Snapshots* The Fiction of Shobha De: Critical Studies, Prestige Books (2000), New Delhi.

Chandra, Subhash: *Family and Marriage in Shobha De's Socialite Evenings*, The Fiction of Shobha De: Critical Studies, Prestige Books (2000), New Delhi.

Forster E.M.: *Aspects of Novels*, Penguin Books (Reprinted 1963), 93.

Iyengar, K.R. Srinivasa: *Indian Writing in English*, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd. (1985), New Delhi.



Ms. C. Rajeswari

**Guest Lecturer, Department of English.
Bharathidasan University College for Women.
Orathanadu, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu. India**
rajisrisuresh2015.rs@gmail.com



**Dr. N. Gejeswari, Assistant Professor
Department of English
Bharathidasan University College for Women
Orathanadu, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu. India**