Abstract

Introduction:

The rationale behind choosing Shobha De’s Novels: *Socialite Evenings, Starry Nights, Sultry Days, Sisters, Second Thoughts, Strange Obsession, and Snapshots* for research was to highlight modern and post-modern life with its similarities and contradictions. Shobha De is one of the prolific writers of the contemporary times. The broad aim of the study is to attempt an exploration of the elements of post-modernism as reflected in Shobha De’s novels. The scope of post-modernist study has widened considerably making one aware that there is enough in socialite culture to provoke an intellectual situation and a world of ideas which can help us to understand the complexity of the age that we live in.

De champions modern and postmodern life through her literary work. She has presented the merger of two traditions of the east as well as the west. She breaks new world through the open discussion of female sexuality from women’s point of view. The whole canvas of love, sexuality, femininity and emotional turmoil is presented in a dispassionate way. It is as inhabited and candid portrayal this aspect which is rare in literature. The honesty of her sexual writing is new and bold. Her novels present a documentation of different aspects of urban elites in metros. The world of advertisement agencies, the party world, the film people, the journalists’ world, the life on the college campus and the different forms of sex encounters and adventures are depicted convincingly in her novels. The broad features of postmodernism find their reflections and expressions in the fictional worlds portrayed by Shobha De in her major novels. Her novels are mainly concerned with women’s quest for
self. There is a constant struggle to find and preserve the identity of the self. Shobha De writes to refute the age-old notion of a woman as an object to be used and abused. Her protagonists struggle to find and preserve their identity basically as individual human beings. She desires women to be aware of their potential and power.

In the portrayal of such distinct fictional worlds of the journalists, the party animals, the film-stars, the fashion models, the copy writers for ads and those involved in abnormal sex and other additions, Shobha De has earned the distinction of a free, fierce and fighting post-modernist novelists in Indian English literature. Hers are the worlds of tinsel towns, celluloid screens, glamorous ads, yellow journalism, the clouds of smoke, the tinkling of glasses, the loud pop music and the disco-dancing. The high and low, elite and popular, the creative and vulgar, the glamorous and cheap, the heights and depths of social culture are mixed in various combinations in the presentation of her novels. The world of images assumes the role of reality and the distinction between what is real and what is imagined.

Objectives of Research:

- To discuss and analyze Shobha De’s novels to differentiate distinct fictional world portrayed by her and to show how she inter-mingle the versions of the image and the real
- To differentiate the elements like fragmentations, rejection of authority, self-reflexivity, dystopian vision and fabulation and analyze how they have been grouped together in considering the thematic and structural networks of the novels
To relate the post-modern elements found in the novels with the form and techniques used by the novelist and explore the techniques of narration and formal structures in the novels from post-modern writer’s point of view

To attempt a justification of the claim that the distinctive position that Shobha De occupies in India is an account of the crumbling of boundaries and considering popular art is capable of provoking intellectual situation and understanding the complexity of the contemporary

**Research Methodology:**

The proposed research has been carried out by using close reading of the novels their explanations and analysis. The method of the library research is followed for the present study. Since the study is related to the postmodern elements the help from the internet sources have also been taken and the sources have been acknowledged fully. In order to investigate the post-modernist elements in the selected novels investigatory method has been used. The descriptive method has been employed for the broad conceptual framework of the topic and the account of the novelist’s achievement in the literary front and the comments necessary for the development of the study. The investigatory method provides the basic material on which the study rests heavily. For the textual commentary, critical analysis and appropriate interpretation of the evidence presented the analytical method has been used. The logical inference helps in coming to the conclusions of the present research study. The methodology has been employed appropriately to the discipline of literary research through critical examination of a literary theory in the novels of a single author.
The Scope and Limitations of Research:

The scope of the present study has been restricted to the selection of the novels by Shobha De only. The novels have been analyzed from postmodern writer’s point of view and studied to find out the post modern elements in her novels.

The Novels Studied:


Chapter Scheme of the Research Work:

1. Introduction
2. Elements of Post-Modernism in *Socialite Evenings* and *Starry Nights*
3. Elements of Postmodernism in *Sultry Days* and *Sisters*
4. Elements of Postmodernism in *Second Thoughts*, *Strange Obsession* and *Snapshots*
5. Conclusion:
Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter one is introductory in nature and talks about the concepts of Postmodernism and its elements. The chapter also elaborates Shobha De as an author of literary pieces. It throws light on her literary career as well as the other traits she has developed. The chapter also gives introductory remarks about Shobha De’s contribution to Indian Writing in English.

Chapter Two: Elements of Post-Modernism in Socialite Evenings and Starry Nights

This chapter is devoted to the study of two novels by Shobha De: Socialite Evenings and Starry Nights. Socialite Evenings is the story of a Bombay Socialite who is forced to drown her sorrows in the party life of Bombay. The author has shown the problems of men in the postmodern world. How the hectic city life destroys the married life of people turning into failed marriages and failed relationships.

In Starry Nights Shobha De portrays the life of glamorous dazzling world of Bollywood. It presents the tale of a film star Aasha Rani who journeys from a small town background to the tinsel world of Bombay. In order to emerge as a top heroine, she utilizes every opportunity by breaking up the traditional shackles. Like a new woman, she does not hesitate to involve in a number of extramarital affairs to reach her desired goal.

Chapter Three: Elements of Postmodernism in Sultry Days and Sisters

This chapter explores the postmodern elements in Shobha De’s Sultry Days and Sisters. Sultry Days is a story of a woman’s quest for separate identity in the male dominated society. In this novel, Nisha, the central female character of the novel, yarns for Deb but
his new way of life creates repulsion and alienation between them. De deals with the realistic picture of distressed woman, who has beaten men in their own game. In this novel Shobha De presents the problem of married life in the postmodern world.

The chapter also deals with De’s another novel *Sisters*, and presents one of the common themes of the time i.e. struggle for self-identity. The novel shows that her themes and her language are more contemporary than those of other women writers. The novel has been analysed from the postmodern writers’ point of view and illustrates the bold language used by De by revolting against the modernist.

**Chapter Four: Elements Postmodernism in *Second Thoughts, Strange Obsession* and *Snapshots***

This chapter covers the three novels by Shobha De from postmodern writers’ point of view. *Second Thoughts* discusses the story of a higher middle class Bengali girl, Maya, who has gone to Bombay after an arranged marriage with a foreign returned Bengali boy, Ranjan conforming to the principles of the society. De has used a very bold theme for this novel i.e. extra-marital relationship. The novel shows that how the failure in marriages leads them to seek it outside wedlock. Failure in relationships is one of the problems of the postmodern era, and Shobha De aptly chose it as a theme of her novel.

*Strange Obsession*, as the title shows the strange but shocking betrayals on account of the strange sexual obsession. Shobha De is a relentless crusader against authoritarianism of those who wield power –political, social, cultural and financial. She exposes the hunting expeditions of these sharks among men and women through her novels. In doing this, Shobha De has kept aside the conventions of the literary genres she is practicing. Her novels combine the various strands that are used as reports, documentary, thriller,
detective fiction, pornography, crime story, sci-fi and popular romance. The boundaries of literary forms are deliberately blurred in her novels.

_Snapshots_ presents the women who have diverse marital status. Again like earlier novels Shobha De has used a bold theme of betrayed married life for this novel. _Snapshots_ embodies the spirit of postcolonial literature that concretizes the advantages of powerful, emancipated new woman. In this novel De has transformed the traditional images of women and opposed the move to relegate women’s experience and women’s body language to the second rank.

**Chapter Five: Conclusion:**

The final chapter presents the findings in the form of conclusions. Shobha De’s works of fiction have all the elements of the postmodern writings. Along with the style and technique, De has also used the themes related to the problems of modern man, especially the strained relations and spoiled married life leading to the extra marital relationships.

**Significance of Research Work:**

Being the part of Post-modern study, this research project elucidates life pattern of metropolitan life along with the western culture, customs and tradition. This study reveals the various dimensions of the people who live in the upper crust of the society. Literature has a reciprocal relationship with society. It is an outcome of social, cultural events and has also the power to influence the society. The present study will be fruitful in measuring this intervention of literature of society. As the study probes into the socialite world, it will create reference material and provide scope for further research.