Chapter -4

SHOBHAA DE’S DYNAMISM
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MODEL WRITER– A REAL MODEL IN EARLY LIFE

Shobhaa De made an early tryst with a career in modeling. She fought her family and friends just to prove herself that she is worthy of such career. But later she realized that that was not her cup of tea. She had an inclination and flair somewhere else. Another world was waiting for her with open arms to embrace her skills. Therefore she had a short-lived, self-aborted modeling career. But in that small time also Shobhaa De carved a niche for herself. The world and especially our nation has not lost on her modeling career which proves that she was a huge success there too. In the following part of the chapter I will take some of her quotations, some excerpts, reviews, etc. to study how at the tender age of 20 also Shobhaa De was a sensible, poised and composed to decide what was best for her.

At no point should fashion be exaggerated, attention-seeking or in-your-face, unless you happen to be Lady Gaga, proclaims the witty and irrepressible best-selling author and former model Shobhaa De

Few Indian women can boast of looking equally at ease in Indian and Western outfits, but Shobhaa does it with aplomb. Coupled with her love of statement jewellery, including large neckpieces, chunky bracelets, and a love affair with silver and beads, one starts to get a sense of the Shobhaa De look. I have zero self-consciousness in what I wear; it’s an extension of my personality and who I am, declares the ageless Shobhaa. "I don’t take any cues from prevailing trends, and I never have. Fashion is all about individuality and what suits you. The day you start taking fashion, its icons, and its trends seriously, is the day you become a bore.

Shobhaa who started modeling at a very young age soon grew to be one of the most-wanted supermodels of her time. So much so the celebrated photographer Henry Clarke shot her and she was the first Indian to be the cover of French Vogue magazine way back in 1968. Those days we used to have a lot of government shows for the Indian textile board, handloom board and so on. I had gone with my father to one of those shows when
someone from an advertising agency made me an offer asking me if I was interested in modeling. I took it up but didn’t take it very seriously. I knew it was a short-term thing and it was time-bound. Those days there were no stylists and so on. You wore your own makeup and you pretty much wore your own clothes, did your own hair, kept your fingers crossed and hoped for the best. At fashion shows there were no helpers or anything, which is where I learnt to drape a saree in less than sixty seconds! I only wore sarees at fashion shows. I was known as the ‘saree-model’. Between changes you just had to do it quickly. Change your petticoat, your blouse, your saree and your jewels: all very quick. I think I can drape a saree in my dreams!

Coming from an otherwise orthodox family, the dynamic De started her career in the glitzy field of modeling and created quite a buzz on the ramp. Shobhaa, in her sixties is followed as a style diva even today. She transited from her glam profession to a literary career in Journalism. She was once questioned as to how she took to modeling to which she answered, I got an offer for modeling at the age of 17. I was not much interested in that but I felt that financial independence is very important for a woman. I accepted the offer and staying in modeling boosted my self-confidence. Her reaction on whether her parents supported her in modeling was, There was no question of help. That was my personal decision and my father was upset over this issue. But my mother knew me well and trusted me a lot. I assured them that I would not do any such think in modeling that would hurt you. I kept my word and remained as Pond’s girl for 5 years. I also did modeling for Bombay Dyeing. (3)

She has a very interesting story to say about how she shifted from modeling to journalism. She was at a creative unit for modeling. At that time, the creative director was Shilpa Shah. She was pregnant and asked her to take care of the copy section for three months. Shobhaa De took a test there and they offered her 350 rupees per month while she was earning 15 to 20 thousand from modeling. They put a condition that she has to leave modeling and work as a copywriter and she agreed. She was getting bored of modeling and also the life in modeling is no more than 5-6 years. She thought of doing something different.
While on the way becoming model, Shobhaa faced many strange people and strange events. She was youngest of the women chosen and had to model exquisite *Banarasi Sarees*. It was a kind of ego trip. One of them was a wealthy married socialite. It was an opportunity for the lady to display her splendid body. The location was Delhi and Agra. During this campaign Shobhaa De experienced an ugly side of the modeling business, for example, wine-drinking women and keeping illicit relations. One of them even went away with costly *Banarasi Saree*, which was borrowed from the shop. She saw beauty queens with dirty toe nails and ramp mannequins with oily pigtails. Though she was the part of this world, she did not belong to it. She remained on its fringes, watching, laughing and learning. It was possible then to work in that artificial, almost unreal environment without losing one’s perspective or a sense of humour. Other girls concentrated on becoming swans while Shobhaa chose to be a down. It was hard for her to take modeling business seriously, because she did not see herself as a sleek, sexy, soignée creature of collective fantasy. She did not possess the prerequisites for such a high visibility job, as she thought that time.

When you probe more into her modeling days, she admits with great pride, *I modeled for the most prestigious brands, ‘Khatau sarees, Taj Tea (what Zakir Hussain endorses today) Ponds, Bombay Dyeing, all the top brands!*

Shobhaa endorsed the most celebrated brands way back then and she did that for almost 6 years until she was 22 years. When queried about a natural progression to Bollywood, she states *I did receive every conceivable offer to act in Bollywood, but acting per se never attracted me. I am a reticent individual – I am sure once you get to know her, she makes splendid company – and I enjoyed modeling not so much of ‘ramp’ though I did quite a few shows but ‘still’ photography was what I was most comfortable with. You have the photographer and a few individuals around you, that’s it and it’s like you are walled in. I could never be comfortable in films though I had been approached by the likes of both, Benegal and even Satyajit Ray.*

If you know that Shobhaa can drape a saree in a minute, her fascination for the national dress of India goes beyond that. In 2007 Shobhaa surprised everyone by trying her hand
at designing sarees them and launching a new genre of what she called *Cocktail Sarees*. According to her the saree epitomizes womanly poise and femininity. *Designing is a flirtation I love, not my vocation. It is fun and something I love to do. I never encourage designer-wear. I always say this and I repeat that you should define the label and not let the label define you*, she says about her sweet flirtations. Having said that, her sarees are a sellout and you wouldn’t be surprised if you see enough and more celebrities glossed up in them. *I think Indian designers are way more talented than Versace or Gaultier. Those are international colossal brands, but in terms of creativity and using our craft skills, we are far ahead.* Any doubts you want to think twice why they label her India’s very own Anna Wintour? Hopefully under her imprint, one can once again look out for this vacuum to be filled.

**Shobhaa De’s Journey as a Journo**

The obsessive-compulsive writer of fifteen books, Shobhaa De has spent the last three years in the pursuit of her first vocation, journalism. Her columns are ubiquitous, appearing in nearly every newspaper and magazine of note. They carry her customarily edgy observations on matters of politics, the economy, business and commerce, the heart and the hearth. Best-selling author, jet-setting commentator and honest critic, she is most at home in Mumbai—a city which is also a recurrent ‘character’ in much of her work.

De is considered as the top Opinion Shaper and credited with several awards for her journalistic contributions. She emerged as a publisher with her latest book titled 'Shobhaa at Sixty' by her own imprint Penguin Books, titled *The Shobhaa De Book*. De is on Reader’s Digest list of India’s Most Trusted People, DNA Newspaper’s 50 most powerful Women in India, and Hi Blitz ‘India’s 50 Most Beautiful’ list. After being successful as a Model, she became the first editor of gossipy magazine's *Stardust, Society* and *Celebrity*. Her racy and raunchy columns explore on socialite life and celebrity lifestyles in Mumbai. She has been held responsible for accelerating the pace and bringing about a sexual revolution through her writings in the column *The Sexes* of the magazine *The Week*. 
From being a super-model Shobhaa metamorphosed into a journalist under the aegis of Nari Hira - the owner of the Mumbai-based Magna Publishing company that publishes magazines like *Stardust, Showtime, Savvy* and *Health*. It is one of the most eternal, close, affectionate and enduring bonds I share with all the people I worked with. Even after all these years I still call him ‘Mr. Hira’ and nothing else. That is what it will remain. There is that formality because he was my first and only boss. He is not an easy banter. He had just called to say I looked good on the cover of the latest issue of the ‘Society’ magazine, which was my baby because I started it. I feel very fortunate. I don’t have too many friends but the ones I have, I cherish and love them with all my heart. So I went in for a modeling assignment and ended up as a trainee copy writer in his company. (5)

Shobhaa De, contemporary writer and columnist, is undoubtedly one of India's hottest novelists. A staunch socialite, Shobhaa De has been a model, journalist, movie magazine editor and, most recently, the author of some spicy novels. She is known for her stark views on current issues and is always in the news for right or wrong. Fashion Diva Best-selling author, jet-setting commentator and honest critic; she is based in Mumbai, a city which is also a recurrent ‘character’ in many of her novels. She lives there with her husband Dilip and their six children. Shobhaa is as much at home with her family as she is with her profession. She is a person who is noted for her poise and glamour in the fashion circles of Mumbai, Bangalore and other metros. The obsessive-compulsive writer of fifteen books, Shobhaa De has spent the last three years in the pursuit of her first vocation, journalism. Her columns are ubiquitous, appearing in nearly every newspaper and magazine of note. They carry her customarily edgy sharp-witted observations on matters of politics, the economy, business and commerce, the heart and the hearth. Due to her writing style she is often called India's Jackie Collins. Born Shobhaa Rajadhyaksha in a Bengali Brahmin family, she graduated from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai with a degree in Psychology. After making her name as model, she began a career in journalism in 1970, in the course of which she founded and edited three popular magazines – *Stardust, Society,* and *Celebrity*. She writes racy thrillers which are set in urban India which are invariably bestsellers. The erotic content of her novels has been somewhat controversial, with some reviewers being contemptuous of her work while others suggest that she is countering the taboos held by many women writers. She has also written the
script for several successful television soap operas such as *Swabhimaan* (1995). She currently writes a fortnightly column called *The Sexes* in the Indian magazine called The Week where she writes about women, social taboos, social and media’s mediocrity, and regularly flays men for being sexist and chauvinist. She often voices her dissatisfaction with the behaviour and morals of the current generation’s superstar image. Her latest work *Superstar India-From the incredible to the unstoppable* is an intimate confession to her readers about the real image of the country, whether India has lived up to the promises made to her people, focusing on contrasting images of India and the Indians. Surveying the many images of the country, De points out that for every truism about India the opposite is also true: India as the land of the meek; India as inheritor of the earth; India gherao-ed by distinctly unfriendly neighbours; Indians fleeing to jobs in the West and then racing right back to a better life; Indians who ape their erstwhile colonizers and yet cling irrationally to tradition. Having highlighted the glories and failures of the country interspersing her argument with humour, she finally concludes that the nation has earned superstar status nevertheless, and winds up her book on a positive tone.

- In the 1980s, she contributed to the *Sunday* magazine section of *The Times of India*. In her columns, she used to explore the socialite life in Mumbai lifestyles of the celebrities. At present, she is a freelance writer and columnist for several newspapers and magazines.
- Bestselling novelist, jet-setting commentator and cultural critic, Shobhaa De, is an Indian superstar. A former model and Bollywood journalist, she exposed Bollywood the way Jackie Collins exposed Hollywood.
- She edited *Stardust*, but did not allow the "dust" to cover her persona. She flirted with Bollywood, writing about its people, but never joined it. *Society* and *Celebrity* magazines followed.
- Presently she is the house name of the aristocratic intellectuals.
- On 27th February, ’07, the lawns of the ITC Grand Maratha Sheraton were witness to a momentous occasion. *The Kelvinator GR8! Women Awards, 2007* was held there in the presence of illustrious glitterati. The awards are an endeavour of the *GR8! TV*
Magazine, which is an initiative of the Indian Television Academy. Shobhaa De became the recipient of this award for her writing. Recipient of several awards for her journalistic contributions, De writes prolifically for Indian and International publications. She runs four weekly columns in mainstream newspapers, including The Times of India and Asian Age.

Speaking about a significant landmark in Indian journalism of which she was a part of through the magazines she edited Shobhaa’s reputation as one of the most uncompromising writers and editors in India stays intact.

**Script writing in Shobhaa De**

Shobhaa De has perfected the art of reinventing herself - as a model, journalist, advertising copy writer, celebrity, columnist, novelist and now as a television script writer. She has several novels to her credit and has taken the favourable reviews as well as criticism in her stride.

For Zee's *Kittie Party*, De's incisive pen has created eight women who are catty, full of gossip, often hypocritical and crafty. What sets these well-heeled women apart from their counterparts in competing serials is their closer association with reality. De has sensitively brought out their honesty even as she brutally exposes their frailties, their obsession with class and their weakness for the rich life.

*Kittie Party* scripted by Shobhaa De is a clever insight into the mind of today’s urban Indian women poised at the crossroads of modernity and tradition.

*It is shocking to see some so-called women-oriented serials which are propagating archaic values of the nineteenth century. I have attempted to put things in the right perspective and pull the women back into the new millennium,* (6) says De.

She says contrary to popular belief that kitty parties are about bitchiness and playing cards, they promote female bonding. *They are therapeutic sessions where women can unburden themselves about their problems,* says De.
Though critics have dismissed the subject as insignificant, De defends her choice when she says, *Authors often go after the serious stuff. But it is day-to-day happenings that require special skills. Not everyone can write on kitty parties.*

This explains why the serial is notching such high ratings. In fact, thanks to Shobhaa De, Zee TV at last has a winner on hand. (7)

**At her best- Shobhaa De**

THE first daily soap opera inspired by the Gandhi family tells you more about Indian television audiences than about Indian politics or about the Gandhis. It is called *Sarrkkar,* but its subtitle is *Rishton ki Unkahi Kahani* (the untold story of relationships) which is a way of telling the viewer, hey — don't go away! This isn't really a political drama. It's just the kind of stuff you guys love — family intrigue, *saas bahu* histrionics, a small dollop of sex. It is a a Shobhaa De potboiler, with some political stereotypes thrown in. After all isn't the political saga of the Gandhi’s family, a drama?

Despite the standard disclaimer at the beginning of this soap/drama on Zee, similarities to persons alive or dead are not coincidental but fully intended. De had declared at the launch of the serial in Mumbai that the makers, including her, felt India was ready enough "to tackle a representation of contemporary history". And so it does. The plot is peppered with Gandhi family similarities that give the serial its talking point. Sonny boy has made an unfortunate choice in love, bahu-to-be promises to be a load of trouble, *saas* is already frosty in anticipation, and senior bahu is getting uptight about the prospective competition. Sounds familiar? Reminds you of Ekta Kapoor? Or of something that transpired back in the 1970s at No 1 Safdarjung Road?

**What Shobhaa De says about script writing?**

On TV, pace is everything. If you don't understand pace, you don't have any business to be on television. A writer's work cannot be compartmentalized. Whether it is an ad copy
or a script or a novel, it is inspired creativity at its best. It is all about thoughts, words and ideas.

*Writing for TV serials was an exciting experience for me. Unlike a novel, which is purely a one-on-one experience; writing for a TV serial took me to another dimension. I felt as if my characters were coming alive on the small screen. My characters have faces (of the actors who played the characters) and I associate these faces with my creations.* (8)

*Kittie Party* was a gut reaction to the 'retrograde' serials currently on air. I grabbed the opportunity to use *Kittie Party* as a device to project contemporary women and narrate a true to life story. The serial wouldn't have been accepted a decade back as it would have been considered to be an elitist past time.

I have been surprised by the response from people in different walks of life. This proves that the premise of female bonding and women meeting one another to discuss their lives is being accepted in several places in the country. In fact, even within Mumbai, there are suburban kitty parties, multi-millionaire kitty parties and middle-class kitty parties.

People have reacted in a favourable manner and this response has come from metros as well as smaller towns such as Indore, Nagpur and Coimbatore. These people who reside in small towns didn't know me as an author of English novels. Now they have started reading my work. Writing for *Kittie Party* and the promotional media blitz around the serial has succeeded in getting me instant recognition beyond the metros. There has been a rub-off effect on the sales of my novels but the extent cannot be quantified.

Even at airports, I have had women walking up to me and congratulating me and thanking me for giving them *Kittie Party*.

It is all about the attitude projected by the women protagonists. *Kittie Party* has definitely broken the mould and presented Indian women of the 21st century. It has brought these women to the forefront and given them confidence to behave as freely as their global counterparts do.
The story is about issues relevant to today's women and not the *saas-bahu* sagas where the protagonists' mindsets were 50 years behind the times. I personally feel that the *saas-bahu* themes are extremely insulting and degrading. It is wrong to project women as submissive on the small screen. On the other hand, one must give the younger generation enough confidence to be what they are and what they want to do.

Indian women love to cling on to the existing stratosphere as they find a certain comfort zone. Most Indian women have spent their entire lifetime living and believing in the values projected on screen. Several of them haven't had the courage to break away from the groove. Also, the elder generation of women doesn’t allow the younger ones to break the mould.

*Kittie Party* has given them a new insight. Viewers may or may not pick these insights and imbibe them. But the fact remains that we have shown them a new path. The female characters speak today's language and many Indian women will definitely connect to them.

Some male characters in *Kittie Party* are extremely progressive modern males. Consider the character of Manoviraj (played by actor Kiran Kumar) - he is a contemporary man who doesn't fall into the trap of stifling his women. He gives them freedom. Basically, all my characters are neither black nor white; they all have their failings and their strengths; they are good at times and equally bad. None of them can be permanently slotted or typecast in a permanent mould.

Swaabhimaan divulges the story of an attractive woman - Svetlana who finds herself in a battle where there are no real winners. Insecurity, suspicion and fear threaten to erode her vivacious spirit as she struggles to come to terms with her position - that of a pampered mistress whose tycoon patron Keshav Malhotra played by Naasir Abdulah dies leaving her to cope with the ugly aftermath of the tragedy - inheritance wars, succession rights, property entanglements, petty quarrels and above all, emotional turmoil that threatens to destroy her. This serial was aired in the year 1995 to 1997.

**Shobhaa De a Columnist**
A columnist in the country’s leading and most widely read newspaper – *The Times of India*, Shobhaa is also associated with the *The Week* and more. On a day she can pen down at least 1500 words but of course *There are days when nothing happens, yet when I get down to it, I can write at a manic pace.*

Most of her writings focus on different aspects of urban India. Urban India defines every aspect of her life – it is her milieu. Shobhaa De writes about realities which she cannot write on her own – what does she know about rural life? How phoney! Besides, writers generally choose their turf and stick to it – Vikram Seth does not write about India’s villages either. Life in urban India will evolve and change as the world changes.

**Shobhaa De as a Blogger**

Prominent Indian columnist, writer and social commenter, De has been around the writing scene for more than a decade. Her smart writing style, sharp opinion and versatility have earned her both praise and critique as she remains firm to her views regarding both national and international political, economic and especially social scenarios.

According to De, the future of blogging is bright as she continues to highlight how the blogosphere acts as a “democratic space especially for a young person for self-expression and more. A blog can only get popular if people like the content and you are able to saying something different, something innovative and challenging.”

A blogger since 2008, De loves her blog and likes the space and freedom to express her views uncensored and people from all over the world can read. Moreover, as a writer she aims to reach more people and writing for her blog, helps her do that.

She concluded that the whole idea is to have dissenting opinions and that is the challenge of a blog. The future of blogging seems optimistic as Shobhaa De reassures everyone to take to the web to express their views.
Blogging happened in April 2008. It began as a promotional idea for my book *Superstar India*. I found it most liberating and a whole lot of fun. And here I am – going strong more than a year later!

Her blog is freewheeling and spontaneous. She doesn’t really ‘pre-plan ‘a post. It is more cathartic and communicative, with a chatty approach. The topics vary – it could be a strong comment on a movie, politics, fashion, food, a celeb, an international happening, a social issue… or even her own little discoveries while travelling. For her it is important to connect with those who visit and share her feelings\experiences. She enjoys the banter and frequent interactions.

The words just pour out to her in torrents…

She once commented that she has not tried to promote the blog so far. There is no strategy –She reads every single comment and tries to respond directly to those that interest her. It’s not physically possible to respond to everyone, since she doesn’t employ people to manage her blog. It is pretty much a one woman show. She loves the relationships she has established through this space. She normally has no time to check out other people’s blogs. But from her readings in the newspapers she finds them pretty lively.

When questioned once in an interview about how she feels about blogging she answered:

*It is so liberating! There are no word limits or space constraints. As a writer, I can receive instant feedback from some really sharp minds who are followers. I learn a lot from them. Blogs represent creative freedom – I love that.*

Some of her blog posts have been involved in controversies. Many of the celebrities shy away from blogs for the fear of speaking their heart out and getting involved in controversies. But Shobhaa De believes that that’s a key part of the excitement!! How boring it would be if every blog post was sanitized and ‘safe’. She claims that she was no stranger to controversy in any case. She could handle the heat –she was a big girl!
Being a columnist with many newspapers and magazines and as an active blogger, Shobhaa’s comments on social issues and public life has often acted as a mirror to the state of affairs in the public domain and as an intermediary between the common man and the policy makers. It is not for no reason that she is called on to every other social platform to voice her opinion. Is there anything that really frustrates Shobhaa about India? What bothers me is the indifference of the young. It is a young country with very old leaders. If the young want to have a voice in how the country is run, which they should know, they have to get involved. You can’t remain disengaged and expect someone else to do your dirty job. In every culture and nation, there has always been a flashpoint. Even the Berlin wall came down because the young brought it down. Communism collapsed overnight and the young did it whether it was the Tiananmen Square in china or elsewhere. They did it because they are the ones with the passion. I don’t see that passion in India and that is what annoys me. I try to charge them up. My generation clearly didn’t succeed because we were still coming to terms with a lot of things like the idea of freedom and democracy. Ours was the first generation and we had too many other issues to deal with. The young generation doesn’t have too many nationalistic issues because they are too ‘me’ centric. It all begins and ends with them. They should understand that even to have a better life and a better future, they have to engage and feel more responsible, (10) she says on a more serious note.

Any writing needs courage, even if it is about you. Either you want to put yourself on the line and do it with complete honesty and take that risk or don’t do it. I like to do it. I have strengths within myself that if this book can reach out and if there are ten thousand women who say they can feel inspired by it, it’s worth the effort. I have never had issues with age and I want more and more women not to make age an issue.

**Shobhaa De as a Designer**

For four decades Shobhaa De has been in the news. She's been a Vogue cover girl and is a well-known author. Now, the very stylish Shobhaa De extends her creativity to designing saris.
I created this special niche called the cocktail sari to make sure that the younger generation wears it with a sense of style and fun, says De.

For four decades Shobhaa De has been in the news. As a model she was the first Indian to be on the cover of Vogue and as an editor she created some ground-breaking magazines.

Her irreverent columns have stirred up many controversies and her novels have scandalized many, while making her one of India's most well-known authors.

She has also dabbled in scripting TV serials and recently added fashion designing to her list of creative endeavours.

De is that rare celebrity who announced her 50th birthday with an autobiography and to mark her 60th birthday she launched another book Shobhaa at Sixty.

She is a successful model, editor, columnist and author. But Shobhaa De continues to explore new avenues to express her creativity. The outspoken fashion critic decided to try her hand at designing a few seasons ago. And like everything else she has ever done, her line of saris reflecting her own personality and style has been lapped up by fashion lovers. To quote her words It was an offer I could not resist. I have been associated with fashion from my early days as a model and magazine editor. I monitor fashion and write about it, so designing was a natural progression and I absolutely adore it.

Columnist and writer Shobhaa De also turned into a designer. She made her debut in Mumbai with a collection of lovely saris. From bestselling author to designer-Shobhaa De has made the transition with practiced ease. Mumbai's famous faces made it a point to be seen at her debut as a designer. After all, most of them were her subjects in her career as a journalist and columnist.

She can give some of the film designers a run for their money. I think that she has done exceptionally well, says Karan Johar. Her new role as designer sees her giving a spin to the traditional with her cocktail sari collection. The switch from wordsmith to designer says Shobhaa, is seamless.
I believe that writing and designing require more or less the same skills. Only the application of those skills is different. You need imagination, discipline, hard work, you need to be observant, need to be interested in life itself to be able to create something beautiful, said Shobhaa.

So is Shobhaa better as a writer or a designer? No surprise that most came to the rescue of the author known for her razor-sharp columns.

The famous designer Ritu Beri said Shobhaa De is everything that any lady would like to be. The elegant lady has poise, charm, persona, confidence, personality and above all a very positive attitude which makes her glow at any event or function she graces, radiating absolute charm.

Ritu Beri who later joined Shobhaa De on the ramp went on to say that Shobhaa De is a timeless beauty for her. The designer was clearly impressed with the charm and etiquette that Shobhaa De exuded at the event.

Well as far as Indian fashion and beauty is concerned, Ritu Beri and Shobhaa De are two of the most coveted timeless beauties that go beyond the realms of judgment!

Shobhaa De, the enigmatic and charming novelist, who has always managed to sweep book lovers off their feet with each of her novels, was looking amazingly beautiful, recently in Mumbai, walked the ramp for friend Ritu Beri, fashion icon of India.

Walking the coveted ramp for the designer was Shobhaa De, who was seen in a black and white sari and even at 60 plus has a great penchant for looking her best, exudes definite style and grace, and can be surely called the ultimate woman of contemporary India.

Shobhaa De has extended her creativity to Designing field and started Designed dresses. She experimented with clothes and designed them to reflect the traditions and customs of Japan and Egypt. Her brand Cocktail which is available in showrooms like Samsar is hot fashions in wealthy groups of Mumbai.

And many more ……..
I was state level champion athlete. My record for long jump and running stayed for years. I used to play hockey and football as well. My pictures used to be in print media and talking about now, I don’t feel that it is something new for me. Having been an athlete and having played at a national level one can’t miss out the competitive spirit in Shobhaa’s writings. *I think it becomes a life-long passion for anyone who has been with sports. It never leaves you and you get used to winning which is a lovely feeling. Also sports teach you sportsmanship. That it is ok to not to win. You win some, lose some and take it in your stride and move on. Unless you play a sport, it is very difficult to communicate that balance. There is always going to be someone in your life who’ll do it a micro-second faster than you and you must learn to accede with grace.* (12)

Speaking about Bollywood, I was a copywriter for an advertising company and hence was able to start *Stardust* magazine. My life has less glamour and more hard work.

*Author Shobhaa De has turned to Music now. Well, she’s not strummed the guitar or sung a ballad (yet!), but has brought out an album inspired by her recent book on India.* (13)

She has also anchored a prestigious weekly show called ‘Power Trip’ which featured India’s Billionaires apart from TV Serials Script Writing.

When she was asked if she regretted on giving up her career as a sports woman she answered blatantly, *Never. I had my priorities in place. As a student, I had been a state level athlete, and a record holder in basketball. Achievements came naturally to me and I took them in my stride. I could have brought home an Olympic medal but I didn’t.*

**Non Stop Shobhaa De:**

Shobhaa De's two new works scheduled for launch in November are biographies on Bollywood actress Kareena Kapoor and Adi Godrej - the industrialist behind the 115-year-old Godrej Group.
This will be my 18th title, it will be launched digitally, Shobha De said addressing CIOs of top IT companies at the Gatner Symposium and IT Expo, adding that she was
influenced by Bachchan who has turned tech savvy and making best use of the Internet platform.

*My publisher (Penguin) gave me the option of traditionally doing it. But I have said no. My new book would be digitally launched, I haven't tried it before. The launch will be digital and I'm very excited about it. I haven't tried it before but I understand it reach and potential. It's a style book.*

**God’s golden girl**

Shobhaa has often openly spoken about how spiritual a person she is. Spirituality is not something conscious that I think about and think am feeling spiritual at some set hour in the day. It just happens! These things just come by and how! There was a whole generation what was out of touch with these things in pursuit of something intangible. In their run towards what they assumed were success in western terms and the symbols of that success which they seem to be obsessed by, they lost track. *I think it will all return soon. I am positive about that. Today be in Ganapathi or Gokulashtami or Ramzaan, I see a lot of young people. One reason might be that they are all lost and confused and need something to hold on to,* says Shobhaa, who is very intriguingly spiritual and speaks with an air of mysticism. It might just be all this positive energy she gains that keeps her and her wonderful work going. The more she tells you these tales, the more endearing she comes across. There are reasons why even the gods might have chosen her to convey what they wanted to, to the world around.
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