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Identity crisis and feminist studies by Shobha DE's *Strange Obsession*

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Abstract

The paper discusses about the Indian writer Shobha De's novel *Strange Obsession*, which was one of the causes of her enormous prolific writing. From many perspectives, the study analyses of the issue of Representation of India by Women Writers in English Novels. Shobha De has worked hard to develop a character who feels a feeling of transgression in a story about contemporary literature. This study also explores gender identifications and the implications that Minx, a lesbian woman has experienced as well as the topic of identity crisis is expressed. This paper examines Shobha De's novel and presents an in-depth examination of how the characters' incorrect decision becomes the fundamental flaw for their sufferings and how the decision causes the characters to sacrifice their lives. This paper also discusses the gender equality and normalization that is taking place in the modern day.

Keywords: LGBTQ, the truth, gender studies, and the modern, sexuality, obsession, anxiety, absurdity

Introduction

Literature is a reflection of our lives. It can transport us to a fascinating universe while also feeling us with pleasant emotions. Literature always has an impact on many viewpoints and genuinely educates us. Women writers have battled for their rights. Their genuine thoughts and voices for justice have been imprisoned for a long time. Following a period of adversity, women authors rose to share their thoughts and raise their voices in support of our country's justice. Female writers' purpose was to share and clarify their inner views and questions, not to contradict masculine empowerment. Our country is currently commemorating its 75th year of greatness. Shobha De is an Indian writer, novelist, journalist, and feminist of the highest caliber. She wrote many novels. Her works include *Strange Obsession* (1992), *Uncertain Liaisons* (1993), *Socialite Evenings* (1989), and *Starry Nights* (1991). For the first time Shobha De introduces an urban woman in her works. Through her essays and novels, she challenges patriarchal hegemony. Because of their separate sex, women in contemporary Indian society are viewed as inferior to males. She possesses a remarkable ability to expertly describe extremely delicate areas of human life. She is a novelist who is different from other Indian women who write in English.

Shobha De, like Kamala Das and Arundhati Roy, is a well-known Indian writer. *Strange Obsession* is her daring novel. It is an excellent essay that explains the grief and emotions of a lesbian while also dealing with societal ideas. Shoba De's writings are depicted in the contemporary reality of the elite people. She penetrates people's hearts on a profound level. She doesn't hurt anyone to portray the world as it is. She is a fearless and honest individual who is committed to raising awareness of homosexuality in the community. "Shoba De deconstructs the traditional concepts of love and sex and naturally romance and sexuality as made out by the novelist create a conflict in the social and cultural society." (Indian Writings: Critical Perspectives.102). Her novels are interesting, inventive, and eccentric. In her writings, Shobha De opposes forced heterosexuality and makes the argument that lesbianism, or relationships between women, is preferable to relationships between men. She questions the expectations that society and culture have placed on her and rejects her sexuality. This work is likewise written in the voice of a gay assault victim. It also explores a straight woman's transformation into a lesbian as a result of a traumatic childhood event. Queer people arise as a result of hereditary factors as well as difficult childhood experiences. The author took the initiative to promote the idea of LGBT folks being normalized.

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It also discusses how old concepts and belief systems evolve. *Strange Obsession* can also be considered as a method for educating people about LGBTQ people's suffering and normalizing these social constraints.

Amrita Aggarwal, a lovely young model, tells her inspiring experience in *Strange Obsession*. She is portrayed as a pretty woman who submits to violent people. Everyone has admired and envied her beauty since she was in elementary school. She has always been concerned with grooming herself and staying attractive. She has won many hearts by competing in modeling competitions. She chose to pursue a modeling profession since she was passionate about it. She comes from a traditional household. Despite her family's objection to her chosen career, she pursues it. She resolves to advance professionally in her modeling career. As a result, she leaves her village and travels to Mumbai. In Mumbai, she meets new people and shares their bonds. On a dreadful day, she encountered a tough girl named Minx.

Amrita's enthralled beauty captivated Minx at first sight. She wanted Amrita's undivided attention and devotion. She created a variety of products to try to impress Amrita. As the months passed, Amrita began to feel unpleasant sentiments toward Minx. She decided to quit her connection with Minx since she thought it was wrong. Minx forced Amrita into a relationship with her. Amrita was in an impossible situation and had no choice except to ignore her connection. Minx described a past traumatic encounter she had with her parents. She also showed the scars from her father's brutal beatings. Amrita was heartbroken for Minx. She felt worse for her. She doesn't want to leave Minx in such a vulnerable situation. She tried to be a nice friend, but Minx expected more than just friendship from her.

When Amrita returned home to heal, Minx accompanied her and spoke with her family members, giving them the impression that she cared more about Amrita and always took better care of her. Her family members were pleased to meet Minx and believed Amrita was really lucky to have her as a best friend. Amrita was in a dreadful way, and she couldn't tell anyone what was going on. Minx underwent surgery to change her sexual orientation and persuade to stay with her. Minx would go to any length to bring Amrita along with her. Although going out of her way to impress Amrita, she has no feelings for her. In her own house, she was helpless. Minx took advantage of the situation by compelling Amrita to engage in sexual acts with her. Amrita, who used to have a good relationship with Minx, grew increasingly insecure as Minx's undesirable activities upset her in a variety of ways. Amrita begins reacting to Minx's homosexual advances, which ultimately causes her to experience an emotional breakdown. "She develops nausea for her parents, family life and especially for male members of the society." (*A study of Psychopathic Sexual Relationship*, 88). Amrita feels as though she is imprisoned by Minx and is suffocating. Because of Minx, she has a lot of emotional issues.

Minx is portrayed as a daring woman who despises falling in love. She is at ease around Amrita. She is persuaded that Amrita is the solution to all of her problems. When Minx revealed her troubled past, Amrita consoled her and felt sorry for her. She was constantly watching and observing Amrita's moves. Minx's life was difficult. She had wished for true affection from her beloved but had not received it. She went to tremendous efforts to ensure the safety and security of her lover. She was certain that Amrita would

recognize and appreciate her genuine love one day. She continued to develop Amrita and fought till the end of the tale. Her determination to reclaim her loved one was admirable. Her acts were never thought to be in the best interests of society. Amrita felt she was on the right track when it came to persuading her. Minx went to Amrita's residence and took her possessions without her knowledge to feel her presence in her. Amrita is always amazed by Minx's unwavering adoration. She was first grateful for her support and concern.

Amrita returned to Bombay for work a few days later. Minx persuaded Amrita to remain at her residence. Amrita couldn't persuade Minx to leave the chat. As a result, because she had nowhere else to go, she consented to stay with Minx. Amrita was forced to collaborate with Minx. has been tortured physically and mentally. Minx's harsh demeanour made her feel safe. She has been tortured physically and mentally. Minx's aggressive demeanour made Amrita feel vulnerable. Minx changed her appearance to impress Amrita since she feels more at comfortable in a relationship with a male partner.

Despite her efforts and sacrifices for Amrita, she prefers heterosexual guys and is not sexually attracted to Minx. Amrita met her groom by chance one day. The first time they met, they adored and fell in love with one another. Minx was much angrier at Amrita after discovering this. She humiliated Amrita in public. She had experienced physical harassment. A few days later, Amrita's mother arrived. She understood the true significance of Minx. She was concerned about her daughter's situation. She rescued her and returned her daughter to her house. Amrita told her spouse about all of her negative interactions with Minx. He comprehended her with maturity. They had both gotten married. Minx was unwilling to quit and she had divorced Minx and married her beloved companion. She finally kidnaps Amrita and puts her in danger regularly. She cunningly tortured Amrita. Finally, when she attempted to take over her life, Amrita's husband defended her, reminding us that humanity has a strong message.

Minx craved genuine affection and attention, which she had never experienced. She instantly fell in love with Amrita and wished to be with her. Her tragic childhood experiences influenced the rest of her life. She had a rough upbringing. She does not feel safe when she is with her parents. She was always eager to share with her parents, but they never paid attention to her. Her father's cruel behaviour destroyed her image of males, and she wished for a female to understand her feelings. The immense sorrow she carried in her body as a result of her father's punishments drove her to be even crueller. These occurrences turn Minx into a lesbian and a maniac. Similar to this, Minx's behaviour with Amrita is homosexual as a result of her father abusing her sexually. "The sexual relationship with her father turns her towards homosexuality as a safer sexual outlet... Girls who have been raped by their fathers (and they are not rare among delinquent girls) find relationships with men either threatening or disgusting and often turn to other girls for the fulfilment of their emotional need for love." (*Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life* 595) ^[5].

Becoming a social worker Minx's mother is worried about her family, which exposes her daughter to danger. It is relevant in the context of current living. In our generation, more social workers have emerged, but they are more concerned with society and earning goodwill in society than

with their own families. Minx was unaware of her mother's anxiety. She was forced to look for her care. *Strange Obsession* examines Minx's identity crisis in the context of society. Throughout her life, she has struggled to reconcile cultural notions of identity and has encountered a great deal of ignorance.

Our predecessors' practices and traditions are still a mystery. All of the ideals we held and promoted for our lives are being destroyed. Ancient conceptions' belief systems are gradually vanishing. People today are doubting their ethical beliefs and engaging in activities that are convenient for them. The cultural shift and the traditions we followed are being called into question. In today's environment, blind faith in some conventional beliefs is steadily diminishing. The archaic norms we followed, such as female oppression and horrifying attitudes against gay people, are changing. The filthy thoughts are being washed away by true education, which has given women courage. People value convenience. Every Indian looks forward to Republic Day with pride, excitement, and independence. The important topic to be addressed is whether each gender truly celebrates this day. As a result of the inspiring works of current writers such as Shobha De, changes occur in our modern era that makes everyone a mentally educated person.

Shobha De's incredible efforts on gender equality inspire everyone to consider their own points and perspectives. It made the readers rethink their psychological constraints. That brought a lot of hope to the Gay community. It also assists readers in comprehending biological changes and psychological feelings. Shobha De explains clearly the changes in ancient behaviour, including gender supremacy. It also deals with an infinite number of magical elements that bring troublesome ideas from both the ancient and modern ages. Shobha De is recognized as India's Representation of Women Writers in English. The majority of her works deal with the idea of normalising gender issues. She excelled as an Indian writer who spoke up for social ideas and tried to remove society's unfair constraints. Discrimination persists, no matter how often we talk about it. Authors like Shobha De have emerged to dispel such myths and argue for true freedom in everyone's thinking. The concept of mental and physical independence is introduced in the writings of contemporary writers.

Contemporary Indian women writers have broad thinking perspectives and address major subjects responsibly. *Strange Obsession* is a respectable story about gender difficulties and the psychological suffering of the people. It takes a lot of courage for an author to speak about social boundaries. It is also meant to increase awareness and normalize emotions toward LGBTQ people. The story depicts Minx's parents' harsh treatment, as well as her emotions and feelings of rage toward them. When the child's parental guidance is not good, it could lead to such hard mentality. Throughout the contemporary era, several gender crises have occurred in various parts of the world. All that remains is to learn and value people's feelings. Before presenting their well-known writings, Shobha De conducted significant research. To depict India, modern female writers engage in tough writing.

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