

## Contemporary woman searching her true identity in Shobhaa De's Second Thought

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**Abstract:** This Research paper is an aim to take a run at the connection between the intellectual content and audacious character, which explores the depth analysis of female self-discovery and the substantial personality among the patriarchal society in Shobhaa De's Second Thought, which is set in De's Wessex and loved city that can be seen as the setting for most of her novels. Maya is a Kolkata based girl who is married to a Mumbai based boy Ranjan. She thought that she would achieve everything that she desired to be; Maya subtle female who finds wings after marrying but ultimately fails to find the same. And that makes her audacious and rebellious in order to search her true identity.

**Keywords:** Self Discovery, Patriarchal Society, Stereotyped, Identity

**"Where women are honored, there the Gods are pleased; where they are not honored, all works become fruitless" (Manu (3.56))**

The route of modernization is accretive, assimilative and adaptive. It occasionally threatens established social order. Modernization, unlike social movements constitutes a process of social, political, cultural and economic transformation which by its nature tends to be accumulative and adaptive and which selectively pro-

motes structural replacements and distinguish in society. It is the process which generally involves an interaction between the existing ideology and the necessary ideological framework that is required for development and progress according to one's ideology. Hence it is a complex procedure involving the denial of some 'new' things. Thus, there exists a contradiction between the 'old' and the 'new'.

The process of modernization demands the full utilization of scientific discoveries, invention, technological developments and available natural resources. It focuses on the social and economic development of a society on a rational basis. A modern society may accept those values of cultural heritage which are not obsolete. At the same time, a modern society accepts new values which are equated with the political and social ideology of the society and then the specific patterns of modernity are defined as per that society.

As women are human beings they have as much rights to full development as men have. No doubts, each are a self which initiate the other as its compliments. The bifurcation of sexes is a biological process, not a historical event like the divisions of races and classes. Both male and female constitute a fundamental unity. The status of women in any society is a true barometer of that society. In other words, it is one of the important criteria for evaluating with precision the degree of civilization achieved by a particular society during the various phases of its history. The status is always affected by the progressive trends prevailing in the society.

A historical survey of women in India reveals that they have always made a significant contribution to the society and there were distinct stages of rise and fall in their status. They have been iconed as patni, Goddess and sometimes described as the symbol of Shakti, the personification of power. They are also called Datni, a creative energy which conduces to the growth and welfare of human society. Indian

women in the Vedic period enjoyed a very high status. She experienced equality with men in all sphere of human activity, be it social, religious, spiritual or in state craft. They were initiated into studies of the Vedas through ceremonies like Upnayan. She composed and enchanted the Vedic hymns. She was men's friend as well as co-worker who journeyed the life joining shoulder to shoulder with her husband. Even in the matter of selecting partner for marriage she had equal rights and now women set the values into the innovative ideas.

Shobhaa De is one of the substantial authors in the world of literature. She describes herself as an 'obsessive-compulsive writer', columnist, commentator and author of fourteen books. She lives with her family in Mumbai a city that she considers a 'character', not just a locale, in her works. When it comes to survival and identity, the females of Shobhaa De takes course to other way.

**"The situation of woman is that she is free and autonomous being like all creatures finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the statue of the other."**

**Simon De Beauvoir**

Indian English literature has a prolonged galaxy of women writers touching various facets of women's life, while writers like Kamala Das touch the physical aspects of human relationships, Anita Desai focuses on the psychological one, Shobhaa De highlights on a question of identity. Thus, the movement took place as an influential step towards as mere 'consciousness' in writers like Shobhaa De. She does westernizing of the women of Mumbai; she has gone to the extent of redefining marriage and the role of woman in the soil of India.

The concept of identity is a delicate idea to locate; identity is something what makes a person unique or distinctive. 'Identity' as a theme can be a somewhat problematic concept, however, because authors and poets often construct complex and profound characters. Writers will



often construct characters who perform a false identity; villains such as Shakespeare's Iago. Identity is a strong premise in many literary texts, possibly because a writer must always construct several identities in order to achieve interesting characters. The problem of search for identity or 'self' is intricately woven with problems related to the problem of existence. This has been a popular theme with most of the women writers of Indian fiction in English. Each one of them has tried to delineate this idea in their inimitable style. Shobhaa De is a popular columnist and journalist who has frank and forthright manner depicting sensitive aspects of human life. Refusing to be a tag as a feminist, and choosing to be known as humanist. She has attempted with bold and openhearted narrations of problems faced by women in a culture bask in the glory of male superiority.

Second Thoughts published in the year 1996, is Shobhaa De's seventh novel in succession. The title of the novel immediately conveys to mind about The Second Sex a revolutionary text written by Simone De Beauvoir. When we look at closely, it becomes apparent that, Shobhaa De through the title of her novel alludes to first thoughts of woman which are influenced and scrutinized by the rigid values and system that widespread in the society. Her first thoughts about life are extensive with expectation and aspiration.

Shobhaa De's Second Thoughts focuses on deep anguish of Maya who feels trapped in a place where there is no way to get out and breathe out. Maya is neglected and criticized by her husband and exploited and deceived by her young lover. She was betrayed because of her incorrect decision Maya, the main protagonist and narrator caught up in a drab, boring life that she seeks to escape by making new friends. She only wants a good company. The story revolves around the three main characters; Maya, Ranjan and a fun loving boy Nikhil.

Maya, who is extremely happy to be

married to Ranjan a Mumbai based boy, and moreover settled by all means found her life stable, she has loads of desires and plans to be executed as she is in Mumbai; a city of dreams. She knows her caliber and wants to continue it with full dignity, but Ranjan wants her to be a perfect housewife like his mother. He always wants to see the side of his mother in Maya, which she is unable to show as she isn't as perfect as Ranjan's mother. Here it can be seen clearly that Ranjan married Maya just for the sake of his mother because she wanted him to be settled down, although Ranjan had some other plans. Ranjan starts criticizing her for unobvious reasons; she also tries to manage things according to Ranjan, but unfortunately fails to bind to his absolute way. Maya has a different perception about Mumbai's life. She is a kind of girl who has her own personality, and wants to be the same. She is an ambitious girl who wants to fly and grow. When Ranjan doesn't allow her to go out and to work unfortunately she is dumped at home and that very thought made her rebellious. Then she started her new journey towards Nikhil, a young college boy and a short span boyfriend.

Maya struggles a lot in her life but at the same time she finds the way out to escape from her boredom household chores, she tries to knock down her weary routine and meets Nikhil. They become fine friends and further more than that. Ranjan's erroneous attitude makes Maya sort of rebellious lady. She decides to move from her homely atmosphere. Maya starts flying and growing with Nikhil although for him Maya is mere a person to whom he could spend some pleasurable time and that's all. Nikhil isn't serious in anyways but unfortunately Maya gives her broken heart to him and falls in love. She starts keeping happy and joyous in the company of Nikhil. Actually, Maya sets up her path and takes pledge to keep up the high spirit in life. She doesn't want to go back and see the moron married life of her. She chooses to be

happy no matter how long it would be. She determines to be in the mode of blissfulness and leaves all her anxiety at the back. The time of her happiness isn't too long but she satisfies her appetite of being a female through Nikhil. Maya doesn't keep herself as a typecast in fact she smashes the image of typical female who listens to everything without bowing her head. This is how Maya proves herself a kind of female who doesn't follow the stereotyped norms and becomes a contemporary woman who knows very well how to search her true identity.

Shobhaa De seems to suggest that we have not only an urgent need to demolish the fabled and iconographic descriptions of woman imposed by patriarchal structures but also an urge to conceptualize woman as a merged energy of production and protection.

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