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**LESBIAN FEMINISM, EROTICISM AND SEXUALITY IN SHOBHA  
DE'S STARRY NIGHT AND MANJU KAPUR'S MARRIED WOMAN:  
A CRITIQUE**

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**ABSTRACT**

Shobha De, a great literary figure and writer of Indian writing in English delineates female sufferings in her books. Her goal is to protect women rights. Her intention is to feature the pathetic state of Indian women under the overwhelming burden of man controlled society. The women characters in Manju kapur's Married Women and Shobha De's Starry Nights are completely concern with their own rights being women; still they become victims of male dominated society. They attempt to set themselves free from the deep rooted problem of sexual orientation and separation.

Kapur's distraction with the female rebel against profound established family esteems and the organization of marriage is depicted through her books. It is a fascinating contextual analysis of lesbian story techniques in Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman*, female sex and sexual character is inseparable from her perspective. The novel uncovered the local relationship. Astha's lesbian association with Pipee is, rather a subordinate articulation of Astha's feminist awakening within a man centric structure. The novel encompasses heteronormativity at last. Astha in her eagerness transforms into a lesbian and ends up noticeably flippant with everything including her children and her partner, and Peepalika a lesbian woman who is a widow.

An attempt is made through this paper pertaining to the status of Indian women in the compositions of Shobha De and Manju Kapur in which they speak to sexuality, as indicated a woman is to be taken as a simple toy, an object of desire and lust with pleasure but man's

equivalent and respected partner. Their women characters without a doubt uncover their feminist perspective. The present paper explores sexuality in honored society where women are dealt with simple as commodity and the paper looks to give an investigation of the Lesbian Feminism, Eroticism and Sexuality in the books of Shobha De's *Starry Night* and Manju Kapur's *Married Woman*.

**KEYWORDS**

Feminism, Indian women, New Woman, female sexuality, Eroticism, Sexuality, lesbian feminism, patriarchy.

## RESEARCH PAPER

### Introduction

The word lesbianism is derived from the Greek word "Lesbhos," a Greek island in the Aegean Sea which was the local place of Sappho, the seventh Century B.C. verse poetess who tended to her affection lyrics to ladies. In the Kamasutra, the popular exemplary of Hindu erotica, there is an unmistakable citation of lesbianism. Today lesbianism is a general wonder where woman find sexual satisfaction among themselves. It has been expanding in the moderate Indian culture regardless of the society's absence of acknowledgment to this context. Reason being a lady can work up another woman superior to a man; while a man performs and subsequent to do it he wind up plainly apathetic regarding his female accomplice or show absence to look after her.

In *Starry Nights* (1992), Shobha De has anticipated the shattering of human esteems in this sparkling universe of Mumbai silver screen through the practical depiction of Aasha Rani, Geeta Devi, Malini and Rita. In our society, women abuse and ill-treat women as opposed to indicating adoration, regard and comprehension for their own sex. In actuality, Shobha De draws out the general mental truth that the woman is the adversary of woman. The women in this novel are identified with the universe of movies. Aasha Rani, 'sweetheart of the millions', breaks every single social progressively and social standards by her strange and freak conduct. Nothing controls her willingness to carry on with her own existence. Her sexual experiences with various men call attention to her sexual animosity. She overcomes men unexpectedly, and devastates the legendary picture of lady forced by male centric society. As indicated by De, 'sex is the bedrock of all connections'. Her character's in this novel honestly talk and have sex. They are intense and rebellious who secure against their abuse and endeavor to state their identity. However women in Shobha De's are sufficiently tolerant to proceed with their indulgences and issues without their partner. These women are sure and are sufficiently sensible to legitimize their relationship. This relationship is best shown in the connection between Asha Rani and Akshay Arora in *Starry Nights*.

*A Married Woman* (2002) is the tale of Astha upper white collar class, working, Delhi woman. Astha aches for a reason in her life, other than being a spouse and mother against a clearly acknowledged setting of Indian legal issues. She was their future, their expectation, and however she didn't need them to watch her so deliberately, they did. She continually battles for acknowledgment and a social reason. Astha wedded life offers her extravagant smoothening through matrimonial euphoria however gradually she feels the throbs of

estrangement and disappointment. She is raised in a customary plain condition of an ordinary white collar class family. Her husband is occupied with the business and Astha feels alone and boring at home. She joins the job of teaching. Hemant has brief period to share Astha's sentiments and her every day routine issues. Astha creates an affair with a lady Pipeelika which offers her much solace. She is caught in an inevitable circumstance.

At the point when Astha wants to go to Ayodhya to challenge the proposed devastation of the Babri Masjid, her choice is restricted by her relative, who demands the resistance of Hinduism. In the meantime, the relative declines to take part in the discourse of a suggested Hindu resistance. The mother-in-law's refusal proposes a fundamentalist attitude. Since Astha's contact with a Muslim extremist, Aijaz, she wants to remake her religious personality. Kapur exhibits that Astha's acknowledgment of the disadvantages of giving her family and her prompt Hindu people group a chance to shape her religious identity for her comes to fruition her experience with Aijaz. On account of Astha both the parts of sexual flexibility can be obvious, especially additional conjugal sexual relationship in new measurement of radical woman's rights. She appears to have challenged the imperatives of the white collar class presence and the built up ideas of heterosexual relationships with Pipee. Manju kapur has uncovered a woman's enthusiasm with affection and lesbianism, a contradictory marriage and resulting inconvenience with energy to change the Indian male affectability, she depicts the injuries of her female heroines from which they languish and die in for their triumph.

Aijaz's sudden death is a result Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid conflict in Ayodhya, afterward Astha is selected as a sympathizer and artist in the anti-communalism extremist gathering (the Sampradayakta Mukti Manch) that is shaped to honor Aijaz. It is on one of the excursions to Ayodhya with this gathering she meets Pipeelika TrivediKhan, Aijaz's widow who is a humanist and works for a Delhi NGO. It appears to be vital that Astha and Pipee first experience each other in an open space marked by the injuries of history, and starting now and into the foreseeable future, open spatial settings turn into their relationship.

Manju Kapur has uncovered a woman's energy with affection and lesbianism, an inconsistent marriage and following irritation. With enthusiasm to alter the Indian male affectability, she depicts the injuries of her female heroines from which they endure, and die in for their triumph. She is dazed at the strengthening of fundamentalism and the expand of religious devotees to inspire and raise the nation by a campaign and build up neurosis by introducing malevolent as an authentic need Astha was every now and then going to Pipee for her sexual

needs. Sexual Satisfaction is as Joseph Bristow watches "is a principal human need. While the lesbian drags Pipeelika to the universe of distraction, Astha delivers a sweet retribution on her husband. Having picked an elective type of sexual personality energetically, Astha wouldn't fret, as Judith Butler contends, "To destabilize the whole arrangement of sex control that fixes paired restrictions, for example, gay/straight". Women are presently depicted as more self-assured, more freed in their view, and more lucid in their demeanor than the women of the past were. Rather than downsizing the components of torment on account of her sweetheart or spouse or man, she has begun attesting her substantive character in real life, not in words. The resistance of male matchless quality, and challenge at being are subordinated by men.

Manju Kapur shows a developed comprehension of the female mind, delineating the inward condition of a woman's mind, the crack in the connections through a picture of desired connectedness. "*A Married Woman* is a very much adjusted portrayal of a country's internal advancement its qualities and its disappointments and the anguish of a woman's agitation, which is as confounded as the social and political change going ahead around her". In the event that Astha turns into the victim of male enthusiasm, Pipeelika turns into the victim of common uproar. "Astha is Kapur's new woman, cognizant, reflective, instructed, and needs to cut a life for herself to some degree she even passes on an individual vision of womanhood by disregarding current social codes. Through Pipeelika, Astha finds a fulfilment that she didn't get from her husband. At whatever point she moved toward Pipee, her heart beatspazier as a girl's heartbeats quicker at whatever point her darling subjects her to real investigation. In the event that Astha couldn't meet Pipee, she felt frightful the entire time. When they were standing in Pipee's condo gradually: Pipee put her arms around her. She could feel her hands on the restriction of her back, on the starting spread of her hips. Delicately she fixed her pullover blouse hooks and her bra, staring at her face as she did as such and gradually she kept, feeling her back with her palm, coming round up towards her boobs, feeling their non-abrasiveness, particularly where the nipples were, feeling them more than once, in no rush to achieve any conclusion. They were encased around of hush, the main sound, the sound of their breaths, near one another and blended Astha utilizes the relationship to ache for out her freedom inside general society circle, for Pipee, the relationship is a method for consulting with Aijaz's death. Kapur utilizes Astha and Pipee's relationship to a shade of multifaceted nature to female religious personality in India. For Astha, a stealthy lesbian relationship with a widow of a Muslim man symbolizes a space that does not fall

inside the limits of either the private or the general population circles, as managed by male centric society. In the meantime, the relationship enables Astha to move between the limits of the two circles unchallenged, as a lesbian relationship seems to be either censured or overlooked in India.

She applies her organization and cross examines socio-cultural construct and finds "numerous aspects of the connection between her husband and herself reflected power than adoration. Tired of deterioration of the body, she needs to reevaluate herself as a person and get back her female body with its wants, desires, feelings, emotions and dreams and sets on her mission for a more important life in her lesbian association with Peepilika, a widow. For quite a while, the female hero rejects the standards of a custom bound society and challenges the man centric heterosexual control structures which have nullified and demonized lesbianism/homosexuality. The lesbian match makes their own reality inside the bigger standard hetero world; in this manner affecting a critical inversion in the subject position. At the times of their increased bliss they are not mother, spouse and little girl or property of man centric framework however singular self who are the sole proprietor of their bodies. Through its unequivocal depiction of lesbian sexuality the author uncovers the under tummy of customary society and the potential outcomes accessible for agency and the declaration of female desire. By and large, it offers short-sightedly sexual articulation as the vehicle of female freedom.

The heroines take the remarkable way of lesbianism up to this point a forbidden and socially inadmissible relationship in the Indian setting. Their activities may end up being freeing and confirmed of their personality. They don't appear to trouble regardless of whether they would be put into a zone of rejection. Such a difference in disposition in them moves us to comprehend that it is conceivable to rise above to build up reality and tradition. Both the courageous women Pipee completely and Astha somewhat would miss their womanly fate with a specific end goal to pick autonomy. Manju Kapur in this manner through her account develops a feminocentric challenge the heterocentric, homophobic and phallogcentrically glamorized male centric society and in doing as such she is somewhat compelled to exhibit her courageous women as lesbians Journey for character is to a great extent a social marvel in India, a wonder impacted by different changing powers of reality, flexibility development, training, social changes, expanding contacts with the west, urban development and so on. Another time of liberation for the Indian ladies, a time of expanded open doors and a more unique investment in the social and scholarly existence of the nation introduced by the

colossal social reorientations, which came when the new century rolled over. Women's liberation developed as an overall development to secure women's rights from one perspective and love, regard, sensitivity and comprehension from guys on the other. It concentrated on women's battle for acknowledgment and survival and influenced them to understand that the time has come when they should quit enduring noiselessly in vulnerability.

Shobha De's *Starry Nights* published in 1992. Shobha De in *Starry Nights* has graphically delineated the Bombay film world and how could Bollywood be finished without sex and beefy joys". Shobha De has anticipated the quick breaking down of human esteems in the glitzy universe of Mumbai silver screen. Aasha Rani, Geetha Devi, Malini and Rita encounter abuse and misuse in film industry. *Starry Nights* overwhelmed the artistic world for its straight to the point depiction of sex and sexploitation. Bombay silver screen is known for marvelousness; it entices numerous young ladies, rising with desire and desire for power and self. Young ladies like Aasha Rani needs to go through the dim passages of sexploitation dejection and fiasco. Shobha De attracts thoughtfulness regarding woman's misuse, separation and commodification.

The very birth of Aasha Rani was an intense desolation. In her youth, she was denied of parental love, and passionate security, Aasha Rani needed to confront starvation and destitution. Her mom pushes her into the demonstration of making the blue movies and along these lines her mom is mindful in offering her body in the market. The basic examination of the content uncovers that Shobha De has delineated the expectations and desires of an advanced young lady whose principle thought process is achievement, glamour and money. Aasha Rani, is nicknamed as "Sweetheart of the millions" however she breaks every sexual and social standards by her deviant conduct. Nothing controls her desire to carry on her own existence. Her sexual experiences with various men call attention to her sexual hostility. She vanquishes men unexpectedly, and destroys the legendary picture of woman imposed by male controlled society. Aasha is a female criminal who utilizes all the sexual techniques to entangle men to uncover them. Aasha Rani's wellspring of happiness are men and the amusement she appreciated playing is love making. For her age isn't a bar by any stretch of the imagination. Aasha is intense in her sexual scenes delineated in the *Starry Nights*. Shobha De has concentrated on the topic of utter liberation of woman. She anticipates the thoughts of freeing woman through self-acknowledgment. The novel *Starry Nights* is a story of a provincial young lady from Madras who looks for total freedom tossing every single good

code of male centric society. The trip of Aasha Rani and her mission for total freedom is on the double intriguing and energizing, thrilling and progressive. Sex and exotic nature are part of life and with a specific end goal to acknowledge life. One needs to certify sexuality. It might mean suggestive sex Aasha and sexy love making as depicted between Mikki and her husband Binny Malhotra on the moonlit night in his place before their marriage. Aasha Rani wouldn't like to go to Mumbai however her mom drives her to wind up plainly a money making machine in her life. Tears move down the cheeks of Aasha Rani, when she leaves for Bombay. Like a confined flying creature, she is compelled to perform in porno session. Her mom savagely struck her when she stood up to. Before porno session, she powerlessly cries dissents and over and over solicitations Amma to spare her life. Aasha requests, "Amma kindly don't, i am consecrated of that ghastly man. How might I remove my clothes before every one of these outsiders?"

Aasha Rani's mission starts when she experiences Kishenbhai in the main scene of the novel. She develops as a noteworthy young girl with dull complexion hailing from Madras: "She had wonderful eyes darker than the moonless night sky. It was astonishing that Aasha Rani needs to confront numerous changes of life to make her name in the realm of fame. Aasha Rani discloses to Kishan Bhai that "Every one of you is only the same, yet hold up I will demonstrate to all of you – beat you unexpectedly". Aasha Rani utilizes sex and bed as instruments to deliver retribution from men. Her first victim is a married artist named Akshay Arora. She appreciates sexual joys with him on the bed however she realizes that he is a married man. Aasha Rani's lesbian issue with Linda is one of the finest suggestive strokes of Shobha De. In *Starry Nights*, the lesbian connection between Linda and Aasha Rani is a rebel against the man centric customary set up of our society. Aasha Rani rebels against the heterosexual connection between man and woman. The dreamland of courageous women is smashed when their fantasies don't fit in with reality. Akshay isn't persuaded about the marriage thought at all as Ajay will slaughter him. Aasha proposes Akshay for marriage and persuades him that they will move toward becoming Muslims since the laws in Islam permit polygamy laws. Akshay rejects the proposal saying that he would die as a Hindu. Aasha is totally broken as everything she could ever hope for and trusts are destroyed. She crumples on the bed as in distress she takes an overdose of resting tablets. Aasha Rani's suicide endeavor shouts the headline of all the main daily newspapers.

In the books of Shobhaa De the shifted universe of characters are imaginatively depicted. Her women are much more unique when contrasted with any customary provincial women. They



have a place with city-life and of high status. They carry on with their life minus all potential limitations. They favor living without any confinements and liberating from a wide range of control of male centric guidelines uncontrolled in the provincial society. Shobha De's concern is to uncover the uselessness and trivial pseudo women's activist conduct. De's books decipher and find, obviously or clandestinely, sex-starved woman's liberality in passionate exercises. They feel disappointed with their spouses and discover their affection outside in extra marital affair. Their journey for freedom and self-rule by shedding the dividers of traditionalism, effortless and ethical quality leads them to live definitively. The picture of a woman reflected in her books is of an advanced or ultramodern defiant woman who is solid and sufficiently striking to accomplish social and financial uniformity in a male-ruled world by utilizing sex as the most critical instrument.

The lesbian relations of De's women keeping in mind the end goal to dispose of their inflexible and tradition marital issue. In a heterosexual connection the woman needs to pay its price at her own cost. Since, she needs to decimate herself, her voice, keenness, and self-improvement, for man's need. De's woman are not reluctant in utilizing sex as figured system to get social and money related advantage marriage for them it is a protection against social esteems. In some cases Shobha De has been charged of commercializing women while communicating sex in a much expounded detail. In the wake of perusing her books one feels that she has attempted to battle for the reason for women and has drawn out the part of sex since she feels that women are underestimated regarding sex. They are influenced slaves in the hands of their spouses by making them to fulfil their requests at whatever point they require it. They get brutal and inconsiderate even love making and receive pleasure in return. Shobha De has depicted men deriving joy by tormenting a woman by beating their stripped body with seekers or harming them with influencing wounds and offering them to torment. In this manner the writer has depicted her women such that they are sexually freed and utilizes sex on their own.

In her books she practically displays a private side of urban woman's life and furthermore uncovers her predicament in the present day society. Woman is misled and oppressed by the male group all over the place. She has been the subordinate sex and needs to fit in with male measures. In the greater part of her books, Shobha De has concentrated on the underestimation of women in Indian culture. She attracts our regard for women's misuse, segregation and commodification. Shobha De rejects necessary heterosexuality and recommends woman to woman connection or lesbianism is superior to man to ladies

relationship, which she has delineated in her books. Female homosexuality has a few names in particular lesbianism, sapphism, and tribadism.

**Conclusion:**

To conclude, Lesbian relationship as self-assertion, subvert status due to gender discrimination. In treatment of these problems Kapur resembles with shobha De. Kapur highlights lesbian relationship as the self-assertion whereas Kapur reflects female lesbianism in different form. The depiction of problems as psychological, sociological, linguistic, cultural and emotional, divorce status of the protagonist and immoral affair with a foreigner, problem of the sexual affair, problem of the quest of identity, marriage obsession in different form, extra-marital affair, lust for the wealth, fame, fashions and life-style addictions in the novels of Kapur and De have been differed from each other.

The journey of Anjali and Aasha Rani is for the genuine mind-set of men who is superior to women. Her mission for affection, money, name and popularity and sexuality prompt their erosion of self. Unquestionably they investigate the idea of male hostility and sexual abuse. She understands that the world she had ventured in was exceptionally remorseless. Shoba De and Manju Kapur have transparently talked about free play of sex, homosexuality, and lesbianism in their books. Both the novelists depict the picture of women in their books. They have depicted a man-woman relationship with alternate points of view. Their woman characters they have experienced their own particular encounters, go to their genuine self. They likewise rebel against the customary picture of Indian women in words and deeds. One might say they are the precursor of the rising Indian women with their freed womanhood. The main contrast between both the authors is that Shobha De is eminent for strong and candid style of composing. Shobha De's woman characters are extremely candid about their appearance of sexual desire by scorning the sexual ethical quality which is basically ordained for women in the male centric framework existing in India. Her books speak to the new Indian woman's voice. she demonstrates her hatred and aversion for their unscrupulous and socially unsatisfactory conduct. This can be found from a definitive exercises and freak conduct. Indeed Shobha De encourages her woman to break down their conduct and quit posturing to be men. In the present situation of sexual orientation separation, an investigation of her books broadens and guides our thoughts to significant issues influencing women in Indian culture.

The presence of lesbianism in De's novel is a part of the new insubordinate woman who needs an equivalent balance with man. What Linda and Aasha Rani, Minx and Amrita share

are appearances of the new woman who looks for satisfaction inside her own sex. De's delineation of unequivocal sex between women is an honest depiction of the new reality which is coming up quick in the new world and its inexorably autonomous woman who are tossing difficulties to men in relatively every circles of human in lesbian activities. De's woman will never again endure sexual sualterity. Lesbianism has totally autonomous of man. Women in De's and kapur's books are depicted as sexually freed and the scholars who have named it as 'New Woman'. All her women characters are rebellious modern Indian women who challenge the conventionality of social taboos. They are not quite the same as the sexually ignorant women, who feel that sex is as repulsive subjection to man's vital in order to have posterity. Her women challenge this conventional set up in the society. They are more confident, overbearing and striking in contrast with men. They are not marginalised and blameworthy of their affairs.

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