

## PATRIARCHY, ECONOMIC DETERMINISM AND FEMINISM IN SHOBHA DE'S STARRY NIGHTS AND SOCIALITE EVENING.

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With mystery shrouding Harvey Weinstein on METOO, we can understand the fourth wave of feminism making use of social media to win its hands together, yet feminism is not broken free; it cannot be; even if there is biological alternative for reproduction or having roof of one's own, until men free their space in public and private lives it will remain a utopian dream. This paper disseminates the concept of Marxist feminist and socialist feminist ideologies in Shobha De's novel Socialite Evenings and Starry nights. Shobha De is a Mumbai socialite, journalist and writer and came to be known as the "Jackie Collins of India". She is considered a neo-feminist writer, as she writes vivid descriptions about sex, individuality and liberation limited to high class society. Personal is always political, reading Marx will always be interesting with social structure, political economics and ideology while feminism and the questions of women are riddled with 'straw Marx'. Early feminist rejected Marx on economic determinism while the recent feminist (poststructuralist feminist) paradoxically rejected him on class reductionism and economic determinism, while the 20th century socialist thinkers insist capitalism and patriarchy are fundamental problems of feminism. The consideration of women's oppression exposes their biosocial problems (economical/cultural/ideological) ranging from sexual harassment, rape, incest, gender discrimination, low wage, identity for self-determination. Social reaction resists women only to play downside, on the other hand, it opens a channel, where man enjoys independency of social determination, when women are forced to be responsible for social formation to serve as social agent. Before we delve into the paper, it is necessary we understand difference between Marxist feminism and socialist feminism, where Marxism deals with class system while socialist feminism deals with sexism, i.e., what classism is to Marxism; sexism is to socialism; patriarchy is to feminism.

### Capitalism and patriarchy

*Men is identified as human being and a woman as female, whenever she as human being expresses she is said to imitate man (1949).* Capitalism and patriarchy are interlinked from the time of feudalism to private ownership, people who do not own land were enslaved by the capitalist owners to work for them, as Marx names them proletariat and bourgeois.

Women irrespective of gender fall into class division and labour as an archaic form of primitive communalism as put forth Engels.

In the novel *Starry nights*, the protagonist Aasha Rani is exploited by numerous men and women. Power, control and money play a formidable role in the novel. She levitates herself to level of a 'glorified' prostitute. She is emotionally and sexually exploited by patriarchal and capitalistic men to attain her dream. It was her mother who exploited her first by pushing her into doing blue films don't be stupid. *These films will not be shown in the theatres. Nobody will know, there is a lot of money (Starry Nights 23)*. Aasha as victim started her life at the age of six, *Kishenbhai led her to her first client, a father who probably didn't recognise her. She was nothing but an unwanted, bastard- child. For everyone to exploit ...most times, she didn't even bother to look at the man's face or body. She ceased to react (Starry Nights, 43)*. Sonia Ningtharjam in "Traditional women versus Modern woman; A study on Shobha De's novel" *explores woman in glamour are in, traditional parlance are characterless*

*With no consideration for morality, which is in fact a question ... ambitious woman is ready to make every compromise as long as they can get rich and name.*

In the novel *Socialite Evening* the Karuna's (protagonist) mother denied her career by saying *father will be upset, if he hears about this woman, have you taken his permission after agreeing to model for her (7)*. Patriarchy dominates the feminist society, where a father chooses a child's career, juxtaposing in the *Starry nights* Aasha's mother choose Aasha's career, which is again a result economic deficiency as she is too old to involve in flesh trade. Karuna, how desperately I wanted to be in that charmed circle of rich girls who had everything (12).

In the two novels survival and individuality are fractured, every women characters are restrained to make their own decision, even if they do, it backfires with severe consequences; isolation and alienation and selflessness torments their life. It is to be learnt woman and girls of modern time cannot resist or fight against patriarchal model as they finally yield and compromise their living. A quarter of liberated women look out for sugar daddies and rich guys for marriage and living which is again a form materialistic oppression though with consolable exceptions. At the states of affairs, men in domestic and public places control the cog of organisation and household, when woman is left with nothing only to be treated as dolls as they have to live in dilemma between choosing self or other, it is also added men control reproduction as well.

## Production and reproduction

*The modern individual family is founded on the open or concealed slavery of the wife within the family, he is the bourgeois and his wife is a proletariat (The origin of the family, Engels).*

Marxism points out two critical interlinked concepts material production and reproduction, where production is carried out by members of the community to take of food, shelter and clothing, while reproduction refers to child bearing, supporting, companionship and love through which human race sustains. In the novel *starry nights*, *Appa been already married, when he whisked away Amma – a fleding 15 years, for he had his own family... the formidable Girija with three sons...your Appa was movie mogul (starry nights, 91)*. Aasha describes (Aasha Rani's mother) *when appa had left, amma had aged*

overnight...she must have in late twenties. Aasha rani remembered a succession of dubious 'mamas' turning up at their place and taking Amma out on mysterious missions...she'd come back late in night, smelling strange and looking sleepy (starry nights, 103) . Her Appa being a movie mogul in Madras, abandoned her wife only seek pleasure bodily pleasure from a under aged girl, once he got bored out of Aasha's mother she was left her to the streets and was unmindful of how a mother of two will find her survival, which led her to prostitution. Production determines reproduction for landless men or woman they have to sell their labour for salaries to sustain stable relation towards reproduction to sustain economic condition which is a beyond the control of individuals. For woman the employment is really scares with technical and social gender roles of production with guaranteed skills and remunerations. Marx defines

*Prostitution as only a specific expression of general prostitution of the labours and prostitution, not as selling body but as a labour.* Here Geetha Devi has taken both role of production and reproduction in patriarchal society. In the socialite evening, karuna concludes, *men feel threatened by self-sufficient woman, they like girls to be dependent dolls...men are like dogs must be conditioned with rewards and punishment (Socialite Evening, 101).*

## Sexism and monogamy

Monogamy is another reason for the subjugation of one sex by another. We can assume from history, the problem of sexes Engel's, who follows Lewis. H. Morgan's, an American anthropologist writes *rediscovery of the original mother-right gens as the stage preliminary to the father-right gens of the civilized peoples has the same significance for the history of primitive society as Darwin's theory of evolution has for biology, and Marx's theory of surplus value for political economy.— Engels, Friedrich (1884).* In Socialite evening Karuna and Anjali faced discrimination from their fathers and husband, as Anjali *I wanted to be on my own, independent, to see the world buy lovely clothes and perfumes (Socialite Evening, 24).* After marriage Karuna feels *an exhausted wife with no dreams...we are reduced to being marginal people, you don't really count except in the context of priorities, for a roof over a head and a four square meal (Socialite Evening 25).* As Betty Friedson Roy say, it is urgent how the very condition of being a housewife can create a sense of emptiness, non-existence nothing in a woman. With both scenarios, we can square production houses first to reproduction, though Marx observes *"all science would be superfluous, if the outer appearance and essence of things directly coincided (Marx, 1968, 817).* Marx alleged class reductionism and economic distribution produced from ahistorical theories that biological equality in procreation. The first division of woman and men in the propagation of children led to the monogamous oppression which leads to subjugation of female sex by male.

Marriage leads to *aimless days indefinitely repeated, life that slips away gently towards death without question, its purpose – anonymous.* Karuna expresses *if the husband was unhappy, I'd try not to argue, only to do what makes him happy...whenever she resented "do you have any alternatives wife ask her husband (Socialite Evening, 153).* Economic freedom decides gender role and sex subjugation. Men do not want woman to overcome or take up their space, as it becomes a nightmare and potential threat to their ego. D. Murali Manohar in his article "Rejecting the Hegemony, 1990's comments *what prompts Akshay to want his wife to be a home maker is that children won't be affected if both husband and wife have*

careers. *He personally knows how some woman goes the extremes for liberation* is sexist comment. Further exploring Starry nights, when Malini calls Aasha Rani to warn her in Rita's house, we can see the conflict between a liberated woman (production) and monogamous marriage (reproduction) of how patriarchy, capitalism and sexism affects feminism. Malini Screams *sex, that is all you have, you will remember this day and regret it, you will die as you are without sindoor and maang* . To have to attain a desired status, money and control of becoming liberated and economically independent, a woman must pass through sexual harassment, exploitation, domestic violence, sexism even to the extent of having unnatural sex (sodomy) for all men are always bourgeois.

## Conclusion

We cannot assume technology, sexual liberation and biological replacement as sole solution for the universal oppression of woman; it cannot be achieved when all policy makers, social structures and naturalization are designed from androcentric view. Of theorising and implementing all objectives of feminism, biosocial factor decides the insistence of the ages (voting, education, property and social freedom). It is a scientific truth, both men and woman are equal in procreation, yet economic relations and naturalization passes them through the division of labours and gender role. We must accept modern female mentality have obscurely been leaning towards materialistic oppression with limited resistance, (marriage/production) which is not feminism at all; as again a consequence of patriarchy and capitalism. This 'invisible psychic cancer' weakens the advocacy of feminism from inside and again summons them into the cycle of patriarchy and capitalism with production and reproduction as process, when sexism and monogamy as a tool. Womyn as being born free must entitle to break free all emotional and societal chains without a moment of regret, sense of compassion and must not look , if they have to create a space of their 'own' and should begin with 'feministic tabula rasa'. They should aplomb their right, does not threaten public/private social construction of men, possessing only ethical moral values with a consciousness rising spirit. The spirit of feminism advocates both woman and men objectives as in feminism, though men enjoy their privilege and self-determination, they also face oppression from capitalistic owners as a mere producer of a family, though in some countries like India and Egypt, labour is linked with caste, which is world's worst of slavery, women are killed, gang raped and harassed all around India as Marx writes *When the crude form of the division of labour which is to be found among the Indians, and Egyptians calls forth the caste-system in their state and religion, the historian believes that the caste-system is the power which has produced this crude social form.*" (Moscow edition, 176, p. 63). Engels and Marx conceptualized ancient egalitarian societies as primitive communist, where women are involved both in collecting honey and hunting, albeit not as much as men, but at the end of the day, despite there's a division of labour, the calories each sex brings to the table are fairly equal. In both groups, monogamy is the norm and men are active in childcare. Men can start to have several wives and they can have more children than women," said Dyble. *It pays more for men to start accumulating resources and becomes favourable to form alliances with male kin.* – *Guardian*. We should find a way or may be adopt methods of primitive communism with modern terms and conditions, which would treat both men and women equal with gender role, labour and sexuality, only with agriculture and more resources male dominance and power of ownership emerge.

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