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PORTRAYAL OF NEW WOMAN IN THE NOVELS OF PREETI SHENOY: A FEMINISTIC STUDY*

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Abstract

The term *New Woman* is an offshoot of feminism which was originated in the final decades of the 19th century in Europe and North America. It refers to an ideology which escalates the path of women's empowerment and emancipation by crossing the conventional barriers of society towards liberating oneself. Modern day women are concerned about their individual identity and economic independence and desire to lead their life on their own. The portrayal of the New Woman, her struggle and quest for an individual identity has become a popular trend in the Indian English literature which reveals the chain of women marching from tradition to modernity.

The present paper is a study of the portrayal of the New Woman in the selected novels of Preeti Shenoy. Shenoy portrays the image of New Indian woman who typically values the self-fulfillment, and who is always in search of self-identity and individuality rather than the rational image of the self-sacrifice. Shenoy in her novels shows a great insight in portraying the image of the modern educated women, their life style and psyche. Shenoy highlights the changes in the perspectives of the women about marriage and sexual relationship in the woman characters of her novels.

Keywords New Woman, Patriarchy, Marriage, Self-Identity, Empowerment, Liberation.

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The image of the New Woman is the presentation of the woman just opposite of the figures of the silent, submissive and virtuous old traditional woman. The New Woman is the woman who refuses the traditional marriage scenario and opts single and professional life instead. (Jusova, 1) The image of the New Woman is varied according to nation, society, class, age and cultural differences. This conception of the New Woman inspires many Indian women novelists to project the series of female figures in their novels who struggle for their evolution to come out from their domestic spheres.

Preeti Shenoy is an emerging and shining star of the literary sphere of Indian Writing in English. She has portrayed her women characters in her novels as an image of New Woman who rebel against the established patriarchal social set up to own their freedom and rights as a woman.




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