

Confession in Shobhaa De's *Selective Memory*

MRUNALINI B. V. AHER

Shobhaa De's autobiography Selective Memory selects a lot of confessional elements and fewer elements of struggle and rebellion. Some memories and incidents are intentionally selected and some are omitted, they are selective by author's choice. Glamorous world of modeling might offer her name, fame and money. But unexpectedly she accepted a copy writer's job in the advertisement agency like Creative Units, here her cord attached to writing. Middle class mentality of her parents didn't relish her modeling and also her writing in cine magazine Stardust. But according to her nature. She did the thing which stood to her mind. Even while working in the flashy world of glamour she never got carried away. It wasn't an easy task but she did. To balance one while walking on the slippery road is very difficult exercise. This exercise becomes possible for her because she was brought up in Maharashtrian Rajadhyaksha family. Shobhaa always called out her ethics and behaved keeping her moral and morale strong.

Keywords: *Autobiography, Confession, Indian Women, Tradition*

Shobhaa De's *Selective Memory* contains many confessional elements. In fact, this autobiography has confessional tone. Memories in the book are selective, narration is candid and makes us to confine to it. She has confessed that intentionally she wants to select the memoir and to present in the form of autobiography. Some memories which she doesn't want to make public are precious and private to her. The book throws light upon the selective memoirs in Shobhaa De's life as a sports girl model, journalist, editor and a writer. Her life isn't sensational like Protima Bedi. But as an author she remained controversial, especially, as a novelist she faced disputes. Heroines in her novels are uncommon, free, blustery and unbearable to the typical Indian mentality. Though selective but it would be interesting to know the elements of confession in Shobhaa De's autobiography. Penguin books publisher, David Davidar phoned

Shobhaa in 1997 and asked her to write autobiography, to write about her twenty-five years, an unending column. Shobhaa thought that people wrote their memoirs at seventy but it would be better to chronicle memories before they faded away.

She was intensely obsessed by the thought of writing. It wasn't possible to spare enough time for family members and friends, so there was complain of neglect from them. Moreover, she realized writing was very private and secret activity for her. She confesses, "For a woman, a book in progress is like a secret lover she has to hide from her family. Steal time to go back to. Dream about. Luxuriate in. Fantasize about. It's a guilty secret she can't share with anybody. There is a sense of regret you can't make love to a book or talk to it. And yet, the secret thrill of each encounter provides a high. The book makes you feel desirable, sexy, beautiful, interesting. It's better than the best sex." [De1998:2] David Davidar's words began to pursue her. She thought over it sincerely and decided to write when she was just fifty years old. According to critics and experts fifty isn't properly ripped age to write autobiography. But Shobhaa surrendered to David's urge and started writing. The book was as if guilty secret for her which she had to keep away from others without sharing with anybody. She met writing intimately, only a lot of memoirs with her. She never kept any diary or notes.

Shobhaa recollected her memories, it was colorful kaleidoscope a little pleasant but painful too. She couldn't control her writing as if she was getting haunted by writing. She began to enjoy her writing, became totally captivated by it. Shobhaa's birthday at fifty was a grand, sentimental celebration by her family members. She was moved to experience their affection for her. The autobiographer achieved mature state of mind at fifty. She became neutral and impersonal to her experiences. While analyzing her experiences; she looked through the spectacle of emotional intellect. Not only enmity but personal ego got diluted. Her understanding warned her not to be argumentative. She cleaned up her mind and began to believe in co-existence. Autobiography is the book forces us to peep into the past, and to relate past with present and future. At the mature stage of life, one begins to think about past but impartially. Yet being one's own lover, there are temptations of self-praising and self-defense.

To accept life and to proceed with maturity was not easy but she decided to do this at the age of fifty and onwards. Emotionally she felt stronger; her mind became cherished with reminiscences. As according to her nature, Shobhaa was looking for something 'new' in her life. She left modeling and accepted a trainee copy writer's

job. As a model she earned monthly ten to eleven thousand rupees and as a copy writer only three hundred and fifty rupees she got. But it was birth of a new writer out of Shobhaa. Nari Hira who was the chief of 'Creative Unit' offered her job of a copy writer. She agreed, "It was that one casually uttered but perfectly-timed question, 'Can you write? That changed the direction of my life for me, gave me my future vocation. Another identity. A new future. [De 1998:89] As an author Shobhaa got international fame She realized her potential as a writer.

Shobhaa was asked during her *Stardust* days whether it was possible for journalists and the movie people to be friends. Her answer was 'NO'. Shobhaa encountered many stars and published their interviews in *Stardust*. She observed ugly filmy world pretending decent but actually very disgusting. They were each other's jealous rivals. They were selfish, self-absorbed stars. But now days the whole picture is not totally disappointing. Being a writer, Shobhaa has interest in human beings human relationships and human disposition. She wrote, "On each visit and in each place, I've watched, absorbed, learned. Not from museums or monuments but markets and street corners." [De 1998:152]

Shobhaa met a period of crisis and calamities in her life, it was the period after 1980's She decided to leave Nari Hira's magazine *Society* and to start her own *Celebrity* magazine independently. At the same time her marriage was breaking up. She felt totally isolated. She admitted that she didn't have money for two square meals a day and often made do with coffee and biscuits, or an egg sandwich. Shobhaa faced two calamities at a time : First was her break up, she wasn't alone at that time, she was a mother of two children. Her second decision was to leave Nari Hira's job. According to her father and friends, both of these decisions were foolish. She became homeless, left her in-laws home and couldn't go to her maternal home. Moreover, it was very painful to leave her children to her husband and - in-laws but she was helpless. She had to face upheavals in her life, they were on two levels: Personal and Professional. Shobhaa confronted this crisis courageously. She remained strong and didn't allow herself to carry away in depression. She saved herself from emotional disintegration.

As a journalist, a column writer and a writer Shobhaa was criticized brutally and got bitchy remarks like 'Pornographer' or 'Pornqueen', 'Vamp Feminist' and a 'Masala writer' She became sad and brooded over such remarks, it happened in past. But in a long journey of life, her experiences taught her how to neglect trivial comments and taunts. Sometimes rational criticism helped her to

think and correct. At fifty, Shobhaa changed herself, this change took place gradually. She became mature, open minded and flexible. She began to accept people with their shortcomings and weaknesses. She accepted her own drawbacks frankly and decided to correct them. She dilated to be insistent. Her motherhood increased her patience. Yet, as a writer Shobhaa wasn't aware of this soil properly, she didn't know people living Maharashtrian soil, difficulties faced by them, their problems. Even she is unknown of geography and graphic details of this land. She didn't attempt to learn and to speak better Marathi. Shobhaa never believed in typical norms, morality and ideal principles. She had respect for the great personalities by whom she was influenced. But when she came to know about their hypocrisy and mean mindedness, she got deep blows on mind.

After having such experiences, Shobhaa wanted to live simple, straight forward life. She began to hate the hypocrites in disguise and pretending themselves knowledgeable thinkers. She came across different human beings with different tendencies. She taught herself to grow with the growing age. She never allowed her to be bias, egoistic and very special. She gained wisdom and understanding. Yet, some issues, matters, and people are unknown for her. She must reach to them to experience the world full of many controversies. At the age of fifty, she decided not to bother about people and their comments. She wanted to make herself free from all types of restrictions and obligations of presenting herself as one of the celebrities. She got fatigue to be constantly 'On Parade'

Shobhaa didn't like any type of stamping upon her, or she never wore a typical spectacle to look at matters. She remained free writer who wrote from, 'Every person's point of view.' She calls herself 'a very interested observer,' it means she wants to look at the matter with every person's point of view. A journalist or a writer must have impersonal stand, it means he/she should be impartial and rational. Shobhaa De confesses that as a writer, she thinks from a common man / woman's point of view but actually most of her writing represents specific elite class. Though she claims that she isn't a social scientist, anthropologist or a political analyst but she must have human sensibilities as writer, and to get disturb by any type of unrest is a sign of human sensibility. As a journalist she must use her pen to give out let to personal and social injustice and exploitation. A writer isn't any inborn revolutionary but his/her pen may create fire flames for expected creative revolution.

Shobhaa has interest in wealthy people's lives. She wrote about the hypocrisy and gluttony. But she never tried to peep into a poor person's house. She kept herself away from ground realities of

Indian soil and ordinary- Indian people with their difficulties and agonies. As a writer and a journalist she never observed and studied heterogeneous Indian society. A critic J. M. Waghmare's remark is significant, he says, "Most Indian women writers in English, I am afraid, rather elitist and or not very closely acquainted with Indian life and society at grass root level. They are familiar with the upper class urban life. The true heart of India has to be searched in the rural society. The best and truly representative Indian women's writing is found in modern Indian languages. In them, we find contemporary currents and cross currents of Indian life." (Shobhaa De's works do not reflect the real India) [Waghmare 1999:15]

Shobhaa wrote about human instincts, whims and human tendencies but she turned a blind eyes to social, political happenings and their impacts on the lives of common people. Shobhaa has excessive desire to live life on her own terms and to pay price for doing so. But she couldn't dare to do so. She confesses that she is just an ordinary woman who occasionally took her chances. Yet, Shobhaa De is the name of a woman who tried to break unwanted chains. Once an interviewer asked her, 'How would you like to be remembered?' And her spontaneous answer was, 'As someone who dared.'

The Penguin Books Publication writes: "Insiders know that besides her commitment to work and the frantic pace of her life, Shobhaa De's first priority in life has always been her family. Here she writes poignantly of her early years and of her relationship with her parents and siblings, her husband and her children." [De1998: Last cover page] Shobhaa De always remained the writer of educated elite class. Her writing rarely reflects social issues and ground realities. But she has a sensitive third eye to find out human tendencies and discord in human relationships.

WORKS CITED

- De, S.1998. *Selective Memory*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
 De, S. Trans. Velankar, A.2004. *Speed Post*. Pune: Mehta Publishing House. Print.
 De, S.2004. *Speed Post*. New Delhi: Penguin Books. India (P) Ltd.
 Gupta, S. 2010. *Indian Ethos In Shobhaa De's Works*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors (P) Ltd.
 Waghmare, J. 1999. *Critical Essays on Indian Women Writing in English*. New Delhi: Harmann Publication House

Literary Insight (ISSN 0975-6248)
 Volume-9, Issue-2, July 2018, pp.227-233

Thinking of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Ideology towards Women's Liberation

RAHUL DNYANOBA KAMBLE

Indian culture is an allegory that is divided into various ingredients. Its soul is the Hindu Dharmashastras that produces caste, gender inequity, untouchability, pure or impure, superior or inferior, in which women have been considered impure and inferior. Women had not the right to take education, to express her expression in the public sphere and it was a mandatory law for her; the law comes through the centuries from the Vedic period to the present. It has become a tradition to consider women as subordinate. For women, however, many social reformers have worked for her emancipation in various manners: Jotiba Phule, Savitrihai Phule, Periyar E. V. Ramaswami, Maharashtra Karve, and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. However, enhancement of women's condition, it is not appropriate in the present context. Moreover, its symptoms have changed and it has become a discourse in society. In the present context, one raises questions: Do women have freedom of expression herself? Is she free in a real sense? Why is she not free from slavery? Who is responsible for her? Why is there no upgrading of women's condition in Indian society? Is there politics behind it? Or is she herself conscientious for it or others? Even though we are celebrating the 70th birth-anniversary of Indian independence, all these questions are in mind, but it is needed to comprehend Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's ideology in women's liberation and how he produces his ideology through revolutionary texts, speeches, monographs and movements for women's rights. The present paper attempts to explore the idea of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and his contribution to women's freedom. He is not merely a prolific writer, but also a social reformer, sociologist, anthropologist, economist, political thinker and is architecture of Indian constitution. The aim of this paper is to examine how Ambedkar's philosophy is significant in the present-socio-cultural and political milieu of women's liberation. It can be said that his ideology is based on three tenets: 'Liberty', 'Equality', and 'Fraternity'