

INDEPENDENT NATURE OF MODERN WOMEN IN PREETI SHENOY'S NOVEL "TEA FOR TWO AND PIECE OF CAKE".

T.S.Sreekala M.A M.Phil.,PGDCA,

Asst. Professor and Head of Department of English, Sree Devi Kumari Women's College, Kuzhithurai.

Abstract:

The novel *Tea for two and piece of Cake*, is an unusual, heart-warming and a gripping love story between two people who have so much to lose by getting into a relationship with each other, yet so much to gain. Nisha's life is far from perfect. At 26, she is plump, plain looking and without a boyfriend. A chance date with one of her office member and a strange twist of events sees her losing the one thing that is her job which she valued above all else. Just as she gives up all hope of finding a new job, life throws her bait in the form of attractive, rich, Ivy-league educated Samir Sharma. He offers her a job and later they get married. Marriage with its routine life, kids and running a home has a way of putting a brake on most romances. Though Nisha is blissfully unaware of the slow way in which she as well as their relationship changes when she becomes a mother of two. Eight years later the comfortable world she carved for herself comes loud down when Samir announces he is leaving her for a younger woman. As Nisha, struggles to stand on her own feet, hope comes into her life in the form of Akash, a younger guy, who is certain he has found the woman of his dreams in Nisha, who does not ever want to depend on another man again. But for the welfare of the kids they two live together without announcing others.

Key words : Independent, Wrong Intention, Unconditional Love, Parental love, welfare

Introduction:

Literature is an art which gives more pleasure than other things. It reflects human beings day today life in written form. It has many intellectual values. Literature is something that reflects society, makes to think about ourselves and our society. It allows to enjoy language and beauty and also reflects the human condition. Literature presents the essence of reality. As art is the knowledge of the actual world, it exists in the real world and has a function in it. Literature can be classified into many types they are Novel, Drama, Fiction, Non-Fiction, and Short story, Prose, Poetry, Satire, and Historical.

The authors who belong to India and writes work of art comes under Indian Literature. Indian Literature in English is a historically verifiable phenomenon and it is the result of the commercial, cultural, and literary encounter between India and Britain. It cannot be apparent that a set of historically given conditions are to be identically understood by successive generations of critics and historians. The wealth of Indian Literature reveals the fact that the creativity and the experience of the writers have made an eternal impression. The concept of family is an important motif in Indian literature and drama. Both the great epic *Mahabharatha* and *Ramayana* are the two famous works of Indian Literature. They are family epics which feature about cousins, uncles and aunts. Many American dreams feature tough individuals. When these stories are adapted to India, the individuals are given the status of mother, father and ideally a brother or sister relation.

The leading Indian writers in the twenty first century are R.K.Narayan, Rohinton Mistry, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitha Gosh, Chetan Bagat, Ravinder Singh. Some of the leading woman writers in Indian

Literature are Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Jhumpa Lahiri, Sudha Murty, Bharathi Mukharjee, and Preeti Shenoy.

Many young talents are in India these days and of them is the fresh and unique author Preeti Shenoy. Preeti Shenoy's *It Happens for a Reason* which is among the highest selling authors in India and has been featured on the Forbes India long- list as the most influential celebrities. India Today has named her as being unique for being the only woman in the best selling league. In the past she has written for various publications such as *The Times of India* and *Readers Digest*.

She currently writes a regular column in *The Financial Chronicle*. She has given several talks in many educational institutions including the IITs and IIMs. She is also an artist specializing in portraiture. Her other interests are travel, photography and yoga. She is a great poet, renowned artist, excellent blogger, versatile in art (portraits, mixed media and paper quelling), a fine ex-basketball player, sweet nature lover, powerful mother and a yoga-buff.

Preeti Shenoy's first book *34 Bubblegums and Candies* was published in October 2008. In her college days she wrote pleasant articles for Reader's Digest "Joy". Preeti Shenoy novels list are not too long but these novels have made quite an impact on not only Indian audience but all over the world. But Preeti Shenoy's best books are bestsellers that include *Life is What You Make It*, *34 Bubblegums and Candies* and *Tea for Two and a Piece of Cake*.

Author Preeti Shenoy brings the succinct details of her books and bestsellers. Titled as 'Keenly observant mind' by Daily News Analysis this perfectly designates her personality. She has been endowed with excellent storytelling skills which makes her quite popular among children. Her social work involves her to help poor children's study and learn artistic things. Her portraits of pencil are outstandingly realistic. This multitalented and dynamic author Preeti Shenoy's new book is launched recently *The One Who Cannot Have*. This recent novel was published in November 2013.

Preeti Shenoy is also known to be on Forbes list of 100 most influential people. Live life to the fullest is her philosophy which is evident from her blog as well as her books. Preeti Shenoy is among the top five highest selling authors in India. She is the highest selling women writer in India. Her work has been translated to many languages. She has been awarded the 'Indian of the Year award for 2017 by Brands Academy for her contributions to Literature. She has also received the Academia award for Business Excellence by the New Delhi Institute of Management. She is the recipient of the '100 Young Indian women Achievers award' in the Powerful leader category. Her short stories and poetry have been published in various magazines such as Conde Nast and Verve. Her books include *It's All In The Planets*, *Why We Love The Way We Do*, *The Secret Wish List*, *The One You Cannot Have* and many others.

In this novel, *Tea for Two and a Piece of Cake*, the female character Nisha is the best example for an independent woman. In her young stage, she works in a travel agency named Point to Point. She never depends on others, when she loses her job, she doesn't worry about it. And she never asks any help to others. Instead, she searches for a new job and also selected in the interviews. But, because of the wrong intentions in the mind of the officers, she exits from that place.

In the meantime, Samir calls her and offers a job to work at Magellan International as an Executive Assistant to the senior partner. She feels happy about Samir for offering this job to her. The next day Nisha goes to the new office, where she finds Samir as her senior partner. She presumed that senior partner should be some old guy in the organization and not the charming Samir. She is very happy about it, and feels something better has been

happened in her life by Samir. After that, they became close to each other and went to parties and visited many places. Finally, they loved each other and got married.

Samir and Nisha thinks that they were made for each other. After their marriage Nisha decides that to leave her job. She thinks that "How can his wife be his secretary?" (94). She passes her time by learning cooking and reading. From her young stage to till her marriage she never depends on others. Then she joined in the baking and cooking course. The course turns her out to be a very good one in cooking. At first, she knows to cook only the basic items like rice, dal, rotis and a few vegetables. It includes the basic dishes from four styles namely, Mughlai, Continental, India and Chinese. Strongly believing in her own beauty and potential, the modern day woman recognizes that she needs to be the best version of herself to teach the goals.

When she knows that she is pregnant with their first child she became overjoyed. But when he suggested that to abort their baby, she become upset. She knows that, he is not fond of children. After that he has accepted the baby. Her new born baby name is Tanya. Five days later Samir's mother has been passed away Samir wants Nisha to come with him to London for the funeral. But she never goes with him because of her new born baby. There is certain thing that changes her after marriage. He makes these problems as a big issue. After that Samir abandoned her and his two children.

And so, it is Nisha's duty to take care of her two children. But she has no enough money for moving her daily life with her two children. She has only three thousand rupees in her purse. It is only a small problem and she wants to talk to Samir. Nisha has the habit of checking her mail once in three to four days. When she opens her inbox, her heart starts beating at a thousand beats per minute. There is a mail from Samir. She opens and read it. Samir has another relationship with Maya. He knows Nisha need money. So, he promised her that he will pay the fees for kids' education and give her a good sum for her monthly expenses and also tells, active her own ATM cards and credit cards. So that, he will transfer the desired amount to her bank account itself.

When she read this mail, she gets angry with him. Each sentence is hitting her with the force of a gale wind. Out of all the things he stated, two things seemed to be pierced her heart. "He had said 'MY house' and 'YOUR precious babies'" (127). "I feel so angry and so hurt that I wished I had a truckload of money to go and throw on his face, to pay him back for having stayed in HIS house and raising MY kids. I am blinded with fury, hurt by the injustice of his words" (128).

A modern day woman knows that being fearless does not mean being rash in making decisions but rather putting her fears aside in order to reach her dreams. It also means not being intimidated by the success of others but seeing it as motivation to be even better. Nisha has a thought that by handling all of Tanya's and Rohit's needs on her own, she has given him the space that he needs. And, she doesn't ask any help from him. When it comes to kids, she presumed that he would get his time to do his work, and that he would appreciate her for taking care of every single thing at home.

Nisha looks around the place which she has been called 'home' for the past eight years. With each passing second, the walls of the house with the colour co-ordinated paintings on them seem to be mocking her. She feels cheated and betrayed and insulted. She takes a decision to leave his house. She packs her cloth and also packs the most important of the children's toys. It happens nearly midnight; they are going to her father's house.

Tanya is going to school, Nisha takes Rohit and go to the super market. She walks in to the cash counter and asks the cashier to check the card if it is working. He tells politely that the card has not been accepted. For the very first time, she realize, it makes her to feel that she is poor without having any money in her hand. After two days only her ATM card has been renewed. Nisha tells everything to her friend Chetana. She is a practical one, she simply advises her to take the money that Samir offers her. But Nisha never accepted it.

Nisha calls her friend Akash and invites him to her house for a dinner. Nisha tells everything to Akash and she wants a job. He listens patiently and told her that "If you can have a job where you can be around when Tanya comes from school, and where Rohit can be with you throughout, then you would want that job, am I right?" (161). Akash asks Nisha to give ten days time for getting a new job for her.

Akash calls her two weeks later, and said that he has some really nice news for Nisha. And, he wants to come to her house because she will cook something delicious for him. She decided to cook some Mughlai chicken, rotis and a lovely salad. She waits eagerly for Akash. Akash came there after finishing all his office works. While coming there, He carries one paper and gave it to Nisha. She eagerly opens the paper with the excitement, and read it. "The Magic Saucepan We makes food good!" (168). In the bottom of the paper, on the right side her name, address and phone number has been mentioned on it. The business card looks really professional and it is so beautifully designed on expensive handmade paper, as the letterheads. She wonders about this plan made by Akash.

Akash knows that she has to earn money and so she wants a good job where she can be around Rohit and Tanya, when she comes from school. This is the best job for Nisha. Akash tells her, The Executive Director of his company has arranged a party in his residence. He wants Nisha to cook for the party and she too agreed for that. In the novel, the author Preeti Shenoy says that there was a time when woman were just the kitchen keepers and the house keepers in the Indian society. Rearing children, cooking meals for the whole family, or makes use of their spare time by doing some tailoring or knitting, but all within the four walls of the house. This has been considered as their only way of life. But now a days, women are being educated.

As of today's women are found to be working in all such fields and they are distinguishing themselves in those fields. For the middle class families, choosing a career for women has also become necessary. Nisha also belongs to the middle class family. She has an independent nature of woman. And so, she started to work for to support her family needs. Akash also appreciates her for taking such a decision in her mind.

Nisha goes to shop to buy the ingredients and she gets easily the chicken, the noodles cake, vegetables and sauces. But the spring onion and ajino moto have been sold out for the day. Both are highly essential in Chinese cooking for the extra bit of taste. This is a good opportunity for her and she want to make good of it. Nisha has chopped all the vegetables. And she never depends on others while cooking also.

Akash has arranged all the food items neatly in the serving containers. Akash calls up Mrs. Singh and tells her that they are outside in her apartment. Mrs. Singh comes there and Akash introduce Nisha to Mrs.Singh. She is the person behind The Magic Saucepan. Nisha arranges the food on the table and watches her that she is writing out a cheque for eight thousand five hundred rupees. Nisha thank Mrs.Singh for the opportunity that she has given her to serve happily to her.

Then they have celebrated the first successful order of The Magic Saucepan. When Chetana came to visit Nisha in her house she tells everything to her. Chetana talks favourly to Samir. And, Nisha replied her that,

Chetana, I don't know if this will make sense to you, but I truly do not want his money. He offered to pay me a sum monthly, but I refused to take it. Look I really do not want to discuss this with you. I am finally doing something which gives me joy. It is something I am good at and I have now started to earn money from it. It is just a humble beginning, but I am getting there. (210)

Nisha wants to live an independent life and so she moves on. She thought that Chetana will say like this. "I guess, in a secret way I am also craving for her approval, her appreciation and I want her to tell me that I am brave" (211). But Chetana says nothing like that and immediately wants to know all the details about what she is doing. So she tells her, "And you really think all this Magic Saucepan business is really going to succeed? Just take my

advice and go back home and take the money from Samir. Why are you putting yourself and your children through this torture? I am being honest with you and telling you what is good for you" (213).

Nisha wants to tell her that to shut up and mind her own business and stop judging something that she knows nothing about it and has never experienced for herself. She became totally upset by hearing these words. Akash tells to Nisha, The Magic Saucepan is really somewhat successful. He has full confidence in her talents. His words also really comforted her.

Nisha starts to get more and more party orders. By the end of the first month, she has successfully catered for nine parties of varying sizes at various south Mumbai homes. At the end of the month, she has made a profit of eighteen thousand, five hundred and forty six rupees. In the second month also she gets a profit of thirty thousand. Nisha gets happy and overjoyed. Akash says, this is just the beginning. "Nisha, you are lovelier as a business woman" (219). Taking on many roles will be a challenging one, but the modern woman embodies each of them with strength and poise. Her ability to confidently embrace each of her identities with case truly makes her a real life super woman

Samir knows that Nisha has started a new business without his help. He calls Nisha and asks her about the catering business, and tells "Look. I don't know what the heck you think you are doing trying to embarrass me like this by getting into some catering business. Do you realize how had it makes me look in my circle? I have offered you enough money, haven't I? What the heck is all this nonsense about supplying food to people's parties?" (224).

Nisha has spoken to Samir very strictly that she does not want his money, his house or anything from him. She has been left alone by him and she never depends on him also. Nisha become a brave independent woman. When she left Mumbai and came to Pondicherry, she has spent all her days happily with her children and Akash. In Pondicherry she started a restaurant named 'The Soul Garden'. And so, she has achieved a lot in her life.

SUMMATION:

When Samir left her and his children, Nisha thinks about her children for how she is going to handle them in all the situations without their father. She gets lot of pain from Samir; but she lives only for her two children, she left from his house and goes to her father's house. She earns money from cooking company. She do all the sacrifices and reduce the own living cost for the future of her children, She provides each and every thing to her children for their happiness. Nisha has done her duty of parenting well by taking care of her two children.

"Independent nature of Modern Woman" portrays the life of middle-class woman, Nisha. When her husband Samir announces his decision that to separate from her, she felt very sad. Because, their life looks almost perfect until Samir decides to walk out of their marriage for a younger woman. And, when he offers to support Nisha and her kids financially, it is her self-respect that guides Nisha to refuse any sort of association with Samir.

As Nisha struggles to stand on her own feet and hope comes into her life in the form of Akash. She does not ever want to depend again on any other man. Then, Nisha begins a catering business and became successful in it. Thus, the novel *Tea for Two and a Piece of Cake* is highly appealing and gives a realistic picture of Indian family.

In the beginning of the novel, Nisha was just an ordinary woman but gradually free from herself as a new independent woman. She is optimistic and has a positive outlook. As a independent woman she becomes free from traditional life, social and moral constraints and possess a heightened sense of individuality and self-awareness. With her courage, self-respect, indomitable and independent spirit. She has reached a stage of self-sufficient freedom, and self-fulfillment.

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