

## **MARRIAGE AND FAMILY IN SHOBHA DE'S *SECOND THOUGHTS* – A SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Introduction**

Every religious tradition and culture encourages marriage as a responsible adult act. Marriage is regarded as a duty incumbent upon all. In some cultures marriage is considered more crucial for women than for men. It is the most important social and religious occasion in a person's life. Even in a society where celibacy is a religious virtue, it is expected that to become a celibate ascetic one has to first experience marriage and parenthood. And it has been an important social institution. It is the basis for the family. The functions of marriage include regulation of sexual behaviour, reproduction, nurturance, protection of children, socialization, consumption and passing on the race.

Shobha de, the Indian woman novelist, whose novels show the struggle of woman against the predatory male-dominated society. In dealing with the problems of women in the androcentric society, she fails to provide viable solutions to the plight of the ailing woman. A woman in Indian society marries not just the man but also his family and subsequently loses her identity in marriage, relinquishes her freedom and sets about pleasing everybody.

Her novel **Second Thoughts** is a realistic representation of the psyche of the traditional Indian men and women. It deals with a young middle-class Bengali girl, born and bred in Calcutta who makes an arranged matrimony alliance with a Bombay-based, foreign-returned Bengali. Maya, the young bride is more fascinated and in love with Bombay than at the prospect of having married Ranjan. Once she lands in Bombay, after the marriage, her disillusionment begins. She realizes that despite Ranjan's stay abroad, he is very traditional and

above all, an insensitive husband. After marriage, Maya, with lots of dream, visits Bombay, with her husband Ranjan. For every girls, marriage ushers glamour, fascination, and freedom but once the ceremony is over, the dreams come crashing down and it is with a lot of bitterness that they face the harsher unknown realities. Maya was fascinated by "Bombay but was taken aback when she sensed that Bombay smelt of desperation and deceit". Desperation and deceit become the key words of her life when she becomes a part of Bombay.

Both Maya and Ranjan are strongly influenced by the traditional orthodoxy of their respective parents. Ranjan has studied abroad, lived in Bombay, but as far as his wife is concerned he imposes restrictions on her movements, she is not free to go anywhere in the city. She cannot feel free to live in the house as she would wish to. He imposes many restrictions to her. He asks her to stay at home and not to misuse his hard earned money in things like the "gajra of mogras" (26). He frights her against mop salesmen and vendors by mentioning them as "Useless ruffians". For this reason, he also asks her not to peep through the windows of the house. He never appreciates her for any work, dress, word or any other thing which belongs to her. His attitude towards Maya is derogatory and says to accept what he was saying because he does not like any kind of argument.

Ranjan's mother Mrs. Malik is rich and apparently seems quite modern and start. She has a very clear picture of her future daughter-in-law. Maya is often hurt by Ranjan's indifferent attitude and wonders why he did not pick up a Bengali girl from Bombay. She was an influential lady and she could have chosen for