



Self-Centered Modern Society in Sana by Vikas Sharma

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Abstract:

Literature has always been known as the mirror of society. This is because over the years, many writers, poets, playwrights, etc. have used literature to throw light upon the society and paint a very realistic picture of our society. Professor Vikas Sharma is a renowned writer in the realm of Indian English literature. His themes are mostly modern and deal with the issues of modern and contemporary society. He understands the problems of today's generation and society and the same is visible throughout his novels as one of the main themes. One of the most recent novels written by Professor Vikas Sharma is Sana. It majorly deals with the issues of modern society. As the society has progressed, people have majorly shifted their focus to their own personal gains and selfish motives and this has been one of the major issues of the society. The novel mainly revolves around the theme of individual subjectivity and the selfish tendencies of modern society. The protagonist of the novel, Sana, is an example of self subjectivity and through her character, the author has painted the picture of a unique modern woman with her own aims and ambitions and struggles. This is the main theme of the novel. Professor Vikas Sharma has highlighted how the characters in the novel, especially Sana, are unique in their own way and yet have some common characteristics that they have picked up from the society around them. While all the characters have their own individual personalities and perceptions, they are still a part of the same self centered society that has instilled some sort of selfishness in them. They are selfish and they are only concerned with their own selves when it comes to realizing their goals. They are so selfish that even spouses, families and other relationships do not matter in front of their selfish interests. This is the major theme of the novel and can be studied through different characters in the novel, including Sana and her father, Naveen Nishchal. The author has attempted to show that while everyone has their own unique selfish interests and goals, their method of achieving them is more or less similar. The proposed research paper aims to analyze how this novel presents the readers with an image of modern society and highlights the selfish behavior of the majority of the people. The research also aims to study the said novel in the light of individual subjectivity and highlight how the characters are unique and yet a result of the influence of the outside forces of society.

Keywords: Unique, ambition, selfish, individual, modern.

Introduction:

It would not be wrong to say that Professor Vikas Sharma is a revolutionary writer. His novels often deal with complex themes and issues. He is also a social writer. This can be said as most of his novels often deal with social issues and the story often revolves around the journey to find a solution for the same. Almost all his novels follow this pattern and this is what makes his novels so popular as they don't just serve the purpose of entertainment, but they also stir the thought process of the readers and cause them to think upon major social and political issues both at the national and international level. This is a very unique feature of his writings. He is also a modern writer. He understands the issues and complexities of the modern day world and the same is visible throughout all his novels. He is well aware of the problems that prevail in today's society and he addresses the same throughout his novels.

Sana is also one such novel. This novel primarily revolves around major issues and problems in today's society. In this novel, he deals with the issues and problems of the corporate world along with those of the private life of the characters of this novel. This is what makes this novel unique. Professor Vikas Sharma also touches upon the issues of individual subjectivity and uniqueness of personalities in the modern society along with the tendencies of selfishness in this modern generation.

Sana's Unique Individual Personality:

Sana is a young woman who is also the protagonist of this novel. Sana is the daughter of a very famous and rich businessman, Naveen Nishchal, and she is married to a man named Pandit Brij Vrat. She lives in a decent house with her husband. She was married at a very young age and since then, she has been living with her husband who loves her dearly and takes care of her. Her husband is very much in love with her and takes care of all her needs and tries his best to fulfill all her demands. He is inarguably a very good husband. Sana is happy with him but she doesn't love him as much as he loves her. She is a very ambitious woman. She is highly educated and wants to get a job but she knows that it is a very sensitive topic to bring up in front of her husband as she knows that he would not be very supportive of her in this and would not want her to get a job.

She is not like the other women her age. She has friends in her kitty party group. Most of them are happy with their lives where they are treated like trophy wives, but not Sana. She wants more from life and she tries her best to get the same.

She is educated and wants to put her education to good use. This life does not satisfy her where she sits at home all day and spends her time either with her husband or her friends from her kitty party group if not her family. She wants to become independent and have a career. Mere materialistic things like jewels or anything else do not appeal to her or make her happy. She wants a career more than anything else. She is very unique in her ideas and ambitions. She has her own unique ideas, views, opinions and personality which make her the unique person she is and give her own unique identity. Through her character, Professor Vikas Sharma shows us how most of the people in today's world are unique and have their own opinions, goals and ambitions and at the same time, they are also influenced by one person or the other. While Sana is surely not influenced by her friend group or her mother who is a housewife and a devoted wife and mother, she is influenced by her father who she has seen all her life as this powerful and rich man with a commendable career and passion towards his job. She wants to have a passion and job like him. She idolizes him in this one particular aspect. She is a mixture of all the people around her and yet she is unique in her own way. She wants to be strong and independent like her father but she also wants to be a mother like her own mother as the fact that she has not been able to conceive even after long years of marriage makes her upset and sad. Like her kitty party friends, she also adores presents and materialism to some extent. She has pieces of everyone around her in her personality. She is like a collage of the people she knows and yet she is not completely like anyone that she knows or spends time with. This is one of the most alluring aspects about her personality.

This is something that we find in almost everyone in today's times. People are influenced by the people around them or the people that they idolize. Their preferences, choices, likes and dislikes are affected by the people around them. But at the same time, this does not mean that they have no individual personality of their own. Every person's individual personality is an amalgamation of a huge number of people. But this mixture is unique in its own sense and this is what makes up for the individual subjectivity in the character of Sana and other people in the society.

Sana: A Picture of the Self-Centered Society:

Sana is surely an ambitious woman and somewhere or the other this contributes to her selfish tendencies. She is selfish and for her, she is her number one priority and she is structured in a way where she thinks of herself first. She has high aims and she wants to achieve them and she also knows that she might have to use people to achieve them. She is not afraid to use people for her own selfish motives.

This is a very common tendency in today's generation. While it is a good thing to be ambitious, it is not justified to use people and then discard them in the name of ambition. People do not respect others, even their own family members, for ambition. They are often so blinded by ambition to see the real meaning and purpose of life. This is what happens in the case of Sana as well. While her husband is out of the city one day, his disciple, Pandit Revati Prasad visits the house. When he does not find Pandit Brij Vrat there, he enquires Sana about the same but the latter seduces him. *"He felt cut to size now and she moved her right hand towards his thighs and kissed him saying — 'Pandit ji, there is something superior to soul too. How can you, young as you are, forget and ignore the God of love Cupid who shoots his arrows regularly? Don't you feel hit with Cupid's arrows now?'"*

Pandit Revati Prasad tried to gather his courage as he had not been very frank with her earlier. Yet he admitted — 'Of course, Sana ji, I feel a sudden change in me.' And he kissed her cheek.

'This is like a young Pandit. After all, Vishwamitra had an attraction for Menaka. Why do you forget the love stories of Urvashi? Try to remember the love story of King

Dushyant and Shakuntala. Do you feel that I'm inferior to Menaka, Urvashi or Shakuntala? Are you not prepared to be a youthful Yayati to make love to me?'" And she kissed his neck."

(Sana, 13)

She starts an illicit relationship with him while her husband is in Agra because of work. Her husband is very loyal and loves her a lot and treats her very nicely but she does not show him the same love or loyalty. He respects her a lot but she does not do the same. She cheats on him the first chance she gets because she is selfish and she prioritizes herself and her needs before anything and anyone else. The thought of her poor husband does not cross her mind even once. She tells him about her education and how she wants to get a job. She even asks him to help her achieve her goals. He assures her that he would find a job for her and he keeps his end of the promise and tells her about a job. She brings up the same to her husband who is not very happy to know this. Pandit Brij Vrat discusses the same with his father in law, Sana's father, to know his opinion and gain his help. Her father tells her to not take the job as she is pregnant and tells her that he has recently purchased two schools and Sana could look after them if she felt like she needed a job. She agrees to the same. Once her purpose is fulfilled with Revati Prasad, she starts ignoring him and abruptly ends the relationship. This shows us how selfish she is. She uses Revati Prasad to gain success and then leaves him and does not even acknowledge him after her purpose is served as he is of no use to her anymore.

Sana does not stop here. Now, she has a school and a job like she wanted to and she can finally utilize her degrees like she always aimed to. One would assume that she would now lead a happy and satisfied life with her husband and focus on her career and her family but she does not do so and she once again cheats on her innocent husband. One day she has to go to Agra to buy some equipment for her lab. A teacher from her school, Mohan Akshay accompanies her and yet

again, she gets physical with another man. While they are in Agra, they stay together and get intimate. Sana is selfish here as well as she does not want to promise him anything and just wants pleasure momentarily. He also feels the same and they both know that this is a one time thing. But this is surely unfair to her husband, Pandit Brij Vrat, who has been nothing but loyal, loving and caring to her.

“As the sun had set, madam Sana and Mohan Akshay roamed the Taj Mahal area, hand in hand, and he kissed her quite often. As he rubbed her mounts, she recollected the loving meeting with Revati Prasad and then Brij Vrat. Now she had to take a little precaution. In the hotel, they again had a cup of champagne and enjoyed playing basketball, billiards and badminton.

After dinner, they slept in the arms of each other without taking an oath of eternal love. Both of them were conscious of temporary outbursts of passion. She was not the least conscious of the bare fact that she lived in the world of illusions. After school affairs, she normally forgot to offer prayers to God and thought of one arrangement or the other as if nothing would move without her.”
(Sana, 78)

This way, we see how Sana is unique and yet like all the other people of our society who are selfish and do not respect or value other people. She uses people for her own gain and then abandons them as if they are nothing. People do not matter to her and she doesn't care about their emotions or feelings. She is selfish and she only thinks about her personal gain.

Naveen Nishchal as a Hard Working Yet Self Centered Man: An Older Version of Sana:

Naveen Nishchal, the father of Sana, is a very rich businessman. He has spent all his life trying to climb the corporate ladder and expand his business and he has been successful in the same. When he was married to Kavya, he was very poor and lived in a very small house. Kavya also comes from a poor background. He was a lecturer in Chemistry in S.D. Inter College Gurgaon. But he was not satisfied with this life and wanted to do something big. So he experimented with his knowledge of chemicals and created a few perfumes that soon became very popular. So he started his own warehouse and bought a house and on the ground floor of that house, he started his factory and stayed on the first floor with his wife. Really soon, his business took off and he had a huge factory and company of his own. He earned a lot of money and became very famous. Kavya stood by him through all this and always supported him and helped him. She was a very devoted wife. She loved Naveen truly and respected him and appreciated his passion and supported him in achieving his ambition. She always stayed loyal to him but Naveen was not the same. When Kavya was pregnant with Sana, she found out that her husband constantly cheated on her with the housemaid and often spent time with her and got intimate with her. This broke her heart but she stayed quiet for the sake of her marriage and her unborn child. One day, Kavya's sister approached him and asked him to help her as she wanted to study further but her father could not afford the same. He agreed to help her and gave her a job in his company. But this was his way of exploiting her. He started an extra marital affair with her and constantly cheated on his wife. On one instance, he even told Silky that they were married by the rituals of Chakravorty marriage.

“Then he put the chains on her neck and kissed her passionately. She was already elevated with the diamond ring and got up to hug him. He asked her to put the second ring in his finger and after she had done that with surprise, he gave her the second chain to put around my neck. That is our Chakravorty marriage Silky darling.”
(Sana, 51)

He also has an affair with another young woman named Katty. Just like Silky, she is also in a bad financial situation and needs help. He exploits her and uses her for his own pleasure. This way, we find out that Naveen and Sana are alike in a lot of matters and yet different from each other. Naveen is also an example of the self centered modern society and so is Sana.

Conclusion:

Thus, through an analysis of the novel *Sana*, we find that the present society is an epitome of individual subjectivity and people in today's generation are unique in their own sense. Their personalities are unique and like no one else's. But at the same time, it is also true that they are influenced by a number of external factors, like the people they spend time with or idolize, present trends of the society, etc. and they are in a way similar as well. They are also selfish. It is as if everyone in this present society only thinks about themselves and other people do not matter to them at all. They are selfish and use people for their own benefit and pleasure like objects. Professor Vikas Sharma has depicted the same through his novel *Sana*. This is a very good example of how the present society is characterized by individual subjectivity and selfishness.

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