

---

## **The Role of Infidelity in the Breakdown of Marriages in 498A: Fears and Dreams**

---

**Ms. Sunny**, Research Scholar, College : SRMIST, Delhi NCR Campus

---

Paper Received on 04-06-2024, Accepted on 03-07-2024  
Published on 04-07-24; DOI: 10.36993/ RJOE.2024.9.3.08

---

### **Abstract:**

This research paper explores the complex representation of adultery and its connection to marital dissolution in the book 498A: Fears and Dreams. The novel vividly explores the middle-class couple Jatin and Tanvi, whose goals and wants are hampered by the difficulties of contemporary relationships and societal expectations. Through their turbulent journey, the author highlights the widespread problem of infidelity and its detrimental effects on the stability of marriages and the well-being of individuals.

The first part of the research looks at the characters' backgrounds, emphasizing how growing up in a low-income setting impacts their vulnerabilities and life goals. Unfulfilled aspirations and ethical quandaries abound in Jatin and Tanvi's marriage as they pursue better lives. Throughout, adultery is deftly woven into the story, in which a ceaseless chase of financial achievement at the expense of interpersonal relationships, emotional neglect, and a lack of communication are a few of these. The study also looks at the connections between infidelity. It presents it as a sign of more severe problems in the marriage rather than just an act of treachery—and other issues like gender roles, power relationships, and social influences. The extramarital activities of Jatin and Tanvi are portrayed in the novel as both a cause and a result of their failing marriage. The characters seek recognition, an escape from marital discontent, and a sense of control over their life through these interactions. However, in the end, these liaisons deepen their sense of loneliness and hopelessness, which further erodes their intimacy and trust. The novel portrays a broader social environment where adultery is both taboo and tacitly acceptable, a reflection of the conflicting views that contemporary society has regarding marriage and faithfulness. This backdrop is also covered in the paper. Sharma shows how common infidelity is and how it is accepted in some social circles through supporting characters and subplots, all the while emphasizing the moral and psychological fallout for those who are involved. This paper attempts to thoroughly analyze how adultery contributes to marriage dissolution in 498A: Fears and Dreams through a critical analysis of important scenes and character interactions. The study offers a comprehensive investigation of the elements contributing to marital infidelity and its effects by using

---

insights from sociological and psychological theories.

**Keywords:** Infidelity, Marital Breakdown, Vikas Sharma, 498A: Fears and Dreams, Extramarital Affairs, Trust, Emotional Needs, Societal Expectations, Section 498-A, Indian Penal Code, Modern Indian Society, Psychological Impact, Legal Ramifications, Traditional Values, Contemporary Realities.

### **Literature Review:**

Many studies have been conducted on the topic of marital infidelity, looking at its causes, effects, and how it affects relationships. Drigotas and Barta (2001) believe that adultery might serve as a catalyst for marital discontent as well as one of its symptoms. According to psychological theories, the main causes of extramarital encounters are inadequate communication and unfulfilled emotional needs (Blow & Hartnett, 2005). Sociological viewpoints highlight how cultural norms and societal expectations impact marital fidelity (Treas & Giesen, 2000). The interaction between traditional traditions and contemporary lives in India makes the problem of infidelity more complicated. According to research by Sharma and Das (2016), marital discord is frequently heightened by the demands of upholding social standing and satisfying familial responsibilities, which might result in adultery.

### **Introduction:**

Vikas Sharma's book "498A: Fears and Dreams" is a rich tapestry of ideas and characters that speak to current societal challenges, especially in the Indian context. The main artistic, cultural, political, and environmental aspects of the book will be examined in detail, along with how they relate to the conversation in academia and the general public today. One of the most important things that lead to marriages failing is frequently identified as infidelity. Through the lives of Jatin and Tanvi, whose marriage is ruined by extramarital encounters, resulting in mental upheaval and eventual separation, the novel 498A: Fears and Dreams offers a nuanced representation of this problem. With a focus on the psychological, emotional, and sociological aspects of the problem, this paper explores the complex role that infidelity had in their marriage breakdown. In a peculiar and symbolic scene that begins with God and Satan arguing over who should run the Department of Divorce. The novel's examination of marital strife, societal expectations, and the intricate interplay of good and evil in contemporary relationships are all powerfully metaphorically represented by this setting. The novel's opening conversation between God and Satan establishes major themes and foreshadows the tensions that would arise in the lives of Jatin and Tanvi, the characters. God and Satan's Conflict: The battle between God and Satan regarding divorce is a highly symbolic scene from the first chapter. Given the high rate of divorce in contemporary society, Satan argues

---

that divorce should be under his control. This argument emphasizes the prevalence of problems, including infidelity, domestic violence, lack of commitment, compatibility concerns, and unreasonable expectations. Mammon, Belial, Beelzebub, Chemos, and other followers of Satan symbolize the darker sides of human nature and the corruption of society. The cynical belief that marriages are doomed to fail is reinforced by Satan's position, which holds that compromise rarely resolves marital issues and instead causes recurrent arguments. He compares the function of dishonest divorce attorneys in contemporary society to the commercialization and exploitation of marital collapses through his ambition to seize control of the Department of Divorce for financial gain. These attorneys take advantage of the financial and emotional agony that divorcing spouses experience, much like Satan's followers do. God's argument, in contrast, places a strong emphasis on the value of understanding, tolerance, and the sacredness of marriage. God encourages tolerance and compromise, arguing that while love may not always be able to be sustained, it may still guarantee harmony and stability in the home and society.

This point of view embodies traditional beliefs that emphasize the value of marital harmony and the detrimental effects of divorce on society.

The argument between God and Satan is symbolic, emphasizing the ongoing conflict between the forces of good and evil, with marriage acting as a battlefield. Satan is an entity that tempts people to commit wrongdoing and believe falsehoods. In Christianity, he is also known as Lucifer. His preference for divorce is a metaphor for the tensions and contradictions brought on by moral decay and the disintegration of social and familial ties. Socio-cultural Analysis: Sharma offers commentary on current societal concerns through this divine discourse. Due to issues like adultery and irrational expectations, divorce rates are on the rise in contemporary culture, which is indicative of a departure from conventional values. The novel's fundamental themes of moral deterioration and social instability are portrayed as being exacerbated by this transition.

Citations to Literary and Philosophical Works: Sharm's incorporation of allusions to several literary and philosophical works makes the narrative more complex in the second chapter. The idea that a person's family and property might corrupt someone in a public post is introduced by mentioning Plato's Theory of Communism regarding wives and property. The story explores how human defects and societal influences can ruin marriage ties, similar to Plato's notion that private property and personal relationships can undermine the integrity and efficacy of public leaders. The author emphasizes love as the cornerstone of a happy marriage and refers to William Shakespeare's principle of love for marriage. The story incorporates the Buddha's critique of dowries and support for morality, knowledge, and correct action. This emphasizes the ethical and moral aspects of marriage. The narrative is further

---

enhanced with historical and philosophical depth by allusions to authors and thinkers, including Francis Bacon, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, John Dryden, William Congreve, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Samuel Richardson, and Henry Fielding. These allusions offer a vast cultural and intellectual backdrop, demonstrating the various historical perspectives that have been taken on the subjects of moral integrity, marriage, and love.

### **Aesthetic Developments**

#### **Narrative Structure and Symbolism:**

**The book starts with a metaphorical battle between God and Satan about divorce, combining realism and allegory. This allegorical opening establishes the tone of the novel, which blends personal stories with more general society criticisms. The characters of Tanvi and Jatin represent the conflict between traditional and modern values as well as the challenges of middle-class ambitions.**

#### **Analysis of Infidelity in 498A: Fears and Dreams:**

##### **Character Dynamics and Marital Discord:**

The author contrasts modern love's fragile, materialistic, and high-stakes nature with the pure, spiritual essence of old love. The author laments the change in societal ideals, which he sees as the primary source of suffering and sadness. This dichotomy emphasizes his lamentations. Jatin comes from a middle-class background and is described as hardworking but materialistic and impractical. He marries Tanvi because of her attractiveness, but their marriage is troubled by his inability to satisfy her materialistic needs. Tanvi is shown as being foolish and unintelligent, with no concept of morality or intellectual development. Her impracticality and high expectations strain the marriage. Jatin is a metaphor for the moral decay and avarice of the modern man, showing how consumerism may taint relationships and ideals. Jatin and Tanvi are shown as ordinary people, reflecting broader issues of consumerism, moral bankruptcy, and the frailty of contemporary marriages via their shortcomings and external influences. The story is enhanced by including literary and mythical allusions, secondary characters like Satan and his adherents, and a multi-layered examination of current events.

This is seen in his change to become Joe in the United States, and later, he forsakes Tanvi in favor of wealth. Tanvi represents Eve, signifying purity, grace, and the ability to feel and love. Her anguish and eventual moral and spiritual degradation reflect how the novel portrays the modern wasteland. High expectations and ongoing pressure to lead a better lifestyle define Jatin and Tanvi's relationship in 498A: Fears and Dreams. Not only are their extramarital affairs betrayals, but they also reveal more profound problems in their marriage.

---

**Psychological and Emotional Impact:**

The profound psychological effects of adultery on both partners are depicted in the story. Whereas Tanvi feels deceived and ashamed, Jatin feels guilty and confused. Due to the intricate interaction between social and personal elements, familial expectations and societal judgments make their emotional agony worse. The core foundations of their marriage are eroding, as evidenced by their loss of intimacy and trust. The story assigns blame for failing marriages to both men and women. Women are perceived as having changed due to more excellent education, making them less inclined to conform to traditional roles. At the same time, men are chastised for their egos and unwillingness to work with their wives. According to the author, one of the leading causes of marital incompatibility is the modern woman's demand for equality and her refusal to take on two jobs, such as housework and office work. The author says, "Jatin's parents hoped Tanvi would have wisdom with the birth of a baby." This passage highlights the patriarchal notion that Tanvi's marital problems would be resolved when she gave birth, giving her maturity and stability. It reflects the unrealistic assumptions of society that parenting is the path to wisdom and fulfillment for women, which frequently puts undue pressure on them.

**Societal and Cultural Influences:**

Marital strife and adultery are encouraged by the need to live up to social expectations. The book uses a frame narrative in which the author mixes fiction with autobiographical material by inserting his opinions and experiences. This method allows for examining societal issues and introspective thoughts in greater detail. Jatin and Tanvi's troubles are placed within the broader context of contemporary Indian society by the author. A recurrent subject in the book is the conflict between traditional values and modern reality and the need for personal fulfillment. The book provides examples of how cultural norms and individual beliefs affect marriage dynamics and behavior. The author challenges the patriarchal myth that a failed marriage can be saved by having children, showing how this notion frequently causes more problems than it does to solve them. The story illustrates the patriarchal expectations that are placed on women, such as the notion that motherhood will provide stability and wisdom, which the author refutes by highlighting Tanvi's persistent lack of responsibility even after she becomes a mother.

This novel severely examines the patriarchal demands placed on both men and women in modern Indian society. Through Tanvi's persona, the author examines how women's roles have changed due to education and independence, contrasting this with conventional notions of domesticity and motherhood. The story also emphasizes the dual expectations placed on women to succeed in their personal and professional lives.

Marriage is said to be a contentious arena where conventional ideals and

---

contemporary goals collide. The book criticizes the institution of marriage, arguing that despite efforts at modernization, it is still firmly based on patriarchal standards. The portrayal of Tanvi's union with Jatin and subsequently with R.K. Sharma underscores the continuous compromise between monetary stability and subjective satisfaction.

The author writes, "Quite often young men seek divorce from wife due to their ego. All over the world, women today have tremendously changed after getting a higher education, and they need to prepare to remain busy in the kitchen before and after office hours. The author draws attention to the tension between the typical male ego and women's changing roles. He points out that women are now more potent due to their higher education and rejecting the traditional role of being limited to household duties. This shift made Marriages tense because men find adapting to the new dynamics challenging. The book discusses how women's modernization and education cause them to challenge traditional gender roles, which in turn causes marriages to fail. It also discusses the abuse of legal safeguards such as Section 498-A, showing how laws intended to defend women can be twisted to the detriment of both families.

#### **Legal Ramifications and Section 498-A:**

The novel's critique of the abuse of Section 498-A of the Indian Penal Code is among its most essential features. The story portrays this legal protection, which aims to shield women from cruelty and domestic abuse, as a manipulative weapon. The abuse of this law exacerbates the already complicated marital discord between Jatin and Tanvi and shows how severe legal disputes can exacerbate tensions between divorcing couples.

The misapplication of Section 498-A of the Indian Penal Code, which was meant to shield women from domestic abuse but is depicted in the novel as being used for selfish gain, is a prominent cultural issue. This indicates a more extensive discussion in society about balancing defending women's rights and averting abuse of the law.

The book addresses the legal and political ramifications of Section 498-A, criticizing how laws intended to safeguard people can occasionally be weaponized, upsetting families and society. This theme is relevant in today's political conversation because it deals with the divisive topic of balancing justice and legal abuse.

Sharma's story also criticizes the necessity of social reform and the role of the government. His demands that the government create a welfare state and preserve constitutional values are part of a more significant political critique that aims to enhance accountability and governance in India.

#### **Language and Style:**

The author distinguishes her approach by using a combination of

---

sophisticated literary allusions and simple prose. Allusions to Indian epics, Shakespeare, and Plato elevate the story and link individual tales with enduring ideas and historical continuity. Additionally, the weaving of fictional stories with autobiographical components adds a degree of authenticity and emotional engagement.

The novel emphasizes the socio-economic and political effects of the COVID-19 pandemic by placing its story within its historical background. How lockdowns and economic downturns are portrayed and the alterations they cause to day-to-day life emphasizes how environmental and public health issues have fundamentally changed modern civilization. Through discussing the pandemic's worldwide effects and allusions to international events, such as the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan, Sharma expands the novel's focus to encompass a global environmental consciousness, reflecting an awareness of interconnectedness and the global nature of today's challenges.

### **Conclusion**

An examination of the book 498A: Fears and Dreams provides a complex examination of contemporary marriage, gender roles, and societal shifts. The first few chapters of Vikas Sharma's 498A: Fears and Dreams lay the groundwork for a sophisticated examination of marital strife, social expectations, and the moral quandaries that people in modern society face. The novel's main themes are powerfully metaphorically illustrated by the allegorical argument between God and Satan on divorce, which emphasizes the conflict between conventional norms and contemporary reality. The author presents a nuanced analysis of the causes of marriage breakdowns and the broader ramifications for society using a wealth of literary and philosophical allusions.

This approach emphasizes how critical it is to comprehend contemporary society's social, psychological, and emotional aspects of marriage and divorce. The author's view, which system, the story highlights the shortcomings and possible abuse of feminist principles in the contemporary, reflects a nuanced and somewhat incoherent position on feminism, veers between supporting women's independence and holding them accountable for social problems and criticizing the patriarchal culture. The story has allusions to both philosophical ideas and literary works. Examples include Alfred Tennyson's poem Crossing the Bar, which represents death as a way to begin a new journey, and Indian philosophy's idea of samskara, which refers to mental impressions.

The novel's examination of patriarchy, gender norms, and the effects of education on women is consistent with current scholarly investigations in gender studies. It adds to the conversation of how women's societal roles are changing and the ongoing obstacles they encounter.

---

The criticism of Section 498-A enhances the public discussion on law reform and rights protection. It emphasizes the necessity of well-rounded strategies that protect the weak while preventing abuse.

The author examines issues of materialism, education, and the effects of patriarchal expectations via the characters of Tanvi and Jatin. The novel offers a complex analysis of current societal concerns by critiquing traditional and modern ideals and literary and philosophical allusions. A fascinating examination of the part infidelity plays in marriage failure is given in 498A: Fears and Dreams. The book emphasizes social, psychological, and emotional aspects of infidelity via the tale of Jatin and Tanvi. In order to maintain a marriage, it emphasizes how crucial trust, emotional fulfillment, and effective communication are. This work is typical and thought-provoking because it delves deeper into the story of infidelity in the context of contemporary Indian society and explores the legal ramifications under Section 498-A. The deep and advanced story of 498A: Fears and Dreams authentically explores the complicated dynamics of contemporary marriages, gender roles, and cultural ideals. To sum up, Vik s Sharma's "498A: Fears and Dreams" is a complex book that tackles essential political, cultural, artistic, and environmental issues. Its examination of gender roles, marriage, legal systems, and the effects of global crises offers a thorough reflection on current topics, making it an essential text for scholarly research and public discussion.

### **References:**

- Blow, A. J., & Hartnett, K. (2005). Infidelity in committed relationships II: A substantive review. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 31(2), 217-233.
- Drigotas, S. M., & Barta, W. (2001). The cheating heart: Scientific explorations of infidelity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10(5), 177-180.
- Sharma, R., & Das, M. (2016). Marital discord and extramarital affairs: A sociological perspective. *Indian Journal of Social Work*, 77(3), 295-310.
- Treas, J., & Giesen, D. (2000). Sexual infidelity among married and cohabiting Americans. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62(1), 48-60.
- Vikas Sharma. (2022). 498A: ears and Dreams.

### **How to cite this article?**

**Ms. Sunny** ,“ The Role of Infidelity in the Breakdown of Marriages in 498A: Fears and Dreams ”*Research Journal Of English (RJOE)*9(3),PP:1-8,2024, DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2024.9.3.8