
Concept of New Woman in Vikas Sharma's Novel -*Love's Not Times Fool*

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Abstract

What is a New Woman? Who invented the term new woman? What are the characteristics of a new woman? So, several questions are raised when we read about this new woman term. The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the emergence of the feminist ideal known as "The New Woman," which had a significant impact. The phrase "new woman" was coined in 1894 by writer Sarah Grand (1854–1943) to describe independent women seeking radical change in an influential piece. It was a concept that powerfully conveyed the desire for women to lead autonomous lives, take charge of their destiny, and confront a society that was ruled by men.

As women's roles, identities, and goals change in society, the "New Woman" idea has also changed over time. In the late 1800s, women who pursued education, employment, and independence were the ones who first gave rise to the phrase, which was first used to characterize their actions. Because women have varied experiences worldwide, this archetype has been reinterpreted over time in various literary and cultural contexts. The struggle between traditional beliefs and modern desires is typically personified in the Indian setting by the "New Woman." *Love's Not Time's Fool* by Vikas Sharma presents a modern image of the "New Woman" in India. The work explores how women manage the difficult terrain of tradition, modernity, and individuality in the context of a society that is getting more interconnected by the day.

In his first novel, Vikas Sharma introduces a range of female characters who embody the traits of the "New Woman," such as Richa Pandit, Rikki, Nikki, Shalley Sree, etc. These are complex, multifaceted people who battle to navigate the challenges of modern life and live up to society's expectations. The purpose of this paper is to challenge the conventional conventions that continue to shape women's identities and to emphasize the difficulties that women encounter in juggling their personal and professional lives. Vikas Sharma shows a

type of brave, independent Indian woman in his female characters who are willing to experiment with their appearance to create their own identities.

Keywords: New Woman, Concept, society, personified, India.

Introduction

When a woman demands her rights as a woman and asserts her own identity beyond simply striving for equality with men, she is considered "new ."In this light, a rebellious or revolutionary woman is not a "new woman" for that reason alone. The "new" woman first examines and considers her place in the world as a woman, taking into account the socio-economic, spiritual, and moral domains. The responsibilities of the "new woman" do not stop at these paragraphs. Every woman has done the same at some point in her life, but her views are shaped by the mental models her parents instilled in her, and by the social and intellectual order that people have created. A "New Woman" also examines every aspect of her private life, including her relationships, both personal and social, and her roles as a wife, mother, daughter, and sister, all from a fresh perspective that she has created for herself. She also modifies her moral code based on how she assesses the social standards established by the community. After years of oppression, women are tempted to prove that they can compete with men in the game of gender supremacy to level the playing field. The "New Woman" hides her moral and spiritual demands under her trendy clothing.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the emergence of the feminist ideal known as "The New Woman," which had a significant impact. The phrase "new woman" was coined in 1894 by writer Sarah Grand (1854–1943) to describe independent women seeking radical change in an influential piece. It was a concept that powerfully conveyed the desire for women to lead autonomous lives, take charge of their destiny, and confront a society that men rule. Notably, the term feminism was first used by the French dramatist Alexander Dumas the Younger in 1872 in a pamphlet 'L' 'Homme-femme' to designate initially a movement for women's rights. An anti-masculinist movement of women for the assertion of their rights, feminism is also called aphorism after Aphra Behn, a 17th-century feminist and political activist.

Feminism recognizes the inadequacy of male-created ideologies and struggles for the spiritual, economic, social, and racial equality of women who are sexually colonized and biologically subjugated. It is a struggle to undo the tilted and distorted images of

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women who cry for freedom and equality. It is a reaction against malist culture. A woman is held to represent the 'otherness' of man, his negative. Gandhi Ji gave a new direction and dimension to the feminist movement in India and freed women from passivity and servility. The idea of Ardhgini enshrined in Indian culture renders man as the complement of woman, her other half. Together, they make a whole. During recent decades, a galaxy of Indian women novelists have written remarkable fiction about Indian women, their conflicts, and their predicaments against the background of contemporary India. Some of India's most renowned women novelists include Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sehgal, Attia Hossain, Shashi Deshpande, R.P. Jhabvala, and Namita Gokhale. Relatively new to the writing world, Professor Vikas Sharma is a university professor by trade. His literary roots run deep in his family. Kumar Vishwas, his brother, is a well-known poet and writer in Hindi. For almost twenty years, he has been an English literature teacher. He has a keen interest in poetry, literary theory, fiction, Indian English writing, and Hindi literature. He is also interested in the language, culture, politics, and history of the community he lives in. Since he began penning books around this time, Professor Vikas Sharma is aptly referred to as the novelist of the Corona period. Since the publication of his debut Hindi book, Raah Ke Pathar, in 2021, Prof. Vikas Sharma has been praised as a notable writer. Raah Ke Pathar's English translation was released in titled Never Together Never Apart and released in 2022. Professor Vikas has written other books: Love's Not Time's Fool, IAS Today, 498A: Fears and Dreams, Medicine: Light and Twilight, Ashes and Fire, Sana, and Hope against Hope. He also has two short stories and poetry collections entitled Epiphanies to his credit.

His books do a fantastic job of capturing the tempo of the Indian setting. Nonetheless, during the coronavirus era, the author had plenty of time in 2022 to devote himself to writing at a most unpleasant moment in human history, and the fruits of his labor were multiple novels. His books touch on issues including women's rights, the value and function of medicine, and societal injustices and evils. Sharma also emphasizes the need for independence, compromise, self-reliance, and tolerance. His literature addresses issues related to family life and inspires readers to tackle the hardships of life. Hence, Vikas Sharma is crucial in capturing the shifting views of women in an evolving India. Dr Vandana Sharma asserts:

A good writer addresses the contemporary world and its problems. Purposeful literature mirrors the society in which it is being written. Vikas Sharma is well aware of this fact. (Vandana, 2021)

Love's Not Time's Fool is Professor Vikas Sharma's first English-language book. It was written in 2020 and released in 2021 amid the COVID-19 epidemic. The novel's title is also derived from William Shakespeare's well-known Sonnet number 116, in which Shakespeare highlights the value of real love and its endurance. He asserts that genuine love lasts forever and grows stronger over time.

love is not time's fool, though rosy lips and cheek

Within his bending sickle's compass come

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

If this be an error and upon me proved I never writ, nor no man ever Lov'd

The idea of love—which can be physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual—is referenced in the title and can be comprehended by reading the book. Despite Professor Sharma's emphasis on worldly or physical love, we might argue that materialistic love is a product of American society throughout the book. In the novel, the author explores several themes, such as the idea of marriage and love, emotional fulfillment from extramarital affairs, the pursuit of true love and financial and emotional support, issues facing the window and those in need, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Richa Pandit, the protagonist, is a contemporary Western woman looking for fulfillment and self-determination. The story presents her as a strong, driven woman who handles relationships, business ventures, and love. She represents the contemporary, Westernized lady. Seeking empowerment and fulfillment in several areas of her life. Through his characters, Vikas Sharma demonstrates to the reader that everything is achievable with perseverance and that love is resilient in the face of adversity. His characters also support female rights and independence. In many respects, the narrative depicts contemporary Indian society. It starts by examining how women are empowered in the modern India.

The female heroine of the book deconstructs the gender boundary by switching back and forth between the feminine and masculine arenas. Virginia Woolf's desire for money and a room of her own is long gone, and Woolf's symbolic refusal to visit Oxford University's library is no longer possible. Richa Pandit is emphasized as a strong, self-reliant woman who defies gender expectations and rules in a society where men predominate. The paper also discusses exploring bodily urges, learning new things, and loving oneself. And the significance of true love in life.

The character Richa Pandit is energetic. She's smart, funny, and a powerful lady. It constantly irritates her that she never shares her inner turmoil with others. Abhi is the

only one who ever gives her emotional support. She lives a lavish lifestyle as a member of the upper class. She is around 30 years old and married to Mr. Malya, a wealthy businessman who owns a Peppe & Tette shoe firm. He is a prosperous businessman but a bad spouse. He travels abroad for work. He gives everything to his wife, Richa. Richa is a woman with a keen intellect. Everything she needs is in her life except a compatible companion. Her marriage represents an unfulfilling partnership, and it fails because of her husband's lack of support—most notably, his impotence.

Nietzsche said, "It is not lack of love, but lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages." (Friedrich Nietzsche)

The primary character, Richa Pandit, is a contemporary Western lady looking for empowerment and happiness. The narrative starts with Richa, a courageous woman, and her husband, Malya, a healthy businessman. She accepts her son Amitabh, who has clubbed feet, and covers the cost of transporting him to Nora, the child's caretaker. She even doesn't tell her spouse about it. Later on in the story, she marries Abhi, a worker at her workplace, and becomes a young widow. The first chapter clearly shows her attempts to have sex with him.

Although she is accustomed to wearing solely Victoria's Secret fragrances, she also wears branded perfumes in addition to regular ones. People in the 21st century mindlessly adopt the customs and behaviors of other nations. Everybody's life has been altered by modernization. Men and women from all social classes have lost the customs, morals, and standards of the community. Richa Pandit is a strong, pragmatic woman in the book. Traditions and culture are not important to her. She ends her life in the upper class and, more importantly, with her own decision. She isn't concerned about what other people think of her. For her, the finest kind of love is self-love.

Richa's lifestyle is aristocratic. She is indifferent to culture and society. She enjoys living in a way that attracts men. She thinks that life should be enjoyed to the utmost. In the past, Western ladies might drink wine at a party club or other event. Richa, who is a representation of new women, also enjoys drinking wine and living in the present. She and Abhilash develop a new love bond as a result of their relationship. In a store, she meets Abhilash, a young student with a pleasant personality, and she finds herself drawn to him without realizing it. Sexual desire is now the main source of human existence because Sharma highlights how readily strangers may become familiar when it comes to sex. As a married lady, Richa is not ashamed when Abhilash kisses her bosom and clasps her waist in the restroom. Surprisingly, she doesn't care if Malya would have realized what would

happen to her eventually. The following sentences demonstrate her satisfaction when she enters into a relationship with Abhi:

He had the courage to kiss my lips, my cheeks, and my breasts. Then he pressed my hips! I responded with the same energy as I was in a frenzy of love. (Love's Not Times Fool 76)

When Abhilash refers to her as "Malya's worthy wife," she requests him not to bring Malya between them. The social, moral, and ethical standards of society don't bother her. She wishes to break and forget all the bonds that have been formed around women. She tells Abhilash,

I wish to love you in a way that makes me forget the whole world. Hell with all people and worldly things. (77)

Richa Pandit requires love, care, and understanding since she is a woman, and she only finds these things in Abhilash (Abhi), not in her husband Malya.

He is the one who relieves her loneliness and depression by filling the void in her life with his love and care. On her first sexual encounters with Abhilash, during which she completely discovers love, caring, and understanding, she says:

I took him to bed. We removed our gowns and were in quilt. Unfortunately, he had never enjoyed sex with any girl before. He was ignorant, and hence I directed his penis to enter me. But he failed to control his emotions and passions and came within a few seconds. (11)

It is quite commendable that Vikas Sharma, the author, handles Richa's openness on sex and sexuality. Richa, who symbolizes new women, appears to have the ability to influence others' opinions. Modern women, or "New Women," have one thing in common: they wish to alter what other people think of them. Like Richa, in her spouse's absence, she manages her factory without taking biological variations into account. She also makes choices and takes chances. She believes that both sexes frequently engage in sexual bending. She also supports unrestricted sexual relations and sexual equality, but this does not reflect poorly on her character. Due to her spouse Malya's impotence and the betrayal of her first boyfriend, Robert Lee, she needs love. She leans physically, emotionally, or mentally to Abhilash to fill the thirst of her gloomy existence.

The main character and narrator of the book *Love's Not Time's Fool*, Richa Pandit, may be summed up as chanting a "new mantra" for the "new women" in "new air." Women must take charge of their own personal, social, and economic lives, as evidenced by their

existence and essence. They need to be well-educated for bold ideas and practical actions to live a life full of grandeur, love, and freedom from flimsy romances, flirtations, and extramarital encounters that exist just for sex. They need to be self-sufficient in terms of finances, looks, mental habits, and mental characteristics to deal with a society that has frequently treated them cruelly due to their biological differences, even though “*one is not born, but becomes a woman*” (Simone de Beauvoir. *Second Sex* p.15)

The works of Professor Vikas Sharma are a wonderful illustration of how a woman may use her fortitude to turn her challenges into a bright future. He is an author who consistently advocates for the rights of women. Richa Pandit is an excellent example of how a woman can work in a man's industry and overcome any challenge. The author has skilfully represented all of the issues that a modern, career-oriented lady experiences. A modern woman understands how to mix financial pleasure with a philanthropic nature, just as both physical and materialistic pleasure play significant roles in a man's life.

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