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The Intersection of social media and emotional development: Exploring Self-Worth and relationships in Preeti Shenoy's *A Hundred Little Flames*

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Abstract

In Preeti Shenoy's novel "A Hundred Little Flames," the main character, Disha, struggles with grief, loss, this paper delves into the psychological problems of adolescents. The wider social influences that determine their mental well-being are also considered. This research examines the relationship between social media use and adolescents' psychological development. Based on Disha's societal experience, this study examines the protagonist's role on how social media can contribute to emotional vulnerability in adolescents, as well as the effects of social media. They become a means of expression and a source of external validation, ultimately shaping the emotional lives of adolescents in a manner similar to the emotional development in the "A Hundred Little Flames" of the Disha.

Keywords: Psychological Problems, Social Media, Self-Esteem, External Factors

Introduction

Preeti Shenoy is one of the prolific writers of India. Her works explored the youth-centric and modernized society through her typical characters, and in this article, *A Hundred Little Flames*, related to the ancient Vedic spiritual path for healing, self-development, happiness, and balance the social expectations. Through Disha's struggles with grief, loss, and her strained relationship with her father, the novel explores the universal needs and consequences of illusions on family and community relationships. Disha's shift from seeking knowledge to accepting herself, both individually and collectively, has led her to acknowledge the challenges facing society today, particularly those arising from societal norms and expectations. In the modern era, social media has become an important part of young people's daily lives, contributing to their emotional experiences, relationships, and self-confidence. The proliferation of these sites, where users routinely display their images to the world, has major implications

for mental health, self-esteem and social mobility in an environment in which external validation and comparison are constantly reinforced by digital preferences, opinions and interactions.

Preeti Shenoy's novel "A Hundred Little Flames" tells the emotional story of Disha, a young woman who has lost her mother and has a close relationship with her father. He searches for personal meaning and satisfaction in her life. Through this analysis of encourage connection and self-expression or perpetuate feelings of loneliness, insecurity and inadequacy? from This study will expose the real and social complex relationship between social media and young people's emotional well-being and how these platforms help build self-esteem, relationships and identity. Based on the life experience of One Hundred Little Flames, this study explores how teen minds explore and experience their emotional worlds in real and virtual worlds. This research shows that social media is a double-edged sword like an emotional hero's journey: it can be a source of strength and affirmation.

Social Media and Self-Esteem

In "A Hundred Little Flames," Preeti Shenoy has created a compelling story that explores Disha's emotional journey as she tackles grief, family relationships and developing her self-esteem as Disha's struggled with inner conflict and self-doubt as she explored hers. On social media sites like Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, the world is carefully edited and filtered, giving young people the illusion of connection and acceptance, but often at the cost of their self-esteem. Disha's process of self-discovery, especially how she deals with the emotional trauma of her mother's death and her strained relationship with her father, reflects how social media can exacerbate adolescent emotional vulnerability online Pressure to achieve and can make Disha feel unworthy and isolated from society Social comparison process, comparing behind-the-scenes reality with others polished, filtered image, exacerbates these feelings, leading to low self-esteem Disha's inner emotional growth journey in which she learns to accept her flaws and find inner peace It reflects the emotional growth they can experience while embracing and resisting the temptations of online validation. But as the Disha's teach us about the power of compassion and self-care, when used wisely, social media can be a tool that helps promote self-acceptance and awareness, strengthen relationships and improve community. The book is about balancing internal and external identities, which will continue to evolve despite teens' efforts to find a balance between their real selves and their social media personas.

The Role of Validation and Comparison

In A Hundred Little Flames, issues of affirmation and comparison play an important role in Disha's emotional journey. As Disha struggles with difficult emotions around loss and cracks in her family relationships, she seeks the approval of those around her, especially her father, whose approval she craves This need for external validation reflects a common psychological phenomenon among young people today, especially in the digital age. According to social comparison theory proposed by Leon Festinger (1954), individuals evaluate themselves in comparison with others. This process, while often natural, can be harmful if it leads to negative self-esteem. Like many young people in today's world, Disha finds it difficult to compare herself to what she considers the best of herself - she feels inadequate compared to her father's expectations or her own internal standards. This need for validation creates an emotional disconnect as Disha constantly measures her worth against unattainable standards, a feeling many young people can experience through glossy photos of other people's lives on social media. Festinger (1954) was well aware that such comparisons can lead to feelings of inadequacy and dissatisfaction because people believe that their lives are not as good as the images projected on the Internet. Disha's desire for admiration

is, by analogy in the novel, unhealthy. This emphasizes the importance of moral perspective - it happens when Disha learns to stop measuring his worth in the eyes of others, and more importantly the approval of others. "I felt happy for the first time in my life," she said as she reflected on the realization that her true worth must come from within, not from the approval of others, and this moment of self-acceptance marks an important turning point in the book.

Furthermore, ego regulation disorder theory (Higgins, 1987) provides insight into emotional disturbances in scripture. According to this theory, individuals experience emotional distress when there is a significant discrepancy between their "true self" and their "ideal self." Disha constantly compared herself to her ideal self-shaped by her father's expectations and societal pressures, creating a painful discrepancy between her true self and the ideal self. This contradiction created a sense of insufficiency within herself and forced her to seek external validation, a cycle that compounded her emotional pain. As Disha begins to accept her true self, she begins to bridge this gap, much like young girls must adapt to external stressors compared to their true selves in order to develop a healthy self-esteem. Disha's experience is a stark reminder that the search for external validation, whether through family approval or social media "likes" often leads to endless comparisons and dissatisfaction. Rather than relying on this standard to acknowledge one's faults, the novel ultimately emphasizes the importance of self-acceptance and challenges the idea that one's worth can be measured by comparing oneself to others, a message that resonates loudly in today's world.

Healing and Personal Growth

The Fiction *A Hundred Little Flames*, follows Preeti Shenoy's journey of healing and personal growth. The focus is on the character of Disha. His worldview changes dramatically after the death of her mother. In Disha, renunciation and passion create peace in a world of suffering. The song reflects Disha's feelings of loss: "I felt like a part of me was gone and nothing could replace it." In this grief, the mother not only cries but also realizes that the person she was before her death is no more. Disha must accept the parts of herself that have changed as a result of this tragic loss, only then can she begin to understand herself and why her life is so important. The therapy focuses not only on the psychological aspect, but also on the relationship aspect. Throughout the book, Disha tries to rebuild her emotionally distant relationship with her father. Their difficult relationship demonstrates grief, love, and the belief that she is unworthy of love. Reflecting on her father's abuse, she said, "I always thought things would be different if he was a better person," explaining how his positive qualities influenced her and how important it was for her to go to college. They agreed.

But over time, Disha slowly began to understand that improving relationships with others is not enough to heal a person; it involves learning to trust and believe in yourself. The most important change in the Vedic path is to give up the belief in perfection and learn to admit your mistakes. When I realized that "it's okay not to know." "Healing doesn't happen overnight." This quote touches on the quality of life, which is a major theme in the novel, as Disha realizes that she doesn't need any answers, she just needs something emotional that will touch her.

This play emphasizes the importance of breaking stereotypes. The Disha are ideas that say that resorting to superstitions is wrong and harmful to the human mind. Looking back, I realize, "Nothing is perfect... I need something unreal." This discovery led to a revolution in Vedic teachings. You begin to understand that self-worth is not about being good, but about accepting your inner weaknesses and imperfections. This shift is important because, as the scriptures say, the growth you seek is not about meeting the needs of others, but about living and giving others space. I have a hundred small works, but they paint a beautiful picture of life and growth. The book

emphasizes that life is a personal journey that cannot be controlled or managed. Through the Disha, She learned to acknowledge her past sins, forgive herself and others, and take responsibility for his own birth. Her path to recovery is not just avoiding pain, but learning to live with it and accept the unchangeable side of life.

Conclusion

Shenoy says that recovery is not an easy task and true growth comes when one overcomes one's weaknesses, deals with negative emotions and begins to accept oneself. Ultimately, the message of *A Hundred Little Flames* is that self-confidence is measured not by external standards or standards imposed on others, but by vulnerability and authenticity within oneself. The Vedic spiritual path offers a powerful message: healing is not achieved by eliminating suffering, but by learning how to live with it, coming to terms with the past, and finding a path toward growth and self-discovery. In this story, Shenoy beautifully captures the power of the human spirit, a journey that can be confusing, uncertain, and ever-changing for the development of the reader.

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