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Article

Misandry in Lakshmi Raj Sharma's *We Should Not All Be Feminists*: A Critical Analysis of Contemporary Feminist Discourse and Male Representation

Vivek Kumar Dwivedi

University of Allahabad, Prayagraj, U.P., India;
vivekdwivedi1980@yahoo.com

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Abstract: This research paper examines the manifestation of misandric elements in Lakshmi Raj Sharma's novel, *We Should Not All Be Feminists* (2024), through a comprehensive textual analysis. The study investigates how the novel critiques contemporary feminist discourse while simultaneously revealing underlying attitudes toward masculinity and male identity. Through systematic examination of character development, narrative structure, and thematic content, this analysis demonstrates how Sharma's work reflects broader tensions within feminist theory regarding the treatment of male experiences and masculinity. The paper argues that while the novel ostensibly critiques "fake feminism," it inadvertently perpetuates certain misandric tropes that complicate its feminist critique.

Keywords: Feminism; Misandry; Misogyny; Lakshmi Raj Sharma; Imperialism

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Introduction

The contemporary feminist landscape has become increasingly complex, with debates surrounding intersectionality, inclusivity, and the role of men within feminist discourse gaining prominence. Lakshmi Raj Sharma's novel, *We Should Not All Be Feminists,* emerges as a significant contribution to this discourse, offering a satirical exploration of what the author in his blog terms "fake feminism" while raising questions about the portrayal of male characters and their experiences (see his blog). The novel's treatment of masculinity and its critique of feminist activism present a nuanced but problematic perspective that warrants careful examination through the lens of misandry studies.

Recent scholarship has increasingly focused on the phenomenon of misandry, defined as hatred or prejudice against men. However, research indicates that such attitudes are far less institutionalized than misogyny, as Gilmore contends, "such antimale terms have little application in cultural anthropology for one other important reason: there are virtually no existing examples of culturally constituted antimale complexes in traditional cultures that can be designated by such terms" (12). Erica Coppolillo, in her observation "while misogyny is a well-established issue, misandry remains significantly underexplored" (1), raises the issue of scholars' lack of attention paid to the subject. The term is often considered an antonym of misogyny, but despite its pervasive presence in literary texts, it is far less talked about in comparison to misogyny. Nathanson and Katherine make a comparable observation: "Misogyny has been studied and taken seriously for decades. Misandry, on the other hand, has been either ignored or trivialised for decades" (pp. xiii-xiv), and their comment buttresses my assertion. However, in recent years, misandry has made inroads into public discourse as a phenomenon that cannot be ignored. Flood et al.'s claim, "Despite contrary claims, misandry lacks the systemic, transhistoric, institutionalised and legislated antipathy of misogyny. Nevertheless, the notion is gaining in currency among 'masculists' and 'men's rights' groups" (442), which validates my contention.

The concept of the "misandry myth" has emerged in academic discourse, suggesting that accusations of male-hatred often serve as rhetorical devices to silence feminist critique rather than addressing genuine anti-male sentiment. Hopkins-Doyle argues that this stereotype of feminists as misandrists "has been used to delegitimise and discredit the movement, has deterred women from joining it, and motivated men to oppose it" (2). Contrary to Hopkins-Doyle's opinion, Hedges argues that "rejecting misandry on the grounds of it being too confrontational, alienating and thereby politically unhelpful runs the risk of further perpetuating already-existing epistemic and affective injustices" (96). Within this context, Sharma's novel occupies a unique position, as it simultaneously critiques specific feminist approaches while potentially reinforcing negative stereotypes about both feminism and masculinity.

This study needs to grasp how contemporary feminist theory has dealt with the subject of male representation in literature. Contemporary feminist literary criticism has evolved to incorporate diverse perspectives and methodologies, reflecting the

complexity of modern gender discourse. Cooke notes that "The feminist commitments that emerge . . . are transaffirmative and intersectional, attentive to how classism, racism, ableism, geographical location, and other forms of discrimination and privilege differentially shape women's lives" (4). She also draws our attention to how "an intersectional feminist politics cannot treat gender in isolation, and the texts also emphasise the racial politics and colonial histories that intersect with gender in bordering processes" (66). The field of feminist discourse has increasingly grappled with questions of male inclusion, intersectionality, and the relationship between feminist activism and broader social justice movements. Oren and Press's observation expands the canvas of misandry studies: "The vocabulary and beliefs of men's rights activists, such as "misandry" (hatred of men by women) and "SJWs" (social justice warriors, a pejorative term), have infiltrated many internet spaces, especially those seen as key to geek masculinity" (324). Recent scholarship emphasises the importance of examining how feminist texts represent masculinity and male experiences, particularly in works that critique feminist movements themselves.

The concept of "pseudo-feminism" or "fake feminism" has gained attention in academic circles, referring to the appropriation of feminist rhetoric for purposes that contradict feminist goals. This phenomenon often manifests as the co-opting of feminist language to promote ideologies that reinforce traditional gender roles or objectification. Humm asserts that **"**how we acquire a gender through language, and to perceive the role played by language in creating our subjectivities and our oppressions give feminist literary criticism an important task" (3). Understanding this context is crucial for analysing Sharma's novel, as it positions itself explicitly as a critique of such inauthentic feminist practices. In the book, Clarissa pays attention to the role of language in female subjugation when she notes, "Language, which is largely manmade, projects the male viewpoint. It is the vehicle that takes us through the social learning process without itself ever becoming visible. Always present, though hidden behind this language, is the male attitude. Language can be described as a social institution that establishes the supremacy of men over women (21).

The study of misandry in literature has emerged as a complex field, intersecting with broader discussions of gender representation and power dynamics. In his interview with John Barry, Paul Nathanson sees "misandry as the radioactive fallout from feminist ideology and continuing with the fallout from several closely linked and politically allied ideologies." Research indicates that literary misandry often manifests through specific patterns: the portrayal of men as inherently violent or predatory, the dismissal of male emotional experiences, and the representation of masculinity as fundamentally toxic or problematic. Hedges acknowledges the fact that "men [are] being represented as callous, violent and sub-human" (88). However, scholars debate whether such representations constitute genuine misandry or serve as legitimate critiques of patriarchal structures. Hopkins-Doyle's observation further problematizes the debate: "Though the stereotype that feminists are man-haters is used as a political weapon against the movement, there are well-established theoretical grounds to suppose that feminists may harbour negative attitudes toward men" (2).

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of distinguishing between criticism of patriarchal systems and hatred of individual men. In his empirical study on the presence of misandry in society, Hopkins-Doyle calls it "the misandry myth." His findings question the misandry stereotype, as he calls misandry "a trope that deters women from feminism, and which is widely used to delegitimise it. This trope, which we have called the misandry myth, is deserving of the name insofar as a myth is defined as a false but widespread belief" (24). The "misandry myth" concept suggests that accusations of male-hatred are often weaponized to silence feminist discourse, particularly when women challenge traditional power structures, as Hopkins-Doyle notes that "the stereotype that feminists are man-haters is used as a political weapon against the movement" (2). The theoretical framework of these studies provides essential context for analysing how Sharma's novel navigates these complex dynamics.

The intersection of Eastern and Western feminist thought has become immensely relevant in contemporary literary analysis. In the novel, Peggy Grosvenor aptly underlines how feminism has brought about changes in the lives of females as well as males. She also draws readers' attention to the difference between the growth of Eastern and Western feminism:

> In the post-modern world, men and women are no longer what they used to be. The roles of men and women have changed because of Feminism and other contemporary philosophies. Men can no longer hope to be all-powerful as they were in the past because they had convinced themselves, and women, that Nature had made them more powerful. They claimed this on the premise that during the sexual act, they were on top of women, and so naturally above women. However, today, such simplistic theories have little credibility. Today's woman, particularly in the West, has discarded that view and controls man rather than allowing herself to be controlled by him. Mental, not physical strength, determines the supremacy of the sexes now. (189)

Scholars think that feminist approaches can challenge the established gender relations, but the approach of radical feminists somehow tends to widen the gap between genders. Oren and Press observe that "Western feminism is excessively focused on challenging 'patriarchy,' when other issues, such as poverty, have greater priority for many women/feminists in the global south" (62). Scholars highlight that the biggest mistake of Western feminist groups is that they consider the issues of Western white bourgeois women as global issues without parsing the details that different sets of problems plague the lives of women of the global south. Mohanty highlights the problem of Western feminists while dealing with women of the global south: "While radical and liberal feminist assumptions of women as a sex class might elucidate (however inadequately) the autonomy of particular women's struggles in the West, the application of the notion of women as a homogeneous category to women in the third world colonizes and appropriates the pluralities of the simultaneous location of different groups of women in social class and ethnic framework" (351). Some feminists seem to believe that women would be better off in a world in which there is no male presence. Clarissa Hatfield in *We Should Not All Be Feminists* represents that group of

feminist activists who have "all brain and no heart" (44). She openly confesses that she has "never connected with any man in . . . [her] life" (108) and even the "mention of a man hurt her deeply" (44). A man in Clarissa's "scheme of things was to be used for her steady advancement or for the kind of utility that errand boys provided. He [Pramod] was not a woman, so not worth wasting emotions on" (86). It is noteworthy that Clarissa does not have any pleasant conversation with any of the male characters of the novel, be it Rajni Kant, Father Pramod, Neville, the hotel manager, the journalists, or even the cab driver. It seems as if she cannot bear the sight of a man. Clarissa's acknowledgement bolsters my claim, "For me only women's matters mean anything. I only listen to them with an open mind. I have shut myself up to everything male" (46). The novel makes a case that Western feminists have a harmful influence on Indian women, and their aggressive approach aligns with potential cultural imperialism. The two Western feminists, namely Clarissa and Emelia, suffer from saviour syndrome, but they end up being inflictors of much of the suffering the men of the novel go through.

The paper engages a multidimensional theoretical approach, drawing from feminist literary criticism, masculinity studies, and postcolonial studies to explore misandric elements in the novel. This approach also addresses Nathanson and Katherine's complaint that "unlike misogyny, misandry is not closely monitored, because, from a gynocentric perspective, it is considered morally and legally acceptable" (5). Interestingly, Hedges takes a different course for reclaiming misandry; he suggests "the term 'misandry' ought to be uncoupled from its supposed antonym 'misogyny' and (perhaps unintuitively) reformulated and reclaimed" (86). The need for its uncoupling could be seen in Emelia's remark, "Women sometimes make a greater show of their suffering, using it as a weapon" (96). The analysis also takes into consideration the intersectionality within feminist theory to emphasise how the novel's treatment of masculinity issues intersects with race, class, and cultural identity. This paper uses close textual reading along with thematic coding to underline designs of misandric representation in the novel. The approach incorporates systematic scrutiny of character development, narrative technique, plot structure, and symbolic features to identify how the story develops its critique of contemporary feminist discourse and male representation. Secondary analysis encompasses recent scholarship on misandry, feminist literary criticism, and cross-cultural gender studies to provide a theoretical context for the textual findings. This approach ensures that the analysis remains grounded in current academic discourse while offering original insights into the novel's complex gender dynamics.

The novel follows the story of four main characters—Emelia, Clarissa, Rajni Kant, and Vibha—set between India and the USA, exploring themes of love, spirituality, gender empowerment, and what Sharma characterises as "fake feminism." Through its cross-cultural narrative, the work examines the intersection of Eastern and Western values while addressing issues such as marriage breakdown, character corruption, and the exploitation of feminist ideologies for personal gain. This analysis seeks to uncover how these thematic elements contribute to broader patterns of misandric representation within contemporary literature.

One of the most significant aspects of potential misandry in Sharma's novel lies in its treatment of male emotional vulnerability, particularly through the character of Rajni Kant. The narrative consistently portrays Rajni Kant as emotionally dependent, naïve, and ultimately unsuccessful in maintaining relationships with women. This pattern suggests an underlying assumption that male emotional needs are less valid or worthy of narrative sympathy than female experiences. In the novel, Emelia wants to listen to the problems of Vibha in detail, but Rajni Kant fails in obtaining similar attention from her. It can be argued that men, too, are complicit in such assumptions, as in a patriarchal society, there is an established framework within which men perform, and they learn not to portray themselves as emotional beings, as that characteristic is reserved for women in a man/woman binary. A patriarchal society makes men believe that showing their emotions would paint them as weak creatures.

The novel has five major female characters and five key male characters. The female characters are Clarissa Hatfield, Emelia Sedley, Vibha, Julia Hamilton, and Manorama Taksona. Each of these five characters seems to succeed in their own right. Clarissa returns to Britain, having made her name in the feminist circles of India, and finds Vibha as her disciple cum sexual partner. Vibha, who can be described as a go-getter, is empowered socially and financially with the help of Clarissa. Emelia gets Neville, whom she desperately wants to have in her life. The novel hints that Julia happily involves herself in her literary agency business and decides to take a different course of life from Neville, as the novel mentions, "Julia could not spare time for him [Neville], being up to her eyes in work, chasing the professor who two literary agents were wooing and not sure which would be better. The competitive and thoroughly professional Julia felt certain that she would get him even if she had to marry him for a few months to sign the contract with him (123). Manorama achieves her target of throwing Vibha, a Brahmin girl, out of her house. From the present observation, one can infer that the novel tells a great story of female success in a patriarchal society. On the contrary, in the novel's presentation of all the male characters, they seem to suffer eternally and break down under the feminist pressure. The five male characters are, namely, Rajni Kant, Neville, Father Pramod, Keshav Dulal Taksona, and Rohan Mishra. It is interesting to note that all of these male characters are disappointed in pursuit of their aim and consequently break down in one way or another. Rajni Kant loses Vibha, and her late love interest, Emelia, deserts him when he had slowly developed soft feelings for her. Neville has to settle for Emelia, even though he was after Vibha. Father Pramod is left with his injured "male ego," and his dream to go to Britain is dashed to the ground. Keshav Dulal Taksona fails in improving his crushed and insignificant presence in his household, as he confesses, "Manno [Manorama], please do not glare at me so angrily! I can fight the world, but I can hardly stand up to that glare (25). Rohan has already lost Suhasini, and he is beyond healing, as "Rohan had grown stoic after Suhasini left him" (68). At the end of the novel, all male characters seem distraught and perished, whereas female characters end up empowered or triumphant. Feminist discourse might find justifications for the sufferings and breakdowns of male characters. For instance, Rajni Kant can be blamed for not taking a stand for Vibha, as "it pained Vibha that he made no effort to save her from his frenzied mother and

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suspicious father (27); Neville deserves the sufferings at the hands of Julia for his earlier abandonment of Emelia; Father Pramod is metaphorically crucified for his excessive sexual advances; Keshav's fault lies in his mistreatment of his daughter-in-law; and Rohan's sufferings come about because of holding on to traditional values and not evolving with the times.

This narrative choice reflects what some scholars identify as a typical pattern in contemporary literature, where male suffering is either ignored or treated as a deserved consequence of patriarchal privilege. Nathanson, in an interview with John Barry, highlights how feminists "blamed all evil and suffering on 'them,' on 'patriarchy' and therefore on *men as a class*." The story does not present many instances in which male characters receive any emotional support from the female characters. The female characters of the novel suppress, humiliate, mock, and even inflict violence on their counterparts. Manorama suppresses two males in her family, namely her son Rajni Kant and her husband Keshav. As the novel defines "a weak and vacillating man is at least as bad, if not worse, than a weak woman" (112), it bolsters the misandric trope that men are innately evil. Clarissa, along with Abida and Sanjana, mocks and humiliates Father Pramod when Clarissa equates a male authority with a commode. During the meeting at the P. D. Tandon Park, Clarissa says she cannot recall his name and she "can only remember that... [Pramod's] name rhymes with commode" (98). Clarissa appears to subscribe to the views of some feminists who "believe that outrage and anger toward men are useful for keeping the boot to the throat of oppressive systems that impede women's liberation" (Amber Wardell). Clarissa also inflicts violence on Pramod during the toilet incident, when "she dug her nails deep into it [Pramod's phallus] till he had nothing better to do than to yell out in pain (88). Julia Hamilton abandons Neville at a time when he needed her most, as he was suffering from depression and anxiety. One can see that there is a pattern in how female characters of the novel treat the male characters and how much they sympathise with their suffering.

The novel's treatment of Neville's emotional crisis, which arises out of Julia Hamilton's abandonment, represents society's convoluted positions toward male emotional experience and requirements. The novel recognises his suffering from the heartbreak and consequent depression. Still, implicitly, it insinuates that his agony is well-deserved and a form of poetic justice for his earlier treatment of Emelia. Under the garb of this moral constitution, Neville's emotional commotions find no takers, as the feminists might be inclined to believe that they are the outcomes of his moral turpitudes. This suggests that male emotional suffering serves primarily as narrative punishment rather than a genuine human experience deserving of empathy. Hopkins-Doyle records the arguments of some feminist scholars, as they have reasoned that "bad feelings toward men are rational responses to men's hatred and mistreatment of women and that more positive or dispassionate responses would only undermine women's motivation to bring about social change" (3).

The novel's portrayal of male characters within feminist spaces reveals potentially misandric assumptions about men's capacity for genuine support of women's rights. Though Emelia's experience with Neville was somewhat different, she mentions,

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"Neville was remarkable. He always made me feel so capable, made me believe I was an achiever, and not an incompetent failure" (60), but her experience may not be taken into consideration by the feminist activists on the pretext that this may be a rare individual experience. The conversation between Emelia and Clarissa sustains the argument that feminist discourses strive to keep men out of them:

> Emelia: Don't say that! I can see the great leader you are, and I cherish your friendship. You're almost like a man in your leadership.
>
> Clarissa: I am sorry, I simply cannot tolerate such a statement from someone who is supposed to be moving towards feminism. I wish you would not put it that way. You should respect leadership qualities in women, too. (63)

Male characters are consistently portrayed as either absent from feminist discussions, perhaps because, as Manorama claims, "I am a woman and I better understand a woman than you [Rajni Kant] do" (140), or present only as romantic interests for female activists. For feminist movements, Emelia can accept Clarissa as the leader, but for her romantic inclinations, she needs Neville. She affirms, "A leader could be great for a movement but for a blissful, carefree life, a man was the thing!" (63). This representation suggests an underlying belief that men cannot authentically engage with feminist issues without ulterior motives. Even Father Pramod subscribes to this view that "when a man and woman come together, there have to be some ulterior motives, or they would never get connected" (108).

The character of Rajni Kant, despite his genuine care for the women in his life, is ultimately portrayed as inadequate and unable to provide meaningful support to his wife, Vibha. The novel suggests that his failure stems not from specific personal shortcomings but from inherent limitations of masculine identity within feminist contexts. Harmange points out this problem of masculine inadequacy: "Their sympathy has limits, and so does their capacity for listening and caring. Men always want to find a solution, sort out my problems, rationalise my pain, when very often all I need is a kindly ear and a shoulder to cry on" (25). This portrayal reflects what scholars have identified as a common misandric trope: the assumption that men are fundamentally incapable of understanding or supporting women's liberation.

The text's treatment of male authority figures further reinforces these patterns. Father Pramod Emanuel Francis's portrayal is a case in point. His representation in the novel is humorous, but the humiliating toilet scene undermines his religious authority while simultaneously sexualizing his interaction with Clarissa. Clarissa, who has vowed that "If ever I came to power, I would castrate the bloody lot of them" (62), almost castrates Pramod by inflicting a wound on Pramod's phallus. Clarissa's injuring of his "manhood" is symbolic of his disabling the supposed centre of power, the phallus, as she confesses to having "felt a deep sense of gratification" (88) after the incident. Her further claim that "she could have castrated the fellow if she had a knife. This was a moment for which she had waited a lifetime (88), which is consistent with her long-term goal of making this world free of male presence or with the presence of such males who are unable to procreate. Interestingly, Pramod is mocked, shamed, and wounded for no

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fault of his own. He undergoes such treatment because Clarissa misunderstands his intent of visit. Clarissa misconstrues his statement when he comes to take her advice, "on how to do it effectively" (86), where he was referring to conversion to Christianity. Clarissa, who represents the radical feminist group, being a prisoner of her prejudices against men, believes that men only dream about having sex as if they have nothing better to think of than sex. The incident also demonstrates how feminist discourses are unable to understand male language and male intentions. Clarissa's motivated outlook is marred by dispassionate reality. This representation combines multiple misandric elements: the reduction of male authority to sexual comedy, the suggestion that religious masculinity is inherently hypocritical, and the implication that men's discomfort with female sexuality reveals their fundamental inadequacy.

Sharma's novel presents a complex but problematic view of masculinity within cross-cultural contexts, particularly in its comparison of Western and Indian male identities. Rajni Kant confesses this dichotomy:

> The biggest problem with most Indian men, unless they are highly westernised, is that they never want to part with their parents. Even when they love their wives, they pretend to be with their parents. You may consider this a boon or a bane of the Indian situation, but we maintain till the end that our parents are right and our wives wrong, so that the parents do not feel neglected. However, what we believe in, we rarely give out. (102)

The narrative suggests that Western feminist influence corrupts not only women but also undermines traditional masculine roles in ways that are culturally destructive. This perspective, while ostensibly defending cultural traditions, inadvertently promotes misandric attitudes by suggesting that men are passive victims of feminist manipulation rather than active agents capable of adapting to social change.

The portrayal of Indian masculinity through characters like Rajni Kant reveals underlying assumptions about male fragility in the face of women's empowerment. Rather than presenting male characters as capable of growth and adaptation, the novel suggests that feminist activism inevitably leads to male displacement and suffering. Such portrayal is consistent with feminist fundamental principle, as Nathanson puts it, "by their innate status as a victim class, [women] are innocent and morally superior to men, but also that men, by their innate status as an oppressor class, are evil and morally inferior to women. The consequence should surprise no one. Women have created a movement that has become astonishingly indifferent to men at best and overtly hostile to men at worst" (Interview with John Barry).

From Nathanson's observation, one can deduce that in the gender equality movements, men's rights to protest against their biased and cruel treatment are often sacrificed. Their agency to speak against such atrocities is trampled by the dominant narrative of misogyny. Whenever they raise a voice against such a misandric approach, they are charged with promoting misogyny and patriarchy.

There is a clear bias in the portrayal of Western males and Eastern males. The only male character that unsettles Clarissa in her arguments against males in general is

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a Western male, Neville. On one hand, the story presents that Western males can challenge the dominating feminist discourses and can also negotiate their marginalised position in the feminist discourse. On the other hand, the story presents a pathetic plight of Indian males. All the male characters seem to suffer at the hands of female characters. The representation of male sexuality in cross-cultural contexts complicates the already problematized gender dynamics. The diverse cross-cultural sexual encounters—between Clarissa and Vibha, Vibha and Neville, and the palpable attraction between Emelia and Rajni Kant—frequently present male sexuality as missing, incapable, and finally bartered in exchange for female liberation from the clutches of a repressive patriarchal system. Male sexuality is accorded secondary status in comparison to female sexuality.

The plot of the novel seems to provide enough literary space for male-bashing. The only male character who does not succumb to the pressure of feminist discourse is a Western male, Neville. He shows a tendency to use women for their pleasure, and he can take them for a ride. Drawing upon the strategy adopted by Neville to deal with females, one is inclined to infer that the novel offers a toolkit for surviving strategy in a radical feminist arrangement where there is excessive male subjugation. The book also highlights how the Indian males are not armed with those maneuvers that Western males have gathered over the period after having been subjected to prolonged misandry, as Clarissa in her speech says, "Contemporary woman in the West has, to a large extent, succeeded in making them unlearn such behaviour and will not allow a man to yoke her into submission" (21). This archetype furthers the fundamental assumption of the feminist discourses that male sexual identity is a hindrance to women's empowerment.

Sharma's novel can be seen as a satirical critique of "fake feminism," but the same satirical analysis provides the novel a façade under which misandric attitudes flourish. The novel draws its humour from degrading male characters while at the same time presenting feminist activists as Machiavellian and sexual predators. This narrative technique of the author draws the attention of readers towards the negative capability of the author in emphasising pervasive misandry in feminist discourse behind the shield of satirical intent. This use of satirical elements assists the novelist in reinforcing the tropes of misandry at the expense of male characters and at the same time absolves him of any intent to demean feminist discourse. Clarissa's character is an epitome of this prototype. The novel disapproves of her feminist approach as "fake feminism" by bringing to the fore her misandric outbursts that paint her as a man-hater, sexual aggressor, and also a home-breaker. The novel's humour excessively relies on misandric attitudes to advance the interests of radical feminist groups. The humorous treatment of male religious authority, Father Pramod, reduces his character to a sex chaser as Flood et al. highlight Paul Nathanson and Katherine Young's observation that "misandry results from a feminist project to privilege gender as the principal site of identity and power and to redress traditional androcentrism through legitimised forms of dehumanising and demonising men" (442). Such a portrayal not only dents individual male authority but also the larger edifice of male institutional power. Such depictions of male characters give the impression that they legitimise feminist purposes

by accentuating that male authority is ridiculous and there are extremely feeble chances of any reform in them. Pramod's character is a case in point. The novel presents him as someone who keeps chasing Clarissa for a sexual relationship even when he is lying injured in the hospital.

Rajni Kant's character is a quintessential example of masculine performance under feminist pressure. His portrayal in the novel exposes the misogynistic undertones of the story. The book shows Rajni Kant as someone lacking masculine behaviour in his relationships with women. At the novel's beginning, the American feminist's recurring dream presents a man as her saviour. However, in the case of Rajni Kant, he is shown to need a saviour who could rescue him from the oppressive clutches of the matriarchal arrangement in his household. Rajni Kant could only find a saviour in a man, and that is Rohan. He announces, "If you [Rohan] succeed in persuading her [Vibha] to return, then you are God for me; if you do not, you are still my saviour" (72). His helplessness in protecting his wife from his mother's harassment, his inability to understand the needs of his wife, and his final rejection by his love interest, Emelia, suggest that male inadequacy is not incidental but innate. He is always dependent on the support of someone, be it in his professional space, his domestic frontier, or his romantic inclinations. Rohan Mishra turns out to be his saviour in his professional space, Vibha in his domestic frontier, by taking the harsh decision of leaving her household and imbibing her newfound liberation, which becomes the guiding principle of Rajni Kant on a path to freedom, and Emelia by providing him with transient romantic support. Such presentation of Rajni Kant's dependence on different characters is consistent with misandric stereotypes that present males as emotionally stunted and unable to evolve in changing gender dynamics. It is noteworthy that the novel does not provide much narrative space to include Rajni Kant's stand on these changes. His thoughts, feelings, desires, motives, and perspectives are hardly explored, suggesting that the female experience is prioritised over that of males.

Notably, Neville's character presents a different dimension of the novel's treatment of masculinity, specifically regarding his emotional relationships and personal growth. In the beginning, the book presents his character as an insincere individual who is emotionally unavailable to Emelia. His abandonment of Emelia looks cruel and unjustified, and Neville's sufferings at the hands of Julia are presented as karmic justice. At the end of the novel, Neville gets Emelia back in his life. Still, the agency of this reunion turns out to be either divine intervention or female interference in the form of his aunt, Peggy Grosvenor. It shows that if there are any positive results in a male's life, it is because of the presence of a female character. Such patterns promote the misandric attitudes that stress males' dependence on women for emotional support.

However, the novel's female characters fare relatively well by displacing male presences from their lives, which leads to their empowerment. Vibha liberates herself from the atrocities of the Taksona household and can sustain herself financially, whereas her decision to leave her family comes at the expense of making Rajni Kant isolated and dampened; Clarissa's empowerment is marked by the total absence of men

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from her life and sexual manipulation and cultural imperialism; and Emelia takes help from Rajni Kant, but his temporary presence is required to achieve her romantic goals. This depiction shows that female emancipation necessarily involves male displacement. Clarissa's sexual bond with Vibha also reinforces the same idea that women's independence unchangeably demands men's exclusion from women's lives for a meaningful relationship. Manorama's incessant harassment of Vibha brings to the fore an added layer of gender complexity. The context seems to criticise patriarchal structure, which is responsible for the domestic abuse of females. Still, it also suggests that feminist solutions to such problems lead to the breaking of traditional family bonding. The context also presents male members of the family either as complicit in the abuse or too powerless to intervene, which ultimately declares them redundant in women's lives. This treatment of the male characters tries to establish the misandric trope of masculine inadequacy.

It seems that "The Women's Emancipation Cell" is meant to promote the idea, as Clarissa puts it in her speech, "women must help women since no one else will" (20). It is presented as an organisation crucial for women's protection, but at the same time, it also demonstrates how such an organisation's apathy leads to the destruction of traditional family stability and sometimes also leads women to "prostitution." Emelia raises her doubts about the functioning of the cell when she says, "I find the name 'The Women's Emancipation Cell' really pretentious. Kind of artificial" (40). Rajni Kant, too, is unsatisfied with the functioning of the Cell, as he desperately asks one of the functionaries of the Cell, "Is this the function of the Cell? Are you here to instigate women to sever links with their husbands, to break up homes? (58). This depiction of "The Women's Emancipation Cell" in the novel seems to support the feminist approach in principle and oppose its praxis.

We Should Not All Be Feminists's cross-cultural context facilitates complex exploration of how feminist discourses vary in different cultural backgrounds. This evaluation uncovers disquieting attitudes toward both Western and Indian masculinities. While Neville is portrayed as emotionally impaired and a sexual predator, Indian male characters like Rajni Kant and Father Pramod are painted as either inadequate or skirt chasers. This permeates the idea that masculinity itself is essentially problematic and is not punctuated by cultural expressions of it. The institution of marriage, too, is a subject of intense inquiry in feminist discourses. The novel's presentation of two married couples, (a) Vibha and Rajni Kant and (b) Manorama and Keshav, is problematic, as both marriages are presented as not entirely successful. Superficially, it may seem that Rajni Kant fails in saving his marriage because of communication failure and compatibility issues. Still, the undercurrents reveal it was because of the feminist belief that marital stability is a hurdle to women's empowerment. Keshav, who is troubled by his doubt about whether he has fathered his son, reconciles with his fate of eternal subjugation to his wife, Manorama.

Ideally, a third-person narration provides equal space for characters of all genders to reveal their thoughts, feelings, desires, and motives. Still, this novel shows its exponential bias towards female characters by giving them disproportionately more

space to express their inner beings. In contrast, male characters have been thrown into oblivion, as they are hardly explored upon these lines. Such an attitude of the author suggests that female experiences are far more critical than those of males. Sharma seems to give his female characters privileged treatment. Marwick and Caplan's remark, "Men's rights communities use the term [misandry] to signify a form of undesirable feminism that they argue privileges women's rights over men's, while feminist communities use it as a symbol of the false equivalence they believe the MRM [Men's Rights Movement] employs in their rhetoric" (Marwick 11), finds claims of males as well as of females sustainable.

The novel's plot structure is also used to advance misandric stances of feminist discourses against male agency and their capability. Male characters seem to play second fiddle in the plot of the novel. Their roles are limited to assisting in the development of female characters rather than following independent narrative trajectories. Rajni Kant is placed to facilitate Emelia's spiritual quest; Neville's role revolves around providing romantic resolution to Emelia and random sex services to Vibha, and Pramod performs the role of organiser of trips of Clarissa and Vibha to the hinterlands of India. None of these male characters seems to evolve independently in any way. Such discriminatory allocation of active roles to female characters and passive roles to male characters exposes the underlying misandric bearings of the novel.

In the assessment of this novel, one cannot forgo its literary achievements and complex social critique because of the pervasive presence of misandric elements in the novel. Nevertheless, the literary merit of the novel does not hamper critical analysis of its ideological implications. The patterns this analysis identifies include marginalisation of male interiority, the institutional subjugation of masculine needs and feelings, the structural positioning of male characters as impediments to female empowerment, and the assumption that authentic feminism should accommodate masculine presence in their discourses. These models draw one's attention to unresolved issues in the contemporary gender discourse. To address these unsettled concerns, one can find solutions in Emelia's understanding of feminism:

> One does not become a true feminist merely by showing interest in women or even in the cause of women. By doing that, one might indeed be no more than a woman. Because interest could be only skin deep, or it could be the result of inquisitiveness. To be a true feminist, one had to feel for women, to be emotional about them. Feminism born of intellectual needs was no more than a credo, and such a credo could change with shifting intellectual climate. (41)

The inferences of this analysis have far-reaching effects in terms of raising disconcerting issues for contemporary feminist discourse regarding its treatment of masculinity and male experiences. The novel's portrayal of radical feminist discourses wanting to do away with male presences, as Clarissa in her press brief says, "Despite my reservations about men, I do not go running them. At best, I may pinch them to indicate that they had better not come too close" (107), exposing its limitations and questioning the purpose of women's liberation movements. In doing so, it reverberates Emelia's views: "My only contention is that we be more conscious of women's needs

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and pay more attention to them instead of trying to make women more like men or vice versa" (24).

Misandry study is an emerging area of research that requires sustained theoretical progress and empirical investigation. This study expands that scholarship by foregrounding how a careful textual analysis can unearth potentially problematic gender attitudes within works that explicitly seem to critique underlying issues within the contemporary feminist discourses. The novel contributes significantly to the existing knowledge system on contemporary gender discourse despite its exposed misogynistic attitudes. However, the assessments suggest that these contributions come at the cost of marginalisation of masculine needs and experiences.

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