

Women in the novels of Shashi Deshpande

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The problems and predicaments peculiar to the Indian women found artistic expression in the Indian literature in English since the 1970s. In their creative writings, the women writers like Kamala Markandaya, Kamala Das, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Shobha De started discussing openly the sexual problems of women and questioning the gender-role expectations. The female protagonists in their writings evince sufficient vigour and courage to question the oppressive role of society, religion and culture, but yet they refrain from taking the paths suggested by the western feminists. They rather seek to find their own paths. Shashi Deshpande's novels, namely *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *Roots and Shadows* and *That Long Silence*. In all these novels, Shashi Deshpande objectifies new female subjective experiences with a gynocentric vision. She basically reflects on the problems and concerns of the middle class Indian women. Her writings, rooted in the culture in which she lives, remain sensitive to the common everyday events and experiences, and they give artistic expression to something that is simple and mundane. Her feminism is peculiarly Indian in the sense that it is born out of the predicament of Indian women placed between contradictory identities: tradition and modernity, family and profession, culture and nature. Her art is intensely personal, not political. Her feminism rooted in the native environment tends to be humanistic and optimistic in its outlook. The underlying theme in Shashi Deshpande's novels is human relationships, especially the ones that exist between father and daughter, husband and wife and also between mother and daughter. In all these relationships the woman occupies the central stage and significantly the narration shifts through her feminine/feminist consciousness. Her novels reflect the lives of suffocated women in search of a refuge from suffering. The female protagonists in her novels shift from their personal pains to the sufferings of the other women around. In Shashi Deshpande's novels three

types of suffering women characters recur with subtle changes. To the first type belongs the heroine's mother or the mother figure – the traditional woman who believes that her place is with her husband and family. Whatever be her troubles, she does not leave her husband; she strives for a working relationship with him at any cost. In a sense, she represents the traditional religious ethos and confirms to the Manu code that the woman should be under the control of the father in the maidenhood, the husband in her youth and the sons during her old age.

The position of the girl in the new home is no better than the parental home because the behaviour of the society is same in both the families giving her feeling that “ She had exchanged one pair of pinching , torturing shoes for another .After that female who want to come out from the same situation always asked-“What choices I have ?” Millions of girls have asked this question millions of times.

It brings into light the real blight of women's life in our country. It is not a woman who want to lead a life of passivity & indecision but her circumstances that compel her to adjust herself acc. To the parents, to the family and lastly her husband.

There is a ‘dependency syndrome’ in Desphande's heroines whose responsible for thus own victimization. In fact the novelist seem to suggest through her heroines is that to after resistance to the appression being practiced upon then, they have to master up their courage and to face life with all its challenges to share responsibilities & not to escape from then.

Shashi Desphande's character after a great deal of litter and biting experiences come up to overcome the sense of doom and defeatism. Moreover woman character manifest their firmness that they should have definite & dariy gesture in their life. The author evinces the tenjible and tormentiny truth that women should not success to their different dynamics of relationship as well as they should not sit on the fence. Simultoncously they are expected to plag the successful role of mother wife & beloved by keeping their entity dignified.

The movelist doesnt probe the psygetic inbalance of the women from feministic point of view nevertheless she analysis the fragmented end fractured syndrome of her heroines

while they assest for individual identity. All the major charcters bear the brunt of all friends and they all suffer from “ejo-inflation.”

The writer opens the discourse with the sizzling presentational of the solitary life of a woman and her sociological condition. Jaya come across various sets of women & they all fore llustrcted her to adopt according to the dream schene o her her husband. After observing numerous cases of subdued women she merulab herself. She finds herself an addle brained women.

She reacts sharply on the advices of the fashion magazines. “I felt nothing but pity for the girl who had set and creamed her face to might, rubbing the cream in circle as she had read she should. Reward and round, and upward strokes when you come to the neck. I had brushed my hair religiously ton fifty strokes on either side a hundred stroke altogether. “ (96) On getting married she comes to feel and find her new image or Mohan’s wife and tries to adjust as a compromising and motherly woman.

At the very start of her nursed life she however keeps aside fear, terror and ambiguities. She thought that to she will complete all her pending desires after her marriage as she was in realty that after her marriage she will have full coward on her life. In order to live like on ideal wife and mother she does not give priority to her personal and emotional needs. Because she knows at any time she will do what she words to do. To live honorably in a challenging job for any women which in similar to wealth on sword in terms of relationship. She remains remotely attached to the world of her husband through she looks towards the outward glass and glitter.

“Our has been a delicately balanced relationship so much so that we have been snipped off lists of ourselves to keep the scales as on even keel.”(7)

At the initial stage of her married life she was more concerned towards her husband then herself.

Shashi Desphande’s character often a great deals of bitter experiences come up to overcome the sense of doom and defeatism. Moreover women character manifest their firmness that they should have definite and daring gesture in their life. The author evinces the tangible and tormenting truth that women should not succumb to their different

dynamics of relationship as well as they should not sit on the fence. Simultaneously they are expected to play the successful role of mother, wife and beloved.

Shashi Deshpande came on the Indian literary scene in the late 1970s and soon occupied a prominent place among the Indian English novelists. With her novels she has strengthened the tradition of Indian women novelists writing in English. It was in the late nineteenth century that Indian English novel took shape and the most remarkable feature about it was the fact that women novelists did not lag behind their male counterparts in this venture.

The marginalization of women in a patriarchal society has resulted in their alienation. Alienation implies an individual's feeling or state of dissociation from self, from others and from the world at large. In Greek there are two words for alienation – 'anomie' and 'anomia'. While 'anomia' stands for self alienation, 'anomie' refers to alienation from society. In fact, self alienation and alienation from society are the two basic forms of alienation. If a person's spontaneous individual self has been stunted or stifled that person is said to be in a condition of alienation from himself or herself. An alienated person is a stranger to himself as his fellow man is stranger to him. Thus alienation from self leads to alienation from society. The character Sarita in "The dark holds No Terrors" and Indu in "Roots and Shadows" came back their ancestral home to end their self alienation through marriage, ironically, their marriage lead them to another kind of alienation in themselves. As the protagonist Manu of "if I Die Today" says about her alienation given by her marriage , " A marriage you start of expecting so many things and bit by bit , like dead leaves,the expectation fall of____ .Two people who have put themselves into two seprate glass jars, who can see each other but cannot communicate." With this non-communication and emptiness the femalecharacters od Shashi Deshpande are drawn into alienation from both themselves and their families and society at large.

To overcome this alienation caused by a failed marriage that some of the heroines of Shashi Deshpande enters into an extra marital relationship, it is not caused by the western style sense but it is an effort to escape from the loneliness for a moment or some time which filled them to happiness but primary things are always primary they can't be the lasting one in one's life. As all the heroines have to come out from those relationship. It

becomes an occasional affair. India women with education themselves at the higher level as they are adopting the professional career but they can't broken free from the patriarchal society which created a divided mentality in them. Shashi Deshpande's protagonist's also find themselves in the same crises and try to find out something bewhen they are in the self doubt and mental agony and they try to overcome from that. According to Charu Chandra the concept of feminism in Shashi Deshpande's novels where achievement of individual identity and autonomy of female is not only goal but it balanced against life in the family and career .The charter in "That Long Silence" Jaya alienates herself and it is the alienation with herself. Jaya lived her life before marriage was a nourished life and when she married with Mohan, against the wishes of her family, and then she alienates herself after some time. Before marriage every time her father encourages her to do best in her life and treated her as a son although her mother was a traditional Indian woman. After her marriage Jaya finds herself bound as a traditional woman who has to follow the rules of her husband. She was a writer and she tried to write about a woman in a broader way but her husband banned her to write in that way and push her writing according to the conventional society.

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