



FICTION IN SHASHI DESPANDE NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

This paper makes an attempt on feminist movement. Shashi Deshpande is a well-known name in the field of Indian literature. The feminist writings of Indian literature probe into the pathetic situation of women in the male-dominated society in general and in the institution of family in particular. Shashi Deshpande usually describes Indian women in her novels. That is why the condition of women in our families. Shashi Deshpande's sincere attempt to break the silence of women has been widely acclaimed in home and abroad. Her clear understanding of human relationship, her close observation of the way of the world, her unbiased attitude to dogmas and movement enforced me to do the present attempt in this direction. In order to establish social harmony, the harmony in the family needs to be established. There has to be an end to the discriminations on women based on the gender. No gender is superior in this world. Gender equity, justice and equality have a bearing on attaining gender development in order to have peace, harmony and love in the family relationships.

Key words: *feminist, Indian literature , socio-cultural,*

INTRODUCTION

Shashi Deshpande was born in Dharwad in Karnataka as the daughter of the renowned Kannada dramatist as well as a great Sanskrit scholar Sriranga. She pursued her education in Economics in Bombay and graduated in Law from Bangalore. She later received an MA in English Literature. Shashi Deshpande, was awarded the Padmashri in 2009 & is well known for her novels, short stories and children's fiction stories. Her book titled "Writing from the margin and other essays," was published in 2003 stop other notable works of Shashi Deshpande: The Binding Vine; Matter of Time; That Long Silence; Dark Holds No Terrors.



SHASHI DESHPANDE'S FICTION:

Shashi Deshpande always labelled as feminist writer scholars have brilliantly argued to prove the merit of her fictional world. Her works explored with focus on postcolonial theory, modern criticism, feminish, human relations, quest for identity and variety of othere themes. Shashi Deshpande is the critically acclaimed writer of nine novels, a number of short stories, children's books and essays. Her novel, That Long Silence, won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1990. Trained as a journalist, Deshpande's work focuses on the reality and truth of the lives of Indian women. Deshpande has described her literary style as "really a very simple and stark style, which rarely draws attention to itself." She received the Padma Sri award in 2009. Shashi Deshpande is of the view that in calling her novels feminist, one straitjackets the works; imprisons them with the label. She feels that while she is feminist, her novels are novels. She hasn't written the novels as a debating voice, to develop a thesis in a debate. She feels her novels are open examinations of the experiences of people in specific setting. Shashi's writings are complex but seamlessly woven narratives which explore the lives of people, especially women. Unconsciously her writing is informed by feminism, which she finds a source of strength, though unfortunately this sometimes results in her work being slotted into this one category. In Deshpande's view, when women undertake their journey in pursuit of self-knowledge, they do not start light, "... we are already burdened with a baggage that has been given to us. The fact is that we don't start with a picture of ourselves on a clean slate. Inscribed on it already are things told to us by others that determine our behaviour, ideas, expectations and dreams".² Simone de Beauvoir's statement, "one is not born a woman, one becomes one",³ has a special relevance to India where conventions, religious and social taboos dictate and inhibit woman's individuality. Femininity as a cultural construct inscribes the society's views about women. The behavioral patterns for the Indian women are pre-determined by the caste into which one is born and the values and traditions of a culture that upholds archetypal images of woman.

shashi Deshpande's major concern is to depict the anguish and conflict of the modern educated Indian women caught between patriarchy and tradition on the one hand, and self-expression, individuality and independence for the women on the other. Her fiction explores the search of the



women to fulfill herself as a human being, independent of her traditional role as daughter, wife and mother. She has examined a variety of common domestic crisis, which trigger off the search. Deshpande's concern and sympathy are primarily for the woman. While revealing the woman's struggle to secure self-respect and self-identity for herself, the author subtly bares the multiple levels of oppression, including sexual oppression experienced by women in our society. In the changing scenario of post colonial Indian society that observed crosscurrents of traditional ideals and newly imported ones, Shashi Deshpande's was burdened with the task of giving then women characters the specific roles that would fit in the socio-cultural modes and values of the changed society. A new generation of women emerged, embracing the changed values according to which women have a voice of their own, a voice that had been suppressed for centuries. These women, who have the capacity to make free choice and need not therefore depend on the choice of the male, are portrayed in the novels of the new generation women novelists. These new women characters are not however the same everywhere dilemmas are exposed accordingly. In her novels, we get the theme of poverty stricken, hardworking, sincere and silent women of India who live like animals, embrace intolerable sufferings for survival, and yet hope for a better future for their issues only to be crest fallen at the end. Nothing happens in their life but series of disappoints along with humiliation, torture and repeated displacement. Besides the rural mass, there are middle class woman in the innumerable towns and cities of India who are often unable to enjoy the legal status conferred on them. Women are now treated on equal terms by law as far as inheritance of property and opportunities of jobs are concerned. But on the social level, these women who have been struggling since ages to assert themselves, are still being heckled by their male counterparts and forced to remain silent. The voice of this newly emerged class of woman, who have the same education as the men are having and are sometimes given the opportunity of supporting themselves financially, is heard in the writings of Shashi Deshpande. A voice of protest against the marginalized condition of women as a class is also audible in her works. The bold heroines, having moral courage necessary for self-assertion replace the meek and submissive heroines who were accepted as the standard women characters. In Shashi Deshpande's novels, we can find the variety of characters too. In Deshpande's literary



world there are characters taken from almost all the sections of life. They are medical practitioners and writers, educated housewives, uneducated ones and maidservants. Besides poverty, bereavement and such other common adversities, there are some causes of suffering exclusively for the female. Deshpande renders with sympathetic understanding the variety of suffering a woman has to undergo. Sometimes the suffering is attached to the social taboos, and sometimes the women are silenced in the name of family honor, and are compelled to digest torture.

CONCLUSION

Shashi Deshpande, in her works, defines freedom for the Indian woman within the Indian socio-cultural value system and institutions. She has steadfastly resisted the temptation of creating strong, glorified female heroes, and has presented the Indian woman as facing the very dilemma of having to choose between modernity and convention. Deshpande bares the subtle processes of oppression and gender differentiation operative within the institution of the family and the male centered Indian society. Deshpande's feminism does not uproot the woman from her background but tries to expose the different ideological elements that shape her. These include religious and cultural elements (such as myths, legends, rituals and ceremonies) and social and psychological factors (such as woman's subordinate position in the family and her restricted sexuality). The protagonists of Shashi Deshpande's novels are modern, educated, independent women, roughly between the age of 30 or 35. Their search for freedom and self-identity within marriage is a recurring theme. While analyzing her novels, I realize that a similar progress in the protagonists life is portrayed in them. All her protagonists- Indu, Saru and Jaya are shown to be in a state of confusion at the beginning. Slowly as the novel unfolds, they go through a process of introspection, self-analysis and self-realization. At the end, they emerge as more confident, more in control of themselves, and significantly more hopeful.



References

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