
Shashi Deshpande: Women Oriented Writer

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ABSTRACT

Women are always highlighted due to her nature. Mostly writer wrote about the weak part of the women. Shashi Deshpande is also one of the writers who wrote for the women. In this paper we explain how deeply Shashi Deshpande wrote about the women in her novels. She explains various types and phases of the women characters.

Women are always known for her suffering nature. In India that woman is coming in good category that suffers a lot and complains less. To know the nature of woman is really a very tough job.

Shashi Deshpande is indeed the most renowned of the contemporary Indian women novelist. Shashi Deshpande's women characters keeping in mind the various types and phases of the women characters expressed in her six novels and tries to link these novels with the various phases of feminism.

Feminism is, indeed, a serious attempt to analyze, comprehend and clarify how and why is feminity or the feminine sensibility is different from masculinity or the masculine experience. Feminism brings into perspective the points of difference that characterize the 'feminine identity' or 'feminine psyche' or 'feminity' of woman. It can be studied by taking into account the psychosomatic, social and cultural construction of feminity masculinity. The male writers have mostly seen women as inferior and weak. Gendering and some sort of misogyny are evident in the texts written by men. They see men as 'superior sex' or the 'stronger sex' while women are seen as are the 'inferior sex' or the 'weaker sex'. Men are considered as logical, rational and objective, and, women are perceived as emotional, inconsistent, intuitive, subjective and lacking self-confidence. But the modern woman has raised her voice against the atrocity and injustice done to her by the system. And it is their pronouncement in an overt tone that has created the difference also in textuality.

There can be, no doubt, that as Indian English novel claims a tradition of its own, so also Indian English women novelists have their own tradition. Indian women novelists exhibit their own experience in creative writing especially, in the form of the novel. The multi-faceted experience of Indian women is succinctly expressed in their short stories and novels. The women's writings not only express the sorrow and exploitation but also their social and moral success. The woman novelists had to turn inwards in order to make them understood by a world dominated by men for whom "a woman is either a repressed individual or a sex object." The great tradition of English novel which began with Narayan was carried on by Kamala Markandey, Ruskin Bond and Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande.

The relation between literature and society is highly complex, and it is very difficult to determine which element of society has exerted what influence on literature. Jane Austen who has been accepted as an "ideal novelist worthy of emulation" by Shashi Deshpande deals with nothing other than human relationships in a limited range of characters and locale, she intimately knows.

Shashi Deshpande conceived fiction as a creative process with an expression of the most intimate awareness of the self. She is a conscientious writer with her own definite views of life. She has taken up the women cause ardently representing Indian and contemporary Indian Literature. She impresses the readers with her comprehensive vision, scholarship, erudition, poetic sensibility and spirit of joy. Her writings reflect a strong ethnic identities and a quest for eternal self for something deeper the areas of experiences of women, which have not been previously explored. Shashi Deshpande has experimented with, varieties of the genres of fiction like short-story, the literature for children, articles and interviews which carry her own.

A look at her novels will reveal her treatment of major women characters and will show how the themes in them are related to women's problems. Shashi Deshpande has exposed the gross gender discrimination and its fall-out in a male dominated society in her first novel *Roots and Shadows*. In the novel, she depicts the agony and suffocation experienced by the protagonist Indu in a male-dominated and tradition bound society. She refuses to play the straitjacketed role of a wife imposed upon by society. Her quest for identity is tellingly expressed in the novel. *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, her second novel, is about the traumatic experience the protagonist Saru undergoes as her husband refuses to play a second-fiddle role. Saru undergoes great 199 humiliation and neglect as a child and, after marriage, as a wife. Deshpande discusses the blatant gender discrimination shown by parents towards their daughters and their desire to have a male child. After her marriage, as she gains a greater social status than her husband Manohar, all begins to fall apart. Her husband's sense of inferiority complex and the humiliation he feels as a result of society's reaction to Saru's superior position develops sadism in him. Her husband Mann vents his frustration on Saru in the form of sexual sadism, which has been vividly portrayed by Deshpande.

She creates live characters out of day-to-day life and very carefully avoided creating wooden characters to fulfill her dream. The novelist excels in the portrayal of women characters. But she is against the character of superwoman or idealizing them. She is fully conscious of the social responsibility of a writer. Her firm conviction is that a writer constantly corresponds with the reality of the society and, therefore in her imagination, she conceives a vision of life in which she unconsciously seeks some ideal pictures of life that make human survival more amicable.

Deshpande is very much aware of the various stages of the emergence of feminism in the West. She, as a writer, could in no way accept the Western feminist ideas; they cannot be applied to Indian realities. Her feminist concepts had their origin in the experience of the miserable condition of Indian middle class women living in joint 36 families, strictly adhering to the old outworn customs and conventions. Even educated women who try to get liberated from educational and economic deprivation; gender-discrimination and other evils meted out to women, face this problem.

These problems appear in various forms in the feminism of Deshpande. She has strong convictions about feminism. Apart from her belief in the equality of the sexes and in the right of both the sexes to live their lives the way they want to, she also believes that until women get over the handicaps imposed by the society, they cannot succeed in life. In a society as traditionally male dominated as the Indian society is women have to try hard to find their identities. But the modern Indian women, as represented by the protagonists of Deshpande's fiction, are definitely working towards this goal. Deshpande took to writing as a mission through which she passes through historical and traditional contexts which are still the ruling factors of current scenario.

A.N.Dwivedi observes:

“Deshpande dwells on desperation and frustration, misunderstanding and incompatibility, sense of guilt and loss of face, loneliness and alienation of a sensitive woman pitted against an ill-mated marriage and hostile circumstances around her.”

Deshpande's novels acknowledge Indian myth and ethos as she has imbibed influences from her own parental sources. Her chief thematic concern is women's struggle in the middle class society. G.S. Amur, in the preface to her first collection of short stories *The Legacy and Other Stories* writes thus:

“Women's struggle, in the context of contemporary Indian society; to find and preserve her identity as wife, mother and most important of all, as human being is Shashi Deshpande's major concern as a creative writer, and this appears in all her important stories.”

Shashi Deshpande is perhaps the most perceptive and consistent explorer of inner life, especially that of Indian women, convulsed by an acute sense of helplessness in the face of onslaught on an unfeeling world and the resultant moral agony. She may 44 be placed as one of the major Indian women novelists and deserves a proper stature.

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