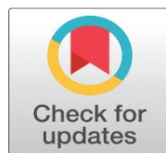
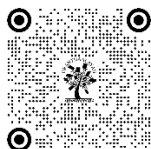


THE STRUGGLE TO FIND A VOICE: WOMEN'S STRUGGLE TO FIND THEIR IDENTITY IN THE NOVELS OF SHASHI DESHPANDE

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ABSTRACT

Shashi Deshpande is one of the most popular female writers in India. Her novels deal with women belonging to the Indian middle class. Her novels deal with the inner world of Indian women. Shashi Deshpande's novels present a social world of relationships. In her novels, we find women searching for themselves and the relationships that are essential to them. She received the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel *That Long Silence* in 1990 and received the Padma Award. Shri in 2009. Feminism is indeed a serious attempt to analyze, understand and clarify how and why femininity or female sensibility is different from masculinity or male experience. Feminism puts into perspective the points of difference that characterize the "female identity" or "femalpsyche" or "femininity" of women. It can be studied by considering the psychosomatic, social and cultural construction of femininity in relation to masculinity. » Male writers have mostly seen women as inferior and weak. The texts written by men reveal a certain form of misogyny and a certain discrimination between the sexes. Men are considered the "superior sex" or the "stronger sex" while women are considered the "inferior sex" or the "weaker sex". Men are seen as logical, rational and objective, while women are seen as emotional, unstable, intuitive, subjective and lacking in confidence. But the modern woman has raised her voice against the atrocities and injustices that the system has done to her. And it was her statement with an explicit tone that also created the difference in textuality. It was mainly after the women's liberation movement of the late 1960s that contemporary feminist ideology evolved and women's voices were listened to with special attention.

Keywords: Feminism, Feminist, Male Oppression.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Shashi Deshpande made a valiant effort to give voice to the frustrations and frustrations of women despite her vehement denial of being a feminist. A look at her novels will reveal her treatment of the main female characters and show how the themes in them relate to women's issues. Deshpande's female characters also signify the changing times with the change in their private lives. It has been clearly indicated that marital tension and the problem of women's adjustment in marriage is one of the salient features of Deshpande's novels. Mother and aunt burdened them with many obligations, which they disliked. They needed a private space, a space of their own. The constant deprivations of patriarchal society forced them to leave home and look for a world of their own. But surprisingly, the fathers of these women do not impose anything on them in the literal sense of the word. But it is the husbands who play the main role. Her private life has c

hanged a lot. Deshpande questions the adequacy of accepted social norms. she questions the conceptual construction of a woman and tries to deconstruct this image of the woman herself.

Motherhood is not a mandatory requirement for female characters in Deshpande. This is a revolutionary thought of the novel that aims to free its women from the "burden" of motherhood. It is often said that a woman cannot be a woman in the true sense of the word until she becomes a mother. But we never see Saru enjoying motherhood and Jaya does not think that motherhood is mandatory. Yet, surprisingly, they all have experienced the pain of labor. The evolution of the world reveals the evolution of the faces of women. They cannot limit their role to enjoying motherhood or taking care of household chores. The home and the outside world are equally important to them. Sometimes the outside world comes first. Deshpande's women are autonomous and iconoclastic beings. Trying to see things from a postcolonial perspective, Deshpande tries to focus on the autonomy of women, regardless of their class, caste and race. She does not only leave space for privileged women the working class; poor and disadvantaged women also figure in her novels. This is a perfectly justified judgment, otherwise Deshpande would have been classified as an elite writer. Therefore, her effort to bring all kinds of women from the margins to the center is very significant. Deshpande is a Third World writer, although her position is different. But it must be recognized that she may have had to face the dilemma of a woman writer.

The Dark Holds No Terrors, her second novel, narrates the traumatic experience that the protagonist Saru undergoes when her husband refuses to play a supporting role. Saru suffers great humiliation and neglect as a child and, after marriage, as a woman. Deshpande talks about blatant gender discrimination by parents towards their daughters and her desire to have a son. After her marriage, as she gains a higher social status than her husband Manohar, everything starts to fall apart. Her husband's sense of inferiority and the humiliation she feels due to society's reaction to Saru's superior position develop sadism in him. Her husband Mann takes out his frustration on Saru in the form of sexual sadism, vividly portrayed by Deshpande.

Commenting on the position of women in the male dominated Indian society, Shantha Krishnaswamy writes: "She is a creature who, as a child, is sold to a stranger for a bride price, or when she grows up, serves as a dowry for her husband's family, or who, as a widow, in a final act of disappearance, commits suicide on her husband's funeral pyre to be hailed as 'SatiSavitri'. immortal." Deshpande refers to myths, epics, puranas and other sacred books in which women, even innocent ones, were presented as the epitome of pativatra obedient to men and subservient to their desires. While Saru is a student, her husband, Manu, is hers. They were at ease at home despite various kinds of obstacles. But the trouble begins at this moment when Saru is recognized as a doctor. Her economic independence makes Manu feel very insecure and this casts a shadow over his life as a couple. Saru appears as a wellknown and successful doctor and almost every morning there are knocks on his door and visitors seeking medical attention. As a newcomer to the profession, he feels enthusiastic about the profession, but Manu's behavior begins to change. He feels totally ignored because Saru gets all the attention that Manu gives him now the impression that he barely responds to his needs. His job takes him away from Manu for long hours and he arrives later at night. His male ego feels inferior and his calm and cold husband becomes a treacherous night rapist and tries to assert his masculinity by sexually assaulting Saru. She despises the world of "love" and refuses to believe that such a thing can ever exist between a man and a woman. Saru changes his attitude towards Manu and even his married life. The world around him becomes insignificant and Manu's position and place also become relatively insignificant. He becomes so unhappy with this situation that he desperately decides to sacrifice his earnings. profession. For Saru, the idea of men going out to work and women staying at home to work, clean, tidy and sweep attracts him because he finds a kind of harmony in these tasks done by women who stay at home. Saru's suffering makes him think of writing to his friend Nalu's new students. He wants to explain to them the strict rules of tradition that: "A woman must always be a few steps away from her husband. If he has a master's degree, you must have a bachelor's degree." If you are 1.63 m tall, you must not be taller than 1.60 m. If he earns five hundred rupees, he should never earn more than four hundred and ninety-nine rupees. This is the only rule to follow if you want a happy marriage. No collaboration can be the same. It will always be unequal, but make sure that it is unequal in favor of man. If the scales tip in your favor, God will help you both: (The Dark Holds No Terror 137)"

This kind of pleasure that Saru discovers in the new routine of life makes him feel that he has a whole new life and now that Saru discovers himself as a changed person. The women of the neighborhood visit him to talk about their problems. Although Saru's social and financial status improves, he is not at ease at home. His feelings towards economically independent human beings are worse. In fact, his economic independence, although affirmed by feminists, brings him fulfil

lment. Another extramarital affair of Saru is with Padmakar, often called Padma. He was his medical school classmate with whom she met years later, but after several incidents, she pushes him away because she wants to end their relationship. Now I knew that it was not just the consequences that I feared and hated, but the thing itself. What had I imagined? Love? Romantic love? I knew full well that both were mere illusions, and that they had nothing to do with my life in any way. » Saru realizes that she is who she says she is and that she has been cruel to her people like her brother Dhruva, her mother and her husband Manu. I feel that she cannot get rid of the idea that she was cruel to them until her last breath: "You are your refuge, there is no other refuge." Saru understands that she must be self-sufficient because there is no other refuge elsewhere, and Saru must apply to herself what she has already told Dhruva. There is no need to run away from the darkness or curse the darkness. Shashi Deshpande's female characters rebel

against social taboos and age-old traditions. They fight for their freedom, their integrity and their identity. They fight against the existing system and traditions of society and express their feelings, anger, resentment against social taboos, but this does not bring them satisfaction. It reflects a good understanding of the ground reality and the situation of women in India. Its focus is on domestic issues rather than the political issues of modern life. It successfully portrays a complex vision of the compromised happiness and fading dreams of the life of middle-class women. In *A Matter of Time* revolves around the absence of the main character Gopal from his family. He is survived by his wife Sumi and three daughters. This is set against the backdrop of the sad story of Kalyani and Shripati in the "big house". This is the house that Sumire returns to with Aru Charu and Seema when Gopal leaves them. Gopal's absence from the family scene creates a unique tension for the various characters, each of whom tries to discover Gopal's reason. Then there is the marital relationship between Kalyan and Shripati. The lack of communication between them touches on the larger issues of patriarchy that affect the next generations.

She did not feel in sync with Sumi and was out of step with her. The breakup of Sumi's marriage put her in an unexpected situation. Gopal's absence leaves her in a state of great emptiness. She does not remain a passive mother but an active agent. In the maze of family history, what happens to Sumi and her daughters? nothing and everything. nothing because there is no solution to their problem. everything because Sumi and Shripati are killed in an accident. there "The Big House" looks at another generation entering history and one that squirms under the influence of an implacable fate. Sumi's daughter, Aruisa, rebels. She rebels against her father. She approaches Gopal without expecting sympathy for him or her mother. She wants to know about her father's strange behavior. She asks Gopal "why did you get married, why did you have children?" Her penetrating question makes Gopal reconsider his reasons for running away from his family. Aru is disappointed when he sees the tragedy of his grandmother and mother. Out of frustration, she declares that she will never marry, she has strong opinions about patriarchy and how women in general are victims of men's actions. She is critical of Gopal. She wants to make sure that Gopal doesn't do it. Aru meets a feminist, Sureka, a lawyer. However, the activist lawyer does not see this case as an ordinary matrimonial dispute. While this novel revolves around four generations of women, Manorama, who was dead but her presence is felt through her portrayal, the second generation is Kalyani, the third is Sumi and the fourth is Aru.

All these women are victims of the oppression of the male-dominated society. Kalyani was a victim of her mother Manorama, who never got over her husband's fear of remarriage; because she could never give birth to a child. She wanted a child but Kalyani was born and thus she became a victim of her mother's disdain. She married Manorama's brother Shripati to keep the property in the family. Deshpande paints a terrifying picture of Kalyan's grief. It is Kalyani; she sees him standing in front of the closed door, holding his hands outstretched, shouting something, finally falling on the door, his head leaning against the still closed door. All noise fades away, finally giving way to a silence that contains the beating of a heart. It is understood that, having lost her son, a male heir, she has abandoned motherhood and her right as a woman. Kalyani has bowed to her mother's wishes, but modern women like Sarita and Sumire rebel against the strict conventions of society. Shashi Deshpande brings to light the cause of women's education and liberation. Then the whole novel is about women who are mute, bleeding, unhappy but alive, clinging to their past but living in the present. Men do not play an active role in the story, but they are the main cause of all the suffering of Gopal and Shripati. Deshpande attempts to justify men by bringing a strong, loving and responsible figure. But they come and go like shadows, the real balance is established by Gopal and Shripati. Gopal's exit reminds us of Anita Desai, the protagonist of the story "Surface Texture", Nirode in "Voices in the City" and Billy Biswas by Arun Joshi.

CONCLUSION

Shashi Deshpande has very well brought out the internal struggle and suffering of Indian women who grow up raising various fundamental questions about modern women rooted and shaped by Indian customs but influenced by rational ideas of the West. Deshpande develops a feminist understanding of women's issues and the complexity of the purely Indian climate. Her feminism is rooted in Indian soil; reading Western feminists has only helped her to put her thoughts on feminism in order. The term "feminism" is applied here to Shashi Deshpande in its broadest sense to refer to her the writer's intense awareness of her identity as a woman, of her interest in women's issue and not in the sense that she defends women's rights in her literature.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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