

Effect Image of Modern Voice in the novels of Shashi Deshpande

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ABSTRACT

Image of modern voice of female has been explored by many Indian Women writers. Among them Shashi Deshpande, one of the distinguished contemporary woman writer of India, projects her protagonist as trapped b/w tradition and modern city—a situation which makes them undergo great mental trauma as they move in a zigzag journey of self awareness and their quest for identity before they are able to affirm themselves. A close study of her novels, reveal as to how well Shashi Deshpande has been able to voice their concerns and how well she has been able to project and portray the shifting paradigms of her characters feminine sensibility.

This paper is an attempt to protect as how Shashi Deshpande's female protagonist aspire for a voice of their own, a voice that had been laying suppressed for centuries.

INTRODUCTION

Shashi Deshpande is one of the eminent writers in Indian English literature who has at length the problem of every woman in this hypocritical society she has presented a kaleidoscopic view of the new Indian woman in her variegated situation where in she has to grapple not only with the social milieu in which she is placed but also the various psychological and moral conflicts. Image of modern women aspiring for their own voice can be seen in the following novels of Shashi Deshpande- That long Silence, The Dark Holds No Terror, Roots and Shadows, The Binding vine, A matter of Time etc.

Shashi Deshpande has portrayed the modern, educated, middle – class Indian women who want to attain their self – identity as well as restore their family ties. All her novels depict the female protagonists entangled in different complexities of marital life and relationships they pursue. There is persistent urge in them to solve the labyrinth of their lives in an effective manner. Shashi Deshpande has portrayed different kinds of women. Her early novels project decide, passive, submissive and weak women like Saru in the Dark holds No Terros, Sunitha, Cynthia Shantha and Meera in if I Die today.

Shashi Deshpande states about her women characters in an interview to Vanamala Vishwanatha:

“My characters take their own ways. I have heard people saying we should have strong women characters. But my writing has to do with women as they are. Most of the women I've known are likes that their decisions are made for them. Due to being over protected, they are people who think one way and do another (235)¹⁹

Shashi Deshpande highlights in her novels that modern women are more assertive and confident yet they are unable to liberate themselves from the limitations associated with each role assigned to them. Deshpande penetrates to the hearts of issues related with women and their–lives. Deshpande defines feminism as a constructive force which in the patriarchal social set-up should emancipated women from their subordinate position without establishing human relationships to submit to patriarchal oppression, but also suggest that women should realize their potential and assert their self identity. In her novels she has projected the modern, middle class Indian women who are struggling to overcome their subordinate position in the male–dominated society. Her women have an optimistic attitude towards life and hence solve the predicament of their lives with a hope for a better future. They do not negate the family life. Relining their identities as wives mothers and daughters they finally restore their individuality and assert their true selves.

Shashi Deshpande's novels are concerned with a woman's quest for self; an exploration into the female psyche and an understanding of the mysteries of life and the protagonist's place in it (2002, A2). Shashi Deshpande's novels are concerned with a woman's quest for self; an exploration into the female psyche and an understanding of the mysteries of the and the protagonist place in it. (2002 & 2002)

Roots and Shadows (1983):

Shashi Deshpande's first full length novel. Indu, the struggler, represents the educated, middle class women. The story of the novels is about the struggle of the protagonist who has a lot of obstructs to cross and achieve freedom. Being smothered in an oppressive male-ag and tradition bound society, she attempts to explore her inner self to assert her individuality. ".....Indu, a rebel, often wished to be free and unrestrained thus, she is presented as a model against women belonging to the older generation."

Indu comes back to her parental home after a gap of eleven years, to attend her cousin mini's marriage being performed in the traditional manner in their ancestral home. She had left home at the age of eighteen to marry the man she loved. She represents new generation and reviews everything with reason and new visions. In this article "Image of women in Shashi Deshpande Novel Roots and Shadows; A critical study,"

Ramesh Kumar Gupta apply remarks:

"She explains the ideal of detachment and liberation and tries to achieve them. She tries only to listen to the voice of her conscience and revolts. But unfortunately, she fails, culture and tradition, or fear of sigma, or timidity, or all these combined together (2002; & 03). Roots and Shadows depict agony and suffocation experiences by protagonist Indu in a male-dominated and traditional-bound society."

That Long Silence (1988)

Presents the suffocated life story of Jaya who plays the role of a wife and mother, despite her every sacrifice, she finds herself lonely and estranged. The protagonist realizes that she has been unjust to herself and her career as a writer. The quiet for an authentic selfhood by the protagonist finds an artistic expression through her rebellion against the patriarchal dominance in the society. Jaya is an unsuccessful writer. Her creative urge and artistic zeal free her broom her cramped domestic and societal roles. She resolves to assert her individuality by breaking that long silence by rewarding on paper which she had suppressed for seventeen years.

Deshpande uses this story to paint vividly how the life of a woman like Jaya is. She says that their life's basis can be summarized as, "Stay at home looks after your babies, keep out of the rest of the world, you're safe." For outside appearances hers was a happy family, her husband was in top position, they had two children- one boy and one girl- and she was yet another wife and mother whose life centered around her family and her home nothing more. (1516)

Jaya has the feeling to be independent, but she lacks the courage to revolt against her husband, when her husband caught in the trouble due to the charge of Corruption, he wants Jaya Companionship in hiding which she refuses. Finally she understands that to assert her identify saying, "But it no longer Possible for me. It I have to play "hole in the heart" I will have to speak, to listen, I will have to erase the silence b/w us."

Thus Jaya comes forward and 'crave out a new identify' for herself. Her traditional role of a wife, in her conflict b/w tradition and modernity and her disasters that rain her married life with Mohan and her silent suffering in the long seventeen years of married life is beautifully portrayed by the novelists.

The Dark Holds No Terror (1980)

In the "The Dark Holds No" the story on the rocks, Saru in the daytime works as a successful doctor and at night is a 'terrified trapped animal' in the hands of her husband Manu an English teacher in a third-rate college. We see the character of Saru representing the middle class working women in modern India. She rebels against the traditions but ultimately tries to compromise with the existing reality at the time. The framework of the novel provides good acoustics for a women's voice and establishes that a woman too has choices in life. Shashi Deshpande does not glorify a woman's sufferings, but she enlists a sufficient amount of sympathy for her protagonist. The novel does not limit itself to the narrow confines of feminist problems. With a woman as the central figure. Shashi Deshpande probes the universally relevant issues of human relationships, Man's tragic aloneness and soon.

It is realization that helps Saru understand the mother's last word: "that's what all of us have to face at the end. That we are alone, we have to be alone."

The story of Saru clearly depicts a duality deeply entrenched in the psyche of Indian Society which sways societal definitions and expectations of women's public and private roles. Consequently, women are expected to be both

traditional and modern in domestic and public jurisdictions. The pathetic state of an Indian middle-class working woman is revealed.

A Matter of Time(1996)

Shashi Deshpande for the first time enters into the metaphysical world of philosophy. Basically, the novel tells about the voice of three women from three generations of the same family and tells how they cope with the tragedies in their lives. In this novel Deshpande has revealed to our gaze the fears, frustrations and compulsions of three women from three generations of the same family. Manorama, Sumi or Kadyani. In the novel of Shashi Deshpande men are considered as logical, rational and objective, and women are perceived as emotional, inconsistent, intuitive, subjective and leaking self-confident.

But the modern women has raised her voice against the atrocity and injustice done to her by the system. And it is their pronouncement in an over tone that has created the difference also in textuality. It was mainly after the women's Liberation movement of the late 1960s that the Contemporary feminist ideology evolved and the female voice was heard with special concern.

The Binding Vine (1993)

Shashi Deshpande's The Binding Vine is very much similar to her earlier novels, as it sketches her middle-class female protagonist predicament in a male-dominated world, where she has very little scope to give voice to her concerns. The protagonist Urmi plays a role of anchor, it is she who is used by the novelist very clearly to expose the suffering of women from different sections of our society.

The Binding vine deals with the multifacetedness of its central character Urmi. Urmi is an intelligent, educated middle class wife, who is employed as a lecturer in a college. She is not dependent upon men for survival and asserts both her economic as well as psychological independence. She is the voice of resistance in the novel that registers a protest against the patriarchal attitude to the issue of rape.

CONCLUSION

Novels of Shashi Deshpande also have female protagonist who try to find out their own selves and they ultimately reach a resolution in their lives the paper describes the modern voice of women. An indepth study of Shashi Deshpande's Novels, present a realistic portrayal of contemporary middle class women. With a focus on women's issues, her novels give a comprehensive perspective on modern Indian women. Deshpande's Novels reveals that she is a highly sensitive writer who is fully aware of the male-female imbalances in the society. Her Novels are concerned with a woman's quest for self. Every human being is equal at birth and should have the right to survive on his/her own terms. Whether or not the changing times and the world scenario are acceptable to us, women are definitely talking front ranking positions in every sphere of life.

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