

Quest for Self- Identity in Shashi Deshpande's Heroines

Dr. Sowmiya L M¹, Dr. Amutha Monica J², Mr. Senthil Kumar S³

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai.¹

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai.²

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai.³

E mail id:

sowmiya.english@sathyabama.ac.in¹, monica.english@sathyabama.ac.in², senthilkumars.english@sathyabama.ac.in³

Abstract:

Shashi Deshpande is noted for inventing contemporary female characters. Deshpande's female heroines, first as daughters and then as brides, are victims of widespread gender prejudice. The goal of this research is to see if Shashi Deshpande's female characters are truly powerful or if they are merely wearing a peaceful mask. Women, according to Shashi Deshpande, have a lot of power. It is something that all humans do. Women, in fact, have reserves that we are often unaware of. Women are more capable of coping with emotional traumas than men. This is because, unlike men, women have never had to suppress their emotional identities, and as a result, they are more open about these issues, both in terms of articulating and understanding them. Shashi Deshpande has dealt with the difficulties of middle-class educated women in great detail and delicacy. With each successive release, Shashi Deshpande's voice becomes more unique.

KeyWords: Style and Technique, Women Characters, male-centred Indian society

Introduction:

Shashi Deshpande is a very recent author in Indian writing in English. Her contribution to the world of fiction dates back to the 70's. Initially, she wanted to bring forth in her novels the transformed society, but she was so much fascinated by her women characters that she laid more emphasis on women. She herself says that she knows how the women feel and she knows the mood of India. Within the Indian socio-cultural value system and institutions, Shashi Deshpande describes independence for the Indian woman in her works. She has resisted the urge to create powerful, romanticised female protagonists, instead portraying the Indian woman as confronted with the very real choice between modernization and

tradition. Deshpande bares the subtle processes of oppression and gender differentiation operative within the institution of the family and the male-centered Indian society at large. Deshpande's feminism does not uproot the woman from her background but tries to expose the different ideological elements that shape her. Religious and cultural components (such as myths, stories, rituals, and rites) as well as social and psychological issues (such as a woman's subservient status in the family and her sexuality restrictions) are among them. The protagonists in Shashi Deshpande's works are modern, educated, and self-reliant women in their thirties and forties. A common motif throughout their marriage is their yearning for freedom and self-identity. Deshpande portrays the anxiety of an educated, independent, middle-class Indian woman attempting to strike a balance between her conventional duty as daughter, wife, and mother in a patriarchal culture and her newfound sense of self and desire for freedom and privacy.

Works:

Shashi Deshpande has published seven novels – *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), *If I Die Today* (1982), *Come Up and Be Dead* (1983), *Roots and Shadows* (1983), *That Long Silence* (1988), *The Binding Wine* (1992), and *A Matter of Time* (1996). Besides her novels, Deshpande has also published short stories, many children's books in English and written a screenplay for the Hindi feature film *Drishti*. She began writing rather late in her life at the insistence of her father. Inspired by a visit to England, she wrote and published an account of her English experiences as early in 1969. Since then, her short stories have been appearing regularly in popular magazines. Though not original, *A Sum – Adventure*, *The Only Witness*, and *The Hidden Treasure* – all are on the lines of Enid Blyton, who has defined the parameters of children's fiction in the West. Her fourth novel for children, *The Narayanpur Incident*, is based on the Quit India Movement and the role of children in it.

Deshpande's first collection of short stories, published in 1978, was called *The Legacy and Other Stories*. Her collection of short stories are *It Was Dark*, *The Miracle*, *It Was the Nightingale*, and *The Intrusion and Other Stories*. Some of these stories were later developed into novels. Her stories encompass a wide range of situations that are an intrinsic part of an Indian woman's existence.

Shashi Deshpande's writings:

What truly distinguishes Shashi Deshpande's writings is their worldwide appeal, which stems from her deep roots in common India. She has resolutely refused to make concessions in

order to appeal to the global market, never exoticizing India, never 'presenting' it (as she puts it), and certainly not playing to the gallery. She is frequently compared to regional language writers, who are deeply rooted in our social realities and grapple with our problems. One may agree with R.K. Dhawan that her straightforward, lucid style is startlingly true and refreshing in this era of verbal acrobatics and gorgeous packaging. Nothing is left unsaid, and there isn't a single unnecessary word in sight. Her writing's aesthetics are informed by the depth of her substance, which articulates her thoughts and ideas and turns reading into a shared experience. As if she were speaking to them alone, readers experience an intimacy, a kind of secret connecting with her. Every work by Shashi Deshpande is unique and provides food for thought about human relationships and emotions. Deshpande is a superb writer when it comes to expressing human emotions, worries, and feelings, particularly those experienced by women. Reading her books is like peering into one's own mind's dark recesses. When one recognises oneself in her characters, one no longer feels alone in the world. Since a result, reading her novels and stories is a really pleasant experience, as reading becomes a therapeutic activity. According to Shashi Deshpande, all of her novels begin with a catastrophe. The majority of them continue without inquiry until they are jolted out of their stupor by something awful or disastrous. All of a sudden, everything you've taken for granted becomes suspect, and everything falls apart. Then you start to doubt everything. And it is through this questioning, this thinking, that you move forward, that you reclaim your life.

But you're in no way the equal after this. This is genuine of all human beings, now no longer simply women. Her protagonists being women, one of the matters they query is the reality in their being females, what it has executed to them. But they're additionally probing the human condition, the human predicament. In this questioning process, people do find out their very own potential.

Women Characters in Her Works

Trapped in a patriarchal society, the main characters of Deshpande learn to reduce their value. They are willing to compromise or ignore personal costs and personal integrity and willingly do whatever it takes to keep the marriage intact. The protagonists of Deshpande, who were writers like Jaya, Indu, and Monkey, hesitate to tackle controversial issues, even if those issues are close to their hearts. Deshpande follows the process of transforming these women from brave and genuine open-minded youth to those who prefer to avoid pain and conflict at all costs and follow a less resistant path. She is learning to get married, even bright

and ambitious Jaya, and she has no other career. The tragedy is that having played their roles to perfection, these women find their lives hollow, meaningless and unfulfilled, realising only after many years that their definitions of success (as imbibed from their society) did not coincide with their personal definitions of happiness. The resultant emotion is that of having been cheated, "Love is a big fraud, a hoax, that's what it is. They tell you it is the greatest thing, the only thing in life. And you believe them and fall into the trap...."(Roots and Shadows)

To digress a little, Deshpande does include the hint of another possible trap her protagonists could have stumbled into. Deshpande's subplots frequently introduce another man on the scene, a man taking a more than platonic interest in the protagonists. In the absence of Kishore, Bhaskar courts Urmi; Boozie, a senior doctor, teaches and aids Saru in her medical career; Naren seduces Indu; Kamal encourages Jaya's writings and teaches her self-respect; but the protagonists realise that swapping their emotional alliances would not solve their problems. The chassis Deshpande novel deals with the quest for female identity. The complexity of interpersonal relationships between men and women, especially in the context of marriage, is a problematic adolescent trauma. Indian women have been a quiet illness for years. She has played various roles as her wife, mother, daughter and daughter, but she has not been able to express her own personality. In her novel, *Darkness Has No Terror*, Manohar's male ego tries to rule Sarita, and eventually Sarita is actually an individual, not an addict, and can face the challenges of life. It leads to the collapse. Her identity is no longer related to the identity of the male partner. In *Roots and Shadow*, Indu accepts that she suppressed her desires, not because of Jayant's pressure, but because of her personal choice in stating her identity. Akka must also endure, hurt, and humiliate with stoic patience and make public, never complain. In her long silence, Jaya was actually renamed Suhasini after her marriage did not properly provide a loss of identity. In *The Binding Vine*, Urmila understands that since her childhood, Mira hates the way her mother surrenders to her husband and doesn't really recognize her identity.

Shashi Deshpande believes that women have great power. Everyone does. In fact, women have reserves that we are often unaware of. But for women, the situation is complicated by the fact that she is said to be weak and makes her believe in her weaknesses. And because the power of women seems to weaken men, they often learn to hide their power. Men are nominal heads, but she says females are the main force of the family. Women can cope well with trauma. This is because, unlike men, females did not have to suppress their emotional

self. Women deal with these difficulties more openly by explaining and analysing them. Shashi Deshpande has handled the issues of educated middle-class women with great attention and delicacy. She always had in mind to write about real people from real India, but as she continued, the woman spontaneously and involuntarily became the focus of her writing. In an interview with Vanamala Vishwanatha, Shashi Deshpande clarified: For example, when I saw a couple, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* came to my mind. She is a unique Indian and the use of Marathi very clearly shows the customs and traditions of the people of Maharashtra and Karnataka. For example, words such as Kaka, Oyster, Atia, and Dada are Marathi in nature and may be a little confusing to non-linguistic readers. Chassis Deshpande places greater emphasis on literary qualities in her creative work. Your language is transparent. It doesn't get attention or get in the way.

She is basically Indian and is writing for Indians. She says you don't belong anywhere when you try to make it easy for everyone. So, without giving the Western reader a luster, leave it to the characters in the novel ... literature can be viewed without understanding all its words. Still, you can get to the heart of it. Without delving into the novelist's beliefs about what serves as an ideal panacea for a variety of tasks, this study examines the problems her character faced in certain situations. The two detective series, developed and published as novels by Chassis Deshpande, are not included in the study because the nature of the subject seems to conflict with the subject selected for this work. The story of Chassis Deshpande is about a woman: her struggle and hardship, tension and irritation, pain and anguish. Their story suggests that compromise characterizes the life of a typical middle-class woman in India. Unable to defy social customs and traditional morals, middle-class women themselves have desire and despair, fear and hope, love and hate, withdrawal and alienation, oppression and oppression, marital discord, and men's. I am suffering from plight. In fact, Shashi Deshpande's main theme interest is in the context of modern Indian society, the struggle of wives, mothers and, most importantly, women to find and maintain their human identity. And accordingly, in her novel, the operational sensibilities are clearly feminine and contemporary.

Shashi Deshpande feels embarrassed to be called a woman writer and she is not very enthusiastic about the label feminist. She considers herself as a feminist in personal life but not a feminist writer.

“I write as a writer but am identified as a woman writer. I am nothing more than a novelist and a short-story writer but people seek more glorified titles to elevate you to stardom.” “If

critics and reviewers insist on calling me a woman writer, then ‘man’ should be prefixed to male writers as well” “Women writers are expected to write for women’s magazines and be read by women readers only. Males generally do not want to read women writers.”

Such remarks were abundant, perhaps embodying her femininity. This makes a lot of sense, especially for the celebration of International Women's Day. Shashi Deshpande very easily uncovered a myth that overwhelmed Indian intellectuals. Language and writing thorns, widening gaps between non-resident Indian writers writing in English and writers writing in English in India, the importance of readers and writers' obligations to self-censorship, globalization of literature, and femininity. The impact on the marginalization of a woman continues to do so with her rich repertoire of problems that has always plagued her. She lamented the gap between writers as a group based on caste, gender, and language, which prevented writers from playing a meaningful role in society and could not accept and write public issues. But the bohemian Shashi Deshpande only makes her voice stand out with each new release. Writing from the edge can also evoke emotions if you are lucky. It is at the heart of her novel, as long as she may deny the influence of feminism on her novel.

Conclusion

Longing and despair, fear and hope, love and hate, retreat and estrangement, oppression and oppression, marital instability, and male misery all affect Shashi Deshpande's protagonist. Deshpande depicts her heroes' struggles without offering clear solutions. She lets the many options, whether to comply or break free, speak for themselves. Sometimes she seems to be faintly echoing the sentiments of de Beauvoir, who she admits, has influenced her, and according to whom it is women who “have to define, measure, and explore their special domain”(609). Deshpande believes that women have so deeply internalized the dominant mores that sometimes, despite being better endowed than most other Indian women, her protagonists cannot visualize an independent identity for themselves and so they become submissive. Perhaps, through their portrayals, Deshpande is also trying to explode the myth of the “educated Indian woman” who, it is popularly assumed, is automatically liberated. Their education should have given them the freedom and the courage to do what they believe in. It should have given them the determination to assert themselves as individuals, to set limits with their partners. However, they had failed to utilize their education or benefit from its advantages because of a latent, patriarchal mind-set, ingrained in their childhood via socialization. Thus, Deshpande seems to be saying that it is the women themselves who have

to exert and come out of the mire of patriarchal oppression, to emerge as individuals and as human beings in their own right. More than any one else, the educated Indian woman must do it so that she can light the path for her daughters, that seems to be Deshpande's vision of the future.

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