



DISCUSSING ABOUT THE THEME AND CONCEPT OF IDENTITY IN SHASHI DESHPANDE

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ABSTRACT

Shashi Deshpande is a renowned Indian novelist who has received accolades for her nuanced depictions of strong female characters. She often writes on women's experiences, elaborating on the difficulties, complexity, and ingrained social standards that they must overcome. Researching the challenges these women experience is crucial because it may illuminate fundamental elements of gender, identity, and social dynamics. The purpose of this research is to examine the complex lives of Shashi Deshpande's female protagonists in order to better appreciate their hardships and the value of their literary portrayal. The female characters in Shashi Deshpande's writings deal with a broad variety of issues relating to their gender. The goals of this research are to better understand the obstacles women face in patriarchal society, such as stereotypes and discrimination based on their gender. The continuation of gender inequities and their effects on women's lives may be better understood if we examine these concerns in depth. Deshpande's female characters often go on quests of discovery, where they examine their place in the world and their place in the family. The purpose of this research is to shed light on the complexity of identity development by tracing their journeys of self-discovery, liberty, and empowerment.

Keywords: - English, Literature, Empowerment, Women, Indian.

I. INTRODUCTION

FEMINISM IN INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE

When feminism is taken into consideration, Indian women authors have made a substantial contribution to Indian writing in English literature. They have contributed a new viewpoint to Indian literature. With feminism serving as the primary focus of their works, female authors KamlaMarkandaya, ShashiDeshpande, ManjuKapur, and Anita Desai have assumed a prominent

position in the world of Indian English literature. For instance, in several of her works, including *Voices in the City*, Anita Desai focused on the challenges of a man and woman's relationship. She has tried to convey the psychological composition of the characters. Women authors hope to increase awareness among women by writing about topics that affect women.

The woman is no longer shown as Seeta, Savitri, Draupadi, or Damayanti at this time. She no longer plays the traditional character of a compromising and devoted person. The reality view of women is rapidly displacing the ideal one. She is now irritated and distant. In the modern world, women stand shoulder to side with men everywhere. Today's lady holds a comparable rank rather than the inferior one. A guy who is concerned about his status has resorted to ordering the massacre of women in order to oppress and crush them as a response to this. Nowadays, we read about rape, female infanticide, and wife-burning for dowry on a regular basis in newspapers and other media. Women must thus be safeguarded by society. Justice must also be served for women in general and for those who have suffered crimes in particular. Women used to be revered as goddesses in Indian culture and society. Yet regrettably, the current society is drifting away from its foundations, and everyone in it is degrading themselves solely as a result of masculine ego.

It has thus generated a lot of inquiries. The first query is: Why and how are women developing an aggressive intuition? Why is Janani, the guardian mother, unable to protect herself from her own reality? Without a doubt, the Indian government is promoting equal rights for women by drafting and passing legislation. The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women was adopted by the government in 2001. In 2010, they also approved the bill for a 33% reservation for women. These are actually the important actions that the Indian government has made. Despite this, there are still certain unlit nooks where women of all classes, creeds, and religions are unable to exercise their rights. Women must thus alter themselves. A woman should possess the confidence to forge her own identity. They must also possess the courage to confront every crime head-on. They need to form groups and rally around all victims of violence.

Due to patriarchal presumptions, Indian women writers' writing has traditionally been accorded less prominence. The idea has long been held that the masculine experience is superior than the female experience. It may be as a result of the fact that the majority of these female authors have neglected to respect their familial responsibilities. Without a doubt, the goals and opinions of Indian women do not go against the country's cultural and moral obligations. In contrast to their native counterparts, Indian women writers who write in English, however, are quarry of a different preconception. The authors from the wealthy, educated, and clever classes are fluent in English. Their paintings thus frequently reflect elite socioeconomic strata. The reality of Indian existence is not captured in their literature.

II. BACKGROUND OF SHASHI DESHPANDE

Shashi Deshpande, the daughter of an eminent Kannada dramatist and Sanskrit scholar AdyaRangacharSriranga, is a widely acclaimed novelist who has ten novels and five volumes of short stories to her credit. Her father is called “the Bernard Shaw of the Kannada Theatre.” Like her father, she has also won various awards such as “ThirumathiRangammal Prize” and prestigious “SahityaAkademi Award” (National Academy of Letters) in 1990 for her novels. She also won the “Padma Shri” award in 2009 for her valuable contribution as a writer. She also wrote the screenplay for the Hindi film “Drishti.” She is a postgraduate in English from Mysore University. After her marriage in 1962, she went to England with her husband. After her return, she started writing short stories which have records of her personal life. Earlier her short stories were published in bestselling Indian Magazines such as “Femina,” “Eve’s Weekly,” “The Illustrated Weekly of India,” “Deccan Herald” and “J.S. Mirror.” Later on, after getting popularity her short stories were collected in five volumes. These are: “The Legacy and Other Stories” (1978), “It Was Dark and Other Stories” (1986), “It Was the Nightingale and Other Stories” (1986), “The Miracle and Other Stories” (1986) and “The Intrusion and Other Stories” (1993).

Indian author Shashi Deshpande was born in 1938 in the Indian state of Karnataka's Dharwad. Along with numerous insightful essays that are now collected in a book titled Writing from the Margin and Other Essays, Shashi Deshpande is the author of four children's books, a number of short stories, 10 novels, and other works. She published The Dark Holds No Terrors in 1980, If I Die Today in 1982, Come Up and Be Dead in 1983, Roots and Shadows in 1983, That Long Silence in 1989, Small Remedies in 2000, A Matter of Time in 2001, The Binding Vine in 2002, Moving On in 2004 and In the Country of Deceit in 2004.



Shashi says that three elements were responsible for her development as an English writer.

III. THEMES IN SHASHI DESHPANDE`S NOVELS

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Deshpande's woman believes that her work is natural, but education and preparation, along with a loving marriage, occurs when it is least expected, putting her in the difficult situation of starting a lifetime relationship only to have it end when children are born. The main social organisations that comprise a woman's existence in India are the mindset for motherhood, wifehood, and marriage. According to Swami Vivekananda in "Women of India," the ideal femininity in India is maternity, that magnificent, unselfish, all-suffering, continuously compassionate mother. The spouse follows the shadow on foot.

“ I. The Swami continues his message to the American women: “In the west, the lady is a wife.” The point of each lady is to become a mother of children to get respect from the family and from the general public also. “The mother in the Indian convention is the supplier of gifts, the provider and defender of life. She is an innovative and defensive goddess, to be regarded and revered. “The goal of womanhood for a lady is to be a mother of a child.”

Deshpande's commitment to the women's tenacity is evident throughout her writing. She claims to belong to a group. According to SumanBala, "Instructing Indian women to integrate into man-centered society and customs from one perspective and self-articulation, individuality, and autonomy from the other, Shashi Deshpande's writings depict the anguish, suffering, and conflict of the advanced. Shashi Deshpande emphasizes how women are devalued and forced into an optional role in patriarchal cultures. The main theme of her writings is "human interactions," with the female protagonist defending herself as a person as well as a woman, wife, or mother. The continual quest for oneself and the affirmation of it as a free, integrated identity within the circle that may be referred to as one's own have been recurring themes. Deshpandecriticises the man-centric desire on a philosophical level rather than simply a few minor complaints. Her writings reveal the male-dominated, man-centered traditions and the continuation of the contemporary Indian woman as one of them. From this vantage point, she describes the societal realities that women must contend with. In order to show the world of mothers, daughters, and spouses, she presents dads, children, and husbands in a convoluted manner, along with the relationship between people and women. Her "center's objective is to examine a common example of human relationships that correspond to the rigorous traditions of sexual orientation vocations," according to her website. In her work, Deshpande discusses opportunities for Indian women within the framework and development of socio-social esteem. She claimed that the Indian lady was forced to choose between tradition and development.

IV. CONCEPT OF IDENTITY IN DESHPANDE’S WORKS

A person's identity has a significant and defining role in determining how they live in society and in realising their power and status. Without becoming a helpless, dependent being that is frequently seen as a burden by others, identity permits a person to keep a firm grip on themselves. Also, maintaining one's identity is essential to maintaining one's autonomy. Without a distinct identity, a person cannot gain respect for themselves or even muster the bravery to

voice their own thoughts. Positivity, self-esteem, clarity of thinking, a strong attitude, and a determined state of mind are all strengthened by having a clear sense of identity. Women regularly fulfil the triple responsibilities of obedient daughter, devout wife, and selfless mother in our traditional patriarchal Indian culture. These socially prescribed roles are intertwined with a woman's identity. They seldom ever take the time to see themselves as unique people with their own independence, and they are frequently raised in a way that makes them reliant on males. Yet, when the situation changed, women were aware of the need to carve out their own space and identity, apart from the socially prescribed roles of mother, daughter, and wife. In a brilliant way, Shashi Deshpande's fiction examines a woman's search for identity in order to establish herself, to realise her human potential, and to endure as a self-respecting person rather than a victim or a submissive. Chandramani notes:

Deshpande's novels are rife with feminine identity quests. Her books are typically told by female characters who are on a journey to discover who they are. Through *That Long Silence*, Deshpande was successful in her portrayal of real-life experiences. Through *Jaya*, who has a beginning to end hunger for the search of the self and identity, she authentically illustrates the internal battle.

V. CONCLUSION

The protagonists of Shashi Deshpande's books are modern middle-class women portrayed in a sympathetic light. The humanistic viewpoint is one that places a premium on compassion and the positive aspects of human nature. In this view, human rights and equality are prioritized. She has compassion for those who have been oppressed, whether they are men or women. That she cares so much about the plight of Indian women is also evident. Her works provide a thorough feminist viewpoint on a contemporary Indian lady, with an emphasis on women's concerns. She made it her mission to elevate women in society, and her varied life experiences as a woman are evidence of her care for them. She shows great sensitivity as a writer by depicting the complicated self-abnegation and service of her protagonist. That doesn't make her a radical feminist, however. She thinks a lot about what it means to be a woman today. She works hard to establish contemporary woman as an autonomous being, free to reject traditional roles and reimagine herself in light of shifting societal mores.

Shashi Deshpande is an author who takes a stand for what he believes in, no matter how difficult or precarious that may be. She focuses on the common predicament of educated, working-class women who struggle and isolate themselves from family in order to pursue their own lifestyle, a trend that is now popular in Urban India. The ladies in Deshpande's work are emblematic of a changing era in Indian culture and society, and they bear a bigger burden than their forebears did. Her main characters shun traditions she sees as archaic. Women have numerous opportunities available to them and have shown themselves to be superior to men in many sectors.

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