

FEMINIST GIMMICK IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF SHASHI DESHPANDE

Evangeline Priscilla.B* and G. Christopher**

Abstract: Shashi Deshpande happens to be one among these writers who has taken up this issue of woman emancipation. She is undoubtedly the most significant of the contemporary Indian women novelists who has portrayed her women in their trials and tribulations under the impact of tradition and modernity. A number of women writers began to deal with the theme of impression and oppression of the women. Shashi Deshpande is one of the significant novelists in Indian literature. She is broadly celebrated as one of the proficient stylists and creative writers of her generation. Hence we need to go for a close study of Shashi Deshpande's novels as a true reflection of feminism which offers a fresh perspective for critical analysis linking literature with real life situations.

Keywords: Serene, temperate, stoic, chronicled, commemorated, verifiable, isolation, racial and sexual obsession.

Shashi's novels evince that the woman's western education awakens in her a desire for freedom and individuality which is resisted in a traditional society and this leaves her alienated and discontented. The marital relationship, too has its share of overt and covert manifestations of oppression. Both men and women are socialized into accepting the male's superiority. Strange as it may seem the day-to-day strife on the domestic front is the most intangible part of the Indian woman's existence and contributes in good measure to her suffering. The predicament of Deshpande's protagonists is peculiarly Indian as experienced and endorsed by many a western – educated Indian reader. Therefore, factors like the milieu in which the Indian woman exists, her socialization, her roles as daughter, wife and mother, the myths that guide and motivate her since childhood and the impression of Western education on her have been examined with the help of social science research on the subject.

It has been placed within the Indian Socio-cultural context and a study made of the manner in which Deshpande suggests a balance between the traditional respect for the family as an institution and the Western idea of self – identity and expression, as a working philosophy for the Indian woman. In doing so, Deshpande belongs not only among the Indian English novelists but also among the regional writers such as Ashapura Devi, Balamani Amma and Ismat Chughtai who have similarly created the details of a woman's world with loving care and depicted the nuances of her consciousness with the empathy of insiders while advocating her liberation.

A reading of Shashi's novels reveals a deep understanding of the female psyche particularly that of the educated, urban, middle – class woman. Deshpande

* M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Asst. Prof in English, VIT University, Vellore

** *Corresponding author*, Asst. Prof, Department of English, VIT University, Vellore

is undoubtedly an outstanding Indian novelist with four volumes of short stories, four children's books and six novels to her credit. Deshpande has gained reputation as a serious writer with tremendous potential. Most of Deshpande's protagonists are women who are educated and exposed to western ideas. The emotional upheavals in the minds of these women and their reactions to various issues related to women, caught between traditional and modernity, are susceptible to treatment from a feminist angle.

Tradition and culture unravels of the protagonist, Indu's attempt to assert herself in the novel, *Roots and Shadows*. It records suffocation experienced by the protagonist Indu in a society governed by the age-old ethnicity and civilization. It also unmasks the protagonist of her costume of a liberated woman and exposes the hypocrisy of ostensibly progressive – minded men like Jayant, Indu's husband. There is striking variety in Deshpande's approaches each one having its own techniques of illumination. They are exposed with chiselled perfection which offers a reward reading. The woman of today stands poised in the threshold of social change in an unenviable position. She is intensely aware of the injustice heaped on her and unlike her counterpart of generation ago she does not believe that woman in an inferior being that must remain passive and submissive. This awakening of the woman's consciousness as delineated by Shashi Deshpande in her novels. It deserves a close study of Tradition and Modernity to assess the extent of articulation of a woman's point of view.

It stresses the male ego which refuses to accept an inferior in marriage in the novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, through the life of the protagonist Saru, Deshpande highlights the pain and sufferings of a woman who is made the victim of her husband's frustrations because economically and socially she has achieved a superior status. It also attempts to discuss the gender discrimination practised by parents towards their children. The uncertainty and apprehension concerns itself with the protagonist Jaya's passage through a confusion of indecision and anxiety towards the assertion of herself in the novel *That Long Silence*. It reveals the trauma of an ostensibly contented housewife who is smothered under the weight of male – dominance.

Deshpande discusses in her fourth novel *The Binding Vine* In which the author makes an attempt to venture into an area – the issue of marital rape – which, perhaps, has not been dealt with by any other Indian writer in English. It focuses attention on the victims of man's lust and woman's helplessness. In her fifth novel *A Matter of Time*, clearly states "Self- confession" which is different in theme and presentation from her earlier novels. In this novel, the author makes a successful attempt to present the story from the point of view of her male characters (protagonists), thereby fulfilling her self – confessed desire to write human beings and not of men or women.

The preceding titles highlighting the feminist perspective in the novels of Deshpande. Operating within the framework of a male-dominated and tradition

bound society, Deshpande's heroines are highly conscious of their predicament as victims of inequality. It is shown that Deshpande's depiction of her protagonists is realistic to the core in as much as she does not succumb of the temptation of creating exceptionally strong women characters who revolt against conventional morality. The issues and problems of contemporary middle class women have always been the sub matter of Shashi Deshpande's writings. This paper definitely seeks to study the feminist gimmick in Deshpande's novel, a specific approach has been adopted to unravel Deshpande's pragmatic resolution related to the Modern Indian woman's beleaguered existence.

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