

Various Dimensions of Women in the Novels of Sashi Deshpande

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ABSTRACT:

Women in India have played various characters in their lives. An Indian woman is subjected to lot of faces throughout her life. Since her birth to her death she undergoes a dramatic change in all phases of her life. This article cumulates all the dimensions of a woman in the novels of Sashi Deshpande. An effort is made to gather and reproduce the women characters in the novels of Sashi. As everyone know that Sashi Deshpande is a voracious writer pertaining to the feministic character. So this attempt is made to put forth the same in this article. The traditional character and the modern face of a woman is also compared in her novels and highlighted in this article.

INTRODUCTION:

Sashi Deshpande is one of the famous feminist writers of India. She in her novels has given a greater prominence to the Indian women characters. The series of changes in the Indian women from the past to the present is presented in almost all novels of Sashi Deshpande .To name a few of her writings ‘Roots and Shadows’, ‘Dark Holds no Terrors’, ‘That Long Silence’, ‘Binding Vine’, ‘Moving on’, ‘A Matter of Time’ etc highlight the feministic character verymuch. She won the Sahitya Academy Award for her famous novel “That Long Silence”. She is an eminent writer, possessing deep insight into the female psyche. The concept in all the novels written by her focuses mainly on an ideal woman subjected to the suppression, slavery and victimization by the domination and monarchy of men in the patriarchal society.

Sashi Deshpande is a famous Indian novelist in English, who specially portraits the inner feelings of ideal Indian women. In this present article an attempt is sincerely made to glance the above insights of the woman society pertaining to some of the famous novels of Sashi Deshpande.

INDUS’ AGONY IN ROOTS AND SHADOWS [1]:

The debut of Sashi Deshpande in writing the novels starts with ‘Roots and Shadows’. In this novel she depicts the agony of a character by name Indu who is a pious, orthodox Brahmin girl, who returns to her ancestral place after 11 years to attend the funeral ceremony of her sister and then she finds a way to live independently. The novelist concentrates on Indus’ inner voice. The novel is affirmative of the individuality of Indu. Though it is the first novel never the less it goes beyond the limits of feminists and touches the very predicament of human existence. This is a beautiful presentation of the inner psyche of a typical modern middle class woman in India.

SARITA IN 'DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS' [2]:

This is a tale of Saritha referred as Saru who is an educated economically independent middle class wife who is made conscious of her gender as a child and whose relationship with her parents and husband let to an agonizing search for identity. The unending search for love from her parents remained as it is and the strained relationship with her husband becomes unbearable. Here Saru is a journey from self-alienation to self-identification from negation to assertion from diffidence to confidence. Saru epitomizes the struggle of the modern Indian working woman and her struggle for the liberation of the self.

JAYAS' PORTRAYAL IN 'THAT LONG SILENCE' [3]:

Here Sashi Deshpande portrays the character Jaya as good writer who after a series of thoughts sacrifices her ambition of writing just to satisfy the needs of her family. Jaya feels that the husband is a sheltering tree and the happiness of a wife lies in keeping her husband happy all the while. The male character in this novel is Mohan. Jaya tries to satisfy Mohan in all the angles. At the first instance itself Jaya loses her identity when her name is changed from Jaya to Suhasini. Still she continues her family life with Mohan. The threshold for patience bursts Jaya when she realizes that Mohan has lost interest in her and feels that she is a non-entity in Mohan's eyes. For all these adversities Jaya maintains a long silence in her life until her association with Kamat, a widower living above her flat, lends yet another dimension to Jaya's personality. Kamat gives equality to Jaya in every aspect; hence Jaya is moved towards Kamat. Her ease in his company makes her womanly inhibition with her and she opens up her problems to him and their relation leads to physical attraction. Kamat builds in Jaya's inner talents and gears her courage by which Jaya proves to be fruitful. She renews her activity as a writer and shortly emerges as a new writer. So this novel inevitably takes on a feminist character-'Jaya'.

URMILA IN 'THE BINDING VINE' [4]:

In this novel Urmi plays the role of anchor. Urmi is a kind of super egoist character which makes her reluctant to submit before her husband. Also she does not tolerate the submission of her sister-in-law and her mother before their spouses. Though Urmila is an economically and socially secured woman even without her husband she finds it hard to control her wishes. The turn in the life of Urmi occurred when her one year old daughter Anu dies. Urmi finds it almost impossible to get out of the memories of her dead infant daughter. She feels to forget the reminiscences of her daughter are very unfaithful. She also realizes the responsibility towards her son who desires her love and affection.

Urmi however appears to be the most rebellious of Deshpandes' female protagonists. The novel celebrates womens' coming together with other women as friends and companions and shares of life rather than as rivals for approval for men.

MANJARI IN 'MOVING ON' [5]:

Manjari is the narrative voice in 'Moving on'. She reflects that the difference between fission and fusion is immense; it is the difference between harmony and chaos. Here the protagonist

Manjari as a woman resists the patriarchal ideology and tries to live her life on her own terms. Manjari's struggle for freedom and for being autonomous is theoretically a challenge to patriarchy, not confronting it headlong but in discovering ones' own strength as a woman.

CONCLUSION:

The above discussion on the five novels of Sashi Deshpandes elaborates the feministic dimensions of an ideal Indian women subjected to various adversities of family life. Sashi Deshpande gives the complete background of a woman and thus portraits her present state.

In the first three novels i.e. 'Roots And Shadows', 'Dark Holds No Terrors' and 'That Long Silence', the female characters Indu, Saritha and Jaya spends the family life for a long period of more than 10 years. During this period she tolerates the humiliation and the mental agony for a long time. She suppresses all her wishes, but then at a point of timeshe bursts opens her heart and put forths her individuality. Contrasting is that after a long stay in a family environment, Sashi Deshpande brings the women characters to a free and deserved life. She portrays her heroines in a realistic manner in all the dimensions of life.

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