

INNER CONFLICTS AND CONFESSIONS OF WOMEN IN THE NOVELS OF SHASHI DESHPANDE

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Abstract:

The woman of the novels and the real world experience the same conflict. There are conflicts that make the woman become more realistic and a fighter for life. The situations in her life make her become either stronger or weaker to the extent that she does not step back in giving up her soul for the good. The father figure and the husband are the two major characters, around whom her life revolves till her last breath. It's these men that make her realize that she is a woman. Whatever comes over her, she leads a life that looks beautiful, fulfilling and longing to the world around her. There would be situations when women would long to be in their company and also at the same time longed to be alone, undisturbed and unspoken. The heart that made the world run behind her becomes annoying and seemingly ugly at times. There would be many a time's, when they feel that they are alienated and unwanted, but still goes on. Sometimes she feels accepted as the queen of his dynasty and sometimes a meaningless disorientation brings in gaps and cracks.

Introduction:

If this could be the reality of her life, what is the reality of every single woman of the free India? Why are there conflicts and struggles in the soul of this woman? Why does she need an ear to confess her inner feelings? Where is the abode that she dreamt of building while she is still alive? Does she really need to confess her conflicts and inner struggles? Will she be ever understood without being exploited?

Discussion:

The society has changed the way it treated women and girls. They are treated well. Special schools and colleges for girls and women are built for their welfare. It became political agenda during every election. Many associations were established. It was a step for the growth of girls in the society. Girls started going to different institutions and universities for higher education. Nothing lacked. It was the dream come true for every family to make their girls get good education, jobs, getting them married and also become independent in every walk of life.

The freedom women started enjoying became a stepping stone for them to grow more in status and also intellectually. There are families in and around us, where one can find the harmony and love between the mates. There is encouragement and understanding. Unless there are hidden truths and feelings between them, there are no conflicts. The conflicts begin with the freedom that's taken for granted. The house runs with the togetherness of the mates. There are no differences.

Most of the families have both men and women working in different offices and different shifts. The harmony still exists. Of course there are families who still believe in woman staying indoors and concentrating on household work and children, they follow the old traditions and beliefs. Their houses are all

well furnished and well maintained. It is the woman who has to make it a better place for the family to have a happy living. It is not that they don't love their women and don't care for their well being or don't want their women to pursue their dreams, but they want to follow the footsteps of their ancestors, who did the same. They are not asked to do so, but by seeing the families' traditions, the next generation also does the same.

In the works of Shashi Deshpande, we see the women protagonists struggling with their parents and siblings in childhood. During their adulthood, they had to fight against all odds to get good education and stand on their feet. Some women were helped by their fathers to take up their desired education and professions.

Men tend to give more attention to their women for the uplifting of their families. The working women get the strength and cooperation from the family to manage both household and office work. The strength that comes from the family is the most amazing thing that makes her go about with her life.

Women protagonists from Shashi Deshpande's novels wanted their voices heard by the society. But who would hear her? She was facing rejection, ego and lovelessness. She was used by her husband as a brand. Saru as a doctor succeeded better in her profession than her husband. It was not a welcome thing for him. He started acting weird. He acted like a loving husband during day time among the public and a rapist in the night. He would hurt Saru and humiliate her. He found a way to make her feel that she is lower and below him.

There are many women in the present society who want their inner voices to be heard. They are louder than the silence on their lips. There is struggle inside her. Once beaten will be beaten again and again because she forgives him and he takes her for granted. There are families where women like to maintain dignity in the society, which many a times is taken in a wrong sense. Women are given freedom with certain rules and boundaries, which makes these women to think about their existence in the future. Is the freedom given with understanding or to make life more complicated later?

In many places in India, girls are made to serve and take care of the guests at home so to entertain them. These adolescent girls would like to hide from the world that sees only their body but not the souls. Shashi Deshpande has tried her best to speak about these women as a novelist. Every house has a heart that needs to be heard out, understood and give life to it. The dreams remain dreams and the life comes to an end. It is always known that the life of many women begin and end up in the kitchen. Some never even know the address they live at. They would not have stepped out of the house even once! The most amazing families live in India where women are considered as goddesses and at the same time they are the least in the society to be noticed.

Though there are more positive things spoken about from the family and men, there are times, where women feel that they need their own space to prove their abilities. The corner for self growth slowly vanishes after the life changing events like- marriage, child birth, more household responsibilities and so on. She becomes more responsible and answerable. Many start feeling that their right to living has been snatched away from them. The cooking, cleaning, washing and other chores keep her so much indulged in pleasing other members of the family, mainly the – husband and in-laws, that she forgets to make an impression about herself to her own reflection. Women start looking at the world through the eyes of her husband and in-laws. Then she starts seeing through the eyes of her children. The society makes it so much possible for her to dream about her achievements as a woman of the house and as a wife. Though the happiness of the family becomes her first priority, there always exists the hollowness in her heart which does not seem to

bothering her till she meets someone, from her school or college, grown in status with high education, job and a profile to be noted in the society.

When women find her abilities as a mother and a wife, she forgets her abilities as a woman. She neglects her dreams and desires. Because she believes that family is her heavenly abode. The moment she realizes that she has not grown as a self, that's the moment she starts questioning about her existence. One can find many women around the cities and towns of India, who are draped in beautiful and the most expensive costume, but their eyes are filled with emptiness. It is not that they don't have the freedom to achieve their goals and make things happen, but it's the family that's the constraint for her.

It is not that every woman has some conflict inside her: but there are women who enjoy this kind of a secluded life. As said in the first paragraph, there are two important men in the life of the women- the father and the husband. Father becomes the first man in her life. He is the hero for her. The father makes the daughter feel safe and happy in the haven he created for her. He gives her strength to dream. It's the father that makes the daughter to know, on the first go, that she is his princess and one day she would rule her kingdom. The kingdom exists, but the right choices are to be made for the princess to rule. The house she is born and the house she builds, are the most magical places for her to live in. Either that house becomes her kingdom or a graveyard of her desires, emotions and dreams.

References:

1. My own ideas
2. Works of Shashi Deshpande
3. Novels of Shashi Deshpande - "The Dark Holds No Terror", "Matter of Time", "Roots and Shadows".