

# SHASHI DESHPANDE AND FEMINISM

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## Abstract:

The pinch on society for gender equalization has been given to the society through literature many years ago. It becomes hard for the people to understand the importance of women and their role in the families and also for the society. Shashi Deshpande made it a point to speak to the Indian society through her novels. Though she was careful in not being a feminist in her views, she has spoken for the women and her freedom. All her writings were based on her real time experiences. She took her characters from the society she lived in. They were not fake but real characters she met in her life journey. All the women protagonists dealt with different problems. One had problems from the parental home and the other had it from the husband. There was conflict between husband and wife based on professions. But the conclusions of all the novels are with a positive note. Deshpande made it a happy ending in all the novels. They learn to go with life and be happy.

## Introduction:

Known as a famous Indian writer in English, Deshpande became popular among women through her writings about women. She took her characters from the real world; her neighbors, colleagues, friends and family. She had a deep insight about the life of a normal Indian woman; a middle class woman. She managed to find all educated, professional, active life partners and mothers around her. Deshpande brought out the hidden secrets of a woman's life. In all her novels, the woman characters were facing problems from the inside; inside her family and self.

## Discussion:

There are women who failed as daughters. She was blamed for her brother's death. The little amenities provided to the boy child of the house became scares for her. One decides to get married to someone against the wishes of her mother and decides never come back to her. She also makes up her mind to escape the caged life already existing at her parental house and dwell happily ever after with her wedded husband. In one of the novels, the woman protagonist gets a chance to speak against the head of the family. After she passes away the heroine becomes the head to lead the family because she is educated and knows the

good for the family. In her novels, Deshpande tells us about the women who doesn't like to wait at the table while the other members of the family are eating. She looks at herself as a waitress. The protagonist despises the woman who waits and then eats in the same dirty plate her husband has eaten. In all her novels she makes it a point to bring out the traditional and cultural rules that are followed irrespective of education and lifestyle.

Shashi Deshpande does not like to be branded as a feminist. She wants to be the voice of woman who is not heard in the deadly silence of the society. She brings up the woman character, which longs for the care and love of a husband; but faces cruelty instead. While she thinks that leaving her parental home gives her freedom to live as she likes, she doesn't realize the hardship of life after marriage. These women go out in search of love and sex. They try to find satisfaction outside her wedding. Though it is a known truth for her that the society does not accept for an extra marital affair she hides her desires and suppresses her fear. There seemed to be no way out from the problems she was facing. A woman finds herself in deep agony during the nights. Her husband turns into a scary animal on bed. He hurts her every day and acts like loving and caring husband during the day. This is the psychology of an egoistic husband who couldn't bear the growth of his wife in profession and earning more than he does.

The novels became a confiding space for the women of Deshpande. She helps them find themselves. These women become successful professionals and mothers; but fail as themselves. Women sacrificed everything to be happy and make everyone happy. But there came a moment they found themselves lost. They strived hard to adjust with life that was in front of them. They waited hours and days looking forward for a change. How long could they wait? These women understood that they need space for themselves. They wanted to find themselves. The feeling of lost to themselves and being a person who had no aims and goals in life haunted them. The ill-treatment of husband was not bearable anymore. A break was in demand.

This was the juncture the woman protagonists left their line of boundary. They left their houses; husbands house, parental house and travelled far. It was at this point, these women watch their mother's as closely as they could. They started understanding the meaning of being a woman and a mother, a wife and a friend. Their mothers were the main enemies in the beginning of the novels, become role models during their hard times. Observation and learning helped these women understand the secret of happiness and joy. The sudden death of a friend, success as a writer, as a doctor, etc. makes them understand that they had wings, but were never nourished and allowed to fly on their own. This was the moment for them to take life in a positive way and build it with love and patience.

Both husband and wife learn to understand each other. They learn to make things better for their families. Family and children become the first priority for these couples in their lives. The pain and agony in soul and in body was no more sensed. The sweetness of life was found among themselves. Husband was able to understand the professional growth of his wife as a doctor and supported her at his best. The husband who never read the writings of his wife, started to read, appreciate and encourage her in her work and talent. The husband who had no peace with the wife found love and peace by the end of the novel.

Deshpande has put all her efforts in explaining to the society the importance of building a family and loving the same with uttermost care and patience. The society that looked at women with mean and ugly thoughts could understand her needs. It was not an easy task for her to bring out the sensitive issues with such a subtle language and hard reality. It is the duty of every individual to understand the importance of a woman and let her also spread her wings to dream high and fly high.

### **Conclusion:**

It is the writings of Shashi Deshpande that gives a consoling spirit and a winning heart to all the women of India and also the men. These novels help in creating a safe and happy society for women and also for men. The main perspective that we understand behind these writings is to understand women needs and also the child care. Children are the first that are affected because of family issues. Her novels deal with parents and children. When there is harmony between the parents children grow up to be free and open minded. The main social issues discussed in Deshpande's novels are not feministic but society based. Though role of woman is the major part, other social points are also discussed.

### **References:**

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