

## Thematic Study in Shashi Deshpande's Novels

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### Abstract

Shashi Deshpande is an eminent contemporary women writer in Indian writing in English. Her protagonists find themselves entrapped in the roles assigned to them by society, but achieve self-identity and independence within the confines of their marriage. The present study, based on the selected novels of Shashi Deshpande deals with the complexities of man woman relationship especially in the context of marriage, the trauma of disturbed adolescence with reference to four novels of Shashi Deshpande namely **That Dark Holds No Terrors** (1980), **The Binding Vine** (2002), **That Long Silence** (1989), **A Matter Of Time** (2001), **Roots and Shadows** (1983), **Small Remedies, Penguin India (2000)**, **Moving On, Penguin Books India (2004)**. She depicts what happen to men and women in and after

marriage, what they have been, what they have become and what is in store for them. The changes in status of men and women after marriage and the changing nature of marital relationships are presented in these four novels. Focusing on the marital relation she seeks to expose the tradition by which a woman is trained to play her subservient role in the family. Shashi Deshpande's novels also show how carefully she expresses the frustration and disappointment of women which they experience in their marital relationship. It suggests concerted efforts by men and women towards creating a mature and balanced gender relationship.

Keywords: Women struggle, Assigned, Self-identity, Confines, Complexities, Context, Disturbed, Expose, Tradition, Subservient, freedom of women.

Shashi Deshpande is an award winning Indian Novelist. She is an eminent novelist with a deep insight into the psyche of middle class Indian women. She has presented in her novels modern. Indian women's search for the definition of "the self and society and the relationship" that are central to women. With more than a dozen fictional works to her credit she has successfully captured the true emotions of Indian women. She writes of the conflicts and predicament of the Indian middle-class women. She published her first collection, of short stories in 1978, and her first novel. She is a winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award, for the novel 'That Long Silence'. Shashi Deshpande's novels present a social world of mammy complex relationship.

This presentation focuses on a study of suffering of woman in the works of Shashi Deshpande. Life is full of suffering, full of choices, full of compromises and an adjustment. Even a silent self-suffering, becomes a survival strategy. This also throws light on the different aspects of suffering the woman undergoes. Indian Women: Socially and Psychologically Oppressed Indian women, unlike their western counterparts, have always

been socially and psychologically oppressed, sexually colonized and biologically subjugated against a maledominant social set-up. Any attempt by a woman to rise above the oppressive forces rooted in the middle-class margins has either been curbed mercilessly or ignored in the name of social dignity. Shashi Deshpande all through the gamut of her ever-expanding creative horizon always makes it a point to provide a separate space for her characters. Shashi Deshpande Focusing on New Indian Woman and Her Dilemma Shashi Deshpande portrays the new Indian woman and her dilemma. She concerns herself with the plight of the modern Indian woman trying to understand herself and to preserve her identity as wife, mother and above all as human being. Girls are a silent part of the family and society. What they think or feel about their social eclipse does not interest most writers or social thinkers. Shashi Deshpande is an awardwinning Indian Novelist. She is an eminent novelist with a deep insight into the psyche of middleclass Indian women. She has presented in her novels modern. Indian women's search for the definition of "the self and society and the relationship" that are central to women. With more than a dozen fictional works to her credit she has successfully captured the true emotions of Indian women. She writes of the conflicts and predicament of the Indian middle-class women. She published her first collection, of short stories in 1978, and her first novel. She is a winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award, for the novel 'That Long Silence'. Shashi Deshpande's novels present a social world of mammy complex relationship. Focus on Feminine Issues Most of her novels 'The Dark Holds no Terrors', 'That Long Silence', 'The Binding Wine' and 'Roots and shadows', deal with feminine issues. In her novels she presents a sensitive portrayal of Indian womanhood with a rare gift for sharp psychological insights.

The women in her novels are subjected to continuous physical and sexual assaults in the society. But the writer feels that a woman has her own existence and place in the society and therefore she should not be reduced to the level of a breeding machine. She also dares to

“expose, question and challenge the age old traditions and prejudices in the male dominated society.

Women have to accept, accommodate and convert themselves to go well with the interests of their male counterpart and in this process suppress their self-identity. In the Indian context, once a girl is married –it may be a love marriage or an arranged one, husband has full control on her. Whether the husband is right or wrong, the wife has to follow him blindly. A woman is never free according to old traditions. Shashi Deshpande’s Characters In her novels many men and women living together, journeying across life in their difference age groups, classes and gendered roles. The old tradition bound world consists with modern, creating unforeseen gaps and disruptions within the family fold. Women’s understanding becomes questionable as the old patterns of behaviour no longer seem to be acceptable. These struggles become in tense of quests for self-definition, because it would not be possible to relate to others with any degree of conviction unless one is guided by clarity about one’s own image and role. Suffering means the act of distress, pain.

Shashi Deshpande gives minute details of development of girl-child in her novels. She has displayed a series of girl-children where each girl faces a different problem within the family. Violence against women, whether physical, mental or emotional, is an issue that crosses all borders and all classes of women. Feminism and its crusade against a male dominated society are of special importance in the Indian context. Novels of Shashi Deshpande The novel Roots and shadows projects the educated women who are unable to enfranchise the traditional background in which they are reared. The curse of all the prevailing problems of women is their subjugation which is always present in the form of silent servitude. In That Long Silence, she retrieves facts from the depth of the past to reconstruct the missing links in the chain of women’s suffering; self-discovery by all means

is a mature act, act and also a cathartic one. In 'The Binding Vine' Mira's poems and diaries engage her attention.

Deshpande reveals a remarkable insight into working of a woman's mind. She also highlights the secondary posit occupied by women and their degradation which is inevitable in oppressively male-dominated society. She gives an excellent portrayal today's woman who is intelligent and articulate, aware of her capabilities thwarted under the weight of male superiority".

Deshpandes "women are the products of a painful period of transition in society where they have a greater share of responsibilities than their predecessors. They also have a number of avenues open before them and in many fields; they have also proved themselves better than their male counterparts. In spite of these remarkable achievements, the attitude towards women remains the same as it was centuries ago. In the institution of marriage too, the age old rules with regard to the accepted behaviour of husband and wife remains almost unchanged, despite an overt display of Western influence. Shashi Deshpande's novels are concerned with a woman's search for her identity — an exploration into the female psyche. Her protagonists undergo an arduous journey to discover themselves and this leads them through a maze of self doubts and fears". In all her novels, she depicts woman in myriad roles wife, mother, daughter and an individual in her own right.

In all Deshpande's novels, except "Come Up and be Dead which has not been included for study in this thesis, her protagonists are married women. Hence her depiction of woman as wife requires special mention. According to Rani Dharkar, the importance that our society attaches to marriage is reflected in our literature. It is the central concern of Deshpande whose heroines caught in the quagmire of marriage, struggle to come up for air.' Marriage is, perhaps, the most complex of human relationships. It is defined as a •cultural phenomenon which sanctions a more or less

permanent union between partners conferring legitimacy on their offspring"<sup>2</sup>. Marriage is not only a social institution but also inextricably linked to religion, and religion being a potent force in our country determines more or less the code of conduct in marital relationships. Almost all the religions of the world give sanction to female subjugation by the male members of society, thereby perpetuating the myth of female servitude". The Bible categorically tells the woman:

Wives, submit yourselves to your husband's as to the Lord.<sup>3</sup>

The ancient Hindu law-giver, Manu, whose philosophy occupies a prominent place in the mainstream of Hindu ideology and culture proclaims:

Even though the husband be of bad character and seeks pleasure elsewhere he must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, it is clear that since time immemorial woman has been given an inferior position in society. It is also obvious that woman has been defined most exclusively in her role as wife. This view is substantiated by Susan Wadley who, in her essay, 'Women and the Hindu Tradition' says that, "The dominant norms for the Hindu woman concern her role as wife. Classical Hindu laws focus almost exclusively on this aspect of the woman. Role models and norms for mothers, daughters, sisters etc., are less prominent and are more apt to appear in folklore and vernacular tradition."<sup>5</sup>

Shashi Deshpande in "all her works clearly presents the inequalities and injustice heaped on woman because of her subordinate status. In *Roots and Shadows*, through the eyes of Indu, the protagonist, we are made aware of the plight of various women like her Kakis and Atyas. The heart rending account of Akka's child marriage reveals the appalling condition of women barely a couple of generations ago. The inferior position of a wife in any

marriage is made obvious through glimpses into the marriages of Indu's numerous aunts and uncles. It is clear that Indu, who prides herself on her liberated outlook, falls a prey to age-old tradition and unreasonable convention. In this novel, Deshpande also exposes the sham and hypocrisy prevalent in the so-called urban, educated men like Jayant who are ostensibly influenced by the West and who pretend to possess progressive ideas, but are, nevertheless, as chauvinistic and fettered to time-worn conventions as their less educated and exposed counterparts. He belongs to a society which prides itself on its sophistication and refinement, but at home he remains a conventional husband expecting his wife to play a very submissive role”.

Saru's husband, Manohar, in “That Long Silence is a glaring example of men with fragile egos, who find it difficult to accept the superior status of their wives in society. Deshpande also holds society responsible for the disastrous condition of Sara's marriage. Maim, who already suffers from an inferiority complex, is further humiliated by the cruel remarks of his colleague's wife and those of the girl who interviews Saru”.

Mohan, Java's husband in “That Long Silence is a typical Indian husband who takes his wife's unflinching support for granted. When threatened with charges of corruption he expects his wife to follow him into hiding without a murmur of protest. He even expects to use his wife as a crutch in his hour of crisis and the slightest hint of deviation from her role of a subservient wife is enough to provoke a terrifying outburst with which he walks out of the home. Deshpande also shows how Jaya herself is to be blamed for the state of her marriage. In retrospection Jaya realises how she had all along followed her Vanita mami's advice that a husband is like a 'sheltering tree' which must be kept alive at any cost because without the tree the wife becomes dangerously unprotected and vulnerable. Jaya thinks that she has to keep the tree alive and flourishing even if you have to water it with deceit and lies”.

In “The Binding Vine, Deshpande makes a bold attempt to tackle the subject of marital rape. Through the character of Mira, she focuses attention on all those women who are doomed to silently suffer nightly assaults by their husbands because the very idea of a woman protesting against her husband's sexual advances is unheard of in our society. Deshpande also hints at the lack of compatibility in the narrator Urmi's marriage even though hers is a love marriage. Through the character of Shakutai, Deshpande shows how, at the lower level of society, marital vows are flouted most casually by men like Shakutai's husband. He is a good-for-nothing drunkard who leaves his wife and three children to fend for themselves and takes up another woman”.

The monogamous nature of women is hinted at in almost “all the works of Deshpande. In most of her stories, the protagonist shares a greater level of compatibility with a man other than her husband. This compatibility often leads towards crossing of the boundary of platonic friendship and progresses onwards to physical attraction. But Deshpande's women do not overstep the limits of propriety except in the case of Indu in *Roots and Shadows* who resorts to an extra-marital relationship with Naren in an attempt to assert herself”.

In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, “Saru meets her former classmate Padmakar Rao and the renewal of their friendship seems to border on an affair. Padmakar Rao who reveals dissatisfaction with his wife tries to lure Saru into a relationship, vulnerable though she is with the horrifying nocturnal attacks by her husband. Saru refuses to accept the advances made by him”. She is. However, not averse to being flaunted around by Boozie, who, she is aware, is using her as a cover to his homosexuality.

In “That Long Silence, Jaya meets a perfect match in Kamat, widower, who lives in a flat above hers. He is well-read and apparently good critic. So he is able to offer her constructive criticism with regard her writing. She is perfectly at ease in his company and

confides all problems to him. She has never made to suffer any condescension in company and this sets him apart from all the other men she has known her life. In time, their friendship progresses towards physical attraction but Jaya controls herself and ruthlessly suppresses her desires, in spite of the ample opportunity provided in the seclusion of his apartment. Safeguards her marriage is of such paramount interest to Jaya that on finding Kamat dead in his flat one day, she prefers to remain silent for the fear of getting involved in a scandal, thereby jeopardising her marriage”.

Urmi’s association with “Dr.Bhaskar in *The Binding Vine* also develops into more than a platonic relationship. Urmi, whose husband is naval officer and away for many months in a year, yearns at times for physical gratification. Dr. Bhaskar's self-admitted interest in her and her own attraction towards him offer her an opportunity to indulge in a physics relationship. But she refuses to let herself be enticed into an extra-marita affair”.

Another recurrent relationship in “Deshpande’s novels is that between a mother and a daughter love and devotion to the mother is an integral part of the Indian psyche. Mythologies and literatures down the ages have always glorified the mother figure. Much has also been written about a mother's selfless love for her children. But the preference for son is as old as Indian society itself. A wife's worth shoots up if she give birth to a boy. Vedic verses pray that sons should be followed by more sons, never daughters. For example, a prayer in the Atharvaveda reads”:

The birth of a girl grant it elsewhere, here grant a son.

There are, of course, economic and religious reasons behind such an attitude. “The presence of a son is absolutely necessary to perform many rituals, the most important ones being those that are carried out upon the death of his parents and which are considered imperative for the well-being of their soul: The daughter, therefore, has not only a negligible ritual significance, but also considered an enormous financial burden inasmuch” as she, who

does not contribute to the family income, but on the other hand, takes away considerable part of her family fortune as dowry.

But, despite the yearning of all mothers to have sons, a mother love for her daughter cannot be denied. Sudhir Kakkar in an article o 'Feminine Identity in India' says that, "the special maternal affection reserve for daughters, contrary to expectations derived from social and culture prescriptions, is partly to be explained by the fact that a mother unconscious identification with her daughter is normally stronger than with her son"<sup>7</sup> Shashi Deshpande's protagonists, however, never seem to be on cordial terms with their mothers. In *Roots and Shadows*, Indus mother dies in childbirth and so there is no delineation of the mother-daughter relationship. In the "The Dark Holds No Terrors, however, this relationship has a significant place in the story. The entire novel, in fact, revolves around Sam's relationship with her mother. It is Sam's antagonism towards her mother and her rejection of the age-old traditional values represented by her that drive Saru into the amis of Manohar During the crucial years of puberty, Sam develops an aversion to all traditional practices because of her mother's cold and indifferent attitude. Deshpande's depiction of this relationship in this particular novel is relentless and uncompromising. Saru studies medicine to displease her mother and later marries out-of-caste to defy her. Even on her death bed Sam's mother has only curses for her daughter". Sam, in turn, does not record any warm feeling of her daughter in her recollections, though she makes sure to provide her daughter with all the material comforts and luxuries that she herself had been denied.

In "That Long Silence, though there is no overt display of hostility between Jaya and her mother, it is evident that they do not share the same level of cordiality as Jaya and her father Like Saru. Java too agrees to marry Mohan at the slightest hint of disapproval, from her mother and like her again she does not seem to have any strong maternal feelings towards her daughter. In a couple of instances, however, Jaya displays stronger attachment towards

her son". This provokes a reviewer. Subhas K. Jha to comment that, "being intellectually equipped to scrutinize mal prejudice, she still reveals an unmistakable partiality towards her son Tin daughter is a mere blur in the narration, while the son (the heir apparent. tin procreator) is described in glowing terms."<sup>8</sup>

In "The Binding Vine too. it is obvious that there is no compatibility between the sophisticated Inni and her daughter, Urmi the protagonist . At one point, in a choked and guilt-laden voice Inni bursts out that Urmi had been sent to Ranidurg as a child to be brought up by her grandparents, because Urun's father did not approve of the way his wife was bringing up the child. Shakutai also shares a love-hate relationship with her daughter, Kalpana. She keeps vacillating between praising her daughter and blaming her for the catastrophe".

Adele king rightly comments that, "..... in all Deshpande's work, there is no mother who could serve as a model for the daughter"<sup>9</sup>. In an interview to Vanamala Vishwanath, Deshpande admits that she does not believe in painting a rosy picture of motherhood. She says:

It is necessary for women to live within relationships But if the rules are rigidly laid that as a wife or mother you do this and no further, then one becomes unhappy. This is what I have tried to convey in my writing. What I don't agree with is the idealisation of motherhood — the false and sentimental notes that accompany it.<sup>10</sup>

Deshpande, therefore, rejects the stereotyped image of mother and refuse to use any mawkishly sentimental language to describe the mother-child relationship.

In "Deshpande's latest novel, A Matter of Time, the theme alienation is even more pronounced. The author quotes extensively from the Upanishads to explain the sense of rootlessness and desolation experienced by the protagonist, Gopal, who abandons his wife and three tee daughters for some strange and inexplicable reason. The author describes the

pain and humiliation of Sumi, his wife, who copes with situation admirably and tries to provide emotional and financial security her three daughters”.

“Shashi Deshpande's frank and uninhibited discussion on a wide range of topics concerning women has prompted several reviewers categories her as feminist. A close study of her works, however, reveals writer who is highly sensitive and clearly aware of the male-female imbalance in society. It also reveals a writer who is free of the artifice of prototype her male characters may conform to the standard feminist description of middle-class husband — insensitive, egoistic and sometimes overambitious but the characterization is true to life and honest to the core. Most of women characters too suffer from some weakness or the other so much so it becomes difficult to label her work. The term feminism itself demand broader definition. In a generic way, it has come to mean a movement support the demand for equal social, political, and economic rights with n Feminism connotes not only an awareness of women's plight but also determination to change the situation”. The treatise 'Half the Sky' aptly defines feminism as:

The awareness of the women's position in society as one of disadvantage or inequality compared with that of men and also a desire to remove that disadvantages.<sup>13</sup>

One wonders whether Deshpande as a novelist fulfils these two requirements so as to be termed a feminist. We may not be sure of her strong desire remove the disadvantages of women in society, but even a casual reading her novels and short stones convinces us that they abound in her acute awareness of women's disadvantageous and unequal position in society. In recently published article she writes:

Most of my writing comes out of my own intense and long suppressed feelings about what it is to be a woman in our society, it comes out of the experience of the difficulty of playing roles enjoined on me by society, it comes out of the knowledge that I am something more and something different from the some total of these roles. My writing comes out of my

consciousness of the conflict between my idea of myself as a human being and the idea that society has of me as a woman. All this makes my writing very clearly woman's writing.<sup>14</sup>

Roots and Shadows abounds in the depiction of women who are given a raw deal. “Beginning with the protagonist Indu, the novel replete with the private agonies of several women covering a wide cross section — educated women, illiterate women, widows, child-brides, domestic servants - all of whom who have some genuine grouse or other. The Dark Holds No Terrors is a typical example of a husband’s inability, who comes to terms with his wife's superior social and economic status. Deshpande gives an excellent portrayal of a woman who falls a prey to in husband's frustrations, when he realises that she has overtaken him professionally. The novel also traces the traumatic childhood of Saru who the victim of gender bias in the hands of an insensitive mother”. That Long Silence is an autobiographical account of Jaya. A gifted writer, whose talent lies, smothered under the disapproval of her husband. Jaya seeks to err the long silence by giving an honest and frank account of the condition which led to her failure as a writer and the constraints of society which results in the suppression of herself as an individual. The Binding Nine a tragic tale of rape sanctioned by marriage in the case of Mira and brutal rape of Kalpana. It reveals the trauma involved in a rape which is committed within or outside the precincts of marriage”. The novel, in subtle way, also traces the martyrdom of women like Inni. Vanaa; Shakutai.

The “novels of Shashi Deshpande, therefore, clearly reveal author's perception of the endemic imbalance between the sexes. It is, however, obvious that the author stops short of trying to correct this imbalance. The numerous minor characters in her novels suffer in silence accept their fate with resignation, but do not take any step which might jeopardize their marriage or reputation in society”. Each of her novels ends, however, on a note of determination by its protagonist who resolves to the reins of her life into her hands.

Indu in “Roots and Shadows emerges in greater control herself at the end of the novel. She puts Akka's money to use according the dictates of her conscience and does not bow to pressure from quarter. She also gives up the job, where she had earlier worked only to avoid displeasing her husband, and settles down to pursue her writing, something which she had always wanted to do With her new found sense of liberation also comes the realisation that any freedom she devises must be within the boundaries of her obligations and responsibilities. She is able to appreciate what Narena’s father says about rules adding grace and dignity to life”.

"To be true to herself, the woman has to excoriate the film of superimposed attitudes and roles. Her emancipation is not in repudiating the claims of her family, but in drawing upon the untapped inner reserves of strength."<sup>15</sup> Kamini Dinesh aptly sums up Sana's development as an individual in her own right and one who is no longer afraid of the dark in the novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. At the end of the novel, Sam stands poised to receive her husband secure in her new found confidence in herself. She successfully rids herself of her complexes and guilts and comprehends the meaning of human life where she realises that she is not the only one facing the predicament of loneliness:

Alright, so I'm alone But so is everyone else Human beings they're going to fail you But because there is just us. Because there's no one else, we have to go on trying if we can't believe in ourselves, we're sunk.<sup>16</sup>

Shashi Deshpande does not take the radical view of the earlier Western feminists like Simone de Beauvoir, Germaine Greer and Kate Millett. The opinion of most of these feminists with regard to man remains more or less the same. In her famous book, *The Second!* De Beauvoir writes:

It has been said that marriage diminishes man. Which is often true, but almost always it annihilates woman.<sup>20</sup>

“Germaine Greer suggests that if independence is a necessary concomitant of freedom, woman must not marry.<sup>21</sup> Kate Millett feels that marriage reduces the status of woman to a mere object for decoration and a too be used for man's sexual gratification. Deshpande's protagonists are, doubt, victims of this unequal power structure in manage. But in all novels she shows how one can rise above such injustice and lea meaningful existence. In the end, her protagonists almost always strive to make their marriage work”. And as J. Bhavani observes.

This is not a negative but a realistic end to the novels. Deshpande upholds marriage as the backbone of society, what is stifling is the persona of the wife and not the institution of marriage.<sup>22</sup>

We may say that Deshpande's views coincide with modern feminist thought which has changed much since the radical feminism of 60's. In her book, the “The Feminine Mystique, which took American society by storm, Betty Friedan challenged the universal belief that a woman should find contentment in motherhood and domesticity. Two decades later, Betty Friedan in her book, The Second Stage, says that humanity can only survive if women make certain compromises. She suggests that women should pursue some meaningful activity within marriage in order to find happiness and contentment in their lives”.

But, it is obvious that “Deshpande never intends to subscribe to the views of any feminist. Her characters, though urban and educated, are firmly rooted in India with the weight of centuries of tradition and culture behind them. It is also evident that one cannot simply ignore the issues she raises in her novels”. In his essay, 'Problematising Feminism', Jaidev says:

It is very necessary for us to have feminism in this country but then this feminism has to be authentic, rooted and context-bound. One does not mind if our feminists are not too clever or good at quoting western critics or weaving intricate post-structuralist cobwebs.<sup>23</sup>

Deshpande may not be a formal feminist in the true sense of the word, but it must also be observed that feminism can mean different things to different people. Arshia Sattar in her thought-provoking article on the position of the feminist movement at present, rightly observes Feminism is no longer a single voice that speaks for all women irrespective of creed and colour. It is, rather, a 'rainbow coalition' of rights, desires, agendas, struggles, and victories. Not all issues apply to all women, our battles need not be the same and, more and more, we tend to speak for ourselves rather than for all of us.<sup>24</sup>

Shashi Deshpande has definitely carved a niche for herself in voicing the thoughts and feelings of the educated, urban middle class woman. "Though Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai and Nayantara Sahgal have all ventured into this area of writing, none has pursued it with the single-mindedness and relentlessness of Deshpande. She has never sworn allegiance to what we normally think of as feminist theories of the novel and yet or may be because of the absence of this overt avowal, she has succeeded in providing her readers with a perspective which is simultaneously truly individualistic and feminine.<sup>25</sup> All the same, Deshpande has not received the kind of recognition she is entitled to. Despite her disapproval, she has been considered a 'woman writer', rather than a writer who deals with 'human issues which of interest to all humanity. This has been made clear by Shashi Deshpande herself most recently in her article 'Of Concerns of Anxieties.' where she writes, I have been put into the slot of a woman writer, my writing has been categorised as 'writing about women' or 'feminist writing'. In this process, much in it has been missed. I have been denied the place and dignity of a writer who is dealing with issues that are human issues, of interest to all humanity.<sup>26</sup>

Shashi Deshpande's novels highlight the image of the middle-class women sandwiched between tradition and modernity. The novel, *A Matter of Time* moves beyond feminist concerns, in that, it raises the existentialist question itself. The important truth

revealed is that self-pity is not the answer. It is only through a process of self-examination and self-searching, through courage and resilience that one can change one's situation from despair to hope. The novel highlights the image of the middle-class women sandwiched between tradition and modernity. The novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* deals with the problems of career women and her marital constraints. The Indian women has for years been silent sufferers. It is reflective of the feminist aspirations.

The situations in which Sarita has placed herself is rather unwarranted. The lack of perfect understanding emotions between husband and wife causes of domestic life, there should be a blend of acceptance and rejection, flexibility and rigidity and above all revolt if the occasion demands and compromise for peaceful life. In the novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Sarita achieved position and the ascribed position of her husband. The financial ascendance of Sarita, renders another less significant and important. But his action at nights terrifies and humiliates Saru. In *Root and Shadow*, Akka's desire to educate her was not because of giving her on independent stand but because she feels that educated girls get a good match and Indu experiences disillusionment in sex and suffers a silent sexual humiliation.

The novelist brings out powerfully the psychological problem of a career woman and discusses it artistically without crossing the barriers of art. Shashi Deshpande's novels deal with the women belonging to Indian middle class. She deals with the inner world of the Indian women in her novels. She portrays her heroines in a realistic manner. As *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, the novel reveals the life of Sarita, who is always neglected and ignored in favour of her brother, she is not given any importance. *Root And Shadow* explores the inner self of Indu who symbolize the new women, who are educated and married to Jayant but her feminine instinct for articulation is suppressed and Mini inculcates in her all the traditional feminine qualities since her childhood. Akka got married to a man who has much older than

her. She has to tolerate the scathing and bestial sexual advances of her husband. In the novel 'That Long Silence' Shashi Deshpande reveals that consciousness of Jaya is not totally a silent and mute sufferer. In 'The Binding Vine' Mira's poems and diaries engage her attention. Urmila establishes a communion with her and tries to reconstruct the tragic tale of an energetic girl, who suffered and write poems in the solitude of an unhappy marriage. In the novel 'A Matter of Time' is an exploration of a woman's inner life. Kalyani's fears are based on patriarchal oppression that condemns women to the margins of silence. Sumi like her mother is a suffering oppressed and wronged woman. Yet she does not question the man; her oppressor.

Shashi Deshpande is one of the famous contemporary Indian novelists in English. Basically she writes about the situation of women and their failures in the fast changing socio-economic milieu of India. She writes about the conflict between tradition and modernity in relation to women in middle class society. In the novel 'The Dark Holds No Terrors' all the characteristics are inextricably blended in Saru who represents a reaction of society. Saru is brought up in a traditional atmosphere but the education she receives makes her a changed person with a rebellious attitude towards tradition. In 'Roots and Shadow' through the character of Indu, who is educated and who lives in close association with society, brushing aside all narrow social conventions. Akka, the strict and disapproving matriarch of the family. In the novel 'That Long Silence' through the character of Jaya, who adjusts and accommodates unlike the modern women who themselves "forced into the background by the claims of culture" and hence they adopt "an inimical attitude towards it". She is not the structurally patterned woman of the traditional Indian society. In the novel 'The Binding Vine' Normally Urmila's meeting with Shakeitai would not have happened as Shakeitai belongs to different strata of society. A Matter of Time focuses on social control, and the site of violence, exclusion and abuse. Aru asks Gopal "why did you get married at all,

why did you have children. The whole novel is devoted to silent, brooding women, unhappy, yet lively clinging to their past, yet living in the present society.

Female Identity Shashi Deshpande's novel deals with the theme of the quest for a female identity. The complexities of man-woman relationships, especially in the context of marriage, the trauma of a disturbed adolescence. The Indian woman has for years been a silent sufferer. While she has played different roles-as a wife, mother, sister and daughter, she has never been able to claim her own individuality. In the novel 'The Dark Holds No Terrors' Manohar's male ego tries to dominate Sarita which ultimately results in disintegration, that Sarita is an individual not a dependent but a being capable of withstanding trials in life alone. Her identity is no longer been in terms of the identity of her male counterpart. In 'Roots and Shadow', Indu accepts that she throttled her desires not because of Jayant's pressure but because it was her own decision with which she had given her identity. Akka too has to endure and submit to insults, injuries, and humiliations with a stoic patience and never complain. In 'That Long Silence', Jaya is being renamed as Suhasine after her marriage is not a care of the loss of identity. In 'The Binding Vine', Urmila understands that even as a child, Mira has hated the way her mother has been surrendering herself to her husband and ever she has not herself identity. In 'A Matter of Time' it is here that in a flash Kalyani realizes that Gopal and she must now move on alone and she reconciles herself to their separation. Kalyani who emerges as the most powerful character in the novel. Here is a pitiable story, but one of deep endurance and strength. In 'That Long Silence' Jaya comes to recognize herself as a failed writer because when she had continued writing, her stories had been rejected for lack of genuine feelings which she had laid aside. After all she came to accept herself as a failed writer and so she depends on her husband.

In the 'A Matter of Time' is a composite study in human relationship. The most striking example of silence is Kalyani who spends nearly forty years in total silence with her

husband, Shripati but all women's depended of them. Deep Insight into the Female Psyche Shashi Deshpande has emerged as a writer possessing deep insight into the female psyche. Focusing on the marital relation she seeks to expose the tradition by which a woman is trained to play her subservient role in the family. Her novels reveal the man-made patriarchal traditions and uneasiness of the modern Indian woman in being a part of them.

Shashi Deshpande uses this point of view of present social reality as at is experienced by women. To present the world of mothers, daughters and wives is also to present indirectly the fathers, sons and husbands the relation between men and woman, and between women themselves. Her young heroines rebel against the traditional way of life and patriarchal values. Ideal Woman the words which we always associate with what we consider to be the concept of an ideal woman are self-denial, sacrifice, patience, devotion and silent suffering. As in 'The Dark Holds No Terrors', the life of Sarita who is always neglected and ignored. 'Roots and Shadow' explores the inner self of Indu, Mini, and Akka and Shashi Deshpande shows in the 'That long Silence', Jaya is not a silent sufferer. In 'The Binding Vine' Mira has hated the way her mother has been surrendering herself to her husband and ever she has not herself identity. 'A Matter Of Time' is an exploration of Kalyani, Sumi and her daughters Aru. Shashi Deshpande's fiction is an example of the ways in which a girl child's particular position, social reality and identity and psychological growth determine her personality.

The new Woman is primarily characterized by the spirit of rebelliousness, visibly exercising its influence on all relationships, the boundaries of time and space notwithstanding. This spirit is manifested through diverse means and modes. A women's rejected of her assigned role inside the family and society, refusal to follow the traditional paths, inherent revulsions to the idealism associated with normal physical functions of the body such as menstruation , pregnancy, childbirth/procreation which often act as catalysts for sexual colonialism, aversion to the practice of favouring the male child over and above the girl child and disrespect for the

social taboos concerning the human body are some of the challenging issues that Deshpande comes up with as the new woman.

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