

The Delineation of Human Relationship in Shashi Deshpande's 'A Matter of Time'

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Abstract

Human relationships are enormously complex in nature. God created human and on the other hand human created complexity. Due to different thought process and mentality conflict and problems arise and how to manage those problems can have an impact on the relationship. This complexities of human relationship is beautifully dealt by Shashi Deshpande in her novel 'A Matter of Time'. In most of her novels, she deals with problems related to married life. This paper focuses the complexities of human relationship in Shashi Deshpande's novel A Matter of Time. In the novel, Deshpande beautifully portrayed the traumas, difficulties and sufferings faced by women in the Indian society.

Keywords: Human relationship, Complexities, Traumas, Difficulties

The complexities of human relationships, especially in the case of marriage, the attempt to break traditional mould in which women are trapped, gender discriminations are some of the concerns which give the feminist bent. Shashi Deshpande is concerned with the traumas and difficulties suffered by women in Indian family in her novel 'A Matter of Time'.

The novel, *A Matter of time*, is about three generations of women. They are Manorama, Kalyani and Sumi. These women faced lots of trouble in their life either to give birth to a baby boy or bear the anger of their husband. Manorama was Sumi's grandmother who was unable to give birth to a male child. She always wanted a son. Manorama had only one daughter, Kalyani and she wanted Kalyani to be beautiful and successful in marriage unfortunately Kalyani was unable to make her mother happy in her childhood. Manorama belonged to a very poor family and had broken all ties with her own family. As she was insecure, so Kalyani has to pay for it. Kalyani was married to her uncle, Manorama's brother Shripati, so that the property remain with the same family. Kalyani and Shripati had three children and their youngest child was mentally unfit. The relationship between Manorama and Kalyani was not normal. Manorama was not happy with Kalyani unless she gave birth to a male child but unfortunately, he was mentally retarded. Kalyani was one of the character in this novel who silently suffered throughout her life, married to her maternal uncle who become cruel when Kalyani lost her only son in a railway station. Shripati could not forgive Kalyani for her negligence and the result was that she had to go back to her parent's house with her daughters, Sumi and Premi. But after insisting by Manorama Shripati came back home, but he never talked to Kalyani. Although they had a communication gap that lasted for 35 years, but Kalyani was still happy with him. Manorama had no male heir while Kalyani lost her only son in railway station, so both of them failed to please their husbands. But Sumi's husband Gopal punished her without any reason.

One day without any suitable reason Gopal left her. Sumi was shocked and helpless without asking any questions as a silent obedient wife allows him to walkout from her life. Like other characters in novels of Shashi Deshpande, *Jaya-Mohan*, *Saru-Manu*, *Indu-Jayant* and *Sumi-Gopal* also enjoyed good relationship during the early years of their marriage. Sumi knew Gopal's view about marriage that "marriage is not for everyone. The demand it makes –

a lifetime of commitment is not possible for all of us” (Deshpande, Time 69). Gopal also proposed her that either of them wanted to be free, her or she would be left to go. As Sumi was very young she failed to understand the problems which she is going to face in future. “And I agreed I was only eighteen then and you were twenty –six But it meant nothing to me then “(Deshpande, Time221) After few years, Gopal started to move away from Sumi and she did not try to stop him from going away. Sumi never wanted any explanation from Gopal and with silently allowed him to go.

Though Gopal deserted Sumi for no fault, she picked up the threads of her life like Indu in *Roots and shadow*, Saru in *The Dark hold No Terrors* and Rashmi in *The Times of Morning* Shashi Deshpande through her character Sumi presents a very bold image of a modern woman who neither cries, questions nor was waiting for her husband to come back. Kalyani became worried when she heard this news and she asks Gopal, “What have you done to my daughter, Gopal don’t do this, don’t let it happen to my daughter, what happened to me” (Deshpande time 46).

Sumi was worried for her three daughters. At the age of forty, she started to write a play ‘*The Gardener’s Son*, which was very successful. After the success of her novel, she decided to deal with the theme of female sexuality. She started to write about *Surpanakha*, the demon sister of king *Ravana*.

Aru, Sumi’s daughter notices how the women in the family find no place in the family document, the names of all the women members of the family - were not mentioned. In another novel of Shashi Deshpande, *That Long Silence* a kind of family tree was drawn by Ramu kaka, in which neither Saru’s mother nor her grandmother were in that tree. Aru was in dilemma, she was unable to understand her mother’s quiet indifference and her father’s shocking behaviour. She doesn’t want to see her mother unhappy. In this novel, Shashi Deshpande beautifully portrayed mother-daughter relationship, Sumi tries to give all good things to her daughter Aru

“I want her to enjoy the good things in life, I want her to taste life. I want her to relish it and not spit it out because she finds it bitter” (Deshpande, Time 220).

Sumi does not believe in fate, in fact she was a strong woman and know how to face the problems of life. Many people asked her to go back to her husband, but she did what she thought was right. At the age of forty, Sumi started her new life. It is a new challenge for her. She told her daughter “Be happy for me, Aru. This is the first thing in my life I think that I’ve got for myself, I’ve been so lazy all my life. And now suddenly I want to do so many things” (Deshpande, Time 230-31).

In the end, Gopal realizes after the death of sumi, “If it is indeed true that we are bound to our destines, that there is no point struggling against them, even then this remains that we do not submit passively or cravenly, but with dignity and strength. (Deshpande, Time 246) Shashi Deshpande expresses the frustrations, dilemmas of women in marital relationship and their efforts to balance the relationship in spite of so much complexities.

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