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**THE ECSTASY OF OPTIMISTIC TRANSFORMATION IN SHASHI
DESHPANDE’S A MATTER OF TIME**

Abstract

Shashi Deshpande captivates the need of human beings of present generation to be optimistic in the fast moving planetary. One of the most important elements in human life, to embellish is ‘optimism’. In modern society, human beings disremember to train their minds to be positive .They intentionally or unintentionally give space for emotions and thoughts to torture their minds perhaps that leads to mental illness and carries malicious reflection in individuals, families and societies. Shashi Deshpande does a complete analysis on the rational thinking process of human beings and makes one to create happiness by going beyond all their barriers and makes them realize only positive mindset can elevate, encourage , enhance, exhilarate and experience the power of one’s creation in this cosmic.

Keywords: positive attitude, resilience, re- discover, faith, wisdom
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Introduction

Shashi Deshpande besides being a feminist writer, she is also one of the best humanists. She plays a major role in training her characters to be positive minded as she strongly believes that hope and trust in a soul is the best way to survive with an optimistic mind set. Helen Keller rightly pointed out that ‘Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement nothing can be done without hope and achievement’. In the novel ‘A Matter of Time’, Deshpande brings out the transition that happens in each character’s life and makes the readers to flip the final page of the book with the wisdom that optimistic thoughts are not only inborn but can be also acquired by the positive attitude, it depends on how one thinks, looks and responds to any situations in their lives. By acquiring the dynamic secret of optimism, human beings can discover and keep rediscovering the sweetness of life in this holy cosmic that God has gifted .The chiseling process that happens in each character to be optimistic, teaches the readers to relish the sweetness of life of one’s own and others and also makes human being understand the value of positive mind set. Shashi Deshpande brings out the positive attitude of human beings through their experiences in this world. She also shows her immeasurable trust that she has on the inbound qualities of human beings which would lead them to progress.

The name of the book ‘A Matter of Time’ gives a deep insight on the analyzation that ‘Time is the best solution for all the problems’ that surrounds people. Human beings have to have patience to enjoy the blossom of life. The novel begins with the hope of the protagonist Sumi standing all alone gaining confidence to lead her life. Sumi listens to the song Jenna yahan, marna yahan (9) by Mukesh (which means life and death is in this world).when her husband says that he gave up the University job and would like to move away from the house. She quietly listens to the song and beautifully connects the song to her real life situation and understands that she has to live or die in this world and also realizes that there is no other better place for her to survive. So she decides to shoulder the responsibility of being a single parent and moves to her parent’s house. Indeed she makes herself ready to discover and rediscover the potentiality that is hidden in her and to know the power of human soul. Arindham Chaudhuri says in his book ‘Discover the Diamond in You’ that

Yes! You are a diamond! Just the way diamonds are rare, so are humans. While diamonds are found only in rare places on earth, similar is the case with life, which is found in the rarest of rare places in our solar system- in fact, earth is the only such place known to me. And amongst the thousands of different types of life, being born as a human being is no less than being a diamond in a coal mine!(25).

Certainly everyone in the family feels gloomy for Sumi, but she lives with resilience. She does not want to cut a sorry figure in the family. There is an occasion when Devi, her cousin cries for her life, but Sumi is so wise in telling her that she does not cry for herself, so she does not want anyone else also to cry for her and she has hope that she would face the spring season in her life though she suffers at present.

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; and a time to plant, a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill and time to heal; and time to break down, a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and time together ; and time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing ; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend ,and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak ; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace .

Bible Ecclesiastes 3

As Sumi thought now comes the time for her to work as a teacher .She is happy working as a teacher in a school to save her kids and she also writes a story the ‘Gardener’s son’ in two nights which was told by Goda, her mother’s sister when she was young in order to make Sumi eat curd and rice. The story goes like this,The king’s only loveable daughter eats curd and rice every day and washes her hands in the backyard tree every day after each meal. She grows into a beautiful princess and tells her father that she would like to marry the man who identifies the tree in which she has been washing her hands from her childhood. The palace Gardener’s son has been watching her every day and he says at the right time that ‘Rice and Curds ‘tree. The princess immediately falls in love with him.

Sumi enjoys rehearsing the tale with her school students .The students enjoy the fairy tale and asks her what happens when the gardener's son becomes a King? Sumi thinks so deeply about the conclusion part and says that

It's good thing fairy-tales end where they do. Wisdom lies in where to stop. Sanskrit drama is right: there should be no tragedy .If we are to construct a world, why not shape one with the hopelessness left out, why not end with the hope of happiness ,the promise of realization ?(158).

So she plans to end with Shubham, All is well, leaving the princess and Gardener's son to enjoy their lives. She becomes confident and seeks wisdom through positive attitude and the hope that she has in her. She grasps and considers all the valuables that she comes across in her life and the knowledge that is passed by her ancestors. Sumi stands close to the window and admires the weather and finds the spider scuttling to the center and then back. It is doing it over and over again to go ahead with its life. Sumi also gets motivated by looking at the spider that struggles to move on with its life.

She wants to bring her kids in the best way, she meets Gopal once and speaks about their daughters and says that she wants their daughter's life to be easy and comfortable and wants them to relish the precious and not to spit as it is bitter. And also says Gopal that their life is complete and she is so bold and is not scared of death unlike her mother.

Sumi has become very rational and intellectual towards the end of the story. She says Gopal that she started looking at things differently. It's all mixed up with the seasons and festivals and flowers and fruits. It's a cycle. Nothing is over; things keep coming back over and over again. They all are connected and human beings should have courage to face the world and also should know to filter the positives even from the negatives. She gives an example saying that

Ganapati and the rains

Dushhara and marigolds

Diwali and wintry feelings

Tulsi lagna and tamarinds... (219) A Matter of Time

Shashi Deshpande fills the mind of the readers' with the positive vibration through Sumi's character and also teaches the readers to enhance their self-esteem and self-growth without disappointing the people around them.

In the initial stage of Gopal's life, he is so hopeless and is scared to care for his wife and children and he keeps expressing to Sumi that oneness is impossible. Gopal declares Sumi that "Its two hearts beating and it can never beat in such unison. Sumi is only eighteen when she listens to the word sa-hriday which means "oneness is impossible" He suffers so much in rationalizing his thoughts, he blindly gives up his job because of his students and is not able to digest the attack on him by his own students, so he moves away from the house, interpreting that Sumi would understand him.

It's a kind of illness, a virus, perhaps which makes me incapable of functioning as a full human being, as a husband and father. He also tells her that he stopped believing in life that he is leading , suddenly it seemed unreal to him and he knew he could not go on (41).

He gives so much importance to the word 'Destiny'. "Destiny is just us, and therefore inescapable, because we can never escape ourselves. Certain actions are inevitable because we are what we are."(26). Gopal surrenders the complete he to Sumi. He never has the pride of a man.

"Gopal himself who could cross the barriers between the sexes with ease, who was able to do something most men found hard-present the whole self to a female, not just a part of himself." (107).

But later as time rolled by, he understands the love that he has for his family; he starts missing Sumi and understands the value of their relationship. Gopal says that "I knew I needed her, her warmth, her humanness, her womaness". (42) Each picture he visualizes reminds him of Sumi time and again. He goes to Dilwara temple, he sees the glowing idol of Parvathi and recollects the face of his wife Sumi and finds the reason behind his life.

‘We are searching for the truth; you, O bee, have found it’.

Found it? Yes, for a while it was that way. After years of blundering I had found the truth in my feelings for Sumi, my love for my children. But now I know I had only lost myself in

that beautiful, den green foliage (45).

However, the gradual positive transition that happens in him makes him realize the importance of his presence in the family and wishes to fulfill his responsibility as a father and husband.

Aru, Sumi’s eldest daughter wants to file a case against for the shame and disgrace that he has given to them and also she wants her mother to get divorced. Aru is short tempered and when her father exiles, she shouts at Sumi saying

‘You don’t care?’ That’s wonderful .You don’t care about where he is, you don’t care what people think - but I care, Yes I do, I care about papa having left us , I care about not having our own house. I don’t want to live like this, as if we’re sitting on a railway platform, I want my home back, I want my father back..... (21).

Aru, Charu and Seema starts disrespecting her as they become suspicious of her and starts calling her ‘she’. Aru meets her father very often and fights with him. However she studies well and joins Surekha, the lawyer to whom she was asking to file a case against her father. She becomes very brilliant in handling the cases. She happens to listen to the story of Yamuna Bai through one of Yamuna Bai’s student and that becomes a turning point in her life to be optimistic.

Aru is pleased to know that her great grandmother Manorama was one of Yamuna Bai’s students. Yamuna Bai returns to her parent’s house as a widow. She belongs to a very rich family and is a silver spoon. She has a vision that women should not be treated as child bearing machines and should be educated, so that they would see the beauty of the world through them. She feels that education is the tool, with which she would achieve her dreams. Yamuna Bai starts a school in a cow shed with dung smell. Aru is impressed listening to the story and wants to create a new life for herself and for others and self-estimates the purpose of her life. She

shoulders the responsibility of her family after the death of her mother and grandfather in an accident.

As Norman Vincent peal opines in his book power of positive thinking for young people 'Fill your minds with fresh, new, creative thoughts – thoughts of faith and kindness and generosity. Get rid of negative thoughts .Become a positive thinker. Do this and you'll re-make yourself. (154).

Conclusion

Shashi Deshpande's characters are great motivators for the readers' and they set as best examples for the people those who want to lead an optimistic life. The best technology that God has created is Human beings. So it is necessary to make the best out of one by being optimistic. One of the best psychologists of America opined that the greatest discovery of my generation is that 'Human beings can alter their lives by altering their altitudes of mind'.

Shashi Deshpande opines that human beings should be influenced with all the positive rudiments that environs them and should learn to learn the benefits of being positive. This helps one to feel the breeze of happiness and the need to spread the need of optimism in one's family that would certainly reflect the society.

Yes she who dreams is created. To dream is to cross boundaries of the physical world, to enter the regions of pure light to be illuminated, and to illuminate then, the world of others. (186)

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