

Miss Deepti Yadav

Assistant Professor

Gcrg Group of Institution

Lucknow, UP. India

Deepti4432@Gmail.Com

To Compare The Characters Depicted By Shashi Deshpande In Her Novels To The Condition
Of Women In The Present Day.

Abstract

The objective of this comparison is to find out the women characters of her novels are still alive or not. As her characters show problems like emotional trauma, gender-biases, marital issues, subjugation, and sometimes they assert themselves to fit in the canvas drawn by the patriarchal-society for the women or sometimes they become rebellious for their rights and status. Her characters fight for identity and their existence not as someone's wife or daughter in this male-dominated society. They struggle for gender equity, and against the notion, they are not a mere object to do household chores and look after their children. They are also a human being, treat them like and they also have their entity.

Keywords: Gender-biases, Rights and Status, Emotional trauma, Marital issues, and Patriarchal- society, Gender Equity.

Introduction

Shashi Deshpande is the prolific Indian writer, she wrote twelve novels and several short stories. For her novels like *Roots And Shadows*, she got Thirumathi Rangammal Prize in the year 1984, Sahitya Academy Award for the novel *That Long Silence* in the year 1991, and Nanjangud Thirumalamba Award for the novel *The Dark Holds No Terror* in the year 1991. Her novel *Roots And Shadows* has been translated into the French and Dutch languages, the novel *The Dark Holds No Terror* has been translated into German and Russian languages. She also got the Padma Shri Award in 2009. Shashi Deshpande's main focus in her fiction is essentially on the woman and her role in male-made mundane society. In her novels, the protagonists belong to the middle-class Indian society and she also depicts their struggle against all odds. One half of humanity cannot be neglected in this modern world. She has given voice to women's feelings and their struggle for existence in the society. Feminism is also an issue in her novels, her novels mainly dwell on desperation and frustrations, misunderstandings and incompatibility, loneliness and alienation of sensitive women pitted against an ill mated marriage around them. She has been against her work being labeled as 'feminist.' In one of the interviews with Lakshmi Holmstrom; she said, 'I always try to make the point now about what feminism is not, and to say that we have to discover what it is in our own lives, our own experience.' Being the author of '70s and '80s, she mirrors a realistic picture of the contemporary middle-class, educated, urban Indian woman. In her novels she uses the stream of consciousness technique, to explore the inner pain, suppressed dreams and emotions, rejections, oppression, and subjugation of her protagonists. Usually, in her novels, women are the protagonist who grows, develop as human-being. Her novels show the crisis and dilemma in the life of her protagonist in their relations with the people around them. For this comparison, take her four novels viz: *Roots And Shadows*, *The Dark Holds No Terror*, *That Long Silence*, and *The Binding Vine*.

Shashi Deshpande's Novels

Her four novels have been analyzed to understand the conditions and the problems faced by the women in the overtly accepting modernity but still, the inner-core of the society has its traditional influence. The novels have been analyzed individually in detail.

Roots and Shadows: This novel is an exploration of Indu's quest for the realization of her identity, the assertion of her individuality and liberty. Indu, the protagonist, rebels against the Akka, the head of a matriarchal family, who believes in the age-old traditions and beliefs, and marries to Jayant, a man of different caste, of her own choice. In her quest for freedom and happiness, she left her home and thought her marriage will provide her the freedom from the restriction imposed on her in the name of gender-distinction in her home. After marriage, she thought that she enters into the free world of her dreams and now she can fulfill her aspirations. She feels that after marrying him, she become complete, not as a woman, but as a person, because they have a total understanding and perfect communication between them. Soon she realizes it is her illusion, and she felt cheated. Her dreams are suppressed as her husband takes her for granted to expect her to submit in one way or the other. Jayant is also like any other conservative man. She is even more pained to realize that she has all along been unconsciously aping the role of the ideal Indian wife. She feels trapped in marriage, and not satisfied because she gets neither loved nor support or happiness. She even sacrifices her dream and ambition to become a creative writer. In her failed marriage, she even develops an extra-marital affair, but she feels disgusted and frustrated by her silence, submissiveness, and passivity.

She gets a shock of her life, after knowing Akka's marital life: she married at twelve and bears the physical, sexual, and mental torture by her husband and mother-in-law. After knowing that, she emancipated herself from her built-in cage and also shows the gross gender-discrimination and its fall out in a male-dominated society.

The Dark Holds No Terror: In this novel, the protagonist Sarita (Saru), survives in a male-dominated world that offers no easy-outs to women. The preference for a boy over girls openly witnessed in most Indian homes is seen in blatant discrimination between Saru and her brother. After her brother's demise, there were no celebrations in her house and her mother also said if he was dead then why you were alive, which leads to a sense of insecurity and hatred towards her parents. Devoid of love and security, she wanted to be loved and gets that attention from Manu, whom she marries as her wish after denial from her parents because he belongs to another caste. But there is an inverse decline in her conjugal relationship with her social and financial rise in society. Her husband did not accept her rise and he turns into a sadist and vent his frustration on Saru in the form of sexual sadism. She becomes clear-eyed with no illusion left about love and romance, after her relationship with three-men Manu her husband, Boozie and the frustrated Padmaker, Saru neither surrender nor escapes from the problem, but with great strength accepts the challenge of her protégé.

That Long Silence: It's about Jaya, the protagonist of the novel, who despite having played the role of a wife and mother to perfection, finds herself lonely and estranged. She is a convent educated girl, who wants to pursue her dreams and make her own identity. After completing her college, her family starts finding a groom for her. And in her home her aunts always said, in the girl's life education does not have any importance: she should have expertise in household chores. Her brother and uncle fix her marriage with Mohan, who is an engineer. They decided her marriage without taking her consent, whether she wants to marry him or not. Because Mohan wants to marry her, in Indian society male consent for marriage has more value than females. Though Mohan is an educated man, still he believes that women should be submissive to men. Because in his house her mother and sister always submissive to his father. He never asks Jaya to give any opinion or suggestion in the

decisions, always taken by him. Jaya wants to become a writer but due to his displeasure, she gives up her dream and only writes some articles for a monthly magazine. This is always burdened Jaya, that she is unjust to herself, she has to do something for herself. But she subjugated herself in front of her husband's dominance. Even she denied her friendship with Kamat, who helps her to become a writer, but she refuses his help, because she has fear, if her husband came to know about it, it would shatter her so-called the perfect home image or even estranged her. Still, in her inner-self there is a conflict, to find her own identity. Her relationship with her husband gets strained, when he has charges of corruption in his office, at that time he wants solace from her and also wants her to pursue her job as a writer to support the family. But she failed to comfort him with her words because there is a communication gap between them and he left her alone. At that moment she realizes that she has to overcome her inner-self conflict and also with that silence prevailing between her and her husband.

The Binding Vine: This novel exposed the life of millions of Indian women who suffer neglect pain and even crimes in isolation, silence, and submission. The protagonist Urmila (Urmi) struggles with her memories of losing her daughter Anu and grapples with the concept of honor, dignity, ignominy, marriage, etc. She was also criticized by her mother and other people, why she needs to work as a teacher. Because her husband Kishore earn well as he is in merchant navy. She also understands and feels the fear and agony of Mira and Shakutai, even though their stories are quite disparate. In the novel, she narrates the pathetic tale of Mira, her mother-in-law, who is a victim of marital rape in marriage. Mira's poetry reveals the pain of a vibrant young woman trapped in an unhappy marriage, and of a gifted writer whose work remains in secrecy and silence and found in the trunk, which was posthumously translated and published by Urmi. Urmi also narrates the tale of her acquaintance Shakutai, who has been deserted by her husband for another woman. The worst

part of her tale is that her elder daughter Kalpana is brutally raped by her sister Sulu's husband, Prabhaker. Though she was brutally raped, and she hovers between life and death in a hospital ward but still, her mother was more concerned about her reputation. Because reputation is everything in women's lives, in fact, it is more than her own life. Urmi takes up cudgels on Kalpana's behalf and brings the culprit to book.

Urmi realizes the constant tug of war women have to contest between the self and what others see them as the expectation to conform to the socially constructed image and both scary and impossible to fulfill.

Conclusion

A close comparison to her characters and the condition of present-day women or the situations or circumstances they face are quite similar. The characters like Indu, Saru, Jaya, Urmi, Mira, and Kalpana are still alive in our modern society. Many women face the gender-discrimination at their homes or their workplaces. They still struggle to raise their voice against crimes like marital rapes, emotional torture, violence against them, etc, they bear it silently. They still struggle for their own identity and individuality (apart from being a daughter, wife, mother, sister) in the male-dominated society. They still fight for gender equity and want they should be treated as human-being, not as an object within the confine of patriarchal -society.

Work Citation

Siddhartha Sharma, Shashi Deshpande's Novels: A Feminist Study, New Delhi, Atlantic Publishers, 2005, 13-16.

S. Prassana Sree, Women In The Novels Of Shashi Deshpande- A Study, Sarup And Sons, New Delhi, 2003.

Shashi Deshpande's "Interview: Shashi Deshpande Talks to Lakshmi Holmstrom," wasafiri, No 17, Spring 1993, 26.

Sodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in, chapter-5 Feminism and Shashi Deshpande's Feminism.

Dr. Tukaram S. Sawant, Shashi Deshpande's Roots And Shadows: A Tragic Story Of Strained Marital Relationships, Vol.2, Issue. 12, Nov 2016.