**WOMEN AS A GENDER IN THE SOCIETY**

Mr. MOHD IQBAL BHAT

**&** ANKITA PARIHAR

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Gender, a social structure that divides men and women as opposing categories with unequal social value, is something that hinders the life and survival of every woman in society. Beauvoir clearly emphasizes the difference between sex, biological reality, and gender as an explanation or symptom of cultural reality when she argues that "Woman" is not a natural idea, but a natural reality. But being a woman is being a woman. Gender is a construct that constantly hides its origins. This does not necessarily reflect gender differences between men and women, but norms are determined politically and some mechanisms of expression and imposition by one gender over another. In power games, men control women. He is 'self', she is 'other'. Showalter's words cannot be omitted:

*……Gender is not a question of difference, but which assumes that the sexes are separate and equal; but of power since in looking at the history of gender relations we find gender asymmetry, inequality, and male dominance in every known society ………*

Shashi Deshpande has created flesh and blood female characters, but they are not harsh enough compared to other female characters created by other writers about women. With their own strength, women fight cultural hostility and male-dominated society. They have strong personalities that cannot be crushed and destroyed by the noble patriarchy. In her novel, Shashi Deshpande gives a vivid picture of women's struggles and achievements through her works. In her writings, she clearly envisions women's rebellion for equality and freedom against conventional voices and various assumptions about women. In her writing, she portrays the image of oppressed women as she sees them in the patriarchal Indian society and on the other hand, the rise of a new liberated and conscious woman who can decide and control her own destiny.

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1. Bhatnagar, K. Manmohan and Rajeshwar. Anita Desai's Novels: A Critical Study. Cirebon: Atlantic Publisher (P) Ltd. 2011. Print.
2. Dr Neeta Sharma. "Realistic Female Characters in Shashi Deshpande's Novel", International Journal of English Language and Literature, Volume 2, Issue 10, 2015, PP 13-15
3. William Heinemann. Clear Light of The day. London ltd. 1980. Print.

Shashi Deshpande is concerned about being a woman based on her potential. Women then have to struggle to conform to socially imposed gender roles in order to find their identity and significance in this man's world. The experience of women in Anita Desai's three novels, Seuneu di Gunung (1977) and Caang Panon (1980), is about oppression, suppression and self-determination through spatial existence. Most of Desai's novels deal with female characters and their experiences in a patriarchal society. Female protagonists are often placed in opposition to the traditional ideology espoused by men and some older generations, who see the service of seeing female passivity as a normative trait in Indian society.

*‘I asked you, Saru……give it up and do what?*

*‘I don’t know. Live like the others do, I suppose. Stay at home and look after children. Cook and Clean. What else? The Dark Holds No Terrors. p 80*

*‘Saru, do you know you look amazingly like your mother now?’ It neither annoyed her nor pleased her, that remark. Nor did she imagine that it was expression that so resembled the dead woman’s …….the eyes joyless and arid, the expression one of indifference. The Dark Holds No Terrors. p 164*

Sarita (Saru) is aware of her gender even as a child. Sarah, a typical middle-class woman, is uncomfortable with the false rhetoric about equality between men and women. He wants to break away from the freedom of tradition and use his rights to express his personal potential and sense of masculinity by asserting his identity and self. Sarah is anti-patriarchy. Since childhood, he has been deprived of parental care and love, leading to a life without love. His mother loves his brother but hates him. When his brother drowned, he was blamed for his death for no reason. So, this is not only Saru's problem, but also some people who were born as girls. Their gender is a curse for them. As a result, Saru married Manu, a boy from a lower caste, against his parents' wishes. Here we find a sign that he returned from the patriarchal way. Marriage with Manu is an affirmation and affirmation of a woman's independence and sensibility. As a result, Manu's male ego was wounded by his high position in the medical world. Saru is a doctor by day and a trapper by night. Novel "No Dark Terror"; explores the social exclusion of women and the perception of their inferiority and women's economic independence, with Saru as a protagonist who disturbs the patriarchal structure. No Dark Terror explores the social taboo of women and their perception of their inferiority, and the economic independence of women with

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1. Fire on the mountain. New Delhi: Random House India Pvt. Ltd., 1977. Print.
2. The Dark Holds No Terror New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1990
3. Fasting. London: Wine, 1999. Print.
4. Clear light of day. London. William Heinemann Ltd., 1980. Print

Saru as the protagonist who breaks the patriarchal structure. Sarah continued her traditional education and became a doctor against the wishes of her traditional parents. He struggles with siblings since childhood. She even married Manu (Manohar) from a lower caste and developed a caste marriage. Here, the novelist reveals the problems women face when they enter family life under the strict patriarchal authority of their husbands. So is Saru (Sarita), who is successful outside as a doctor but becomes a victim at home at the hands of her husband. Therefore, the writer seeks to be recognized not as a woman with an independent social image, but as an individual. Thus, the novel brilliantly subverts social conventions and patriarchal ideology that subordinates women and men in the political, economic, social, legal and artistic spheres of family religion, which hinders the socialization of the family unit. Shashi Deshpande distinguishes that the status of women is reflected in their domestic and family life. Where education, economic independence, and motherhood disrupt the existing equation, there are indications of broken family relationships. There is a picture of a typical Indian man who wants a son; sole heir of family and property. Even the pious Dr. Kulkarni tortured his wife in search of a son; without a word, he made his wife completely dependent on him. Of course, in Come and Die, women's affairs are presented with difficulties and dangers arising from their absence in society as a female gender. Violence against women killed by men as a tool of violence against women is revealed. In addition, the author shows that women suffer from traditional parenting. So; and Kshama.

*Women?, Why was I trying to fool myself, why was I trying to protect myself? I had to admit it- It had been I who laughed. “The weapons of weak and the, oppressed, Jaya.’ Dada had, with a grin, handed me the usual reassuring Freudian patter when I had consulted him about Rahul’s bed-wetting which had started soon after Rati’s birth. ‘Tears, Tantrums, bed-wetting, they are all part of some guerrilla warfare.’ That Long Silence p 168-169*

The novelist is protesting against the treatment of women in our culture through her protagonist ‘Jaya’, Self-aware, sensitive and creative. It takes an inward psychological journey to find oneself. But the destructive effects and prolonged suppression of his personality make him psychologically ill and neurotic and schizophrenic. Therefore, protest in the form of questions about gender issues and the status of Indian women. Also, the characters try to give a different view of history from a woman's point of view.

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1. The Dark Holds No Terror New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1990
2. That Long silence. Cirebon: Disha Books, 1992.
3. John, M. "Gender and Development in India, 1970-1990", Economic and Political Weekly, 23 November 1996

Shashi Deshpande's study of female characters repeatedly asks the reader this question - is there feminism in the search for identity? The answer to this question is that feminism is really trying to find identity through a plurality of voices. But some may argue that it is about "feminism". For them, it can be said that the problem of analyzing women's voices through feminist theory is necessary because society is not ready to give women their sense of respect. Equality of women is not just a myth and has been proven by many sources. Deshpande's novel is one such source. So everyone can look forward to the universalization of women. Deshpande says that gender is just a concept of power. A social structure that; divides men and women into two parts, men as the highest, women as 'other', men as the subject and women as the object.

**2. FEMALE SEXUALITY AND MARRIAGE: THE DILEMMA**

A common saying in India is, “Bringing up a girl is like someone else's water green pasture”. Marriage provides an accepted social identity for women just as caste initiation is for men. Marriage is an important necessity for women. A woman's traditional responsibilities for child care, caring for other family members, and limited physical strength make her subordinate to her husband in many countries around the world. The family is seen as an institutional structure through the notion of enforced gender inequality. Women's destiny is considered to be related to the family which is related to the society. The female character thinks about returning to her husband. Although this is their tacit submission to patriarchy, the author never ignores the value of marriage. Returning to the husband does not mean that the wife is defeated.

In Shashi Deshpande's novels we can find extreme forms of love from sexual violence, cruelty to love that transcends gender. Racism is often manifested through male dominance - which is probably the root cause of the subjugation and oppression of women. Bell Hooks In her essay on “sisterhood” argued that women should not "share common oppression to fight as equals to end oppression" or need "anti-male sentiment to unite them" (2000: 67). The best thing is to share their problems and experiences. As a life partner, a woman has a fourfold character: her husband's half, figuratively speaking, her hero; sahadharmini, partner in fulfilling human and divine goals;

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1. Kishwar Madhu (2004), The Horror of 'Names': Why I Don't Call Myself a Feminist" in Chardhuri Maitrayee (ed.), Feminism in India: Issues in Contemporary Indian Feminism Delhi: Times for Women
2. Septi Gumiandari and Ilman Nafi'a. Women in Feminist Identity: "A Critical Analysis of the Gender Movement from an Islamic Psychological Perspective." Journal of Gender Studies Volume 03, 01, (2019).

Sahakarmini who is a part of all her husband's actions and sahayogini who is really a partner in all his activities. Householders, who share biological, psychological and individual dharma together, are called dampati. However, recently, due to the modernization of society and women's economic participation, the status of women has attracted the attention of social scientists. Women's professional jobs give them greater wealth and prestige, which in turn affects the power structure in the family. Shashi Deshpande's A Matter of Time is a multi-generational story that explores the complex relationships within an extended family. Set in present-day Karnataka, the story is told in the voices of different characters. One day, Sumi's husband Gopal was walking with his three daughters without explanation. Surprisingly, his wife also didn't ask the reason which made the girl nervous. Sumi takes her daughters Aru, Charu and Seema to her ancestral home. Kalyani and Sripati's parents lived together but did not speak to each other for thirty years. Little by little, the mystery of the strange and depressing silence is revealed. Kalyani finally opens up as her relationship with her daughter and grandson deepens. Meanwhile, eighteen-year-old Aru believes that her father is the reason for leaving her family.

*Female Sexuality! We’re ashamed of owning it. We can’t speak of it, not even to ourselves. But Surpanakha was not, she spoke of her desires, she flaunted them. And therefore were the men, unused to such women, Frightened? Did they feel threatened by her? I think so. Surpanakha, neither ugly nor hideous, but a woman charged with sexuality, not frightened of displaying it- A Matter of time p-191.*

These lines tell the story of Sumi, the protagonist. One morning, without warning Gopal, a respected Professor, he came out to his family for reasons he couldn't explain. Sumi was silent and surprised. Gopal's sudden abandonment is a great source of ridicule and mental trauma for him, because it is not only great shame and ridicule, but also a better understanding of what is attractive. Sumi and her three daughters returned to the shelter of the Big House where her parents Kalyani and Sripati lived in oppressive silence. They haven't talked in thirty-five years. With a modern and liberal outlook, Sumi opposes the old social ideology and the orthodox approach of women facing abandonment by their husbands. Shashi Deshpande explores the issue of rape, death and decay, where three generations are opposed to the original sanctity and propriety of marriage and family life. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Dr Neeta Sharma**. “**Authentic Female Characters in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande”, *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature,* Volume 2, Issue 10, 2015, PP 13-15
2. Kakkar, Sudhir. *Intimate Relations: Exploring Indian Sexuality*. New Delhi; Penguin Books, Ltd. 1989.
3. A *Matter of Time.* New Delhi: Penguin, 1996.

Here, Aru is the protagonist who struggles against differences in male-female relationships. Deshpande represents the current phase of tradition and modernity. Aru herself is a bridge between old and new.

*I was not allowed the healing passion of a fit of crying that would have left me exhausted, sleep-washed and becalmed something slipped into my tear –hazed vision………. Cry The Peacock p 10.*

*I was alone. Yes, I whimpered, it is that I am alone, and then give myself up to a fit of furious pillow-beating, kicking, ever thing but crying. From childhood experience, I knew this to be sweetly exhausting. Cry The Peacock p 11.*

Maya, who has an old marriage with Gautama, is almost a "reminiscence of the past" by Maya herself. It was really his attempt to tell himself to find and find meaning in his life. Her husband, Gautama, is a successful, middle-aged lawyer. He has little understanding of his young wife's spirituality. The complexity of her inner life comes across beautifully in the landscape as does her husband's frustration at not being able to communicate with her. One day during a dust storm, when the couple climbed onto the roof of their house, he pushed himself over the parapet and died. A few days later, he also committed suicide. Peacocks will fight before marriage, he said, "life knows death. Death, love lives." In Maya's mind, reality and myth merge into a nightly result. Anita Desai says that the most important social and religious event in a person's life is marriage. “Everything here seems to begin and end with marriage”.

Even in a society where marriage is a religion, it is obvious that it is against social and religious norms to divorce without going through marriage and parenthood first. In fact, marriage is so important among Indians that people involved in marriage decisions are rarely trusted. "Marriage" and "negotiation" are matters of caste and caste. "Love marriage", where a man and a woman decide to marry without family consultation, is considered unusual and even dangerous. When a couple gets married, their union is not passed down from person to person, but from generation to generation. Every marriage must be arranged according to the stricter rules of exogamy and endogamy, because every marriage is a public expression of the social status and rituals of a family and generation. In short, every marriage is a collective act that establishes the official relationship of a family or generation to another generation.

*‘It was an accident, a car knocked her down.’*

*‘This doctor has examined your daughter.’*

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1. Anita, Desia. Cry The Peacock. Cirebon: Oriental Papers, 1980. Print.
2. Gopal, N. R. A Critical Study of Anita Desai's Novel. Cirebon: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 1999, print.
3. Dalmiya, Ashashodhara. "Interview with Anita Desai." The Times of India. April 29, 1979.

*‘She was raped,’ he says, still speaking in English.*

*‘Your daughter has been……….’Vanna hesitates, searching for the Marathi word, gives up. ‘Some one has wronged her.’……The Binding Vine. … p58*

*‘If a girl’s honour is lost, what’s left? The girl doesn’t have anything wrong, people will always finger at her. ‘She turns to him, ‘even if it is true, keep it to yourself, don’t let anyone know of it, I have another daughter, what will became of her ……….?’*

*‘Where is your husband? ............*

*‘He came yesterday after I sent word. He sat, he cried, and went away.’*

*‘Doesn’t he live with you?’*

*‘No, He has another wife. ….The Binding Vine p59*

Urmi, an educated middle-class woman grieving her dead baby daughter, finds it hard to let go of her memories, so she meets Shakuntala at the hospital where her daughter-in-law works. When Dr. Bhaskar reports that Kalpa was brutally raped, Shakuntala thinks that her daughter has met with an accident. This is then followed by Shankuntala's reaction as an oppressed Indian mother in a male-dominated Indian society. Urmi sends Shakuntala home and they begin to bond. Urmi continues to visit asking Kalpana who is not worried. On the other hand, Urmi learns from Meera's mother-in-law's diary how she dislikes physical intimacy and how her husband uses her.

In an Indian wedding, a woman must turn herself into a prostitute to satisfy her husband's mundane needs. Thus, Mira's diary shows that she does not like sex with her husband, and that she physically hates married men. Thus, this novel gives us a graphic account of a society dominated by men.

*Sita noticed the haste with which they ran from her. They had all got together, she decided, her family, to fight her, to reject her, to run away and hide from her. Where Shall We Go This Summer p 141*

*Sita had escaped from duties and responsibilities, from order and routine, from life and the city, to the unlivable island. She had refused to give birth to a child in a world not fit to receive the child. She had the imagination to offer it an alternative--- a life unlived, a life bewitched. She had cried out her great ‘No.’ Where Shall We Go This Summer p143*

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1. Deshpande Shashi. *The Binding Vine.* London, Virago Press, 1994.
2. Deshpande, Shashi. *The Binding Vine*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, (1993).
3. Desai, Anita *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 1982. Print.
4. Joshua, p. And Rajamanickam, k. g. (2017). A self-made woman searches for her identity in Shah Shashi Deshpande's novel.

Sita is trapped in an unhappy marriage with Raman. To escape the daily reality of her husband and four children, she goes to the abandoned island of Manor in Marwa. She also wants to avoid giving birth to her fifth child. He felt that it was inhumane to live again in this cruel world. There are reminiscences about her childhood and her selfish father. He realized that the island was not the place for his problems. Peace kept him there and away from him. Finally, he concluded that it was better to return to reality. So he returned to his family.

*Woman – She is the one who is torn between tradition and modernity, she is one who is in search of self identity, she is the one who tries to give shape and content to individual existence in a sexist society (“Conflict and Identity in Shashi Deshpande novels”, 12-19)*

Traditions that teach women to behave like ideal mythical women such as Sita, Sakuntala, and Savitri try to idealize them and prevent them from stepping out of the mainstream. Almost all of Deshpande's novels are stories of Indian women who have suffered mental trauma and headaches for years. I have now chosen four of his novels (as the title suggests) to find the contrast of tradition and modernity in their protagonists. At the beginning of the plot, Shashi's wife remains polite, obedient and obliging to their husband's every wish. But due to the conflict and conflict of nature, he gradually drifts away from his wife.

Deshpande believes that Beauvoir was influenced by her feeling that women should define measure and study their particular domains. Deshpande, the protagonist, leaves home for peace and freedom after a misunderstanding of marriage. But they understand that it is better to watch their husband's heart and the outside world is cruel. In the end, they understand the way of the world, understand the hard truths of life, and return home with wisdom, maturity, and gentleness, a common theme in all novels. Deshpande has a keen understanding of passionate women and social realities. Deshpande fought for women's freedom from domination; to be economically independent and free from marriage; it is a way for women to be completely submissive to men.

*‘Those women were sitting on the bare ground, right in the dirt, mind you, not even a bit of a news paper or a mat under them. Just sitting there on the ground, like-like beggars. Imagine, Jaya, people like us in that situation!’ That Long Silence p 5*

Jaya, Indian Housewife remained silent throughout her life. The fragile and oppressed silence of the modern Indian housewife finds a voice in this novel that reflects Jaya's and her guest's inner awareness of identity.

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1. Deshpande Shashi "Conflict and Identity", International Referee Journal of English Language and Literature, 5.2: 12-19.
2. Deshpande, Shashi. That long silence, Delhi: Penguin India, 1989. Print.

A convent-educated, English-speaking woman with a literary taste, Jaya is torn between being a writer and a housewife. This novel is an autobiographical story of Jaya. With the protean roles of husband, daughter, sister, wife, mother, daughter-in-law, friend, mistress and Mr. "woman" newspaper columnist, he felt lonely, even with Mohan and his two children. Mohan also could not understand the feeling that was torn from him. Her married life was also unhappy as she described it as "a pair of bulls". So Jaya feels suffocated in Mohan's house and finds her feminine identity lost. She also realizes that her inner writer can't come out because of men who don't like her writing. It is printed according to patriarchal convention. Mohan was tortured by a hidden abortion. When her young son ran away from home, she felt inadequate as a mother.

**4. CONCLUSION**

Women suffer in patriarchal structures. Women in India have suffered from the male-dominated social structure of society for decades. They lack physical, emotional, financial and other advantages, but they do not have the same rights as men. Many obstacles and limitations appear in various walks of life.

But with the passage of time, women began to reach the light of education. Now they are starting to fight for their rights in their cries and voices against the oppressive social order. Women explored various domestic crises that led to the initiation of research. Despande's concern and sympathy is mainly for women. By highlighting women's struggle for self-esteem and self-expression, the author questions the many forms of oppression, including sexual violence that women face in our society. A new generation of women has emerged, embracing the changing value of women's own voices, voices that have been suppressed for centuries. Shashi Deshpande points out that woman’s are appointed. He strongly believes in the relationship between men and women. He felt that men and women should live together to make their lives beautiful and make a great nation.

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2. Parra, Firdous Hussain. (2016). Shashi Deshpande, “The Dark Holds no Terror and That Long Silence, Quest for self-identification”.
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