

## THE PICTURE OF CONFLICT BETWEEN FEMININE CONCEPT AND FEMINISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF SHASHI DESHPANDE

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### ABSTRACT

To think against or beyond the existing categorization has been a common factor which is certainly evident from the development of the feminine outlook and the evolution of feminism. In the past women had been discriminated at the conceptual as well as the empirical level. But now A new wind is blowing all over the worlds –the re-emergence of feminine energy which has been submerged under patriarchal system Although this transformation is inevitable it has taken valuable time to evoke the desired emulation of the contemporary women. Moreover, it was also not the desired expectation of the society in general and particularly the patriarchal system. But now, feminism stands as aberrant alternative offering a justified agreement with case studies for the society as well as the section of individuals connected to the views because of the spirit. This is basically the reason for many contemporary writers to touch upon this issue and this present study elucidates the portrait of women in Shashi Deshpande's two novels namely *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *Roots and Shadows*.

**KEYWORDS:** Aspiration, Oppression, Indoctrinate, Patriarchal

### INTRODUCTION

Feminine concept is nothing but keeping up the customs, beliefs, practice, conventions, rituals, observance, habits – created by the forefathers and following them inter practice. On the other hand, feminism is completely different from feminine concept. It means discovering the inventions into new dimensional heights. On the other hand it means refreshing, rejuvenation or renovating the old generations' ideas and beliefs. Conflict is a dispute or disagreement between two things. The conflict exists between youth and elders which excels the generation gap.

The Encyclopedia Britannica explains, "Conflicts are often unconscious, in the sense that the person cannot clearly identify the source of his distress. The conflicts that involve intense threat or fear are not solved readily but make the person feel helpless and anxious. Subsequent adjustment may then be directed more to the relief of anxiety than to the solution of real problems"

### THE NOTION OF WOMEN IN INDIA

An Indian woman lives with her parents as a daughter and her life, in the context of India, stands as something to support the masculine section of the family in domestic activities along with her educational career even in an urban setup. It is a natural and traditional oppression that befalls on them though the intensity is bearable because of its associated compassion from the family members and if not, the possibility of opting out in the near future in the form of a new life because of marriage. Even there she enjoys when given a role that she should stay at home all the time, do the house-work faithfully, and look after her husband when he returns home from work.

The aspiration of any woman is certainly for the reasons like to be beautiful, to be loved and to play an important role as the maker of harmony in a family. The general feminine concept, discloses the image of a 'tender', loving, 'caring woman' who later comes to be propagated as women limited to the role of a wife and mother. On marriage, a girl is cut off completely from her family and is considered part of her husband's family. She enters a new circle and new relationships. She literally worships a new set of gods with a new name and responsibility. She was also indoctrinated as to how she should behave in her new home – patient, enduring and adjusting to their customs.

Feminine concept plays a very crucial role in indoctrinating values and beliefs into children and also teaches them that they have to accept the norms of the society without questioning. It is by this method that the family perpetuates the state and justifies the oppressions and suppressions of the women without, entertaining any form of protest from them. Even here, generally, women enjoy this self-sacrificing role and is infect proud to undertake it. Even if there be some great disappointments, many are contented with what has come to them, in comparison with others that they know. Usually, Some due to their lack of education and isolation from the society, fear to come out of it to the world and face things by themselves. Thus it is very obvious that the role played by them from the beginning is in no way similar to that of the principles of the feminism though it remains as a possibility.

### **GANDHI'S VIEWS ON WOMEN**

Our father of nation Gandhirespected traditions of the society, but not at the cost of loss of individual dignity. His practical and dynamic advice was "It is good to swim in the waters of tradition, but to sink in them is suicide". One of the noteworthy results of his life-work has been the awakening of women, which made them shed their deep-rooted sense of inferiority and rise to dignity and self- esteem. According to him "Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the very minutest details in the activities of man and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him. She is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere of activity as man is in his".

### **TREATMENT OF THE CONFLICT IN THE NOVELS**

**The Dark Holds No Terros** depicts the journey of modern women towards financial independence, emotional balance and social recognition. Sarita often referred to as Saru in the novel is a modern perfectionist who "defies her own mother to become a doctor, defies her cast to marry outside, defies social conventions. She is confident, competent and amazingly conscious of her own career and place in society.

Saru comes back to her family home overtly to look after her widower father but covertly to escape from the nightmarish brutality of her sadist husband, Manu who inflicts on her every night. Living in her father's home she reflects on the events of her life and the novel gets unfolded through her memories of the past. Though she is conscious about her individuality; she is deprived of all her desires and rights. Saru poses questions about the institution of marriage and the role of man and woman with in this institution. Saru has started sensing that it is their right for freedom and individuality. There is an atmosphere of revolt

Saru in her mind always compelled to ask the question in a male dominated society, "what do you want me to do? What do you want me to be? How can I please you?". In all her attempts she had this sense for waiting to happen. That waiting and learning and growing is an on going process and there never will be a time in life when the growing and learning is complete.

**Roots and Shadows** Through Akka, Deshpande shows the evil of child marriage. Child marriage was the root cause of the physical and moral degradation of Hindu society, but unfortunately was institutionalized by society for centuries. The traditional concept is that woman gets married early which is an irrational practice. Akka was married to a rich man when she was twelve. After six months of her marriages, she 'grew up' and went to her husband's home. The house turned out to be a hell for her. When she attempted to runaway from the house she was locked up in a room and allowed to starve

When Indu studies in the college Akka doesn't allow her to meet the boys and cultivate friendship with them. The older generation feels that due to the tenderness of the age the younger generation will fail to realize future liabilities and consequences. Indu also mocks at the traditional idea of not calling one's husband by his name as it shortens the age of the husband. Later she acknowledges that she too is not different from other women as she always wants Jayant to be with her. After she gets married she does all the activities her husband would like. At a time when arranged marriages were the rule of the day she daringly loved her Jayant and decided to go with him

Belonging to the younger generation Padmini sticks to the old values. At first parental concern, symbols of tradition and old values have no room in Indu's psyche, on the other hand Padmini accepts the parental concerns. For the older generation, the family has to be good and comfortable. Indu ultimately realizes that she has been chasing shadows, leaving her roots far behind in family and in Jayant. An adulterous relationship with Naren is nothing more than a mere shadow to her. The novelist has pictured the spirit of reformation that is alive through Indu and Saru. In their effort to emancipate modern Indian women, both Indu and Saru, despite their education, have all sacrificed bits of their personality like every traditional Indian woman.

As years went by women came to believe that they are inferior by nature, have even embarked on to justify their own oppression and victimization and find it difficult to believe that they live in a male-dominated, male-centered society. For centuries, the notion of a woman in general has made the Indian woman to be more patient and whose pride in life is nothing but suffering. Whatever violence or problems occur to her, she has to accept it and the society forces her to accept. The women mutely accepted and practiced the age old conventions. She is aware of her dependency which shows that she needs a man to attain fulfillment. Here the power of masculine domination in gender formation is evident. She has shaped herself according to her husband's needs and effaced her identity completely. In fact the male-oriented society forces her to remain in the acceptable system and hence she is made to suffer the consequences and become a non-entity. She is incapable of demanding her own identity and becomes a total recluse. So far the woman has looked at this sort of attitude and treatment as man's privilege and accepted it with no murmur. But the present day woman has realized the unjust nature of such an attitude and has started thinking. As we observe, in the life of Indu and Saru, marriage to the man of their choice brings only disillusionment. Though they were educated their ostensibly progressive minded husbands found no different from the average Indian male.

Another notable point is that the Indu and Saru are shown to be in a state of confusion at the beginning. But at the end due to their inner self they emerge as more confident, more in control of themselves and significantly more hopeful to realize themselves fully. Saru could have very well kept herself away from man and never come back to him again. But as a typical Indian woman, familiar within the Indian situation and tradition she does not even react the way she should, when she is insulted. Thus Modern Indian women have an uncanny ability to make impossible things achievable and real. At the same time they are also aware of the traditions and the conventions still and they sustain some sort of harmony through it because of the age old customs, ceremonies, conventions and its relevance and values. Modern Indian women thrive and

strive for sufficient courage and power to stand their ground and they have enough spirit to shape up their unfair lives and inform the world they live in the larger concept of love.

### THE CONFLICT AND THE ENJOYMENT

It is clear through the presentation of Saru In *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and Indu in *Roots and Shadows* that women of India are not completely happy with the way they are treated and the way in which their mothers and grand mothers have been treated. The woman belonging to present day has finally realized that she is not as helpless and dependent as a child. She is as equivalently competent as man. Another fact is that the contemporary educated woman has gradually realized the likes and dislikes in man's willful overlooking of woman's wishes. Until the sixties and seventies man alone was looked as bread winner and woman was confined only to household. In the modern era, woman too has become a direct money earner. Yet, Indian women do not want to completely cut themselves off from the tradition and the lovable burden of playing a major role as a domestic support in the family of her mother and her mother-in-law. She in fact wants more recognition for what she is doing and what her predecessors have been doing. She is proud of the fact that only she is capable of playing both the role of integrating the family and earning for the family better than any body else in the family. What she aspires is not detachment from the past or cutting herself off from the tradition but the approval of her prominence in the family and recognition of her values and capabilities for the betterment of the society.

At the same time, she questions all the postulations and threats to women just because of their sex and from which men are exempted because of the belonging to the supposed dominant sex. So, it is like announcing to the world of men that they are capable of doing all that men can do and are also capable of doing even more than that. In this way they claim to believe themselves as some one who should be valued more than men yet they prefer to stand as second being contented with the realization.

### CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, the conflict between feminine concept and feminism is eternal. But never has it been acute, as it is now. Caught amidst this situation, young modern Indian women leave behind conventions. But they cannot totally sever themselves off from tradition. Nor does modernity offers them a total sense of security. It is also not the desired expectation of the society in general but still feminism stands as uncharacteristic alternative that offers a justified agreement with case studies for the society at the large and the section of individuals connected to the views because of the spirit in particular. But one irrefutable positive factor is that they have risen from their marginal lives to craft their future on the centre stage.

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