Conclusion

Almost every culture in every time and place has had some institution that resembles what we know as marriage. Marriage and family were considered the significant part both for male and female in the past. However, in the present, there are more people make their decisions that marriage is not their priority in the future plan, even no longer an inevitable process during their lives. Some feminists seek the end of formal marriage: "The institution of marriage is the chief vehicle for the perpetuation of the oppression of women; it is through the role of wife that the subjugation of women is maintained."¹ But still "Marriage is crucial because it is the only accessible form of self-definition for girls in her society."²

The institution of marriage will continue to change. Women have taken control on their life as should be. Females do not rely on male and seek for the security of economic through marriage system. They can choose to be married as well as have a career. Society does not have control in the lives of married couples as it had in the past time. With the transformation of the society, the idea of marriage is detaching the security in finance. But spouses should share work and family responsibilities. Such role sharing is supposed to increase the quality of work in marriage by providing
husbands and wives with common interests around which they can build empathetic regard and mutual understanding.

The rise of individualism together with a new respect for the individual pursuit of happiness in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought about the rise of a companionate marriage. The companionate marriage stands in clear contrast to an older model of marriage where women specialize in private functions and men specialize in public functions. The elimination of such gender roles, patriarchal authority and power is seen as a key mechanism for promoting marital intimacy. The companionate theory of marriage predicts that marriages characterized by an ethic of equal regard, as well as equal access to the labor force, will have higher levels of male emotion work and interpersonal honesty.\(^3\) Women are happier in their marriages if they are strongly committed to the institution of marriage, and if they share the social sources of their commitment to marriage with their husbands.

People get married for many different reasons, whether it be for love, money, power, or simple companionship. In her novels, Austen combines love with fortune and promotes a form of prudent marriage. Hence financial soundness, at least to a moderate degree, is essential for domestic happiness. Austen also emphasizes the importance of a prior affection together with good quality cognition of a prospective husband or wife in a courtship. That could lead to a future happiness on the sides of both, husband and wife, resulting from a mutual understanding and respect in marriage. The key to a successful marriage was a right balance of the head and heart.
As I already pointed out in preceding chapter, marriage in the 18th century was an economic basis, providing social as well as financial stability. The financial pressures on women to marry are deeply connected with the general view that marriage was not only seen as a relationship between two people but also as an alliance between whole families which could cause social uprising or downfall.

Marriage was looked upon by both men and women as necessity for security, regardless of a lack of attraction or love. Social security did not exist at the time and for women, especially, the idea of growing old without financial support caused great consternation. Thus, as illustrated in PP, E, and MP, many marry those whom they hold in low esteem but who possesses a great deal of financial stability. Both couples take advantage of their marriage; since he wishes to have a wife to follow the patterns of the society at that time and she is getting quite old already to get a husband.

Of course, marriage did not guarantee a woman’s happiness ever after in the late eighteenth century. While Austen’s novels “unquestionably reflect her justified frustration with women’s economic dependence, the neglect of their education, and the unfair inheritance laws of her day”; Austen’s women are not that different from the women of today. They fail, they triumph, they win the heart of the man they love only to lose it and win it again, and while all of it that is going on, they try to figure out who they are, and what is really important in life. Like the nineteenth century too, a great majority of people today believe they aren’t complete without the benefit of marriage.
The post-colonial writers of Indo-English novels equip with a new education and sociability have different perspective of the images of woman. The bulk of post-colonial English literature has been preoccupied with the marginalized. In India the focus falls on the women suppression. In a male dominated society, woman is suppressed to be an ideal wife and mother. She is dependent for her status and survival upon her husband, her father and her sons.

Deshpande is the one of the Indian writers to have made bold attempts at giving a voice to the disappointments and frustration of women characters. They attempt to assert themselves in a male dominated society. They want to say that they are equal with men. But at the end most accept their failure. The prominent trait of Deshpande’s women characters is that see themselves responsible for problems too.

Deshpande’s novels reveal the inability of the women to speak and “the positive movement is always the movement towards the breaking of that long silence.” Deshpande mentions, “if I am asked what I have achieved, or hoped to achieve through my writing, I would say that I have articulated women’s silences…. I now know that in articulating the silence of women, I have been able to break out of my own silence.”

Deshpande gives unexpected twist to the plot at the end. The preceding events lead us to feel that their marriages are totally towards its end. But they want the mere survival of their marriage. As Siddhartha Sharma says, “In quest for the wholeness of identity, Deshpande does not advocate separation from the spouse but a tactful assertion of
one’s identity within marriage.” The novels end in an affirmative note of hope as against frustration and despair with which it began.

The heroines initially seek refuge to escape from domestic, professional and sexual traps in which they find themselves. They rebel against the traditions but ultimately try to compromise with the existing reality. There are four types of women characters in the four novels subjected to study here:

1. The first type of woman is the traditional woman who believes that her place is with her husband and family. Whatever be her troubles, she does not leave her husband at any cost. These women confirm that they should be under the control of the father, the husband and the sons. They prefer to adopt the traditional lifestyle.

2. The second type of women is the women who hold power or control over other women in the family because of their status as mothers or mothers-in-law.

3. The third type of women characters is very rare in Deshpande’s novels. Such kind of radical woman is bolder and rebellious. Here, she is the converse of the traditional type. She holds a feminist ideology to life for the sake of which she chooses to lead an independent life as spinster.

4. The fourth type of women characterizes the woman in between. Most of Deshpande’s heroines belong to this category. This woman is neither traditional nor radical in her ideas. Their act of marrying outside their community, as in the case of Indu and Saru can also be seen as their way of rebelling against patriarchal attitudes.
They leave their husband to seek refuge in their ancestral home. Their parental homes do not provide them any permanent relief from their suffering and it does not solve their problems. It helps them to understand themselves better. It is towards the end of the novels, that Deshpande’s female protagonist realizes herself and learns to live up to the challenge. Most of them decide to confront their husbands.

In particular the role of women was not quite different in the past to the role of women in the present day. This is extremely interesting to study and compare the nature of the portrayal of women of these two writers. But as Deshpande remarks that how could she, a girl, living in a small town in India, identify so easily with Jane Austen’s eighteenth–century England? She does not identify herself with Jane Austen. Deshpande also points out,

When I read Margaret Drabble’s statement that in a tradition that had Jane Austen, George Eliot, and the Brontes, it was not possible for women to be considered marginal, I deeply envied her…. Yet I know this too, that no literary tradition could save us from being (marginalize) in India, because the literary tradition itself would exclude women.7

Deshpande’s characters attempt to assert themselves in a male dominated society. They want to say they are equal with men. The situations her female characters have to live through are usually hard. Austen insists on the possibility that women can break through the barriers to self-knowledge and self-development.
Austen gives us a very limited scope of relationships in marriage. Couples that are married for a longer period are not among the characters, which Austen mainly concentrates on in her novels. In her novels, Austen’s priority lies in exploring the mind and development of an unmarried woman. Deshpande’s priority lies in exploring the mind of a married woman.

In the 18th century, due to weak enforcement of laws protecting them, women continue to have little access to land and property. In fact, some of the laws discriminate against women, when it comes to land and property rights. When a woman married a man “her properties went straight to her husband, to do with as he thought best. The sole and absolute property rests in the husband, to be disposed of at his pleasure.” 8 When Austen was writing, married women legally owned nothing. All their property belonged to their husband. Yet the only way to financial security for many women of the time was through marriage. Women were deprived of the liberty to earn or inherit money. Austen’s women did not usually have careers.

In the most Indian families also, women did not own any property in their own names, and did not get a share of parental property. A father could disinherit a daughter by renouncing his share of the ancestral property, but the son will continue to have a share in his own right. Married daughters had no residential rights in the ancestral home. In AMT, Kalyani’s marriage with her maternal uncle is arranged to prevent the property from going away. But the laws of mid-1950s gave women rights to inheritance. Now women have been provided the same status as that of men. Only recently, women have been given the opportunity to be educated at a level with their
men folk. Deshpande’s heroines have careers. They achieve position and the position of their husband.

Several marriages in the novels of Deshpande are built around the initial principle of attraction. Saru considers herself highly privileged to have been chosen by Manoher. She is crazy about him and his love appears to her protective. At the beginning their marital life becomes quite good. Saru thinks that all these love can only happen to girls in movies. In an interview, Deshpande says that all her books are about relationships, and most of her novels emphasized love because she is fascinated by the idea of love.

Austen gives much importance to love in marriage. Austen’s heroines always won love in the end, despite having to go through various hardships on the way to finding that true love. Austen shows all her skills in bringing the people together. The heroine’s marriage ends happily. She does not believe in love at first sight. There is a growing affection between the heroes and heroines over a period of time.

Jane Austen’s novels have a happy ending, culminating in the marriage of heroines. It is a pleasing story of virtue rewarded. And her novels will not end by an open ending cherished by modern novelists. It achieves at its end completeness realized through the achievement of self-awareness or the resolution of moral. But Deshpande’s novels will end by an open ending. She leaves the conclusion open.

Austen’s heroines have little distress, like Emma Woodhouse, “handsome, rich, with comfortable home, and a happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings
of existence, and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with little to distress or vex her.” Deshpande’s women are a bit sadder, a bit more world-worn, than Austen’s young, fresh heroines.

In spite of such differences, there are some similarities between Austen and Deshpande in their writing lives. Even though they lived in difference eras, there are similarities between. Both writers have studied human nature closely and portrayed an honest picture of women. The imperative significance of marriage is shown by both these writers. They deal with the world of women who find fulfillment in marriage. Deshpande answers the question that Jane Austen’s character’s problem is to get married; her character’s is to survive marriage,

When I say that Jane Austen is an influence, I was influenced by her in two ways. Firstly, I liked the consciousness of her writing, there is no kind of parade of anything there, and I liked the kind of deliberate lack of exaggeration,…, and through that simplicity you got so much. …, so I cannot attempt to say that I have anything that comes close,… But I think the unspoken in her books to me is I think when I took of maybe, not the marriage thing because I think there is too much of a difference. I was influenced as a reader more than a writer.9

Deshpande attempts to analyze man-woman relationships within the ambit of family and society, and usually concentrates on the experiences gained in life, recalling yet another instance of Jane Austen with her narrow range and limited knowledge. As R. K. Pathak points out, “Deshpande’s novels have, like those of Jane Austen, a narrow range. Most of the novels present a middle-class housewife’s life.”10 Like Austen, Deshpande is primarily concerned with the intriguing problems of her female
protagonists, who struggle hard in the male-dominated world to discover their true identity as daughter and wife.

Both Deshpande and Austen are middle-class, educated women. Their work focuses on a certain social class of society. They depict their women characters in all their negative and positive traits. They have women protagonists occupying centre-stage in their novels. Like Austen, Deshpande also has reputation of only writing about women. They create their main plot and settings from the life with which they were familiar. They do not write about the large public events.

Their success lies in their representation of real experience. Woman is the centre of all their writings and both of them have created compelling portraits of women as the principal figures in their narratives. They are bold and subtle in their delineation of characters. Both of them do not emphasize the darkest hues of vice and villainy, insufferable misery, etc. although they are aware of them.

John Halperin points out that most of Jane Austen novels focus on character and feelings rather than plot or ‘adventure’. For Deshpande, character also takes precedence over plot as they depict the inner landscape of their women protagonists. She portrays an honest picture of women who attempt to be their true self. There are some similarities between some of Austen’s and Deshpande’s characters. Both of these novelists emphasize on the differences in social status. Couples like Saru and Manu (DHT), Indu and Jayant (TLS), and Elizabeth and Darcy (PP) are not of equal status.
Darcy chooses to marry Elizabeth despite the inferiority of her connections. He has learned to accept people on their merit. Like Saru, Elizabeth is indifferent to the social status. Saru’s choice of a boy from a lower caste is a sign of her rejecting the traditional way. Saru defies her mother and defies caste restrictions by marrying the man she loves. The Bingley sisters (PP), like Saru’s mother, exhibit their prejudice towards Jane because of their differences in social status. It is their pride that forces them to believe they are better than others. But even after all their efforts and hopes of separating the two, Jane and Bingley manage to get marry.

Most of Austen’s and Deshpande’s heroines do not have satisfactory parents. The girls look forward to the loss of their home. Children of ‘authoritarian parents’ have anxiety problems and have poor communication skills. They place extreme limits on their children's behavior and rarely allow the child to assist in deciding what should be controlled. ‘Permissive-indifferent parents’ are very uninvolved in their children's lives. The children lack self-control, are socially incompetent, and do not handle independence well. In some ways, they cause more problems than any of the other types of parents because there is usually a lack of love for the children, and thus the children do not learn how to love.

Most of the parents in Austen’s and Deshpande’s novels are either completely permissive-indifferent or are so in varying degrees. Mr. Bennet is indifferent to the rest of his children and lives in his library, leaving them to their mother's care, except for his dealings with his favorite daughter, Elizabeth. Mrs. Bennet (PP) like Saru’s mother (DHT) is the head of family. Mrs. Bennet is ‘a woman of mean understanding,
little information, and uncertain temper’. Mrs. Bennet's relationship with Elizabeth is extremely strained because she is different from her other daughters and she is her father's favorite. Elizabeth sees her mother a foolish woman. She loses respect for her as a parent and a person.

In *MP*, the Prices do not particularly care for any of their children. William is both parents' pride because he has made a name for himself in the navy, and Betsey is her mother's favorite because she is the youngest, but they care less about the other children. When Fanny Price returns to her home after eight years of living at Mansfield Park, she is startled by the differences in the two homes. These differences make Fanny realize how fortunate she is in being accepted into the Bertram home. Fanny can see that her mother is a partial, ill-judging parent. Mrs. Price simply does not care- except for William and Betsey. Her parents ignore her, and the Bertrams are now seen by her as more precious than ever.

Fanny, Elizabeth and Saru have no affection towards their mothers and no inclination for their company. They cannot change their mother; they can only move away from their influence. Saru also tries to break away from the rigid traditional norms and adopts to be an antimatriarch. She hates her parental home. The sense of rejection by her mother fills Saru’s mind with feelings of hatred and dislikes towards her mother.

Saru defies her mother to become a doctor, and defies restriction by marrying the man she loves. Like Saru, Elizabeth defies her mother to marry Mr. Collins. Her mother is prompted by material consideration in threatening her daughter to accept Mr. Collins.
Austen’s heroines produce a completely new type of a female character who is determined to marry only in accordance with her feelings and expectations. Elizabeth has the courage to resist her mother’s pressure and to rebel against the conventional way of thinking. She refuses Mr. Collins’s proposal even if it can be her last opportunity to get married suitably and to secure her family’s future.

The mothers of heroines want to see their daughters become a wife. But they, who inherit little from their mother, retain their own views on marriage. Elizabeth’s mother says in a bitter tone that she will sever all her connections with her daughter if she disobeys her words. This is what Saru’s mother also says. But Mr. Bennet tells his wife to allow her the free use of understanding. He gives freedom of choice to his daughter on such vital issue. Neither of them thinks deeply about ins and outs of marriage. Saru’s father also gives freedom of choice to his daughter on going to Mumbai for studying.

The fathers of the heroines on the other hand, become the source of support or even inspiration for these women. Fathers suffer from a weakness of character. Mr. Bennet is uncaring about his family. ‘Mr. Bennet seeks refuge from reality in books’. Elizabeth’s father like Saru’s father presents us with some novelty of character, a reserved and indolent personage. His wife is ‘a woman of mean understanding’, but he respects his wife. Austen does not put the blame on men’s shoulders. Deshpande also does not throw the blame on men for the subjugation of women. She observes that both men and women find it difficult to overthrow the images and roles allotted to them by society.12
Deshpande highlights the problems that middle-class families encounter in their search for suitable grooms for their daughters. For some Indian girls, it is a marriage that matters, and not the man. In Austen’ novels, marriage also gives a place of respect in the society. Lydia after becoming the wife of Wickham feels superior to her elder sisters, whatever be her past, she acquires a place of prestige in the social circles. Lydia says to Jane, “Ah, Jane. I take your place now, and you must go lower, because I’m a married woman.”¹³ These words imply that for a woman, marriage is more valued in this society than intelligence and honor. Wives have a higher social status than unmarried women.

Money and social rank have always been playing the remarkable role. Looking deeper in Austen’s novels show us the power of money and the importance of social rank in past, gives us an opportunity to analyze also our society and to have some kind of relations between past and now. It is so interesting that for example PP never gets old because nearly everything continues in its own way. It is easily seen that also today we see the importance of money and social rank. It builds a wall between people, and it creates a shadow on people which prevent them to see the worth of love and other human feelings which has to play the starring.

In Austen’s novels, wealth and position in society cannot always give happiness. Austen’s and Deshpande’s heroines do not easily succumb to the monetary motives. Saru’s predicament is contrary to the assertion of most feminist that financial independence brings security to women.
For a number of young women sentiment is a foolish thing and they answer only to the call of money. Matrimony is an easy and respectable means for the acquisition of wealth. There are similarities between Mini (RS) and Charlotte (PP). Charlotte has agreed to marry Mr. Collins who is the heir of estate. But Charlotte is fully conscious of her motives of accepting Mr. Collins, because she is aware that she is unlikely to get a better chance or any offer of marriage. Perhaps it is an ideal choice to her where marriage is the only career for a woman in Charlotte’s social position. To Elizabeth, it is the act of sacrifice for the sake of material security. She cannot understand how her intelligent friend could accept the odious man. “Without thinking highly either of men or of matrimony, marriage had always been her object;…. however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want.” 14

In RS, Mini’s parents’ concern to settle her marriage fills her with guilt for being a girl, for remaining unmarried, for being a burden on her family. Mini’s father is aware that he will not be able to get his daughter married with his weak financial position. Finally, he agrees to marry Mini off to a distant relative of Akka, who is not a suitable match for her. But in order to save her father from further complexities of her marriage, Mini decides not to show her disagreement. Indu, on perceiving the displeasure in Mini towards her own marriage, requests her uncle to look for a better match. But he rejects her idea,

“May be the boy is little ugly, may be a little stupid... but everything else is fine. The family is good,... they have money, she’ll be quite comfortable. And Akka had promised she would pay for their wedding expenses as well as the dowry if this came through. What else could I ask for?” 15
A sense of security among women who intend to be married is more important. In Austen’s view, this feeling of protection maybe of physical or economic or social nature. Deshpande says,

Jane Austen, who wrote of ladies and gentlemen, secure in their comfortable worlds,…, of women with no aspiration beyond a good marriage. ‘I only ask for a comfortable home’ Charlotte Lucas tells Elizabeth. Charlotte’s words illuminate what Jane Austen is saying about women, something we see in Mrs. Bennet’s desperation to get her daughters married,… Miss Bingley employs to entrap Darcy. Charlotte Accepts Mr. Collins because spinsterhood much worse. It meant dependence, it meant becoming an unwanted appendage, and it meant loss of status.¹⁶

The daughters in Austen's and Deshpande’s fiction are easily persuaded that they must look to men for security. Rejection by a family can make the individual alienated and rejection of the family lead to feelings of loneliness and guilt.

Because they are literally or figuratively motherless, the daughters in Austen's fiction are easily persuaded that they must look to men for security. Although their mothers' example proves how debilitating marriage can be, they seek husbands in order to escape from home. What feminists have recently called matrophobia — fear of becoming one's mother — supplies one more motive to flee the parental home, as does the financial necessity of competing for male protection.¹⁷

Both Saru and Elizabeth realize that their ego is responsible for all the problems happen in their life. Saru thinks, ‘It’s not what he’s done to me, but what I’ve done to him.”¹⁸ Elizabeth acknowledges her faults and understands herself better. Both of
them do not accept other’s views so easily. Psychological change in Elizabeth and also Saru almost reach a stage of completion. Both of them accept their errors. Elizabeth’s acceptance of her errors is the first step in the progress of her love for Darcy. Saru says, “It’s my fault again …. If I had left it to them to arrange my life, would be have left me like this?” But the difference is that Elizabeth recognizes her love for Darcy at the end, but Saru does not feel liking Manu any more.

Jane Austen cannot be evaluated as a feminist writer without first examining the eighteenth century English society in which she lived and placed her heroines. Yet Austen’s time was also the time of a new emerging middle-class morality with new ideas of marriage. These new ideas of marriage had almost feminist tendencies from our today’s point of view. Mary Wollstonecraft, who can be regarded as the mother of feminism, has very strong opinions of women’s role in marriage. She states that women should be companions of their husbands in order to avoid living in a master-servant relationship. The feeling of equality and mutual respect is what constitutes a functioning relationship. In addition, Wollstonecraft condemns conventional marriage based on property considerations as “legal prostitution.”

Austen was not aware of feminist consciousness. She lived in a society where women were expected to be ‘accomplished’, as Darcy states in PP. These accomplishments were required to attract the right kind of husband. Austen’s women find themselves suffering under disadvantages in material, family, social and personal categories. The most important suffering for women characters is being a single.
One of the most explicit changes in the eighteenth-century Britain’s social life is a rise of a companionate marriage. As discussed above, it altered the existing motives for marriage and enlarged women’s freedom of decision-making about their spouses. On the other hand, it caused a considerable rise of the proportion of the unmarried in society and therefore led to a spinster problem. Arising out of this, the position of women- unmarried in particular- has not improved much. To demonstrate the unfavourable position of unmarried women in society, Austen presents the very limited and unsatisfactory prospects of a spinster lady in the characters of Charlotte Lucas in *PP*. Charlotte’s circumstances force her to marry Mr. Collins, without any indication of affection. Austen does not passively accept the common features of marriages of her own class.

The inequalities against which the feminist have raised their voice of protest- legal, economic and social restriction on the basic rights of woman - have existed throughout history across the world in all the civilizations. The feminist thought in the west have had some influence on the women’s movements in India. Yet feminism as it exists today in India has gone beyond its western counterpart. As Uma Narayan rightly puts it, “Third World feminism is not a mindless mimicking of ‘western agendas’ in one clear and simple sense- Indian feminism is clearly a response to the issues specifically confronting many Indian women.” 21 The feminist movement in India has to think in terms of its own strategies due to cultural specificities of the region.

Several feminists believe that the subject of women’s emancipation in India should not be reduced to the contradictions between man and woman. The recent trend in
feminist thought is pro-woman but not anti-man. The Indian feminists seek equal right and status for women. Patriarchy has compelled them to be totally subservient to the male in both the social and economic spheres. The Indian woman has to strive to attain recognition for her individuality and acceptance by society. Indian women, unlike their western counterparts, have always been socially, psychologically and sexually oppressed and subjugated against a male-dominated society.

Feminism, as a new perspective came into existence in India trying to define woman’s role in the society. Their movement came up in the form of a pointed protest against certain social customs, like polygamy, sati, child marriage, dowry, purdah system, rape, etc. It is not bothered with the same problems as its western counterparts, because such things have really no scope in Indian society. The Indian women, for years have been silent sufferers and have never been able to claim her own individuality. They need not to be rebellious like the Western feminists nor like the submissive Indian wives. The Indian women must seek their freedom within the periphery of marriage through mutual understanding without disrupting the Indian socio-cultural values.

One of the major concerns of the contemporary literature all over the world has been to highlight the plight of women, their physical, financial and emotional exploitation in the male dominated society. The woman writers have been expressing their revolt against the masculine world, and they have been pleading and fighting for a change in the attitude of society towards woman. Many female writers and a few male writers have analyzed the female psyche and the inner turmoil of the woman. Deshpande is
one of the noted Indian feminist writers who have shown their serious concern within
the depiction of women in literature.

Deshpande may not take any anti-male stand but unconsciously, she is concerned very
close to feminism or can say feminist. Her feminism is Indian in the sense that it is
born out of the predicament of women placed between contradictory identities: family
and profession, tradition and modernity. Atrey and Kirpal reinforce this by quoting
Deshpande from her interview with Malini Nair, “aggressive feminism does not ring
true in the Indian context and that for Indian women selfhood will only come from
‘probing and thinking for oneself.” Deshpande doesn’t believe in taking ‘the militant
anti-men and antimarriage stance’.

To Deshpande, no amount of theorizing will solve women’s problems – especially in
the Indian context. Elucidating her viewpoint she remarks:

But to me feminism isn’t a matter of theory; it is difficult to apply Kate
Millet or Simone de Beauvoir or whoever to the reality of our daily
lives in India. And then there are such terrible misconceptions about
feminism by people here. They often think it is about burning bras and
walking out on your husband, children, etc. 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 experiences. And I actually feel
that a lot of women in India are feminists without realizing it.

Deshpande discusses several problems related with women, marriage and tradition.
Her appeal lies in the feminist themes. Her plots mold into emphatic pictures of
feminist points of view. She has very subtly conveyed the message of mutual
understanding and co-operation between wife and husband. Her novels come to an end
with a note of compromise rather than revolt and revenge which is the basic attribute of Indian feminism.

In Deshpande’s novels, the dominant approach has been liberal feminist, but some of the ideas and concepts of the radical feminists and socialists feminists, Psychoanalytic and gender feminists have to be critically used in her novels where conditions of women’s psyche, employment, the gender roles, women’s sexuality, self-discovery prevail. In her novels, Deshpande gives voice to the people who are unable to articulate their ideas, thoughts, and fears. She is concerned always with a woman’s psyche and a woman’s search for her identity. Heroine’s predicament is representative of the larger predicament of women in general in contemporary Indian society, passing through a transition from the old cultural modes to the new socio-economic forces.

Thus Deshapande’s novels are obviously concerned with feminist issues. Her writing is all women oriented, but she does not need label like feminist writer. Deshpande in her essay *Why I am Feminist* points out,

"Today, when I call myself a feminist, I believe that the female of the species, has the same right to be born and survive, to fulfill herself and shape her life according to her needs and the potential, that lies within her, as the male has, I believe that women are neither inferior nor subordinate human beings,….Would the anti-feminists deny all this?"24

Deshpande concentrates on the sufferings of middle-class Indian, educated women who are conscious of their legal and social rights. She highlights the household conflict between wife and husband operating at the emotional and sexual levels. She does not cross the limits of Indian, socio-cultural reality. Her heroines rebel against the
traditional way of life and patriarchal values. They try to transcend the restrictive role and seek freedom from the traditional norms. Deshpande’s novels study women’s awareness, a journey in women’s inner life, and to articulate a feminine voice. Deshpande’s novels highlight:

1. A woman should take refuge in the self which means she should assert herself, so that she can overcome the suppressing forces. The novels focus on women’s awareness of her predicament, her wanting to assert herself, and her wanting to have an independent social image.

2. Her woman should know that success in marriage means adjustments and silently maneuvering her relationship with her husband according to the socially accepted norms. They decide to keep their marriage in favor of their husband.

3. Lack of education and economic opportunities, especially for women, has strengthened the patriarchy. Despite education has benefited women at least in finding good employment and good marriages, but the condition of average women, has not, improved much, they give up their career in order to maintain their marital citadel.

4. Very systematically they alienate themselves from everything and everybody that posed even the remotest threat to the peace of her family like their male friends.

5. Women especially the older generation have suffered sexual abuse, physical violence, mental torture, widowhood, etc. Some men have mistresses and they neglect the family. Women have to play the roles of caretakers of children and the family.
The numerous minor characters in Deshpande’s novels suffer in silence or accept that fate with resignation but do not take any step that might jeopardize their marriage. It is however important to note that each of her novels ends on a note of determination by its protagonist who resolves to take the reins of her life into her hands.

To conclude, I have not intended in any moment to state or demonstrate any theory but to analyse the images of women and marriage in different periods. I have come closer to a different perspective of love and marriage that took place in different culture. The chapter focuses Jane Austen and Shashi Deshpande who bear a curious resemblance to one another in certain aspects but are yet very different in many aspects. Their novels are subjected to sociological scrutiny by isolating the nexus between the respective stories and the world that they depict.

They almost show their women seeking the solution of their problems within marriage. In their novels, if a girl be a spinster, she will be constantly humiliated by society. Being a widow or single may involve a painful personal loss and social status loss. Marriage may not offer the best of all possible world to a man and a woman; but it is more or less essential because a man and a woman is not complete in himself or herself. They need each other emotionally and biologically, and it is better that they develop a measure of harmony in their relations.

It is interesting to unveil the images of woman in Austen’s time. Within a social and cultural context where marriage was assumed to be of great importance, Austen used the number of marriages to expose societal values of the age and to explore the nature
of the ideal marriage. The society judges women by their wealth, good connections and marriage status in Austen’s novels. The characterizations of some female characters show the nature of women from a social perspective of a 19th century country. Jane Austen’s writing provides an extraordinarily discerning sociology of her period and her social context. She wrote one of the most subtle accounts of social hierarchy and social struggle of her time.

It is interesting to unveil the images of woman in Indian literature because woman in India are still caught between feudal values and the fast approaching new life. Shuttling between the burden of home and workplace, mothering, struggling with conventions, women have first to survive. The question of equality arises afterwards. Deshpande’s woman reaches to the conclusion that there is no refuge, other than one's own self, and escape is a ridiculous idea. She realizes that she cannot attain happiness through anyone else be it a husband, a father or a child. She can attain peace of mind by her own efforts. No one gives peace.
Notes


19. Ibid., p. 218.


23. Ibid., p.7.