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8.1 Introduction :-

Shashi Deshpande born in 1938, Dharwad, Karnataka state, till this date she has authored ten novels, several collection of short stories and some work for children. She is the daughter of the renowned Kannada playwright and Sanskrit scholar, Adya Rangachar named Shriranga. On whose insistence Deshpande began to writing. Naturally she inherits all the facets of a good writer from her father. Her father played an important role in imparting a liberal and radical outlook, which his daughter applied while studying human relationships and their bonding with each other. Due to Deshpande’s stay in England and her post-graduation in the subject English encourages her to write on account of her own experiences. She embarked on a journey of a words, it is with the publications of these experiences.

Deshpande’s first novel- The Dark Hold No Terrors published in 1980s, and the latest – In the Country of Deceit arrived in the year 2008. Within duration of thirty-four years she had created a space of her own in the field of Indian English fiction. Apart From that the translation of her fictional work in various languages has established her as a famous novelist of a considerable worth.

At a time, Shashi Deshpande has candidly accepted the lasting impressions that Jane Austen and George Bernard Shaw made on her in thirty-four years of her writing career. But at the same time she takes extra efforts to strongly refuse the label of “Feminism” which tagged to her name due to her concern related with gender bias. Deliberately she prefers to rescue from being branded for. According to her opinion, her fictional work projects her prime concern and that is the complexities of human relationships. Shashi Deshpande admits that she is indebted to the feminist writers’ like- Simon De Beauvoir,
Betty Friedan and Germaine Greer because they guide her to clear off her confusions and have contributed to her understandings of the socialization and marginalization of women. But even though she draws reader’s attention to the creative activity of writing which she experience and feels and mould her only a writer- a specific phase where gender ceases to exist. It is only due to this; Shashi Deshpande urges to consider her fictional work as an individual’s creativity, keeping it away from the decided and fixed feminist framework.

8.2 Various Issues and Problems Dealt by Shashi Deshpande:-

Shashi Deshpande’s fictional work has in them various other issues along with the thought those are related with feminism. She has addressed several social issues of contemporary India through her fictional work. Apart from that she has also explored the ongoing predicament and psychological conflicts, the inner spaces of feminine gender. Her novels reflects the lives of middle class both in the urban and the rural environment which surviving in extended as well as nuclear families. Along with this she also throws light on the lives of slum dwellers, servants and the world outside.

The intense craving of the protagonists of her fictional work related with the search of her identity helps her to draw reader attention towards the social changes as her protagonist’s moves out of the confines of the house into public spaces. Truly she is an Indian novelist in the sense she projects through her fictional works a very genuine and authentic Indian picture with the indigenous essence of soil. It is due to this her protagonists journey and the content towards the growing self awareness that noted by critic, Jasbir Jain who traces this legacy to Krupabai Sattiandand. Here Shashi Deshpande also gives a glance at the psyche of her female protagonists, who are strongly in search of realizing their identity. This quest of identity goes on in the cobweb of family, friends and relatives. And so therefore we come across at the central theme and location in each and every plot- a family- the canvas against which the whole story
develops and emerges alive with the house, the daily routine; the courtyard, and the relations and nature of bonding with them.

According to the opinion of Shashi Deshpande family is an intricate web of various relationships those develops within the family members: husband-wife, mother- daughter, father- daughter and the extended arms of bonding with the other relatives and friends. Deshpande’s fiction projects a collective world of relationships and at the same time she attempts to untwine individual’s relationship for studying the in depth. Apart from that she presents the transparent emotions, feelings, anguish, love and hatred which existing within the family members. Basically Deshpande is a genuine observer of human relationships and her due interests lies in delineating how people behave at certain situations, incidents and in circumstances. She is very much curious to know and understands about why they behave like in a specific way and therefore she explores the instinct of such kind of behavior of human beings.

Deshpande very strikingly presents that how marriage is becomes a social institutions and binds a man and woman together. This bonding expects that submission and transformation especially on the part of women obviously which resulting into a loss of their identity. It is this marriage institution that comes under the strict perusal in her novels which projecting through all its protagonists and consequences. Her novels prominently depict the quest that the protagonists undertake in search of the identity which has been sacrificed at the marriage altar like a helpless victim.

8.3 Deshpande’s Views and Philosophy Depicted Through Her Fiction :

Shashi Deshpande prominently concentrates precisely on the dilemmas and the problems of the educated, employed middle class married Indian woman. Through her fictional work she provides space for the “silence” to speak and the “darkness” to reveal. According to her views and philosophy she
attempts to tear off the facade of romanticism attached to marriage and portray the stark reality that lies hidden beneath.

The plot construction work through parallel and contrast. While going through her novels, readers come across unhappy and disturbed married relationships in the middle class families and also the lower class families. In spite of that the gender expectations and class differences from the marital institution remains the same. These gender expectations become a cause of estrangement and gender conflict that is bias.

The main issue and concern is related with the real middle class family bound female character, who is at the center of whole family and her maintenance of relationship with other family members. Deshpande treats her female character as she also happens to be at the center of the most important social institution; family. Mainly all her protagonists belong to the age of thirty to thirty – five with ten or fifteen years of experience of married life. She deals with her novels the various dimensions of the institution of marriage and her philosophy related with it. Her near about all novels portray the various factors responsible for the imbalance and the loss of sharing and understanding between a husband and wife. According to Deshpande’s view the lack of mutual understanding between these two and its consequences happens to be one of the major causes of this imbalance bonding. Therefore precisely she pays attention towards the predicaments and various crisis of the educated middle class married Indian woman.

Obviously, all novels opens with an impending crisis and conflict which revolves around the protagonists, usually it is a reversal role. The Indian traditional set-up of a family projects a man- the husband as the bread winner means the main source of earning; while a woman- the wife only taking care of their children and look after whole family. But Deshpande explores very different aspect and that is all the various possibilities of the consequences of this traditional role reverse when exactly the woman is an earning source that is
bread winner. Through her fictional work she juxtapose all the vice versa circumstances of conventional Indian family set-up, so naturally her philosophy and views are related with these various issues quiet an exceptional one.

8.4 Woman Bonding with Womanhood : Aspect From Deshpande’s Fiction :-

According to the analyses of Shashi Deshpande’s fictional work, what surprises readers that her real art of presenting very much properly in women’s characters. She delineates that in spite of all odds, troubles and gender atrocities the female characters always emerges by wearing a very positive bond of womanhood, affection, love and tenderness without a tint of bitterness in them. Readers cannot term this as tolerance nor can they call it a defeat. It is an instinct, act of retaining against all odds and troubles; one’s one existence or mould oneself to exist a new rejuvenate life in the framework. It is because of this optimistic approach that these women characters reach out to others, support and helps them and encourages others to live happily.

The women characters provide strength, support and encouragement to each other. They help to each other to survive from their own philosophy of life which is based on their own experiences and that is “strength to live”. All these female characters are based on the real Indian family set-up. They got very harsh experiences related with the suffocation, suppression, various calamities like death of near and dear one’s and still they are strongly striving for survive with the inner wounds and pains. They take all these various consequences in their own stride and learn from them in a way learns the strategies to cope up and confronts with the life which is full of crisis and predicaments. In spite of all these troublesome situations, they believe and have faith in relations and the real bonding with them. It is this courage and strength and strong bond woven around themselves that guides and supports them to survive and come out of the
stark realities and pessimism of their surrounding. It clears that her women characters are able to cope with the consequences only due to their bonding with their own womanhood.

The women protagonists of Deshpande’s novels are bound to each other not only by various relationship but also they are bound by one pivotal bond – that of womanhood. All these female characters know each other, understand and try to encourage, inspires the other with the help of the bond of being a woman to another woman. They understands and shares the sufferings, pain and agony, humility of a woman in different consequences whether in family and outside. Therefore, whenever possible and needed they support one another lovingly and affectionately. This tenderness, love, sharing, mutual understanding and caring seems to come from within but without any obligations or posing. Sharing and understanding the predicaments and sufferings of womanhood seems to be one of the major issues which projected through her fictional work. Really she minutely shows how the woman is bonding with womanhood and able to confront the various consequences courageously.

Deshpande’s female characters are full of strength. Not only her protagonists but also the subordinate female characters like Mukta, Nilima the middle class women who survive and carefully maintains the various boundaries of middle class social maxims of life. Especially those are decided only for women yet faces with firmness everyday life with all its odds, atrocities, losses. If in case they are unable to face it and not able to spread smiles but at least they do not even spread bitterness, unhappiness and harshness around themselves which may be affects on others. Really it clarifies that Deshpande’s women characters are bonding with womanhood firmly then and then they are prepare themselves to combat with the various consequences those occurs in their married lives.
8.5 Deshpande’s Protagonists Quest to Understand Exchanged Role-relationship :-

Shashi Deshpande, it is by placing her protagonists in various different consequence explores the psyche and the survival instinct of the feminine gender. In spite of all adversities The protagonists emerges out of it with a new in depth understanding of human nature. A very striking feature of Protagonists is that through all over these novels the reader witnessed about the silence and desperation on the part of them. But this desperation and silence does not eat them up. On the contrary with all her efforts the protagonist tries to emerge out of these consequences by confronting the situations courageously, by going through the ruthless task of self-realization and self-evaluation protagonist does not surrender herself. She does not become insane or commit suicide in her predicaments because she knows very well that this cannot be the proper solution of any problem. She is totally optimistic about the world and surrounding where she lives in and obviously her strong efforts are aimed at finding out answers which are practical and reasonable.

Deshpande’s protagonist quest to understand this exchanged role relationship starts with the novel- *The Dark Holds No Terrors* through the characters Sarita and Manohar. The protagonist, Saru is a doctor who is the main source of earning and earns more than her husband, Manohar who happens to be a lecturer. But this specific exchanged role brought up consequences and that is the sadistic, nocturnal and brutal sexual attacks of Manohar on Saru. There Saru is starkly realizes the harsh reality and that is a + b is not equal to b + a in a married life.

Secondly the breach of trust comes through the novel- *That Long Silence* where Mohan, the husband only cares for his own life style, his career, status and his material success. He totally fails to understand his wife, Jaya as a sensitive human being. The protagonist Jaya and her husband, Mohan performs
the allotted conventional roles of so called husband and wife. But due to Mohan’s extreme materialistic and pragmatic attitude Jaya experienced the feelings of trapping similar like “two bullocks yoked together”. In a traditional set-up, Mohan stands as a representative of patriarchal values and principles those take his wife, Jaya for granted and is never aware that she is also as an individual and can perceive her own ideas, emotions, feelings, aspirations and likes- dislikes. If in case wife rebel against all these circumstances then the marriage becomes monstrously lopsided, unbalanced, and unequal relationship. If the protagonist admits and accepts these consequences then she has to confront “the age long brooding silence” which causes to killing her completely not physically but mentally.

Through the novel – *Roots and Shadows* the protagonist, Indu plays the role of an ideal wife but aware that this particular role has restricted and circumscribe her self development. This specific role withdrawn from her the freedom of thoughts and expression and also denied her giving free play for her creative potentialities. Indu’s husband, Jayant is guided and inflicted by the percept that “a woman ought to follow and not to lead” an she should be always at a receiving end. It is only due to this Jayant is turned off when he find himself at the receiving end in the passionate love-making of his wife, Indu.

Deshpande places the marriage of Sumi and Gopal at the center and goes on exploring all the possibilities of man –woman bonding. The male character Gopal is one step ahead of Kishore in the novel- *The Binding Vine* because he forsakes Sumi, his wife and their three daughters. But in the novel *A Matter of Time*, Gopal is a practical man, who totally refuses to accept the term ‘Sahriday.’ In a sense he thinks this is something impossible and just only an imagination. In this novel, in spite of a traditional marriage, individual’s physical and emotional separateness is accepted and asserted by both husband and wife.
Shashi Deshpande attempts to define the real problem of man-woman relationship through another novel – *The Binding Vine*. She very positively points out the difference between the approach and attitude adopted by a woman and man in their bonding. Both man-woman attitudes are totally contrary. In the bonding of man-woman, the wife whole heartedly offers her soul and also her body whereas a man offers his body but always found keeping his soul free and isolated. This half-way and imbalanced offering is presented through the characters – Urmi and Kishore in the novel- *The Binding Vine*. The protagonist, Urmi’s husband – Kishore seems to be afraid and hesitate of the binding of love and sometimes feels threatened by the intimacy which marriage brings between two persons. According to Kishore’s opinion it is only the present and looks as if for his sake past and the future is in oblivion. In this specific novel, She through the characters Mira and Kalpana once again voices against the traumatic aspect of physical relationship which is for grounded through the concept of rape within and outside of the marriage. Urmi, Mira, Kalpana and Akka all are the victims, who ignored and denied even the fundamental rights of their bodies.

Thus, the protagonists rather than surrendering themselves, they prefers to confront the consequences, tame them and come out with a way which ‘could be one of the various ways to handle the difficult situations.’ They drives their strength to cope with these conflicts from their unquestioned love towards family, the kinship and the strong belief that is where they belongs. The protagonists philosophy towards life is that whatever they goes through and if in case they does not come out as a winner, at least they should be an achiever.

### 8.6 An Optimistic Attitude of Deshpande’s Protagonists:

The woman characters delineates by Shashi Deshpande are strong, enthusiastic, co-operative, sensitive and at the same time optimistic, independent, matter- of- fact and straightforward in their nature. These
protagonists lives within the boundaries marked by the society and to a certain extent this binding nurtures a sense of unhappiness and injustice. To a certain point they confront with it but a vital incident compels them to think and behave sincerely, truly and of course, differently. It is at this specific turn, they with their innate strength confronts and acknowledge the reality and understands the people around them and the difficult situations. They always curious and try to learn from this awakening. According to these protagonists solution is not to leave the people to whom they love nor to turn their backs from the world of which they are a part. The praiseworthy quality in them is that they believe in people occurred and just through in themselves and are well aware that change is not possible overnight. They strongly believe that things will change, and it is in this peculiar patience and waiting that they display their tolerance and understanding. All Deshpande’s protagonists decide to play an active part in introducing this change.

The protagonists adopt some strict measures and follows them with self-realization and a new awakening. In this particular process they admit and accepts new thoughts, life patterns, new strategies of simplicity, sincerity and straightforwardness. This specific thing helps them to emerge as achievers. These female protagonists are not great, but they are simple minded and sincere one, women next door and true human beings who loves every family member whole heartedly and tries to enjoy each and every relationships. In many circumstances they may do some errors, but even though wise enough to accept their errors. They aware their mistakes and limitations and are always ready to learn some ethics from them.

Thus an optimistic attitude of Deshpande’s protagonists always keeps them as an exceptional human being. They are capable always physically as well as mentally to confront with the consequences only due to their optimistic approach.
8.7 Deshpande’s Delineation of Conflict Between Old- New Generations:-

Initially, Shashi Deshpande’s novels and the protagonists gives an impression of the conflict between the old and the new generations, the past and the present but an in depth study reveals that it is the reunion of the two contrary aspects. It is the magnetic bonding despite the conflicting journey between old and new generations at the same time past and present.

In her novels she picks up in deep the secondary vital role but which is always played by a woman and that is the role of a mother. She juxtaposes two extremes of the role of mother—a very much understanding mother in the novel—A Matter of Time while a very assertive mother in the novel – The Dark Holds No Terrors. As Nancy Chodorow has rightly remarked about this specific issue—

Mother always remains for both genders, the other, or object

(Nancy Chodorow ; 1981 : P.482-514)

In the same way, related with the same issue Elaine Showalter pointed out that :-

The child develops core gender identity concomitantly with differentiation, but the process is not the same for boys and girls. A boy must learn his gender identity negatively as being not female, and this difference requires continual reinforcement. In contrast, girl’s core gender identity is positive and built upon sameness, continuity and identification with the mother.

(Elanie Showalter; 1981 : P.331-354)
This particular core gender positive identity in the Deshpande’s novel – *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is represented by the protagonist Saru, who had aimed all her efforts to emancipate herself from this identity of her mother. This very thought of Saru’s mother generates in her mind a wave of hatred whatever she does, all she can to keep herself away from her mother in each and every sense. In spite of all these adversities when Saru decides on her father’s insistence about to confront the stark reality; she realizes that she cannot escape from this particular identity. All the efforts made by the protagonist Saru to reject this identification and continuity from her mother, Kamala. Thus the mother-daughter relationship through Deshpande’s novels speaks about that this relationship built on the basis of similarity sameness, continuity and identification of the daughter with the positive core gender identity which is represented by the role of a mother.

The novel- *A Matter of Time* ends with the reunion and that is the magnetic bonding despite the conflicting journey. When Gopal looks back toward Kalyani and Aru? Apart from that a very cordial, sharing and understanding bonding between mother-daughter that is Sumi and Aru is delineated by Shashi Deshpande in the same novel. Here in this relationship the mother prepares her daughter to understand the place that every human being has for the sake of themselves in this world of various types of relationships. Therefore a very supportive and healthy relationship is shared by Sumi and Aru.

Through the fictional work much antithetical to this mother–daughter bonding come another relationship and that is father-daughter relationship which is very much cordial. Deshpande depicts the patriarchal father figures, but those are always lend their help to their daughters. These father figures emerges as characters, who can existed more for the sake of their daughters happiness and therefore carries an “heroic” image in the views of their daughters except Aru, who becomes very much angry and hates her father, Gopal. Because he had left their whole family is in isolated plight and forcing
her mother and the whole family for the confrontation of the various crisis those may be occurs in their future. Actually the father figures are the shield of the whole family and their daughters but Aru’s father, Gopal is run away from his fundamental duties. There are some exceptional strained father –daughter relationships too in the novels of Deshpande. This awkward and somewhat tense relationship is the result of an absence of the frankness, sharing and understanding that means the lack of communication which is the basic necessity of each and every relationship.

Shashi Deshpande, while tracing the mother-daughter bonding highlights the dark and invisible shadows of the father figures which looming on this relationship. A saga of hatred in the age of adolescence, later in remaining life ends with the acceptance of the mother figure as a role model. In the portrayal of father-daughter relationship the father figures emerges as a cordial, supportive and affectionate one who cares for decreasing the burden of the patriarchal set-up on their daughters. Thus very much appropriately, skillfully and in a contradictory manner Deshpande depicts the conflict between old and new generations through her fictional work.

8.8 The Various Features of The Male Characters in Deshpande’s Novels:-

Much antithetical to the female characters, the male characters stands apart in the novels of Deshpande. They have a secondary status. These male characters are always there in the novel, they make their presence feel but still they have minimum space devoted for them. She present her male characters, it is with the help of very few events. The entire central figure is only woman characters, whereas the male characters are always placed on the periphery but yet remarkably pointing out the male approach which is adopted in a marital system.
The delineation of all the ‘husband’ characters like- Manohar in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Mohan in the novel- *That Long Silence*, Jayant through the novel- *Roots and Shadows*, Gopal in *A Matter of Time* while Kishore in *The Binding Vine* are placed to remain on the periphery with one step inside the family circle and the other which is always outside the family circle. These male characters are bodily engaged with their souls. Through all these male characters the concept of “Sahridaya” is ironically discarded. They have their own intense desire about to emancipate themselves into a world of their own.

The male character of the novel- *The Dark Holds No Terrors* named Manohar, who has his own world of superiority which he forcefully imposes on his wife, Saru through his nocturnal sadistic attacks; because he thinks that he belongs to the world of “darkness”, where as the world of “light” belongs to his wife which hurts him mentally as well as physically. Obviously the tormented soul of Manohar uses his body to inflict assaults on the body of his wife Saru by ignoring the adverse effect of these assaults on her soul. Thus, Manohar with this Jekyll and Hyde personality gets oscillates between the two contradictory worlds of darkness and light.

An another male character Mohan through the novel – *That Long Silence*, is also became a victim of his own created world. Mohan creates his own world abiding by what he has felt and experienced with his father and mother. He cares only for his status, his career, material success, his life style and for himself in his own created world. Somehow this world of Mohan shatters and he holds for no reasons, his wife Jaya is only responsible for it. It clarifies that both male characters – Manohar and Mohan hold their wives responsible for shattering their worlds, which specific world they had created with only a space for themselves and won’t like to share with anyone else. According to these male characters opinion the very presence of their wives is a threat to the world of superiority in which they likes to dwell forever.
Even, when Indu, the protagonist of the novel- *Roots and Shadows* attempts to present herself on the ‘giving end’ she poses a threat to the superiority concept of her husband, Jayant who always expects to be at the ‘giving end’ The whole world of Indu is colored with only her husband’s likes and dislikes. She is unable to think about the various dreams of her life without Jayant, who on the contrary knows very well that his wife Indu’s life only to that extent which she has allowed him to know. Jayant had never tried on his own to know what her soul aspires for?, what her feelings are ? On one side we have Indu, the protagonist with her own world which is full of the likes and dislikes of her husband Jayant. On another side we have male character Jayant ironically having a world of his own which have no space for his wife Indu, her expectations and her likes- dislikes.

Amongst all these three couples that are Manohar- Sarita, Mohan- Jaya and Jayant- Indu, the male characters- Manohar, Mohan and Jayant have a different world of their own. Through the relationship of these couples, Shashi Deshpande presents an unbalanced relationship between the husband and wife, detecting in depth the various causes of this imbalance in the relationship of these couples.

While, the male character- Kishore from the novel- *The Binding Vine* escapes from this specific strategy. He is a luxurious nature person when he happens to be with his wife, Urmi, thinks only about the present; the peculiar moment he is with his wife. Even Kishore’s wife, Urmi is also well aware about this aspect of her husband’s nature. She is surprised by the way her husband, Kishore detached himself from everything within a moment immediate after love- making. This emancipation and detachment of Kishore is symbolically represented through his profession which he has opted for.

All these states of emancipation of above discussed male characters emerge in a complete mature form through the another male character – Gopal from the novel – *A Matter of Time*. He clearly differentiated between the soul
and the body therefore he totally rejects the concept of “Sahridaya”. According to Gopal’s opinion this is an “impossible concept” for no two separate hearts can beat in such a harmony and unison that there is only single sound. Gopal’s rejection of the concept – “Sahridaya” makes Sumi aware about the potential of Gopal to walk out from the life of herself and lives of whole family.

True to what Jaya, the protagonist of That Long Silence has said that women find themselves “yoked” in the relationship which is offered by the institution of marriage. The stark reality is that women cannot escape from this institution because the society will not allow them to do. In spite of their ability to learn and all their education after marriage, they willingly or unwillingly have to admit and accept a secondary status. Therefore, Deshpande ironically remarked that never in the concept of marriage a + b is equal to b + a. This equation becomes lopsided and unequal relationship in which women forgets her very own existence. Women must have offers everything that means her body and her soul and in return she has gained only the physical presence of her husband and not his soul. But even though after these odds and atrocities also mechanically the husband-wife relationship continues. Even with all these contradictions this relationship provides a warmth and protection for living life to the women protagonist Sumi.

Thus, the male characters present an ascending graph of detachment. They prefer to stay away forever with no bindings of emotions, feelings and attachments. These male characters only crave for their own space and mentally keeps themselves safe and secure. According to these male characters opinion the binding and ties of love suffocate them and therefore all their attempts are aimed to emancipate themselves from bindings, love, pain and responsibilities that love brings along with it. Due to this they prefer to offer their body and not their soul on the contrary female characters willingly in a sacrificial way and always honestly ready to offer their body and soul only for the sake of their husbands.
8.9 Virtues and Vices Impact of Metaphorical Elements :-

One of the most important and continuously occurring metaphorical element in the novels of Shashi Deshpande is “house”. The whole novel at length evolves only inside a house, all the daily activities going around. Examples like the gush of tap water, the gargling, the sounds of utensils, the crying of children, the various courtyard activities bring out exuberance and vivacity in the portrait of whole novel portrait. It is highly impossible to analyze in depth the inter-relationship among the various characters without this particular metaphorical element. Every circumstance in the novels appears as if it is a scene of a play, very depictive, precise and very much picturesque as if the reader is one of the part of it and experiencing each and every event. An element “house” comes alive threateningly realistic at times, with its own taboos, skeletons in its cupboard. Every house has a witness and its own way to confront death, giving different interpretations about death.

The relationship and explanation about death in the novel- The Dark Holds No Terrors is very much obsessive due to it haunts the protagonist Sarita, where as according to the view of Naren in the novel- Roots and Shadows death comes out as a blessing to reunite himself with his drowned parents.

This specific concept of “death” helps Shashi Deshpande to oscillate in between the “past and present”. In her fiction “past” is something inevitable which the protagonists are trying to escape or rebel against. But alike the metaphorical element “house” the another element “past and present” is also having a vital importance which helps to all the characters to understands their real position, their existence and self–identity.

Thus, the metaphorical elements like the house, death and past –present which are given due importance in Deshpande’s novels are as inevitable as birth and death in the life of human being. Apart from that, a modest understanding of the past guides the protagonists to pave the way for the future. It means
sharing and understanding the past supports the protagonists to move from a strained and hostile relationship to a perfect mature understanding of it.

**8.10 The Development of Optimistic Views Through the Friendship of Male Friends:**

Shashi Deshpande’s protagonists bonding with male friends are a pivotal relationship which is explored through her fiction. It is pivotal because this relationship gives protagonists a breathing space by reliving them from the various bondage of marital life. The protagonists got some relaxation from the suffocation due to the friendship of these male friends.

This specific relationship delineates by Deshpande, where her protagonists need not to pretend for what they are not; or feel suffocated by the role relationship and their expectations. This is an important bonding where protagonists can express themselves as they are Apart from that this relationship provides the strength to know the protagonists themselves and accept their own selves as women as well as an independent human being and supports these female protagonists to come to the terms with their lives and the reality associated with it.

Thus, protagonists friendship with their male friends is truly based on the sense of sharing and understanding. Therefore it is unique one due to it’s ease and comfort and a sense of companionship which is involves in it. This friendship creates an optimistic attitude in the mind of suffocated protagonists and encourages them to live better life. Actually this encouragement, sharing and understanding is totally lacking in the relationship of the protagonists with their so called husbands.

**8.11 The Aliveness of Entire Paraphernalia of Shashi Deshpande’s Novels:**
The aliveness of entire paraphernalia comes with the language that Shashi Deshpande employs in her fictional work. Her literary language projects an external setting with each and every minute detail and also explores the dark corners of the characters' inner psyche. Deshpande’s language tries to bridge and pass over to the readers about the regional ethos, the very Indian feminine sensibility which is deeply rooted in her protagonists. The most exact regional true picture of a middle-class household and its women, their status, the power structure which they operate and are in her fictional language tries to impart a way of communication of certain characters which giving them validity. The language which employed by her expresses thoughts along with the deep rooted cultural area. At the same time she uses some fresh vocabulary as need arises according to the circumstances with its regional variety and various experiences related with daily routine of human beings.

Shashi Deshpande is, at times charged for using the sub-standard language, but through this language she imparts only a definite, natural, original build up and then mould to her characters. Her language happens to be one of the major aspects through which, Deshpande imparts her characters and setting a unique identity and aura.

In all these various attempts of Shashi Deshpande an indigenous authentic setting and an important change comes over at the end of the novel. The protagonists after going through a painful process of self-understanding and revelation, do reach awareness about their self identity, their flaws, mistakes and misconceptions. It is through the insight of conscious awakening that her protagonist’s attempts to breathe and experience life a novel giving and a new chance to the relationships.

The end of Deshpande’s novels or the firm decision taken by her protagonists at the end is strongly objected by some critics. Their strong objection is on the specific way that at last the protagonists prefer to live in the socially prescribed dimensions, rather than accepting a rebellious approach. Due
to this, the critics gets disappointed that these protagonists have not revolted against the fixed and monotonous strategy of social system and obviously the people surrounded by them.

But an in depth analyses reveals some causes behind this decisions of the protagonists and that are her tender love towards her relatives and her optimistic approach towards life do not allow her to abandon her people and to walk out from them. This protagonist’s behavior is very much remarkable and thought-provoking because she believes in making life possible but not alone, on the contrary with her near and dear ones, naturally she believes in sharing and understanding, frankness and therefore tries to adopt a new way of life. She prefers to give a chance to her future instead of dwelling in only past. She strongly realizes that without tenderness, love and warmth of relationships life is not possible, therefore it is through these relationships and people she tries to detect the meaning of her own life. Deshpande’s protagonists well aware that forsaking with these relationships and people related to it will ultimately make her lose the warmth, love, tenderness and affection. It is with only these facets of life she is able to survive and distancing herself from this will not gives her joy, rather it will force her to spend a sad, desolate life, devoid of warmth.

The people who loves the protagonists, who have seen her to grow and develop and have know her well since her childhood are the ones who have added meaning to her life. Naturally turning away from these kinds of people would be like turning her back to her bright future. Therefore, what she needs is not to leave them behind and walk isolated, alone and aloof but to be with them forever with a new ray of hope, with a new commitment not for them but for herself and her surrounded people. All these relationships that have provided bright and warm shades of her life and make her aware about her bonding with her own womanhood that is very much essential to come out and cope with all consequences, inner conflicts of her life. That encourages her to enjoy happy and peaceful moments and try to adjust with life and develop her personality
even in such type of circumstances only with help of her bonding with her womanhood. But this stark realism come in her only because of her self confidence and various relatives and obviously the protagonists bonding with her womanhood. According to all these analyses we firmly remarked that really Shashi Deshpande’s protagonists are competent enough to confront all the consequences only due to their bonding with womanhood.

8.12 Major Findings of Shashi Deshpande’s Selected Novels:-

1) Shashi Deshpande’s women protagonists are firmly and optimistically bonding with womanhood. They reveal an inner strength of their own. Among these all female characters some are young, well educated and others are middle aged without formal education reveals an inner strength. Which is obviously unique one? They represent symbolically an Indian strategic woman in general. While confronting with various conflicts and consequences these women characters do not allow themselves to get embittered or do not march towards committing suicide or death leaving family like male characters Gopal in the novel - *A Matter of Time*. On the contrary they emerge out as a winner by their sheer optimistic approach towards life. The main source of this optimistic philosophy and inner strength towards life seems to be their bonding with womanhood; unconditional love and binding of their near and dear ones; a strong belief in their own selves; these women characters strong sense of compassion and a stark awareness about that ‘Life has to be made possible.’

Thus, a concept of woman bonding with womanhood strongly highlights and always experienced through the novels of Shashi Deshpande.
2) Initially Deshpande’s woman protagonists strongly reject their bodies and their womanhood but with a passage of time at a later stage they aware the terms with the reality and accept their womanhood and their body as natural and healthy. The female characters talk about their bodily reactions in a certain terms. Even though when they do this task, they are very much straightforward and matter-of-fact. Shashi Deshpande is the first and foremost Indian English novelist whose female characters talks about their bodily sensations and womanhood very much objectively and dispassionately and emerges as emotional and sensitive human beings. At this specific point, Deshpande’s language is very much straightforward and crucial yet lucid without having any trace of indecency in it. This constitutes a very pivotal aspect of Deshpande’s writing.

3) Shashi Deshpande reveals a certain graph through her novels, which moves from pessimistic approach towards optimistic approach while delineating the gender bonding within a family. These bonding may be in between man-woman or woman-woman too. i.e.-

i) Initially man-woman bonding gives a bleak picture of a suffocative, suppressive, silent and totally non-communicative relationship through Deshpande’s novels. But after climax with a passage of time this graph of man-woman bonding leads towards optimistic facet which is based on a sense of sharing and mutual understanding through the remaining novel.

ii) Once again that specific graph is experienced in the portrayal of mother- daughter relationship by Shashi Deshpande. This graph moves towards magnetic bonding despite the conflicting journey, the graph moving towards the conflict between old and new generation, in other words the conflict between conventions and modernity.
4) Through the novels of Shashi Deshpande, a very strong and essentially Indian concept and construction of family emerges. This particular factor made of an interdependent parts and role relationships which provides a unique support guides to the protagonists as well as the other family members.

5) Shashi Deshpande deals with the transitional phase of family through her novels. Near about all families portrayed by Deshpande in her novels are basically singular families, which are staying away from the main rook families with the extended families or joint families due to their occupations. But even though there is continuous interaction between these singular and extended families. These families communicates, shares and understands each others concerns, problematic conditions, sorrowful plights as well as happiness. Mostly the elder people by positively using their patriarchy stands as the supportive pillar in all odds and atrocities that occurs in the lives of family members Thus the delineation of ‘family’ by Shashi Deshpande is essentially having rich Indian conventional essence.

6) Shashi Deshpande very duly and positively deals with the special bonding in between father- daughter. This relationship is having impact of patriarchy but positively. She is the first and foremost Indian novelist, who subtly portrayed this father- daughter relationship, which is based on tenderness, love, care, warmth, support and guidance for each other. Through her fiction Deshpande, this father- daughter relationship emerges out as a relationship having a maximum comfort level, but with a very few desires and expectations which expects from each other.
7) The metaphorical elements played pivotal role through Deshpande’s fiction i.e.- ‘house’. It symbolizes as an all-time support like main pillar or as a refuges which protecting the protagonists in crucial times and different types of consequences. Naturally this metaphorical element does not remain a non-living entity. On the contrary it becomes like a live creature and all the time present by providing supports and blessings to the protagonists as the elderly person does in the family.

8) The next recurrent metaphorical element is ‘death’, which is also having due importance as like living characters. In other words if we remarks that ‘dead’ are more living in Deshpande’s novel then it is not wrong. Through her fiction the dead beings symbolizes the past, but which always hunts the characters those are living in present.

9) Apart from above mentioned metaphorical elements, the co-relation between the past with the present is also unique one used by Shashi Deshpande. The co-relation between past and present is always an indomitable theme of her fiction specifically this co-relation analyzed through the characters, their lives and of course their surroundings.

10) One of the pivotal mean that gives solace to the protagonists is their friendship with their male friends. They played a major role in many of Deshpande’s novels. These male friends stand up exactly in sharp contrast to the husband of the protagonists. They share a natural ease and comfort, understanding and warmth of friendliness with the protagonists. They supports and guides to the protagonists to gain a better understanding of puzzled life as well as encourages them to come to know about their strength and weakness for bonding with their
womanhood, to overcome each and every consequence that may occurs in their lives.

11) Optimistic facet emerging out at the end of Shashi Deshpande’s novels is the unique feature of her writing. This aspect remains an important feature for the growth and development of her female protagonists personality. Who at first even think about to commits suicide? Therefore naturally this dimension which leads from sorrowful darkness towards hopeful rays of happiness surely preferred by all readers of Shashi Deshpande.

Thus, Shashi Deshpande has nevertheless created a place for herself in the galaxy of Indian women novelists especially in English. She excels in projecting a true and realistic picture of the specific middle class woman; who although financially independent but still confronting the problems of adjustment between idealism and pragmatism. Therefore Deshpande almost incomparable due to her portrayal of Indian middle class women who are with their convulsions, turmoil, frustrations, endurance which has been existed in them a lot for many centuries. Because of this her fictional work is mainly based on the lives of women and their consequences particularly in the Indian context. She raised her voice againsts the torment on women and also created mass awareness in the matter through her novels.

Deshpande’s fiction holds universal appeal that clearly emanates from her rootededness in everyday India. Therefore her major concern emerge from readers own environment and from their immediate world hold up mirror to readers lives. Her fiction is little bit different in the sense that her protagonists are stronger than her contemporary females. They refuse to sacrifice their individuality only for the sake of upholding the traditional role models; which are laid down by society only for women. But these protagonists attempt to resolve their problems by a process of temporary withdrawal. This temporary
withdrawal helps them to view their situations objectively. Besides, being merely a daughter, sister, wife or mother these protagonists evolve into an individual with their own legitimate expectations of life. All above mentioned optimistic approaches comes in Deshpande’s protagonists only because of their bonding with their womanhood, their own selves for protecting their individuality and develop their personality even in any type of consequences or circumstances those occurs in their lives.
References


