ABSTRACT

The thesis is distributed into seven chapters. The gist of that is as follows:-

The first chapter “Theoretical background” discusses about Indian English fiction which has witnessed the introduction of the new themes and techniques in the last two decades of the 20th century. Indian English writers have boldly experimented with language and techniques with their new found confidence. Most of these writers belongs to the section of society; where English is used as a means of social communication. This Indian English fiction is addressed itself to some social and political problems, politics of caste, statues of women, the fight against traditional restraints. But the writing from the 60s onward has introduced a vista of new themes and concerns.

The novels such as Anita Desai’s *Cry, the Peacock*, Nayantara Sahgal’s- *The Day’s in the Shadow and Rich Like Us*, Arundhati Roy’s- *The God of Small Things* and Shashi Deshpande’s *That Long Silence* are different from earlier ones. In these they no longer glorify women’s a lot or damn them with faint praise but portray them with greater social and psychological realism and boldly subjects the institution of marriage to an objective critical examination.

Through the aspect “Women’s Writing in Indian English Fiction” I liked to take up a glance at women novelists writing. It projects the responses of more than half of humanity and reflects a consciousness contributed by gender. Women’s writing in Indian fiction has questioned the existing viewpoint, which are essentially patriarchal. All female novelists writing need not necessarily be feminist. But feminist interpretations can emerge through absence and negation.

There are three stages of the growth of Indian English novels is described. The first stage i.e. in the mid 1930’s when the big trio- Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao etc made the energetic beginning.
The second stage occurred at 1950’s-1960’s where Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Markandaya, Arun Joshi, Anita Desai all these wellknown writers came out to change the face of Indian English novels. In this peculiar era specially women writers added a new dimension and that of feminine sensibility, opened up a new perspective of human nature and man-woman relationships.

While the third important stage come in the early of 1980’s where the Indian English novels received international recognition. Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shauna Singh all these Indian woman novelists won the International awards for their outstanding writing.

Through the dimension “An Author: Shashi Deshpande” I elucidated the deep and details about the famous Indian English woman novelist Shashi Deshpande. Her background, different strategies of writing novels are discussed with the help of this peculiar point.

The next topic “Deshpande’s Main Issues and Concerns” is an attempt to take a glance at Shashi Deshpande’s main issues and concerns which are used in her fiction. She gives preference to raise the real character rather than creating a strong character. The main concern of her is the urge to detect oneself, to create space for oneself, to grow on one’s own. This recurrence of certain theme. But the predicament of women those are belonging to an educated middle class family has been the pivotal issue that dealt by her fiction.

Through the point “Shashi Deshpande’s : Exploration related with Feminism” the efforts are taken to depicts the deeply rootedness quality of her fiction with feminism. She sometimes agree with that she is feminists while sometimes not exactly. This contradictory issue is described in brief. Family happens to be a very much fundamental institution of Indian society, because preliminary education is imparted only through the medium of family. The
importance of family and experts opinion about it is exemplified with the help of this sub-point “Family : A Sociological Attitude”

Family plays an important role in her fiction, because she thinks that the brotherhood, which shares and supports an individual during the consequences and natural calamities. But due to various reasons, this brotherhood is slowly invisible from families and the result is that joint families are transformed into nuclear ones. The presentation of the consequence of this disintegration is possible at glance with the help of the topic “Family : Shashi Deshpande’s Concern”
The Illumination : About the Research Topic is done as follows :-

- Need and Importance of the Topic:

  Shashi Deshpande successfully attempts to present multi-dimensions of major and minor relationships existing in a family and with the society. Her language projects the external settings with every minute details and also explores the dark corners of the characters psyche.

  All her novels reveal an impending crisis that revolves around aspect of her protagonists. One of the important aspects of her protagonists, I like most and that is their bonding with their own womanhood. She has portrayed the real educated middle class family bound women. Who is at the centre of the family. The protagonists happens to be at the centre of the most important social institution and that is of family.

  The protagonists are bound to each other not only by relations but they are bound by one of the invisible bonds that is of womanhood. These protagonists and other women characters know each other, understands and try to encourage each others with the bond of being a woman to another woman. They likes to comes to know the agony, pains, sufferings, humility of other women in different consequences, predicaments whether inside the house and in outer world. Thus wherever possible these women supports to one another zestfully. These various
facets- braveness, love, caring, sharing and understanding experiences to come from the bottom of heart of other women characters without any artificialness. This mutual understanding of womanhood seems to be one of the prevalent and emphatic issue projected through Deshpande’s fiction.

This dimension I like most that’s why I selected the topic for my research work entitled

The Study of Woman Bonding with Womanhood In The selected Novels of Shashi Deshpande.

Objectives of the Research Work are decided as follows:

1) To study the various literary facets of the personality of Shashi Deshpande.
2) To study the style of weaving plot through her novels.
3) To study the nature and various issues of her novels.
4) To study the woman bonding with womanhood from Deshpande’s novels.
5) To study the conflict between an old and new generation in her fiction novels.
6) To study the quest to understand exchanged role-relationships of the woman characters through her novels.

Methodology of the present research work is decided as follows: Explorative Research Method:

To be concluded this chapter focused on almost all the important dimensions of the era of Shashi Deshpande. Thus in first Chapter I attempted nearly all the theoretical base of this particular research works.

In the second chapter “Woman’s Suffocation: Man- Woman Relationship” in between the relationship of man- woman how only the woman gets suffocated
and suppressed by various consequences? This particular aspect I clarified in detail with the help of selected five novels Accordingly.

Through “Jaya- Mohan Relationship in That Long Silence” first of all the suffocation of the protagonist Jaya- in That Long Silence I would discussed under the tailor made i.e. strict behaviour of her husband Mohan. She tries to adjust herself in her husband’s boundaries and the result is suffocation, suppression. She feels it as the reflection of her ‘long Silence’.

Apart from that the “Other Man – Woman Relationships in That Long Silence” are also taken in to gist therefore I explained the suppression, suffocation of Vanitamami, Geeta, Aai, all these Woman characters by their husbands, respectively belonging through the same novels.

“Sarita – Manohar Relationship in The Dark Holds No Terrors” as per to this point the illustration about the protagonist Sarita, of the novel The Dark Holds No Terrors is suffocated by her husband’s treatment named Manohar in a rebellious approach. Saru is doing her medical practice, while Manu is the struggler, so she hurts Manu’s ego success making him feel inferior. This sense of inferiority makes him to behave brutally. He becomes the victim of split personality. A sincere, understanding and coring husband during the day-time and a monstrous maniac who during the night-time ruins her physically’ as well as psychologically.

Furthermore “Indu- Jayant Relationship in Roots and Shadows” gives the detail about the suffocation of Indu in the novel of Roots And Shadows by her husband Jayant. Indu, though faces the same uneasiness in her married life, there is a different shade attached to it. Her problem is uniquely different and that is her intense love for her husband, Jayant. Indu’s unhappiness comes from the fact that Jayant, as a husband cannot accept his wife to be passionate in love- making.
Similarly from the novel *A Matter of Time* Sumi- Gopal’s relationship focus on the particular facts of woman’s suffocation to some extend as compare to the other novels of Shashi Deshpande. Sumi, with limitations of a human being, is unable to judge and understands Gopal completely, yet curious and not bitter about Gopal, after his act of desertion. Gopal’s desertion has created a vast void in Sumi, which she is unable to fill up with anything else. Gopal has occupied so much ‘Space’ in Sumi’s emotional as well as daily life that she feels ‘a vast emptiness’ within her without him.

Lastly I took a glance at the suffocation of Urmi by her husband Kishore through the novel *The Binding vine*. Urmi, a passionate lover wishes to be reassured’ from her husband, if not in words then in his deeds; that he also thinks of her, misses his wife and family when he is away. But Urmi does not find any trace of this feeling in Kishore. Even after a physical intimacy he is very cool, composed and intact. He does not reveal any sign, which shows he is touched or moved by the moment. He does not give an impression that the moment has left any impact on him. Urmi is shattered by this knowledge.

Apart from all these protagonists suffocation other women sub characters suffocation by their so called husbands also discussed with the help of this particular chapter.

Thus in this chapter the endless efforts are done to exemplified the basic man- woman relationship in the family. It is the basic pillar of the family, yet is reveals the asphyxiation and suffocation of the woman imposed on her by the patriarchal family set-up in India. The reasons- lack of communication, lack of understanding, Lack of space is the main for this harsh reality; which revealed through this basic bonding of man woman relationships.

Through the third chapter named “Magnetic Bonding Despite The Conflicting Journey : Mother- Daughter Relationship” I tried to explain how
Deshpande through her novels focused the complexities and intricate web of the most important relationship and that is of mother- daughter relationship? Through this chapter I illuminated the same one in various ways. The mother at times stands as a refuge for daughters in trouble, or she emerges as an entity from which the daughter is willing to emancipate herself. In spite of the patriarchal system mother’s role in the house as far as her daughter is concerned is a vital one. That I taken into consideration with the help of this chapter.

First of all “Mukta- Nilima Relationship in That Long Silence” the relationship of Mukta- Nilima is quiet an ideal relationship that Shashi Deshpande developed. Their relationship is became like a fruit pineapple because sometimes Nilima angry or taunts Mukta but with an apparent affection. As a mother Mukta has a complete understanding of her daughter’s nature. Nilima as an adolescent, though does not always follows her mother’s instructions but still she loves her mother and respects her mother. So this very nice bond of mother daughter I explained through this point.

Secondly “Saru and Kamala Relationship in The Dark Holds No Terrors” with the help of this particular point I tried to highlights the efforts of the protagonist’s, Saru, that are aimed at escaping from the archetypal mother image. The reconciliation of Saru and her mother Kamala was able only at her father’s insistence of confronting rather than running away from them. This relationship that has evolved from hatred and vengeance throughout the novel, at least ends on a note of perfect reconciliatory understanding.

Later through the mother- daughter Relationship in A Matter of Time” Shashi Deshpande explores the mother- daughter relationships of three generations. The first generation represented by Manorama- Kalyani, the second by Kalyani- Sumi and third one by Sumi- Aru. in the novel A Matter of Time. I pointed out the anger and hatred is directed towards the Kalyani because of her
orthodox nature. She thinks that an heir must be provide to their property by Manorama, which is she was failed to attempt. This happens to be a great defeat to which she holds Kalyani responsible and reminiscent to Kamala dies without forgiving her daughter.

Lastly “the various Mother Daughter Relationships in The Binding Vine” are discussed. Woman protagonists of Shashi Deshpande’s novels possesses the quality to face their lives with sincerity, honesty and straightforwardness. They wish to walk ahead every step with the pain, sense of loss and hurt, whatever their dear ones have endowed with them. They don’t wish to leap into future, Where this pain will be a thing of past. That particular dimension is explained with the help of this peculiar sub point in relation with the various bonding of mothers- daughters i.e. Urmī- Anu, Inni- Urmī, Akka- Vanna Mira and her mother from the novel The Binding Vine.

Thus this chapter has dealt with, in details the mother- daughter relationship depicted in the selected novels Deshpande. Her portrayal of this bonding begins with conflicting journey as the basis of it; even though it leads towards the magnetic bonding of friendliness, love, care and an endless support.

The fourth chapter entitled “Patriarchal Father Figures : Father – Daughter Relationship” gives detail note about The exploration father – daughter relationship which develops at the backdrop of the other important relations. She delineates the father figures as creating a very much positive bond with their daughters.

The “Jaya- Appa Relationship in That Long Silence” according to this point I highlights that how Deshpande very finely pictures the lovable bond between father- daughter? Jaya’s father Appa is the most ‘feminist’ amongst the fathers portrayed by Deshpande. It is Appa, who had inculcated Jaya to become an independent and individualistic person. Appa’s supportive and cordial, nature is
influential in developing Jaya’s basic maxims, principles and of course, her attitude.

Through “the Saru- Baba Relationship in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*” Shashi Deshpande opens up with a very strange uneasiness between the father and the daughter through the characters Saru and Baba from the novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. This aspect I explained with the help of this point. Saru is returning to her parental house after a span of fifteen years due to the rivalry with her mother. Her arrival, back to her house, is something that her Baba had never expected and so he treated as if he is welcoming an unexpected guest. Slowly after some span of time they both understands each other. The outer uneasiness dissolves as time passes, but the inner turmoil still makes her uneasy. This controversy explained with the help of this peculiar sub-point.

Through “Indu- her father relationship in *Roots And Shadows*” Deshpande paints very different father-daughter relationship through the novel *Roots and Shadows* with the help of the character i.e. Indu and her father, who is going to leave his family. Though he was away from Indu’s life, it was he, who took the important decisions regarding her future, about education. In the decision of Indu’s marriage it is only her father who supports her. In short Indu’s Baba not only supported her but also stood beside her always wholeheartedly. This particular facet I illustrated in this sub-point.

Later I explained “Kalyani- Vithalrao Relationship in - *A Matter of Time*” Deshpande’s novel- *A Matter of Time* deals with the frank and caring Father-Daughter relationship through the characters Kalyani- Vithalrao. Kalyani’s Father, Vithalrao is a generous, kind father with no gender bias and has extreme affection and love for his daughter. His relationship with her daughter closely increases when she is passing through the bad patch of her life, but after realizing that his efforts to protect her makes matter worse, he takes a back step and remains quiet.
The second generation of father-daughter relationship is completely contradictory to the first generation. That is of Premi-Shripati relationship from the same novel *A Matter of Time* that dealt by Shashi Deshpande. Shripati here is like an invisible entity and just wants to control everything with a bell.

Apart from above relationship of father-daughter Sumi has a different kind of relationship with Shripati that Deshpande depicted in the same novel. This relationship stands on the pillar of love and affection. She happens to be the one who was named by her father with a name of his own choice. Thirdly the generation of father-daughter is described and that is of Aru-Gopal. Aru desperately tries to get him back for his absence generates in her the fear of losing their identity.

While analyzing the father-daughter bonding in Deshpande’s fiction. This bonding is revealed more that the most of all various relationships are frank, cordial, friendly than the mother-daughter relationship. These patriarchal father figures shape and influence their daughter’s maxims, values, lives, future of course and all the perspectives.

In fifth chapter “Virtues and Vices in Human Life and Relationship” one of the most important and continuously occurring metaphorical element in the selected novels and that 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 Deshpande’s 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, whereas 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 the novelists to oscillate in between the “past and present”. In Deshpande’s 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 understand their real position, their existence and self-identity.

Thus, the metaphorical elements like ‘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.

The sixth chapter dealt with “An Optimistic Facet: Women protagonists-Friends Relationships” The novelist gives her protagonists a breathing space that means an optimistic facet, their relationship with their friends. The protagonists need not to pretend what they are not, but they express themselves as they are. This relationship provides them the potentials to know themselves, accept their own selves as their bonding with their womanhood.

The “Kamat- Jaya Relationship in *That Long Silence*” through this point I depicted that how Jaya’s bonding with Kamat is different from all other man-woman relationships portrayed in *That Long Silence* by Deshpande. Kamat and
Jaya share a unique relationship where no bindings, expectations are laid down. There is a rare frankness between them. This relationship depicts a new approach, which needs to exist in our society.

Then “the friendship of Naren- Indu in *Roots And Shadows*” also little bit similar to the relationship of Kamat- Jaya in *Roots And Shadows*. Naren is the only person with whom Indu shares her isolation, dissatisfaction and her sense of futility about her writing. He only reach across the boundaries, which Indu had built around herself. He makes Indu aware about her hatred of her body, her bonding with her own womanhood at a later stage in this novel. These various aspects of Naren- Indu’s relationship is delineated through this sub-point.

The exceptionality of friendship is the particular aspect is taken granted through this point “Doctor Bhaskar- Urmi relationship in *The Binding Vine*” Urmi, the protagonist unlike Deshpande’s other protagonists is a neurotic person. She does not like to share her sorrows with others. It is one type of nonsense thing for her sake. At this phase Doctor Bhaskar came in her life and tried to give a sense of ‘greater ease’. They started look at each other as two sensitive human beings. A sense of understanding and sharing is an important feature of this bonding that is highlighted with the help of this topic.

Thus all the protagonists male friends and their bonding with each other reveals certain qualities. They have genuine affection and concern towards their male friends. The frankness and reaching towards the other by crossing the obstacles are the main characteristics of this relationships. These male friends makes aware about the woman protagonists about their confusions, problems. Therefore they plays an encouraging role and becomes a turning point in the lives of women protagonists.

Lastly through the chapter seventh entitled “Conclusion” I tried to conclude near about all the dimensions of this research work. Shashi Deshpande had created
a space of her own in the field of Indian English writing. An outstanding writing aspect in various languages have established Deshpande as a reputed novelist of considerable worth. This particular chapter is concluded chapter that is depicted the various issues and problems dealt with by Deshpande, her philosophy and views, the features of woman bonding with womanhood, quest to understand exchanged role-relationship and much more.

Through the topic “Issues, Philosophy and Views in Deshpande’s Novels” the various issues along with the feminist thought by Deshpande are described in detail. Shashi Deshpande has addressed several social issues of contemporary Indian society. At the same time she explored an ongoing psychological turmoil and the inner spaces of feminine gender. She projects through her work a very authentic Indian picture with the indigenous essence of the soil. How Shashi Deshpande gives a glimpse of the psyche of her protagonist’s who are is search of their exchanged role-relationships? is described in detail.

Secondly “The Features Of Woman Bonding With Womanhood In Deshpande’s Novels” are tried to gist in detail. The various bonding husband-wife, mother-daughter, father-daughter, protagonist’s- male friends are delineated very acutely in the attempt to found the woman protagonist’s bonding with their own womanhood i.e. their own selves. They know each other, understands and try to encourage each other with the bond i.e. relationship of being a woman to another character. Some bonding are burdensome, while some are knowing the predicaments, sufferings, humility, agony, pains of a woman protagonists in different situations. Understanding the woman sufferings of their woman hand i.e. bonding of woman with their womanhood seems to be one of the predominant issue projected through Deshpande’s writing.

According to the topic “the Conflict Between An Old And New Generations” the illustration about Shashi Deshpande’s craft, that how skillfully
initially the novels gives the impression of the conflict between the old and new generations as well as the past and present, but an in depth study reveals that it is the magnetic bonding between the opposite aspect that of an old and new generation as well as the past and the present time both are juxtaposed by Deshpande through her fiction in a nice way.

Later the aspect “The Quest Of Woman To Understands The Exchanged Role – relationship” is tried to conclude. All Deshpande’s novels are open with an impending crisis, which revolves around her protagonists; usually it is a reversal role. The orthodox set-up of Indian society projects a man, the husband as the earner and the woman, the wife looks after her children and house. i.e. she must known as housewife. But Deshpande explores all the possibilities of the consequences of this orthodox role reverse when the woman is earner i.e. bread-winner. This quest to understand exchanged role- relationship begins with the novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* by Shashi Deshpande.

Apart from all these various aspect the aliveness of the entire paraphernalia, comes with women’s language, which is used by Shashi Deshpande, impact of metaphorical elements in human life and relationships, protagonists friendship with male friends etc. are also discussed in detail.

The various themes that dealt with and its deep correlation with our contemporary Indian society. It also highlights the main concerns of her novels – woman bonding with womanhood, their quest to understand exchanged role – relationship and the conflict between an old and new generation.