Feminist criticism can be divided into two distinct varieties. The first type is concerned with woman as reader. It offers feminist reading of the text which considers the images and stereotypes of women in literature, the omissions and misconceptions about women in criticism and woman as sign in semiotic system. Feminist criticism has gradually shifted its centre from revisionary reading to a sustained investigation of literature by women. With this, a process started which studies women as writers which is the second phase of feminist criticism. No English term exists for such a specialized critical discourse, and so ‘I have invented the term la gynocritique : gynocentricism’, says the coiner of the term, Elaine Showalter.

According to Elaine Showalter, ‘Gynocriticism’ studies history, styles, themes, genres and structures of writing by women. Its subjects include the psychodynamics of female creativity, the trajectory of the individual and collective female career and the evaluation and laws of female literary tradition. Thus, gynocentricism is concerned with writing by women and all aspects of their production and interpretation.

This research work will represent the researcher’s attempt to study the specialized area of women’s writing – gynocentricism. This area has opened a new world for her in which all women, including her, live, flourish and breathe. Gynocentricism is centered on women and concentrate its energy in knowing more about women. Inspired by it, the researcher has decided to study Shashi Deshpande’s novels from the gynocentric point of view. Within
no time, a lot of questions have raised in the researcher’s mind like: Is there any female tradition that women writers follow to express their experiences? How women writers differ from male writers in their expression? What techniques and styles do they use? This thesis is an attempt to answer all such questions.

This thesis will try to focus on the point that the text written by a woman can be read from the gynocentric point of view. Shashi Deshpande’s novels have also shown how her novels echo the opinion of patriarchy, but the deeper meaning represents woman centered approach. She seems to weave the concerns for women, their problems and also their desires.

In the first chapter “Introduction : Mélange”, the researcher has tried to discuss the condition of women from ancient to the present time, and the contribution of women writers, more particularly of Shashi Deshpande in the Indian English Fiction. In the second chapter “A Poetics of Difference: Towards the Definition of Gynocentricism”, the whole theory of gynocentricism including brief history of feminism is discussed.

In the third chapter “A Biological – Linguistic Study of Shashi Deshpande’s Novels”, how women have been physically and linguistically harassed and how women’s body and their language are immense source of energy for them are discussed. In the fourth chapter, “A Psycho – Cultural Study of Shashi Deshpande’s Novels” two important aspects of gynocentricism – psychoanalytical and cultural - are applied to Shashi Deshpande’s novels and evaluated how her novels are excellent examples as
gynocentric texts. The comments of the learned critics in support of the analysis have also taken for further explanation. In the last chapter, the conclusion is drawn on the basis of the discussion of the preceding chapters.