CHAPTER II

FEMINISM IN INDIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

For centuries human experiences have been synonymous with the masculine experiences, which made the collective image of humanity one sided and incomplete. Woman has not been defined as a subject in her own right, but merely as an entity that concerns man either in his real life or in his fantasy life. This situation has continued to remain the same. What have shaped the feminine perspective differently from the concerned or parallel developments in the Western culture and in the Indian Continent are differences in dress, in attitudes, in cultural behaviour and family structures. In addition to this the feminist movement in its initial stages was submerged in the freedom struggle. And, the freedom struggle liberated women from conventional social constraints and gave them Constitutional Rights. The changes that took place at the social level were the natural aftermath of the political upheaval.

More and more women who joined the work force of freedom struggle were educated and became economically independent and even supported families. Despite this newly acquired power, they failed to
question the accepted patriarchal and sexist oppression on them. In the early decades of the 20th century women took other women for granted and focussed their attention on male dominated spheres. In the typical Indian families of that period, father was the central figure governing or controlling female members of the family. In this way a male child plays dominant role. As Anna Jameson points out, “Surely it is dangerous, it is wicked in these days, to follow the old law, to bring up woman to be ‘happy wives and mothers’ . . . . . as it for woman these existed only one destiny one hope, one blessing, one object, one passion, in existence; some people say it out to be so, but we know that it is not so; we know that hundreds, that thousands of woman are not happy wives and mothers, are never either, wives are mothers at all”1.

The Indian society believes that men have the power and cultural hegemony in the society. A peculiar feature of the Indian society is that men defend maleness and consider women not manly which is not basically human. Women are marginalised through cultural institutions and religious rituals. Feminist movements have been trying for removal of this marginalisation. The strong wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s helped theorize a woman’s discourse. A feministically read text can lead to a better understanding of the woman’s condition. Thus the very basis of feminism which is reformistic in nature helps women to
understand their position in a better manner. In this context Linda Gordon’s opinion is that “feminism is an analysis of women’s subordination for the purpose of figuring out to change it deserves a mention”\(^2\). The women-centered perspective now locates specific virtues in the female experience. This should, conceptually speaking, take to a concentrated study of feminism so as to place in the proper perspective whatever is vital about woman in life and literature. Preferably this should be apart from whatever the ‘ism’ stands for in the history of ideas.

“In the present context, the rise of women’s awakening and of ripening consciousness causes the consequent battle against a tradition formed by male dominated society. Yet the fact remains that feminism is essentially a movement social in basics and socio-political in proliferated dimensions, and is primarily directed against the sufferings of women at the hands of wicked men”. An ancient lawgiver of Hinduism, Manu says, “The father looks after her during childhood, the husband protects her during youth, and the sons take care of her when she becomes old. Woman is never fit for freedom”\(^3\). This forms Indian view of womanhood that relates primarily to the Indian fabric of living. It is necessary therefore, for the feminist to remember that the Indian society has provided a very complex picture of womanhood. In the modern times we have great political luminaries as Kasturiba, Sarojini Naidu, Indira
Gandhi who took leading part in making India free. Services of Tara Bai, Ahalyabai, Razia Begum, Rani Durgaavathi, Jhansi Laxmi Bai etc to our nation are rare and remarkable in nature. Women like Gargi, Mitreyi of ancient times enriched our spiritual heritage. They are also examples of emancipated women.

Virginia Woolf was indeed a revolutionary feminist. A critic Elizabeth Hard Wicin wrote, “Virginia Woolf had a feminine mind different from the masculine”.4 Woman since ages has been under man’s subjugation and her attitudes have changed under the influence of masculine standards. Now she has to find out ways of her own, without yielding herself to the criticism of any Taskmasters. Woman should be able to live her own life. Woman has been living in darkness of ignorance and negligence since ages but now she is moving towards light by slow degrees. “Virginia’s feminism is positive, constructive and deep. She opines that purely masculine or ‘purely feminine mind is dangerous’5.

The feminist movement began in the West with the French Revolution. Mary Wollstone Craft.6 published ‘The Vindication of The Rights of Women’, only three years later. The first event symbolized the beginning of liberty, equality and fraternity for the whole of mankind, the second stood for freedom from the trammels of tradition for equality to women with men for the better half of the mankind.
In 1869 John Stuart Mill published 'Subjection of Women', a very persuasive and well-reasoned book which exerted great influence on feminist movement. However, the movement developed rather by slow degrees. Charlotte Bronte condemned extensively the social system, which brought up girls to regard marriage as their sole destiny. In a letter dated 1st April 1845, addressed to her friend Ellen Nessey, Bronte wrote, "not that it is a crime to marry or a crime to wish to be married – but it is an imbecility which I reject with contempt – for women who have neither fortune nor beauty to make marriage the principal object of their wishes and hopes the aim of all their actions – not to be able to concern themselves that they are unattractive and that they had better be quiet and think of things other than wedlock".7

Today feminism is more or less a worldwide phenomenon though it began in England. The American women were probably the first to wage a hard long-fought battle for equal rights and break into previously barred professions and with the right to equal education with men, to speak in public to vote for, to hold office, and to own property.

It is surprising and note-worthy that despite its wide popularity in Europe and America and with the younger generations of the moneyed classes in cosmopolitan cities in India, feminism has not been defined in precise terms, though most people have an idea of what it means, i.e.,
emancipation of women in three fields, namely political, economical and social. Political emancipation means the power to vote as well as the right to assume office. This kind of emancipation was attained long ago. Now women have attained economic emancipation too. They have the right to hold property in their names and claim an equal share in father’s property with their brothers. Social emancipation covers more than one thing. It includes freedom from outdated traditions and meaningless customs, which act as shackles against what they want to do. Today there are no constraints on the courses in the field of education that they take up. They are free to leave their parents’ home and lead an independent life. However, Women are not completely emancipated from sexual taboos. In the Scandinavian countries free sex before marriage is allowed. In some other countries occasional, extra marital love affairs after marriage take place. A rational solution is yet to be found to the problem of determining what kind of sexual morality would be best from the point of view of general health and happiness. This is no doubt a problem for sociologists to find solution for double standards.

“Most people would agree,” says Bertrand Russell, “that a sex relation is better when it has a large physical element than when it is purely physical, . . . . most moderns would agree that love should be an equal relation”. If this is accepted, polygamy will have to be ruled out. If
not, at least it can be considered as an ideal system. Women were looked upon as temptresses by Christian fathers. But the decay of the idea of sin in modern times has again begun to give freedom to women. The social emancipation of women is of primary importance as far as their morals and marriages are concerned. The demand for social equality between men and women naturally concerned itself with sexual morality. The feminists wanted to impose on men the moral fetters under which women had chafed so long. The World War I provided women greater opportunities to work with men under the exigency of war conditions particularly in England and America. Modern feminists are no longer so anxious as the feminists of thirty years ago to curtail the ‘voices’ of men are. Their predecessors sought equality in moral freedom. Primarily the modern Indian feministic movement may be said to have begun with Raja Ram Mohan Roy’s success in making the East India Company Government pass a bill making it illegal and punishable for a widow to burn herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. Later, the Brahmo Samaja and Arya Samaja worked for the upliftment of women. In Maharashtra, Ramabai Ranade did laudable work for upliftment of women. Later, into the political sphere stepped women like Sarojini Naidu, Vijayalaxmi Pundit and others who fought shoulder to shoulder with men for political freedom under Gandhiji’s leadership. Socially
woman's voice became mute, the term silence is a part of the constitution of female identity, that subjectivity is a crucial factor to women. Sophocles says "silence gives the proper grace to women".9 Women speak on sufferings in the patriarchal order. That is why culture prefers them to be silent.

The concept of silence recurs in women's writings. Women writers have proved themselves as silent protesters. They have given vent to their feelings of protest in their poetry. In pre-independent India, Toru Datta, Sarojini Naidu and a host of other poets produced the best kind of poetry. Toru Datta, a pioneer of Indian English poetry, whose first years of writing poetry were years of estrangement between the family and the Orthodox Hindu community, treated Indian epics and mythologies. Her poems are more than mere poems of action and character. Her heroines of epics and mythologies like Savitri, Sita etc. display a feeling of revolt. As Rajaji comments "The tenderness and purity are the untold sufferings of women take shape as in the Uttar Ramayana are like an un-flickering lamp. It throws light on the equality of their hearts".10 Torn Dutta observes "sufferings of women but does not extricate the feelings of women. Sarojini Naidu, the woman, the mother, the patriot, looks into the buried and broken heart of woman. She sees there a new vision of the chained mother and vowed to break the bonds".11 Her two collections of
poems, namely, 'The Golden Threshold', and 'The Broken Wing' consist of sensitive beauty, and the beauty of living, beauty of holiness. There is no distinction of woman’s suffering in her poetry. For, Naidu is a patriotic poet, freedom struggle is the main motto of her poetry.

Meena Alexander, Sujata Bhatta, and other modernist poets have written poetry on their surroundings, whereas Gouri Deshpande’s 'Beyond The Slaughter House', a collection of poems, provides enough proof of her disinterest in Hindu ethos. It is the duty of a Hindu woman to bear children to destroy ancestral darkness. But Gouri rejects babies. Foetus was aborted by her for economic, legal and social reasons. Gouri was able to differentiate the hierarchy between male and female and come out with the injustice she faces in the society. Kamala Das, one of the most aggressively individualistic of the new poets is a new phenomenon in Indo-Anglian Poetry, Kamala Das, a fierce feminist dares without any inhibition to articulate the hurts she received in an insensitive and largely man-dominated world. Her poems in 'Summer in Calcutta' and 'A dozen Poems' describe the heat of Summer, urban sophistication, urban males, and the contrast between desire and spasm. She exclaims:

'Who can help us who have lived so long
And have failed in love? The heart

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An empty cistern, waiting

Through long hours, fill itself

With coiling snakes of silence...

She pours out in the above lines the cauldron of her personality, her sensual longings, frustrations, humiliations and triumphs. Kamala belongs to the Nair Caste, of which she makes a few pejorative remarks such as, "The Nair males are violent in temper and they are crude when sexually aroused. She seems to have not loved anyone including her. She is the type of an unhappy soul who wants the whole world to turn on the axis of her personality, and when it refuses, she condemns it. Feminism comes naturally in her poetry".¹²

Other women poets like Monika Varma, Margaret Chatterji, Tapati Mookelji, Tilottama Rajan, Sujata Balasubramaniam express their views about the vitality and variegated richness of the current output in Indo-Anglian poetry. The touches of feminism have played the vital role in their poetry.
Feminism in Indian Short Stories:

The publication of stories from Indian Christian Life by Kamala Satthianandan in the year 1898 marked the beginning of the short story in English, by the Indian writers. But the tradition of the short story in India may be traced back to the 'Panchatantra', the Jataka Tales, Katha Sariotsagara. When the Indian short story came of age in the 1930's its possibilities as an art form were realized. Anita Desai - with Desai, the Indian short story attains a certain degree of maturity, especially in her psychological portrayal of the innerself In her collection of short stories entitled 'Games at Twilight and other Stories' (1978) she pleads for an attitude of moderation and adaptability of changing circumstances in the virtue of her successful characters.

Looking at Indo-English literature of the 1970's it appears that the contribution of female authors has markedly increased and that a greater awareness is also to be found, with many critics to direct their attention at the literary depiction of the modern Indian women’s problems, be they of a psychological, emotional, a social or an economic nature. Women's literature is solely or overwhelmingly concerned with comprehensive investigations of a more fundamental nature i.e., common themes like the clash of cultures, East Vs West, Spirituality Vs Materialism, the ideas of India Vs the Externalized goals in the West etc. Most of the young female
writers preferred short form of narration to express their ideas. Majority of the writers of the 1970's belonged to the middle class. Life of this class in India does seem to offer the opportunity, the challenge and the material means to a woman to sit down and write her own stories. The experience of life seems to have been much more predictable to them because of their own traditional role as 'woman in the family' and 'woman in society'. Thus female writers, accordingly, chose their themes within the confines of the clearly drawn 'sphere of women'. The short story writers awoke to the question traditional images by way or probing into meaning of a single experience; a mood or a sentiment based on a moment or moments of rebellion. The use of the long narrative form by a generation, as it were, is in the midst of working out for itself new vistas, new approaches to master one's life and experiences would not meet the authors' requirement to give adequate expression to these probing. This is once again 'wrestling with reality'. The use of short story indicates, as it was, the development of the 20th century woman. In the stories of the 20th century women, a woman is given primary importance, and her relationship with man, in many cases her husband, is most touched upon. Besides, a number of stories depict experiences of girls or young women on the brink of womanhood. These constellations, no doubt, do not differ very much from those of earlier writers but there is a significant
difference, more often than not the relationship of man and woman is portrayed as being strained or women is portrayed as being disturbed or even questioned, what we call a feministic trend, and quite frequently this disturbance arises out of the woman’s attempt to discover for herself a meaningful life in society, be it in her profession or in her social activities outside her home. For example, in Raji Narashimhan’s the Last Embrace, the narrator’s wife decides to leave him, ‘to retire from life’. Similarly, their daughter decides to live her own life, having turned her attention away from home towards a young man with whom she is in love. Little is being said about the motive of his wife’s decision in this story. Joshi, the narrator, feels his supremacy as man being questioned and the only thought he can think of is how to reaffirm it once again by a ‘Last Embrace’. From Joshi’s reaction it becomes clear that to her, he has become unimportant, a non entity, who perhaps never in their married lives, fulfilled her deepest desires and needs as an individual. In the same writer’s ‘A Village Story’, a woman leaves her husband to take up teaching in a village. When he visits her to coax her into coming back home to him, she sends him away. Quite similar in theme is Sunita Jain’s ‘The Landing’ telling about a woman’s and her children’s return from the United States to India leaving husband behind in search of a meaningful life. In Shashi Deshpande’s ‘Rani’, a young woman makes love to her
doctor, while her husband is dying. Having married her lover, the past to
the woman seems a closed chapter not meant to disturb her decision to
live a new life. What all these stories show is that the authors are not so
much concerned with the analysis of their heroines' past experience or
tribulation, nor are they anxious to justify their decisions 'to be free'.
Rather, they are interested in portraying a women's deliberate act of
liberating herself and, at times, to behave independently and to turn to a
new page in their lives is of such monumental importance. Writings like
these, attempting to define a new and anti-traditional image of the role of
women can be supplemented by stories in which women question their
roles of dependence on the male but are neither sure of the consequences
of such question nor of the roles they are hoping for.

Malathi Rao's 'Rita', 'Passion Fruit' and 'Oh America' deal with
woman's quest for self-discovery. The story 'Rita' shows the growth of
the relationship between a young man and a young woman who share a
similar undecided outlook on life. Malathi Rao acted in a more
emancipated manner in a case where both the young man and the young
woman, are being 'offered' the same chance of proving their
individuality. At the same time Malathi Rao's 'Blue Muffler' or Shashi
Deshpande's ironical 'A Liberated Woman', 'The Intrusion', 'An Antidote
to Boredom', 'The Dim Corridor', 'The Eternal Theme', all depict the
destruction of woman's innocence or of her attempts at self discovery by the rule of a social mores prevailing in a man's mind or by a male who expects as a sort of a natural law female's obedience and total submission.

'Not for the physical pain, but for the intrusions into my privacy, for the violation of my right into my privacy, for the violation of my right to myself (The Intrusion) reveals her idea. As "The Intrusion", Illustrates the women writers of the 1970 are as realistic as their predecessors and refrain from painting a reality which does not yet exist because inspite of tremendous changes in India during the last forty or fifty years society has proved it s resilience to concepts of man and woman. Thus the daring of individuals as portrayed in the short stories written in the last ten years or so must be understood as exceptional rather than the rule.

Shirwadkar's conclusion on the portrayal of women in Indo English Literature of the 1950's and 1960s which stresses their frustration rather than a sense of fulfillment' Indian women's writing of the 1970s represents an important step ahead which discloses the careful attention of the critic and the interest of the reader. One can establish an order through defiance. One is driven to a situation where there is no way but to hit back. Women writers have tried to hit back with whatever force they have one such writer is Raji Narsimhan, whose novel 'Forever Free' (1979), is a very good example of establishing a different model of living
through defiance. Another novel by Uma Vasudev, 'The Song for Anasuya' (1978), is of this kind, of paying back the men in their own terms.

A feminist novel for India is not a novel which a woman writes just because she is a woman and knows how to write. It is written by the one who has understood a woman both as a woman and as a person pressurised by all kinds of visible and invisible, external and internal forces, by the one who is not carried away by feminism. An attempt shall be made to study the various aspects of feminism that were taken by Shashi Deshpande in her novels and to see how far she has succeeded in securing for the members of her sex, their present available status in the family and in society.

There were feministic elements in the novels written by men and women before, but after 1950 feminist novels started becoming more prominent, Venu Chitale’s ‘In Transit’ (1950) Shanta Rama Rao’s ‘Remember The House’ (1956) Attiya Hussain’s ‘Sunlight On a Broken Column’ (1961), Nayantara Sahagal’s ‘The Day In Shadow’ (1971), Bharati Mukhergee’s ‘The Tiger’s Daughter’ (1973), and ‘Wife’ (1976), Ram Mehata’s ‘Inside The Haveli’ (1977), Mrinalini Sarabhai’s ‘Thus Alone Is True’ (1977), Veena Paintal’s ‘Midnight Woman’ (1979), and Anita Desai’s novels are the prominent ones. They discuss distinctly the day to day
problems such as marital disharmony, sex violence, divorce, extra-marital affairs, role conflict, problems of working women, spinster's etc. One of the later women writers is Shashi Deshpande. She has certainly some feminist elements in her novels, a fact which has inclined some critics to think of her primarily as a feminist. In fact, her attitude to feminism has been changing with time. Talking of her views, P. Ramamoorthi writes, "Shashi Deshpande feels embarrassed to be called a woman writer and she is not very enthusiastic about the label feminist". But within a few years Ms. Deshpande came out with a statement "I now have no doubt at all in saying that I am a feminist. In my own life, I mean. But not consciously, as a novelist. I must also say that my feminism has come to me very slowly, very gradually and mainly out of my own thinkers and experiences. I started writing first, and only then discovered my feminism. And it was much later that I actually read book about it" in an interview given to Stanley Corvalho in 1990, she said, "It is debatable whether my books are feministic or not". While she had told M.D. Riti in 1988 "I began reading feminist writings only recently, while my writing has reflected feminist ideas from the start". The contradiction in the statements made Car Valho and Riti is, however, only apparent and not real, by 'feministic' she only means propagandist two feminist writers she mentions, as her having read are
Simon de Beauvoire and Germaine Geer, but she also says that she read them quite late, long after she started writing, and that they stimulated her. The other feminist writers she is known to have read are Betty Friedan, Virginia Woolf, Margaret Drabble and Doris Lessing. But she has repeatedly asserted that she has never used literature for propagandistic purpose. Shashi Deshapande told Dr. Vanamala Vishwanath “I don’t believe having a propagandist or sexist to my writing. If it presents such a perspective, it’s only a coincidence”.17 P. Ramamoorthy was so right in asserting “however much she may deny the influence of feminism in her novels, it is the core of her novels . . . it becomes quite obvious that the women she has created are feminist, if she is not one”.18 (apparently this was written before, Smt. Sashi Deshapande came out with the statement that she was personally a feminist). The protagonists are depicted as more intelligent and capable than men are. All the novels are first person narratives, which naturally expresses the feminine point of view. They react to the outmoded traditions and superstitions which tend to impinge upon their personality. They are against marriages and are inclined towards sex freedom. But except in one novel, sex freedom is a minor matter. The protagonists are depicted as having the right of education and exercising their right to have the education they want. They assert themselves in doing what is nearest to their heart. They play a wider role
in the social frame of work than average woman as a teacher, wife, novelist, journalist, doctor, or social worker. They are depicted as having the capacity to lead independent lives and making a success of it.

In the early stages of their lives, they feel cribbed, cabined and confined in the patriarchal schemes of things, but breakout to be in the open. They go out into the world but they feel a sense of nostalgia for home, which but also proves to be a source of support for them in their difficulties. Home symbolizes the ethos from which they cannot entirely cut themselves off, even if they desire to do so. Shashi Deshapande had expressed her impatience with reviewers who routinely used words like, ‘Sensitive’ and ‘Sensibility’ of the ‘writer happens to be a woman. The novelist writing mainly about women’s victimization has dogged her far too long. The only other exportable slot the media would think of was the champion of oppressed women. In an uncompromising toughness in her attempts to do what has never been done in English was done by Sashi Deshapande.

The only novel in which Shashi Deshapande deals at some length with the problems of sex morality is ‘Roots and Shadows’. The first to be written and second to be published by her. Since it was the first one to be written, we may sensibly assume that the problems dealt with here were nearest to her heart and worried her most. The problem in the novel is the
dead weight of tradition in a joint family under the patriarchal system, retarding the natural development of a spirited but sensitive young woman. The system was in existence some decades ago and in some places, it is even today a distinguished characteristic of Indian life. This was an advantage in the agrarian community. But a rapidly developing commercial and industrial society broke up the old order and unitary families became more common. In the novel four generations live together under the hierarchical dictatorship of AKKA, Indu's grandfather's widowed sister, since the grand father is dead. A household like this cannot be without certain drawbacks. "Living too close too entangled with one another, so that if you move you are bound to hurt someone else. And if they move they hurt you. So many diverse pulls, so many conflicting feelings". The one custom against which Indu has a firmly rooted prejudice is arranged marriage. Speaking about the prospective bridegroom of Mini, Akka declares "He has two legs, two arms, two eyes, two ears, so what he's a little dark? So what if he's not too bright?" (p. 52). 'May be the boy is a little ugly, may be a little stupid... but everything else is fine. The family is good, it's known to us, they have money, she will be comfortable'? (p. 56) Mini herself realistically asks, 'what choice have I Indu'? (p. 137) 20. Indu feels sorry for the helplessness of Mini and of thousands of other girls not only as a feminist but as a
simple human being. But when she thinks of the disillusionment of her own love marriage, there is much to ruminate over. She realizes that because of her realistic attitude Mini will be content with on her life, while she herself had been extremely happy but that was only for a short time. Her love - life has been story of disillusionment. "Jayant and I . . . wish I could say we have achieved complete happiness. But I cannot fantasized" (p. 14) How ecstatically happy she had been in the beginning tells Naren,

‘You know the word’, Deflowered ‘they use for girls, Naren? . . . . but I told myself my body had burgeoned into a flower of exquisite felicity. (p. 90)

There was a time when she had desired that traditional concept of an ideal woman was the one who looses her identity in husband. But that is exactly what had happened to her. She dresses to please him. When I look in mirror, I think of Jayant. When I undress I think of him. Always what he wants, what he would like Isn’t there anything I want at all? Have I become fluid, with no shake, no form of my own? And that movement a savage truth had started me in the face without wants there is no “I” (p.54). But Jayant is just the opposite – “He too expect me to submit, no. Not expected. He took it for granted that I would” (p. 174).
She submitted because she was afraid of future. She had to show to others that her marriage was successful.

There was a certain amount of incompatibility of temperament between. "It's more like . . . . we're on different levels. . . . . He chooses his level.

And I try to choose the one would like me to be on. It humiliates me". (p. 90). So she has an affair with Naren with whom she can be herself.

She has come to the conclusion that love is a lie while sexual instinct is true. (p. 173).

Then at the end she makes an edifying speech for her own benefit. I would put all this behind me and go back to Jayant. What kind of life can you build on a foundation of dishonesty, I had asked myself once, what kind of home have I built? Now I would go back and see if that home could stand the scorching touch of honesty.

Nevertheless I knew I would not tell Jayant about Naren and me. For that was not important. That had nothing to do with the two of us and
There are several feministic elements in the novel - the right to have an education, the right to many whom one likes, and the right to have extra-marital affairs. The last one appears to suggest that the feminist could like both successes to have freedom to indulge in extra-marital affairs rather than be loyal to each other.

This accent on extra-marital sex would convey the impression that Shashi Deshapande is a feminist, an impression deepened by reference to it in another three novels of hers. Shashi Deshapande's every protagonist is concerned with the discovery of the self are the search for the self-identification or a quest for the self, all of which mean being honest with oneself. An individual is a conglomeration of traits mental and physical, of which a trait or two may dominate, which we call his personality. In this regard, some critics, who are determined to prove Sashi Deshapande is a feminist, interpret every thing her protagonist do as feministic. For example P. Rammoorthy writes "The novel (Roots and Shadows) gains its feministic stance in Indu's exploitation into herself" which is feministic.

In "The Dark Holds No Terror" Deshpande intelligently plays on the theme of extra-marital affairs without there being any extra-marital
affairs. Saru, (Sarita) had once believed in love. That is why she had married Manu (Manohar), her adolescent romantic hero. After a few years Indu, comes to believe that there is no such thing as love. “Love ...... how she scorned the word now. There was such thing between man and women. There was only a need which both fought against, fulfillity the very fulfillity turning into the thing they called “Love”. It’s only a word, she thought take away the word, the idea, and the concept will wither.” 20

The Main reason for this disillusionment is Manu’s sadistic sex exploitation of Sam. In an interview given to Lakshmi Holmistorom Smt. Deshpande has stated, “believe this or in one where women really are exploited, when men do use power, their sexual power in order to subjugate women. The horror of it is certainly part of my thinking” 21. It is seen that Sam has moved away from Indu. Indu had come to the conclusion that love was a lie and sex the truth. Saru has not lost her trust in love. No doubt, love alone is not enough and sex also is necessary for fulfillment. When they expressed these views, they were disillusioned for various reasons, but it should be remembered that both them had married for love. Diametrically opposite to the idea that tender and affectionate love is of great value in the life of man and woman, Deshpande depicts the suffering that wives undergo where love is

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lacking. Akka prefers being locked of in a room without food being sent by her mother-in-law to the bedroom. Manu's sadistic treatment of Sam at night is intolerable. The only excuse one can think of is that Manu has become a split personality and does not know during day what he does at night.

In 'Come Up And Be Dead' Jyoti Raman has been divorced by her husband because being unable to bear the sadistic treatment of her husband. She tried to commit suicide. She has become inhibited to such an extent that she does not want to mix even with girls. This kind of sexual exploitation by men is what Deshpande appears to have felt most. If the men who exploit their wives sexually are the favourite objects of destination and hatred of Shashi Deshpande, the gutless women who became completely faceless shadows of their husbands without a protest are her pet objects her writing. Saru refers to such a woman, a doctor's wife to whose home they had been invited for tea. Justice cannot be done to the master description without coating the passage in full.

"But there is one family I do remember, one couple, one woman specifically, we had been invited to tea. The man said an talked to us. The woman came to us later with trays of food, cups of tea and glass of water. She came in silently, unobtrusively, like a
shadow and went out in the same way, her husband’s conversation not being interrupted even by a fraction of second by her presence. He did not introduce her to us and so strong was the man’s discharged of her presence that we ignored her.

We ate our food, sipped the tea and gulped the water as if they had been brought to us by a name less waiter in a hotel. When going I went into take my leave of her I smiled at her. She did not response. Her face was unchanged expressionless, as if she had fallen in with her husband’s desires and successfully a faced the person that was her husband. At the door I looked back for a moment. She stood under a light. A strong unshaded bulb hanging low in the center of the room. I looked down at her feet and sow next was no shadow. For some reason, the words came to my mind. If I cast no shadow. I do not exist. (p. 158 -159).

The protagonists of Deshpande become less adventurous in their extra-marital love affairs. If Indu has the courage to have an affair with Naren in the name of integrity, Saru has even greater reason to give herself to Padmakar, but she does not. She leaves Manu to lead a life of
here own. 'That Long Silence' is about the life of resignation, which a lower middle class housewife leads. She is aware that her life is same. Like Saru of The Dark Holds No Terror Jaya aware of the unimaginative nature of her, and his lack of professional integrity. His intellectual superiority makes her uncomfortable. Mohan's predicament being suspected of irregularities proves to be a blessing in disguise, for they are forced to go to their old flat at Dadar, until the storm blows over. It is in that building that, a widower living alone, stays and it is through his encouragement and tutelage that she takes up serious writing. Her friendship with him reaches a stage of almost physical intimacy.

"The body's response is so much simpler, so much more direct, is it possible that it is therefore more likely to be right? Even now I have no answer to that. At that moment, however, I had instantaneously rejected the body's response. I had moved away from him that scarcely touching grasp, I had left him without a word.

There had been no anger in me when I had done that, there had been no outrage, either. There had been nothing but an overwhelming urge to respond to him with my body, the equally overwhelming certainty of my mind that I could not do so. Later there had been confusion 'Jaya' he had said and I had become only Jaya. It had
annihilated Mohan entirely: it had frightened me the way it had annihilated Mohan entirely.” (p 157)

After some days she goes to his flat to meet him and finds him dead.

In Deshpande’s ‘The Binding Vine’ Urmi has married Kishore for love. He is a Naval Officer and hence he is at home for a few months and away for several. Urmi is passionately in love with him and is passionate her self. Then he goes away and I’m left with that passion . . . . pain lashed through me and I knew vulnerable I was. I tried after that to control the erotic fantasies that invaded me in the early hours of the morning, fantasies in which I wave, in great detail, different patterns of love-making: but I soon realized the only way I could come to terms with my sexuality was recognize it”. (p. 105).

When Dr. Bhaskar, an old friend of her, makes advances to her, “I was perilously close to responding to Bhaskar, to giving him what he wants”. (p. 165) But she does not. Its so much easier, so much simpler, to just think of virtue and chastity and being a good wife. I see the point of it now”. (p. 166)

In Small Remedies, Shahi Deshpande explores her favourite theme of a woman set on a journey of self - discovery, a journey which will
bring past and present within a single pair of brackets, which will heal the wounds even if it does not provide all the answers. To woman - Leela the trade union activist and Savitribai Indorekar, the ageing diva of the Gwalior Gharana - both were women who worked for and got the measure of freedom they needed, that both were ready to accept wholly the consequences of their actions. Madu who introduces these two woman is not a passive story - teller, she is very much of mitgestalter, a creator with great potential. Madhu thinks,

So many of us (are) walking this earth with our pained, our sorrow concealed within ourselves, so many of us hiding our suffering, going about as it all is well, so many of us surviving our loss, our grief It's a miracle (p. 315). This is the feministic tone of Shashi Deshpandes. Her recent novel, 'A Matter of Time', is set against the backdrop of the Big House, inhabited by Kalyani and her husband Sripati. It is the house which Sumi, Gopal’s wife, returns along with her three daughter Am, Cham and Seema, ‘A Matter of Time’ is a composite study in human relationships, and of the crucial role plays on familial and social systems. It gives a scene of paradigmatic of the post - colonial Indian society, after departure of the British ‘Master’. Once again the novel reveals the tussle between man and woman.
All the novels of Shashi Deshpande are in a sense breaking of that long silence that Indian women have kept about their sufferings and neglect, of the stiffening of their personality and about their breaking out in protest. The Indian culture, which the author depicts in her novels and of which she herself is a product, appears to hold the protagonists back in spite of their higher education from the kind of feministic sexual freedom advocated in the West by feminists.

Feministic trend in Indian English Literature gradually created a deep impact on other Indian regional languages. Women writers of Kannada strongly incurred this trend in their writings.
NOTE


3 Manu Smirithi.


5 Ibid. p. 45

6 Mary Wollstone Craft was the wife of William Godwin, with daughter Mary, P.B. Shelly eloped. Godwin and She did not at first marry because they thought it improper to mark the climax of what is most sacrely private with ceremony and noise. Harry Blamires: A short history of English Literature (London and New York: Methuen, 1984) p. 265.


9 Ibid. p. 57.


18 *My Life is my Own*, Sushila Singh (ed), *Feminism*, p. 115.


21 Holms Strom, p. 23 i.

22 *Come Up and Be Dead*, (Sahidabad, Dist Ghaziabad, UP, India) Vikas Publishing House, 1983.