CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMATION

All five novels taken for research are written by women. After having an in-depth study of these five novels, the research scholar has unearthed many disturbing facts. Reading between the lines, the research scholar has discovered many hidden meanings.

Shashi Deshpande is a forceful novelist. She talks with a powerful voice. She seems very sure of herself and she makes her voice heard. Women have always been at the forefront of her novels. She gives the male chauvinist a roasting. Anita Desai bears a striking similarity to Shashi Deshpande. The male chauvinists are mainly targeted by Anita Desai. Women are the central figures in her novels.

She gives voice to the sufferings of the silent race. She portrays the pitiable condition of women with a sureness of touch. The readers see what is happening, but they are powerless to help. The characters come alive in the novelist’s skilled hands. Both the writers have several interests in common. They glorify women and their works are women-oriented. They deal with silent sufferings, servility, subjugation, submissiveness and male chauvinism.

Shashi Deshpande and Anita Desai clearly show how the uncared-for wives are longing for love and care from their uncaring husbands, how they expect their husbands to listen to their problems and give them emotional support and encouragement, how the heartless husbands dash their wives’ hopes, how the innocent wives groan inwardly, how
they suffer silently, how their lives are cursed, how men are trampling on the feelings of women and how the male chauvinists think they are more important and intelligent than women.

These literary creations are outstandingly and remarkably successful. These stories capture the hearts and minds of the readers. Their works move the readers to tears. They engross the readers who finish the reading with a heavy heart. The characters and their plight keep coming to the readers’ minds so that they cannot forget them. The readers are deeply affected by the plight of the disadvantaged and distressed group. For months together the characters live with them.

In the chapter entitled *Submissive and Subservient Women*, before marriage the heroine Jaya was a free spirit and she refused to be dictated to by anyone. After marriage her husband imposed his will on her and she was completely tamed. Marriage brought her down and it made her lose power. She was cowed down by her husband and so she turned a coward. She resigned herself to her fate. She never resettled herself and she accepted her defeat with resignation. The novelist could have projected the heroine as a woman unwilling to submit herself to male domination, sticking with her plan and remaining steadfast in her determination. A woman should be presented as a successful strong personality. Then only her success will boost other women’s confidence and make her feel more confident. A woman should not be portrayed as a failure or a broken
woman or a defenceless creature or a creature of somebody. Such depiction will give a wrong perception.

Maya was loved by her father with unsurpassed love but her husband Gautama was totally unsympathetic towards his wife. He did not much care for her feelings. Maya’s mind was completely filled with the thoughts of the albino’s prediction and her husband’s total indifference. Maya’s obsession and Gautama’s rough handling resulted in destruction. She killed her husband and finally she put an end to herself also. The whole novel is filled with the agonized cries of Maya. The main thing in the novel is superstitious belief.

The childhood prophecy of disaster scared her to death. Maya was swayed by superstitious belief. This presentation will disturb and ruin the better frame of mind. It will bust up the confidence and courage of the readers. Caged monkeys and bear won Maya’s heart. Such a gentle and less strong woman was later portrayed as a murderer. Maya is a victim of character assassination. Such presentation is totally unacceptable. It is an unfair attack on the good opinion readers had of her. The novelist could have used a softly-softly approach with the heroine. Such a kind, sympathetic and emotional person should not be presented as a hard-hearted murderer in the end. The novelist’s assault on the character Maya is totally unjustified.

Uma and Anamika are the most pitiable characters in all the novels taken for research. By rendering these accounts, Anita Desai gets a permanent place in the hearts of
the readers. These memorable characters live on and make a profound impact on the readers. The delineation of these two characters is just awesome. Their story brings tears to the readers’ eyes. Uma’s parents never took her feelings, expectations into account and they never took an interest in her wishes, likes and dislikes. Marriage brought desolation and destitution. There was no one to restore or rehabilitate Uma to a normal life. Uma felt rejected and useless. The painful feelings of rejection killed her little by little. Another character Anamika’s life after marriage bristled with problems. She was not allowed to go to her mother’s house and she was fettered like a bonded labourer. Finally her mother-in-law immolated her. Rage bubbles just below the surface of the readers’ minds.

Anita Desai’s presentation of these two characters makes the spirits of the women sink. Reading the lives of women with low spirits, the readers also may show the inclination to accept the authority and to submit. It will provide a false framework and the readers may follow these wrong precepts. Any work of art should not break a woman’s spirit. Women characters should show their fighting spirit. If a marriage is broken, that does not mean, life is over. There are various options open to Uma. She could have come out of her home, she could have picked her way, she could have continued her studies and she could have lived on her own. The novelist could have portrayed Anamika as a figure breaking the brute force and freeing herself from the fetters. Marriage is not the be-all and the end-all of her existence. She could have returned to her parents’ house. Pushing the thought to the back of her mind, Anamika could have gone for higher studies
and she could have regained her footing. She could have got a charge out of her studies and job. Such portrayal will improve morale amongst women.

In the chapter entitled **Brave and Brilliant Women**, Indu had to sacrifice everything for the sake of her husband Jayant. She was not permitted to make her own decisions. She longed for Jayant’s love but he always brushed her off. Then Naren intervened and he fell in with her views. Naren had given her a free hand and Indu enjoyed Naren’s approach. Indu, a dynamic personality went astray for a mere physical pleasure. This portrayal degrades and devalues women. This degrading treatment of women could have been averted and avoided. Such images demean women.

In the chapter entitled **Rebellious / Villainous Women**, Sita’s expectations and ambitions were highly unrealistic. She had refused to give birth to a child in a world not fit to receive the child. Sita was a chain-smoker and she developed the habit of smoking saying that she was not comfortable in her husband’s house. The heroine lowered herself by smoking and she sets a bad example to the readers. Who is not having problems in this world? Is smoking the only way to relieve Sita’s worries? If a mother is a smoker, it is sure that the children also will soon fall victims to that habit. Very easily, they will learn this habit from their mother. The novelist makes a mistake by portraying the heroine as a chain-smoker. The novelist could have avoided mentioning this habit. The heroine is depicted as an irresponsible mother who does not care about her daughter’s future. The
A novelist could have raised the bar and she could have presented the heroine as a loving mother who takes her children under her wing.

A woman is God’s gift to men but men criticize women and crush women. It is like looking a gift horse in the mouth. Women are expected to submit and subdue to others but they should break these barriers and wrong expectations into pieces. They should not suffer cruelty or harassment silently. Now the time has come for them to break their bondage and breathe freely. They should shake off their oppressors. They should make their own decisions and fight their own battles. They should not bury their feelings but break their silence. They should not be puppets and should not allow men to be puppeteers. It is time to fight back against the oppression and suppression. At an early age itself her parents should bring her out of herself. She has to face the toughest time in her life in the near future. To face a rough deal she should not be a mild-mannered person. She should be very strong enough to deal successfully during difficult situations. If she has gone through hell during her life with her husband, she should come out of her shell. When she feels that marriage becomes a death blow to her happiness and peace, when her marriage partner becomes a thorn in her flesh, when she feels a hand of steel on her arm, when her husband twists her arm and shuts her up, when she is deprived of her basic rights, she should make a move. She should come out of the hell. If she is afraid of society and of upsetting her parents, then it will be suicidal. It is her life and she should take her own decision. She should act with a clear aim and with determination.
Lacking courage to face society, many couples accept inhuman and compromising ways of living together as a better choice than breaking the wedlock. They ae grudgingly locked up in the knot of marriage experiencing psychological stress and mental agony. If a couple cannot get along, it is better to part ways instead of suffering in silence. She should face the challenge in her married life bravely and boldly. She should stand the test of time. She cannot be dependent on men all her life. When she depends on her husband for bread and butter, he just takes her for granted. Education can alone free the subjugated women-race from dependency. Education and employment make the woman stand on her own feet.

This research will serve as a wake-up call for the long-suffering women. The research scholar is of the opinion that in future those who aspire to do research can undertake research on the irretrievable breakdown of marriages, family break-ups, shadowy figures and superwomen in the novels of Shashi Deshpande and Anita Desai.