

Chapter - V

CONCLUSION

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In the preceding chapters I explored human psyche in Shashi Deshpande's novels. My exploration goes in thematic concerns of her novels as it is said that novel is the most dynamic way of presenting human life. I go through all her novels and find that her novels breathe in spirit of Indian sensibility that we hardly find any material for the interest of foreign readers. Her novels are only for those who are keenly interested in knowing Indian culture, tradition; and also for those readers who wish to see how it is going to be changed in some decades.

For the better understanding of her novels I conducted research over Shashi Deshpande's background, her literary career, formative influences which cause her to be a writer and I showed that she is so attached with Indian society not only in the portrayal of female characters but the male characters and children too. I explored how in her novels a common middle class Indian's psyche is in grip of the tendencies of modern twentieth century. For the western readers the themes of existentialism, materialism, rootlessness, atheism, absurdism and pragmatism are common but an average Indian reader is far beyond of all these theories.

The close scrutiny of the facts in her novels makes it clear to us that the change in recent Indian fiction which is highly concerned with Indian people is in need to discuss these issues and their effects on wider scale. Deshpande's fiction is not confined within the limits of household but the theories she discusses have universal appeal. She presents her characters in those decades which are the hallmark of the progress of Indian economy.

Globalization was not an unknown concept for us till then. So, the changes occur in a common human's psyche have been easily demonstrated by her.

In the novel *Moving On* I found the Characters making choices by their will and the result is in chaos. In all her characters I picked Manjari, Badrinarayan's father and Gayatri. Badrinarayan's father is rebel in his home while rejecting old traditions and superstitions and is attached with scientific practices. In his life he never let his children to be bound and has sound vision. He never imposed any restrictions on her daughter Gayatri. Shashi Deshpande portrays the character of Gayatri with great skill. Gayatri symbolizes the change in woman's condition. She has never been confined in her life. She enjoys greater freedom and her life by her own way. The demonic force in Gayatri's life is only the loneliness which she suffers after the death of her husband.

Besides these two characters, Manjari is one who suffers a lot because of her will, her choice of getting married with Shyam leaves her life devastated. It is found how she faces the consequences of her choice and her existentialist self travels the harsh journey which is the very embodiment of modern man's life. Egoist self in human-relationship demolishes the structure of family. Deshpande shows the incompetence in relationships as Manjari is destined and the death of dear one leaves her devastated and isolated. While spending life isolated, Manjari faces threat to her existence of being a woman.

Irreligious ambience and agnostic vision of characters are noticed. No character is seen having faith in religion but they are aware of some

driving forces which govern their life. The character of Badrinarayan has been portrayed by Deshpande to show the scientific vision of human. Throughout his life he remains rational, realistic and agnostic. He moves in his life according to his will but he also feels interference of other spirit which he does not identify God. The agnostic vision of modern humans leads them towards alienation and loneliness. Both these factors are enough to convert human's sound psyche into fractured one. In fulfilling of his will man unlocks all boundaries of relationships and feels alone.

We see her characters dwelling in delusion of having both traditional and modern notions. Desolated they feel uprooted and suffer alienation and loneliness. Manjari's journey in which she makes choices leads her in utter desolation that she alienated herself and her children from past. This alienation creates the ditch between Manjari and her daughter Sanchi. Both suffer loneliness. Vasu alienates herself from the reality and writing becomes the tool of escaping from the reality and encountering loneliness. Badrinarayan is found to introspect and write in the hour of loneliness. Gayatri starts reading and Manjari takes long rides in bus to kill the demon of loneliness. All the characters feel aloofness and adopt different ways of encountering them. Humans wish to satisfy their desires by breaking social laws while living in the society, which truly demonstrate the pathetic conditions of human soul.

On one side man asserts on his existence, on other side he claims on having love for other one. Love demands complete collapse of personality which is not possible if we deeply think about the existence. Several characters have been discussed in the novel. Badrinarayan, a progressive

man fails to understand his wife's vision of platonic love and his wife too could not understand her husband's vision; she becomes isolated and suffers loneliness. For Manjari, love is only a treachery, destroying her life. Deshpande's characters lack mutual understanding and love.

It has been observed in the study that how passion governs man and leaves the life miserable and how love has lost its beauty and meaningless physical relationship has assumed the place in the society. The governance of passions makes characters life hell. It has been noticed through different characters in the novel. Ratna takes resort in Manjari's home to get away from her husband's reach. Vasu explores herself in writing. Manjari and Raman; Malu and Shyam being slave of passions become the object of subjugation in moral values. Human's search for freedom has been seen through many characters as Mai wants to achieve in *Moving On* as Manju in *if I Die Today* and Jaya in *That long silence*, Sarita in *Dark Holds no Terrors*.

In *Small Remedies* the character of Savitri Bai Indorkar, Madhu and Leela have been analysed. By analyzing Bai's character, I found her a complete existentialist who does not follow any social code and authority of religion. In her inborn zeal for music, she asserts her existence in the world. In her Journey, her practical vision crosses the boundaries by leaving her children, denouncing Ghulam Saab who played vital role in her singing career and treachery to her grandfather. In her old age she is in grip of loneliness. She is the symbol of hollowness of modern soul.

Through Leela's character the plight of modern Indian woman is seen who wants to prove her existence in the society while maintaining homely responsibilities. In Madhu, the seeds of materialism in Indian society are discerned. Her attachment with son leads her utter desolation, hopelessness, nothingness, rootlessness, alienation and loneliness, when he dies in carnage. How she restores and returns to a normal pattern is the sojourn of modern man. It is also found that motherhood is a demonic side on Madhu's identity when she collapses one's inner self entirely and makes no contemplation over the fact.

The ambience of subjugation of moral values is made visible through Madhu's father, Bai and Madhu. The declining value of religion becomes visible by carnage of Babri Masjid demolition and up to how much extent it affects Madhu's life has been discussed. Through the carnage which occurred during the communal riots we see the human unkindness, atrocities, demonic barbarism, dichotomy of human conduct and exoticism on the barren land of India. It is noticed that Deshpande presents fractured psyche of befuddled soul who could neither entirely accept and nor reject the idea of God. It is found that she also satirizes humans who believe in rituals only for getting happiness and to avoid misfortunes. The dichotomy of human conduct is seen when Muslim singer Hasina is threatened for singing in a temple.

The utilitarian vision of modern man is discussed in *If I Die Today*. In chasing happiness man has laid aside all moral codes. It is seen that the doctors committed mistake which causes the death of innocent one. For their benefit, they hide the fact for a long time but when Guru provoked

their soul by making realize their mistakes they kill the utilitarian views. In discussing the lives of doctors, Deshpande's emphasis has been on the fact that doctors are not god they are human beings having weaknesses and if they cause harm to somebody, they should be punished. By discussing Guru's character, the vision of writer is noticed as a single man with good instincts is enough to remove the ills from the society for it we need not any incarnation.

In addition to it, the impact of materialism is seen when man is caught in the world of sexual vulgarization, hollowness, discrimination, disillusionment and attachment with worldly matters. Child discrimination is seen through the character of Dr. Kulkarni, meaningless physical relationships have been noticed through the characters like Dr. Kulkarni, Rani Agarwal, Ashok, Leena, Guru. The hollowness of human soul has been noticed by Tony and Cynthia. Through Vidya, we see how the feeling of attachment destroys others life. Vidya, in her attachment with her brothers kills Guru and Tony; and tries to kill Manju and her inborn child.

Shashi Deshpande's very vision to write the novel is to show man's return to God's ways. Everybody is punished in the novel by one way or other and there is a change in all of them. Murder is the most heinous crime and a criminal should be punished and there is no compensation for the crime. For the ages human has learnt a great deal of things. Man is a social animal because he has armed himself with various virtues and this mechanical and materialistic world he has to learn so many skills to cope with the odds of the life. Somehow he becomes habitual of all those skills

and careless towards others which bring chaos and disorder in life. We can make life meaningful and beautiful if we learn to be human again.

In *The Binding vine*, the characters like Urmila, Meera, Shakutaj, Kalpana and Sulu have been studied on the issues of love, marriage childlessness, death and rape. I found Urmila's character in attachment with worldly matters especially with her daughter Anu. Urmila faces the demons of death while she is highly attached with her daughter like Madhu in *Small Remedies*. I found her struggling with the demon of death. Through Meera we come to know about woman's loneliness, craving for love, agony, suppression of will, demand of freedom and her human's right.

Different evils as they are identified love by characters have been observed. Meera's husband's love towards her is his fixation which she suffers throughout her life. Akka suffers the same agony as Meera from her husband. Inni faces brutality in love and Shakutai too is burdened with such brutality. Urmila's love towards her daughter is her attachment more than love and Kalpana's uncle's love is lust. Apart from these characters, Urmila's love for her husband is pure. Motherhood as a demonic force has been found by discussing the characters of Meera, Bhaskar's mother, Sulu and Urmila. Change in woman's condition has been noticed through Urmila's and Shakutai's characters who stand firm in difficult situation by killing the demon inside them. Kalpana's rape in the novel highlights the present scenario where a human's lust causes enormous tortures, twinges of pain, humiliation and shame to other beings. Urmi's feelings and

concerns for Shakutai's family remind us that as a human we still have some values by which we can save the entire humanity.

Deshpande's vision of life which she presents through several characters is human's survival at any cost is observed. We all go through the procedure or urge of survival while creating innumerable odds and difficulties in life but the binding vine of compassion, warmth, belief, love, friendship, sympathy, and humanity makes life worth living. If we spiritualize ourselves the pain of human heart can be minimized.

The study of different issues shows how a modern Indian lies in grip of existentialism, materialism, rootlessness, urbanization, loneliness, corruption, moral degradation and agnosticism which make human's world demonic. Surrounded by all the forces which are surfacing in Indian psyche the feeling of absurdity is noticed in the novels. In the chapter, *The Concept of Absurdity*, the increasing feeling of absurdity in Indian society through characters, plots, themes and speeches of Deshpande's novels have been shown. In three of her novels, the characters in one way or other sustain the idea of absurd in their mind. In *A Matter of Time* Gopal is one who completely possesses an absurd mind. His speeches and actions familiarize us about his absurd thoughts. He is the man who perfectly resembles with the Camus' ideas of absurd. In the starting he leaves Shivpur without explaining any reason after that quitting his university job and at last abandoning his family. His sojourn is the sojourn of an absurd. Other characters show some of traits but they are ignorant about the state in which they are damned. The male characters apart from Gopal, Shripathi and Kalyani's father have absurd seeds in their minds. Loss is a force

which turns Shripathi into an absurd one that he discards his wife after the loss of his son. He too does not return and remains recluse throughout his life.

Both Kalyani and Sumitra have different perspectives to face absurd minds of their husbands. It is seen that Kalyani is completely unaware of absurd concept. Her ways are traditional but Sumitra comprehends her husband Gopal's absurd vision. They both have brought up their daughter Seema in a same way as their relationship is built up. Sumitra's speeches realize us her absurd thoughts in several incidents; though she is ignorant. Her interpretation of Epic Mahabharata in absurd term has also been a matter of study. The character of Sudha is also seen possessing absurd mind. Along with characters the absurd strain runs through the speeches, plot and in the natural description.

In *If I Die Today*, no theory of absurdity is followed but it is simply the concepts and happenings of day- today activity to show creeping absurd element in characters' psyche. Incidents and speeches of characters are enough to project the vision of a modern Indian psyche. Manju seems to be trapped in the case of motherhood which brings absurd thoughts in her mind which is a change in the vision of an Indian mother.

To show absurd in Manju I analysed her character with Meursalt. Her experiences of pregnancy are like Meursalt's encounters in prison. Death, disease and hunger are found in absurd sense as it happens with Guru. His acceptance of death is found in absurd term. For Tony and Cynthia childlessness brings the absurd thoughts and Ashok and Leena's

relationship has been kept in absurd term. The operation of Prabhakar Tambe by Shyam has been seen in absurd sense. Symbolic images of nature and temple enhance the absurd effect in the novel. Deshpande's characters and their comparison with Camus' writing show the germinating seeds of absurd concept in Indian society which is the main purpose of the writer to show Indian psyche beyond limitations in which they were dwelling. All the characters conquer the feeling of absurdity at the end.

In *Small Remedies*, it is seen on various points of view how characters' feel absurd. Moreover, we notice the picture of Indian mother in absurd sense, which devotes her life in looking after her child but the demonic forces cause the death of her child which bring disastrous effect and she senses her existence meaningless without her son. It is observed how she encounters the absurdity and faces the truth. The novel is also a glimpse of unnatural relationship developing in the Indian society. Deshpande's portrayal of Madhu in circumstances in which she develops illegal relationship with her uncle is an absurd phenomenon. Madhu's writing and Bai's inherent fascination of music as a work of art have been demonstrated in absurd sense. Hence, different characters exhibit different aspects of life and projects absurd notions.

Absurdity asserts on senselessness. Human beings need a rational basis for their life; if he feels unable to acquire, he thinks his life a futile passion. Throughout our life we search, pursue a goal for achieving higher level in the society by giving more value to our existence but soon the thoughts of loss and temporariness start to room in the mind. At this stage we encounter the absurd in our life. But we should not sustain the thoughts

in mind and should live life continuously despite the meaninglessness. Deshpande shows her characters out of traditional boundaries and at certain moment of their life they realize the absurdity of their actions while adopting nihilistic approach but soon accept the deep rooted Indian traditional vision. Some of her characters return to old traditional way while some continue to live with the modern vision which they set in their mind. In a matter of time Gopal faces the absurd but does not return on normal pattern. But the characters of novels *If I Die Today* and *Small Remedies* confront absurd for a while and embrace normal code of living.

The fourth Chapter *Pragmatic Humanly Self* contains the study of two novels. In both novels the pragmatic decisions of the characters which they make in the course of the action while seeking their own truth is shown. Deshpande's characters are drawn from the age in which both man and woman are cautious to their duties and their role in the society. Through this we find a change in social structure of Indian society. The time she presents is when Indian women are quite familiar with the modern feministic theories and how these theories are enough to support them to realize their existence in the universe and about their self which they have been suppressing for years. Deshpande's characters think search and try to find the cause of each happening. Almost all her protagonists do not adhere and follow the fact blindly; they think and make their own interpretations of each fact and symbolize progressing modern man's pragmatic vision.

In *That Long Silence* Jaya and Mohan put up different visions. The contrast between the two is that while Mohan is tradition bound modern man on the other hand Jaya is modern English educated woman. Both deal

matters pragmatically. Mohan who makes pragmatic choices could not reach the soul of his wife. He never wants to know her choice while Jaya who doggedly follows her traditional vision of her husband suppressing her inner self emerges with new perception which is deep buried in her consciousness. The novel is the journey of Jaya who learns to deal matter pragmatically. Along with Jaya, Mohan and other characters Deenu and Jeeja also show the sign of pragmatic vision. Parents -children relationship in pragmatic way is also noticed.

Dark Holds No Terrors vividly shows pragmatism in relationship between man and woman. The novel shows the travels of Sarita's pragmatic humanly self. Through Sarita, Deshpande represents woman as a human being has more transformation on her side than male. Saru, in the novel, seems a rebel to all those norms and customs which constrain a woman's potential as a human being. The gender discrimination, opposition in love marriage and egoistical self of a husband who suffers inferiority complex with his wife is lucidly presented by Deshpande have been noticed. The factors which enable Saru to seek her own truth and to work on those beliefs which she acquires by contemplation are also visible. Saru represents modern woman's aspirations, her potential to establish herself in the society, while Manohar her husband represents modern man who faces the harmful effects of modernism much against the antiquity.