Abstract

Shashi Deshpande is an eminent writer. She has a unique inner approach to women psyche, which, she explores with careful sensitivity and relevance to the modern times. She has written on the themes based on women’s subjugation and their plight in the male dominated society. She is an award winning novelist of contemporary Indian woman writer of fiction. The research study focuses on the female characters of Shashi Deshpande’s novels. Her women protagonists are modern, matured, married and educated, they face the problems both the domestic and the social life.

The thesis entitled From Suppression to Progression: A Study of Women Characters in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande makes a close study of the texts of eleven novels of Shashi Deshpande; The Dark Holds No Terrors, If I Die Today, Come Up and Be Dead, Roots and Shadows, That Long Silence, A Matter of Time, The Binding Vine, Small Remedies, Moving On, In the Country of Deceit and Shadow Play with a view to describe her theme in the wider sense of the women subjugated consciousness which binds together the various complexities of the psychoanalytical feminist theory.

The theoretical study moves with Shashi Deshpande’s women protagonists’ psychological sufferings in domestic life, marital life and social life respectively. Shashi Deshpande focuses primarily on the psychological exploration of the inner mind of the women characters. The writer being a woman moves deep into the inner mind of women and bring to the light of their issues. To understand how the patriarchal society approach its women and suppress them with psychologically, physiologically and biologically, the needed theories such as the psychiatrists Sigmund Freud’s ‘Oedipus complex’, and Jacus Lacan’s ‘Phallocentricism’, are applied and psychoanalytic feminists theory of Luce Irigaray, Kate Millet, Juliet Mitchell and Julia Kristeva and Simon de Beauvoir are used to seek the reality and the fact of woman. Keren Horney’s
theory of ‘Neurosis’ is applied throughout the thesis in order to describe Shashi Deshpande’s woman protagonists’ inner psyche.

The study then depicts how they at first escape from the predicaments and become strong women in biological, psychological and social by their perfect understanding and finally exhibits how they realize their self potential and act accordingly to walk towards progression. In this thesis, Shashi Deshpande’s novels are explored and analyzed in different aspects by applying psychoanalytic theories. The methodology used in this thesis follows the MLA handbook, seventh edition.

Key Findings: Suppression, Ordeals, Escapicism, Progression and Self potential.

Summary of chapters

Chapter I

Introduction:

The introductory chapter begins with the general introduction on women’s condition in India in order to know to what extent social justices was given to the women from the ancient period to the current post modern era. An attempt, to survey the works of other women writers, has also been made to trace the common tendency and dissimilarities in their themes and perspectives about Indian women. Along with the novelist introduction the study starts with the female characters portrayal, their predicaments and the view points that are extent the following chapters.

Chapter – II

Psychological Tribulations of Deshpande’s Women Protagonists:

This chapter describes the theoretical development of the study. It begins with the physiological and psychological problems confronted by Shashi Deshpande’s women protagonists. It deals with their psychological frustration, fed up, isolation in domestic life, desperation, despair, emotionally numb, feeling of fear in marital life and irritability, anxiety and resentment in social life broadly. The psychoanalytic theory of
Sigmund Freud, Jacus Lacan, Simon de Beauvoir, Luce Irrigary, Kate Millet, Juliet Mitchell and Julia Kristeva are applied to understand how the patriarchal societies approach its women psychologically.

Chapter III

Attempt of Deshpande’s Protagonists to Overcome Predicaments:

This chapter concentrates on the women protagonists’ trials, tribulations, and constant fight against suppression and for freedom. The chapter depicts how they become strong women in biological, psychological and social by their perfect understanding that pursuit of happiness is meaningless and loneliness is the essential condition of human existence and their realization of everyone has to fight for his/her own battle.

Chapter IV

Deshpande’s Women Protagonists’ Self-Realisation A Path from Suppression to Progression:

This chapter describes the realization of the women protagonist empowerment and their inherent potentiality. It, further, depicts how their complete understandings minds of their own self potential prepared them to assign the role bestowed by both the culture and nature. Without neglecting the social views they accept the life with an inner spirit and emotional determination. They confront their problems in a positive challenging way rather subjugated or move back they put their steps progressively.

Chapter V

Narrative techniques in Deshpande’s novels:

The following narrative techniques of Shashi Deshpande have been explicated in this chapter: flash back, flash forward, first person point of view, third person point of view, narration time, character, setting style and intersexuality.
Chapter VI

Conclusion:

The observations made in the body of the thesis lead to a justifiable conclusion. This thesis makes a close study of the text of eleven novels of Shashi Deshpande’s, with a view to describe their theme in the wider sense of woman subjugation consciousness which binds together the various complexities of the psychoanalytic feminist theory. The dimensions of novelistic complexities as subject of critical attention far extend beyond a simple thematic study of suppression, exile, isolation and alienation to encompass all the meanings and features such as margin, construction of homelessness, unwanted child, marital disharmony, seeking identity and individuality.

Methodology:

In this thesis, Shashi Deshpande’s novels are explored and analyzed in different aspects by applying psychoanalytic theories. The methodology used in this thesis follows the MLA handbook, seventh edition.