CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The changing perspectives in Indian society are depicted by Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari through the life of a motley collection of women who belong to three different generations from early twentieth century. The comparative study of their works is an aesthetic experience and this exposure has brought to forum the position of girl children, the influence of elders in their life, their thirst for liberation, search for identity and clarity of vision in the end with a note of optimism along with the position of married women and widows. What is optimistic in reading their novels is that they not only explore the condition of women who belong to three different generations but also they always end their study with a resolute preference and praise for a better future for women without losing their hope in marriage institution.

They depict that education is the prime reason for the changes in the attitude and positive approach of women towards life and the gradual shedding of segregation between men and women in families. This positive cultural change is traced and compared to show how such changes are made possible. The revolt of girls against the imposed rules, the concurrence of mothers to participate in NCC and trekking, the approval of elders for higher studies, the persuasion of social reformers to shed the unwanted constraints and the laws passed by the Government of India in favour of women are the key factors for the changes in the life of women in Indian society. The young and energetic girls revolt to be liberated without harming the harmony of the family when their scopes are limited. The narrative of Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari
continues into a historical timelessness where the relationship of both the novelists is merged into the events of Indian history. It is interesting to read the commitment of women to the welfare of the family with utmost involvement by sacrificing their health during abortions, changing their names after marriage and accepting widowhood rituals without revolt. At times changes are initiated and rituals are proscribed in the life of women by the brothers and sons of widows.

It is interesting to note the role of women who turn out to be experts in sustaining and maintaining a harmonious consanguineous family unit with ease after crossing their adolescence. It is a lesson taught and message passed to preserve the family unit from the elders. In the passage of life the women in India seem to lose their individuality but they boom out as significant individuals by being archetypes for their promising forthcoming generations. Women in the family pretend to be defeated to maintain peace in the family and to provide a comfortable life to their children. After marriage the girls understand the role of their mothers and their own parental role. This discipline is taught to them in a strict way. The method may be harsh but the intention of the elders is to teach them their role and responsibility in their family. Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari clearly state that the family unit in India is being preserved by the sacrifices of women even at present who stand as silent victims awaiting a chance to be understood. It is fascinating to trace how a little scope is offered in every generation to initiate a better life style for the next generation of girls without disquieting the customs observed.

The members especially women are expected to show greater readiness to cooperate with family members on decisions affecting almost all aspects of life, including career choice, mate selection, and marriage. Women are expected to accept a position
subservient to males, and to subordinate their personal preferences to the needs of everyone in the family and males are expected to accept responsibility of meeting the economical needs of the family. Hence the girls think that their economical self-sufficiency will set them free. They try to boom out well in their career to prove their identity and self. Later they thrive as educated and career-oriented middle class women. At times they are sensitive to the problems after marriage but they know to resolve the predicament. It is a proficiency either inherited or learnt from their mothers, aunts or grandmothers who are the real tutors.

The protests and demands from the young girls have stimulated the elderly people from time to time and permission has been granted to accomplish their wishes which act as a milestone in the progress of woman in India. In a tradition bound Indian society instigating changes at once are mirages and hence changes are introduced now and then with the change in time and space consciously or unconsciously. The imposed rules and restrictions of elders are seen as a positive approach to fine tune the buds to blossom with fragrance. The notion of preserving the family unit which is the spring from where inestimable healthy buds sprout out is taught with care and concern which is understood by the girls later. This healthy family unit imparts work ethics, discipline and a set of principles that will give them the edge for their studies and carrier. The care and concern showered and the rules and restrictions imposed on them equip them with the needed thrust to meet the challenges of life with ease. Constant counseling and exclusive focus at the apt time give accessibility to solve all the problems of life. Healthy and well-defined families give rise to a constructive society. Sivasankari and Shashi Deshpande are of the view that the children of early twentieth century are comparatively strong with a firm will
power and withstanding ability. Their efforts bear the fruit in the later part of twentieth century and hence thirty three percent job reservation is accessible for women in all state government jobs in India.

A lot of changes are witnessed from Sivakamu, Akka and Narmada who got married when they were children, Periya Pappa who revolted to take bath after returning from school, Mythili who refused to learn music when she was not granted permission to learn classical dance, Padmini who has got permission to go for NCC trip with the concurrence of her parents during her puberty, Aparna who watches movies with her friends in the theatre, Bulbul who goes for trekking with her classmates to the Himalayas, Akka who refused to endure the torture of her husband and Narmada who was saved by her brother from widowhood ceremonies like the grandmother of Mythili by his son Venkat. Narmada’s brother Anand and Venkat are not social reformers but unconsciously they have laid the foundation for a great change in the society. Child marriage and widowhood ceremonies become outdated. Girls are sent to schools and colleges. Girls become educated and establish their identity through their career.

Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari show the rebellious attitude of the present generation through Saru, Indu, Charu, Aparna, Archana and Bulbul. But they give due importance to familial relations and learn to untie the knots of the problems to lead a healthy life. The ethos in their novels is neither of victory nor of defeat but of harmony and understanding between two opposite ideas and conflicting selves. They strongly feel that liberation and emancipation of women will be beneficial not only for women but for the society too to thrive well. It will result in improvement and betterment of family at
large. Their women protagonists are very intelligent and capable of self-analysis. As they cross their adolescence there is certainly a change in their mental attitude. They make their life successful without escaping from the house, marriage and family unit. The changes are witnessed in their life style and economic independence. Both the writers never think that the solution to the problem emerge when women escape from the problem or situation.

In their work women find solution to their crisis within the limit and they understand that changes would be introduced gradually in any society as it is a time consuming process. Many innocent victims are being victimised inside the marriage institution where their dreams are shattered. Many are left without money but with children to be taken care of. The condition of women compels the need for a change in the society, towards marriage and married women. If the importance is given for marriage life too in India, the innocent children will not be left to suffer. A comparative study between these two works wide-opens a new outlook about the Indian society, when the changing perspectives are closely observed. It can be concluded that the problem of leaving the family burden on women still exists though it is well-tackled by educated women.

Both writers express the opinion that married women are like birds whose wings have been cut-off but at present they are not prepared to suffer the fate of such birds. So, the protagonists who belong to the present generation break the ties to fly off from the cages to become rejuvenated with a tremendous courage and will power to face all kinds of crisis. It is made possible through their right career. Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari
deal with the issues of marriage, widowhood and the life style of women to reveal how traditional Indian norms make life hell for many. The writers do not endorse separation and divorce as the best choices for their protagonists but they do condemn those practices that hamper women’s progress. Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari try to explain that the better changes are yet to be introduced which need time, patience and tolerance. A lot of social evils against girls are yet to be eradicated and the society has to be enlightened. The works of women writers will serve as beacon light to bring awareness about the existing sociological bias and to eliminate and wipe out the hindrances that stand in front of girl children in India.

Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari try to highlight the problems and inconsistencies within the society through their respective novels for all to think and act. Any novel written should be entertaining and educating. Rather than advising directly, the novelists introduce their ideas in an indirect way which will get embedded in the minds of the readers. When the seeds for a change are sown simultaneously among many through their works, the society can harvest better results soon. Their focus is on women who were minorities and underrepresented groups from the early twentieth century to till date. The experiences of early twentieth century women are recorded in a remarkable way by them along with the experiences of modern educated women, their trials and their problem solving skills.

If texts are read without a tinge of comparison, it would limit the scope of the text and its meaning. The novels of Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari are read, analysed and compared to get a better glimpse about the life of women and her struggle to get
liberated. The novels of Shashi Dsehpande confirm the data which is stated in the novels of Sivasankari. The changes that are crept in the life of women encourage the readers to expect an optimistic change at the earliest. The duty of the novelists is to present the problem and leave the decision to the readers. The novels of Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari provide ample scope for the readers to think and interpret. In *The Dark Holds No Terrors* Saru decides to face Manu with a revived spirit as Indu in *Roots and Shadows* and Aru in *A Matter of Time*. In *Pañgal* Sivasankari expects better changes in the generations to come and in *Poy* Dhurga confirms to lead a life without the support of her husband but with her sons. The future of Saru, Indu, Aru, Dhurga and the daughter and granddaughter of Bulbul wide opens the magic gates of imagination. Wolfgang Iser states, “This is why the reader often feels involved in events which, at the time of reading, seem real to him ...different readers can be differently affected by the ‘reality’ of a particular text” (192).

At present women endeavour to prove her power. They want to be active and refuse the imposed rules. Simon de Beauvoir declares, “The emancipated woman wants to be active, a taker, and refuses the passivity man means to impose upon her...she prides herself on thinking, taking action, working, creating, on the same terms as men” (674). But women need to understand that women are not created to do or copy what men can do but they are created to do what men cannot do. Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari try to state that life should be lived and enjoyed by overpowering all the hurdles that curb the progress. In this notable expedition women need to assimilate glorious as well as devastating experiences with a smile. Endurance, analysing ability and problem solving skills to transform each episode of life into a contented experience are the need of the
hour. No one can envisage the future as it has a unique suspense. If all the answers to the problems of life are identified and understood, the life will lose its flavour. Such thoughts are promoted by Shashi Deshpande and Sivasankari. The gradual changes in the life of girls, married women and widows are presented and the need for attending the wants of women is insisted through their works which deserve special appreciation.