



VISION OF MODERN FEMINISM IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF
SHASHI DESHPANDE

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Abstract-

The independent women where they can choose on their own life goals. This is called as a modern term of feminism. It also leads to women empowerment. The freedom of women give them the strength and power to establish their real identity. Self-realization is the process where they need to have a strong motivation and inspiration from society. Their self-identity played an essential role in their lives. The main aim of the paper is to bring the modern views of feminism terms in the novels of Shashi Deshpande. She is one of the prolific writers where her protagonist always questions for their self-identity and even maintains their family relationship. They don't run away from reality but they face the society's challenges with their strong determination and hard work.

Keywords- self-realization, modernism, quest, women empowerment, feminism

Introduction-

Shashi Deshpande was born in 1938 Karnataka and educated in Bombay and Bangalore. She is an award winning Indian novelist. She is the second daughter of famous Kannada dramatist and writer Sriranga. In 1978 she published her first short stories and published first novel The Dark Holds No Terrors in 1980. She won the Sahitya Academy award for the novel That Long Silence (1989). She was awarded Padma Shri for cultural contributions and also shortlisted for a Hindu literary prize to her novel Shadow Play. Her novels especially depend on a female identity. The complex relationship of men and women in the context of marriage. Her novels major theme is marital discord and gender discrimination. Her protagonist experiences the frustration and disappointment in their marital relationships. It means that men and women should work together to understand the gender relationship. Women's writing is considered as the most important and influential domain of modernism. Shashi Deshpande's most of the fiction deals with educated middle class women, gender equality, their struggle and the problems. She is one of the brilliant writers who explains the psychological conflict and

trauma suffered by her female protagonist. Her fiction especially focused on the inner struggle and identity crisis of educated middle class women.

The waves of Indian feminism-

Feminism includes social, political and economic movements that related to equal rights for women as well as gender inequalities. The first wave started in the west during the 19 and early 20th century for voting rights for women. Second wave began in the 1960s and include empowering minority groups and anti-war sentiments. The third wave started in the early 1990s, Emerging the new ideas of post-colonial and third wave explain the idea of 'universal womanhood' It mainly focus on individual rights. The main idea of Indian feminism began the first wave for anti-colonial reform the moments of the 19th century. This especially focuses on the access to education, political rights in public life and getting employment in the part of colonial states. Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar explain the specific issues to improve the position of women. After independence India began to solve social issues and made some plans for women. This wave works on economic opportunities and justice for dowry. In 1950

the time where through law women got equal opportunity for marriage, law and divorce. Women began to develop their self-identity. In 1973, The Chipko movement where women gave importance to the environment. In 1980 the third wave included to the five years plan focus on the health of women and education and employment of women. This moment even began to give importance to the marginalized and Dalit women by the 2000s, includes modern technology. Fourth wave feminism witness to the women's freedom, independence and their choices. Fourth wave feminism increases in India because of social media.

The concept of modern feminism-

Modern feminism affects women to fight against the patriarchy. It is a complex idea and theory to achieve equal rights for women for instance social, economic and political etc. The first name here mentioned as the modern Indian feminist is Savitribai Phule. Her continuous struggle or fight for injustice against women. Modern feminism is all about the equal opportunities for men and women. It leads to empowering the women even to know their strength and identities. Modern feminism is a concept where women are free from all the tradition and restrictions where they live free and empowered lives. In the context of Indian feminism the Western feminism is influence and it called radical feminism.

Significance of the study-

Shashi Deshpande is a prolific writer who writes about cultural related feminist voice. Her protagonists are strong and powerful who raised questions for their own identity. Her Protagonist are able to speak and they act independently. They're always struggling for their self-identity in the domestic as well as social context. These characters are middle class educated women who know their ability and know their rights even if they stand or fight for their own problems but some characters choose the path and deal with the problems instead of finding new way for themselves. These characters are culturally bound and have their own consciousness. Some want to break down these social and cultural rules and face the situation. That Long Silence is the story of Jaya portrays the real condition of an

educated Indian middle class family. She wants to enjoy each and every moment independently but she is bound for the duties even going through with lots of restrictions. Jaya who lives with her husband Mohan and her two children, Rahul and Rati. She is honest in all her work even very affectionate towards her children. After she completes her graduation she gets married and settles down even though she accepts new name Subhasini. It seems that she fulfils all her part as a dutiful wife. She thinks a real identity as Mohan's wife when the time passes she recognizes that her husband behave differently with her. Mohan never gives importance to her likes or dislikes. This makes Jaya think for self-realization. She wants to break The Long Silence and goes to search for her real identity. The cultural context includes Indian women as wife and mother this is the real cultural identity. It is called formula stories about cultural expectations. According to Indian culture women are inferior to men and give second place to them. They are expected to fulfil home and family duties first. As Jaya says, "Even a worm has a whole it can crawl into. I had mine- as Mohan's wife, as Rahul's and Rati's mother. And so I had crawled back into my hole. I had felt said safe there. Comfortable, Unassailable. And so I had stopped writing" (148) Most women afraid to be alone. Jaya gives up the writing because of Mohan. Now she is frustrated because of long silence since childhood. She is not able to speak. So she decides to write more about her life but she changes the name and adopts Sita for writing purposes. She wants her husband to reads. She didn't want to, "Jeopardise the only career I had, my marriage"(144). She takes the help of Bhagavad Gita and the last words (was): "Do as you desire" Yatechhasi Tatha Kuru (192) Shashi Deshpande accepts liberal feminism. The characters search for self-identity but bound the cultural milieu. As Adela King rights, they are 'aware of the strength of a woman can have in a traditional marriage--- This is not the 'power- behind- the throne' often held by European wives, but rather an inner certainly gained from willingly accepting a defined role in society, or perhaps

Mrs. Aarti Vijay Thanwal Professor. (Dr.) V. A. Rankhambe

from believing in a religiously determined fate.”(1990: 160-161).

The second novel *The Dark Holds No Terror* is another prolific novel. It portrays the life of Sarita a lady doctor who wants to run away from her father's house because of her strange behaviour of mother. The novel depicts as an independent lady who wants to free from all the tradition bound society. Sarita suffers a lot because her husband Manohar's physical and sexual violence treatment. She always gets discrimination feeling in her own family. Her brother Dhruva gets more attention from his mother. Dhruva's death bring her alienation and conflict for mother and daughter relation. The problem for saru is that she is a middle class educated women and how she faces her marriage life. She is in the phase of self-exploration, Saru wants to break her silence for her own real identity. She wants to be free from all the social and cultural restraints even if she wants to be free from her past or horror experience. She wants her own independent identity. The novel depicts that even educated women suffer for their own rights. Saru is a very modern and honest person but she lacks self-confidence because she experiences the dark side of reality. She's doing two duties: morning work as a doctor and at night struggling with her husband Manohar. Her mother never likes her. In an Indian family always son gets first preference. Because of her hard work and determination she joins medical College. She marries Manohar, “I was in satiable, not for sex, but for love. Each act of sex was a triumphant assertion of our love. Of my being loved, of my being wanted”(DHNT 40) she is very happy because she finds true love in

Manohar. but she doesn't know it will fade away soon. Her profession brings jealousy in Manohar and she's the victim of humiliation. Manu begins to torture her physically and mentally. Saru wants to take a stand for herself and she decides to go back to her father's house. Sarita remembers that Manohar says to her “I am strict of this place. Let's go ours of here soon” (DHNT 42) But at last she decides to adjust herself instead of running away from her own responsibilities. She goes to Manohar's house and joins her job. She courageously faces the challenge. Sarita is actually the resemblance of the modern women who besides what is right for herself. She is the perfect epitome of modern women who leads for self-realization. Her quest for self-identity makes aware of her goal. It creates a new image of women where they can stand on their own.

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