

**COMPLEXITIES OF MAN WOMAN RELATIONSHIP IN SHASHI
DEHPANDE'S *THE MATTER OF TIME***

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Shashi Deshpande is an award winning Indian Novelist. She is a winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award, for the novel '*That Long Silence*'. She is regarded as a feminist writer and frequently writes about women belonging to the Indian middle class, who are brought up in a traditional, environment and are struggling to liberate themselves and seek their self-identity and independence. She also brings forth the issue of violence against women, whether physical, mental or emotional, which is a concern that crosses all borders and all classes of women. Shashi Deshpande has made bold attempts at giving a voice to the disappointments and frustrations of women despite her vehement denial of being a feminist. A look at her novels will reveal her treatment of major women characters and will show how the themes in them are related to women's problems.

In *A Matter of Time* moves beyond feminist concerns in that it raises the existentialist question itself. The important truth revealed is that self-pity is not the answer. Shashi Deshpande among the writers of the present day, highlights the image of the middle class woman sandwiched between tradition and modernity. She lays open the inner world of the Indian woman in a realistic manner.

Writers like Jane Austen Mary Wollstone Craft, Virginia Woolf pledged for the equality of opportunity for the woman based upon the equality of value. Elaine Showalter's essay "feminist criticism in the wilderness" is also a noteworthy attempt to liberate women from the traditional and conservative bondages. Simone de Beauvoir's has proclaimed, "one is not born a woman, one becomes one". The male writers have tremendously reduced woman as inferior and weak. The male domination in woman's life is a natural phenomenon in a patriarchal society.

Shashi Deshpande's women characters keeping in mind the various types and phases of the women characters expressed in her six novels are studied here and it tries to link these novels with the various phases of feminism.

Feminism is indeed, a serious attempt to analyze, comprehend and clarify how and why femininity is or the feminine sensibility is different from masculinity or the masculine experience. Feminism brings into perspective the points of difference that characterize the 'feminine identity' or 'feminine psyche' or femininity of woman.

In *A Matter of Time* her fifth novel, Shashi Deshpande for the first time enters into the metaphysical world of philosophy. Basically it is about three women from three generations of the same family and tells how they cope with the tragedies in their lives. Sumi is deserted by her husband Gopal, and she faces her humiliation with great courage and stoicism.

In '*A Matter of Time*' Kalyani emerges as the most powerful character in the novel. It is a pitiable story, deep endurance and strength. By the mirroring of her own story in her daughter Sumi is life gives Kalyani the courage to let go of the past and come to terms with her own failed

marriages. Though Sumi has been abandoned by her husband herself admirably and almost becomes self dependent.

At the age of forty, deserted by her husband, Sumi becomes helpless and leads her life along with her teenage daughters but she is not emotionally shattered like the plain house wives without economic independence. She proves her mettle and maturity even in adversity. Her desertion by Gopal instead of making her an emotional work has surprisingly brought out the real, hidden strength in her. She desires to be economically independent and asserts her identity. She revives even her creativity. She thus comes a long way from Indu, Jaya, Saru and even the protagonists, her or the novels. Courage dignity responsibility and independent spirit displayed by her proves that she has reached a stage of self sufficiency and self fulfilment.

She feels that a woman may get some relief by divorce but she has to struggle for social economical and psychological re-establishment. Being different from other protagonists of Deshpande, She gets complete support and sympathy of her parents and other relatives. Being and independent and having unindividualistic spirit, she refuses to take any kind of monetary help from her parents and relatives. She starts working as a teacher on temporary basis.

For being completely independent she looks for a permanent Job, learns to ride a two wheeler, decides to move out of her parents' house and searches for new house. She shows her will power and independence. She writes a play "*The Gardeners Son*" for the school function which turns out to be successful play and she feels rejuvenated "It feels so good and now suddenly I want to do many things".

Sumi starts her life optimistically but unfortunately one day she along with her father Shripati starts from their home to the bank, they met with an accident and died when Aru gets the news of her mother's death. She rushes to Kalayani and says to her, "Amma I'm here, I' am your daughter, I'm your son. Amma I'm here with you".

At the end when Gopal visits *Aru* and Kalayani gopal notices them standing together at the door with "A smile of encouragement" and a steady look in their eyes. Finally Sumis"

Positive attitude towards life, work economic independence, and self identity helps her daughters to go ahead in their life with hope and optimism and Aru proves it. Sumi daughters establish their voices and identities Aru as a lawyer and Charu as a doctor. Sumi has also created her gender identity and found a significant way of life before she dies. It shows that the novel does not end in despair after the death of Sumi which ends on a note of hope.

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