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## STUDY OF STRUGGLE TO MAKE SENSE OF LIFE

**Panchaksharayya**

Research Scholar , Dept of English , Bundhalkhand University, Jhansi.

**Dr. Subhadra Srivastav**

Dept of English , Bundhalkhand University, Jhansi.

**Abstract:-**Shashi Deshpande has been quietly writing for the last thirty-three years. She deals with the inner world of the Indian women in her novels. She has shown an Indian woman as a silent sufferer who has to bear the brunt of the male dominating society. Her depiction of women's world is authentic, realistic and credible. She articulates human emotions, fears and feelings as experienced by human beings especially by women. Shashi Deshpande is one of the eminent writers in Indian English literature.

**Keywords:-**Shashi Deshpande, Struggle, dominating society, women's world.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Shashi Deshpande's advice for aspiring writers: Keep reading, keep writing, and do not expect to make a living out of writing. Hold on to your job. (The Hindu 2008) Shashi Deshpande is one of the few Indian writers in English with a corpus of work. She has successfully handled different forms. She has explored broader human concerns. Her work has been strong on literary qualities – the imagination, the story fused with its telling, with the structure, with deeply drawn characters. Shashi Deshpande says,

Certainly there has been much vigour and confidence as well as good writing in Indian Writing in English in the last few years. But there is no room for complacency. It has to go a long way before we can call it rich.

We need many more books in all genres – romance, historical fiction, crime novels, children's books, drama and poetry. While non-fiction is doing well, short stories are dwindling, poetry remains invisible except to poets and poetry lovers, crime fiction is still not making its presence felt and we do not have enough books for children of all ages.

In general, Indian creative artists in English abound from the nineteenth centuries Indian prose writers are many. Indian poets are only a handful. Of all the genres, fiction is largely touch upon. North Indians were mostly the pioneers; south Indians followed them but never aped them. For the research, Anita Desai, a north Indian by birth and Shashi Deshpande, a south Indian by birth are to be compared and contrasted, with specific references to their chosen novels. They cannot be branded as feminists as they bring to limelight the strengths and weaknesses of women, which may either help them or serve as an obstacle and hinder their progress in society. Undoubtedly Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande serve as eye openers to the Indian patriarchal society Shashi Deshpande is a forceful novelist. She talks with a powerful voice. She seems very sure of herself and she makes her voice heard. Anita Desai bears a striking similarity to Shashi Deshpande. She gives voice to the sufferings of the silent race. She portrays the pitiable condition of women with a sureness of touch. The characters come alive in the novelist's skilled hands. Even though Shashi Deshpande and Anita Desai have written many novels, only five novels have been taken for the research – Shashi Deshpande's *Roots and Shadows*, *That Long Silence* and Anita Desai's *Cry*, *The Peacock*, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* and *Fasting, Feasting*.

The Introduction deals with the growth of Indian English fiction. The second chapter entitled *Submissive and Subservient Women* presents meek and submissive women like Mini, Narmada (Atya), Jaya, Jeeja, Manda, Maya, Leila, Uma and Anamika. In Shashi Deshpande's novel *Roots and Shadows*, Mini was in a pitiable state. She was not in work and so many refused to marry her and it hurt her so much. She felt hopeless. She did not have the courage and determination to rise above her problems.

Narmada (Atya) was a symbol of love, patience and tolerance. The second chapter entitled *Submissive and Subservient Women* presents meek and submissive women like Mini, Narmada (Atya), Jaya, Jeeja, Manda, Maya, Leila, Uma and Anamika. In Shashi Deshpande's novel *Roots and Shadows*, Mini was in a pitiable state. She was not in work and so many

refused to marry her and it hurt her so much. She felt hopeless.

The entitled *Brave and Brilliant Women* gives a fascinating insight into independent-minded women like Indu, Mukta, Nilima, Leena, Maya's mother-in-law, Nila, Menaka, Miriam and Jamila. In Shashi Deshpande's novel *Roots and Shadows*, Indu had a dynamic personality. She distinguished herself by her courage. She was unstinting in her efforts to help. When Indu assumed her new responsibilities, she had a mountain of work; she was determined to rise to the challenge. The fourth chapter entitled *Aggressive and Oppressive Women* deals with arrogant women like Akka, Mama and Aruna. In Shashi Deshpande's novel *Roots and Shadows*, Akka was as tough as old boots. Akka's regime was a repressive regime. She ruled with an iron fist. Wealth gave her an authoritative tone of voice. Family members shuddered with fear and no one had the courage to argue, fight or compete with her. She had the final say in every matter. She never hesitated to speak her mind and it would take a long time to heal.

This is one aspect of a woman's character one has not seen before. They are totally unsympathetic and they make life difficult for others. They mock the needs of other people and there is a streak of sadism in their nature.

The entitled *Rebellious / Villainous Women* gives an account of strong-willed women and bad women like Sita, Sunanda-itya, Kaku, Pom, Sita's mother and Rekha.

In Shashi Deshpande's novel *Roots and Shadows*, Sunanda-itya's actions were motivated by guile and greed. When her son decided not to sit for his exam, she backed him and she defended him. She was riding for a fall and her case was beyond redemption. Kaku did not know how to make polite conversation. She was a great one for idle gossip. She talked venomously and she could not keep her mouth shut. She gave full vent to her bitter feelings and her words were extremely unpleasant and unfriendly. In Anita Desai's novel *Cry, The Peacock*, the ill-mannered Pom's behaviour was often appalling and bad. She was very obstinate at times and showed a total disregard for other people's feelings. This is the terrifying aspect of women. These trouble-loving and trouble-creating women are unwilling to obey rules. They speak as if they have lost the milk of human kindness completely. They disturb the peace and they are always restless.

The deals with Techniques. Technique includes everything that the novelist uses for narrating his/her story. On finer level it means imagery, symbolism, point of view, chronological order of events, stream of consciousness, schematisation of chapter division.

The Summation gives the scholar's feelings. After having an indepth study of these five novels, the scholar has unearthed many disturbing facts. Both the writers glorify women and their works are women-oriented. They deal with silent sufferings, servility, subjugation, submissiveness and male chauvinism. Women are expected to submit and subdue to others but they should break these barriers and wrong expectations into pieces.

This research will serve as a wake-up call for the long-suffering women.

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