

CONCLUSION

The position of women in India can be aptly described by the words of Kumari Jayawardena:

The status of women in India has varied in different historical periods and in the different regions of the country, and has also been subject to differentiation according to class, religion and ethnicity. The general situation, however, was one of suppression and domination within the bounds of a patriarchal system. Whether the woman in question belonged to a peasant family and was compelled to drudgery in the field and home or to a high-caste family and living a life of leisure, she was the victim of a set of values that demanded implicit obedience to male domination, and of many other social practices that circumscribed her life (Jayawardena 1986: 78).

The status of women in India has not undergone any sea change from the point of view of domination. With the passage of time women are able to acquire education and economic independence. But they are regulated by the patriarchal norms and taboos. Kumkum Sangary and Sudesh Vaid have pointed out in the introduction to a collection of essays that 'womanhood is often part of an asserted or desired not an actual, cultural continuity.' Jasbir Jain points out the general situation of women all over the world:

Equality, in meaningful terms, in terms of greater freedom and more space for women is a global need. Degrees of oppression may differ, kinds may also differ subject to the difference in other factors: but gender discrimination persists almost in all societies (Jain 2005: 15).

Amidst this discrimination a new brand of woman has emerged in contemporary India. In the contemporary discourse of women in India a significant mode of interpellation and projection can be perceived in the construction of this 'new Indian' woman (Rajan 1993: 30).

Deshpande's intervention and contribution in the continuing discourse significantly helps locating contemporary Indian woman's image. The conditions of a woman's life in almost all the three stages of life (childhood, adulthood and womanhood) are picturesque

in her novels though the condition in old age is only insinuated instead of detailed representation. The moments in the lives of the characters are the moments of every woman's life. The novels show Deshpande's deep concern about the marginalised existence of women in Indian society. She strove hard to give women their due and her sympathy went with them. She did not know of feminist movements when she wrote the novels, yet they speak of the need for women's emancipation. She represented the women's lives as they are and showed how they are in need of being free from the shackles of social barriers for women. Her protagonists appear to be stereotypes but in course of the myriad experiences of life, they realise their full worth and emerge as individuals with distinct identities. The idealisations of role models or daughterhood, wifehood and motherhood are challenged to show that women are more than wife, mother or daughter. The myth surrounding women as symbols of sacrifice is questioned. Women too desire to shake off the shackles of convention, tradition and custom and want to project their true selves. The six novels show the conflicts to which modern Indian women are exposed to because of their taking up new social roles socially not provided to them up to now. Her novels have definitely contributed much 'towards strengthening the self-consciousness of Indian middleclass women and towards building up a new ideology on the position of women in society...' (Mies 1980: 37). Deshpande's novels register the suffering of women caused by the oppression of men. Yet Deshpande is not against man as such. Her women are seen to be separated from their husbands in course of their lives. But they finally are united with their husbands. They believe in the happiness and fulfilment in a world shared by both the sexes. Her cry is for the recognition of woman's self. A woman should be viewed as equal partner in marriage. Her needs and feelings should be taken care of. She should be valued as an individual. Deshpande shows how the existing system of unequal position of women continues to bring suffering to women. She envisions a world where women are given her rightful position. Like some of her Western counterparts, Deshpande also traverses the territory Palmer maps as specific to women novelists: 'Writers [women] of fiction...take a microscopic unit of society (one particular sexual relationship, one particular family) and use it as spy-hole into a wide network of social, cultural and political changes' (Palmer 1989: 45).

Deshpande's novels uphold the ideology which has core tenets like:

1. Women matter as much as men do.
2. Women have the right to determine their lives.

3. Women's experiences matter.
4. Women have the right to tell the truth about their experiences.
5. Women deserve more than what they are getting from respect to representation (Heywood 2005).

There are some aspects in Deshpande's novels which remained beyond the scope of this study. In order to understand Deshpande's creative oeuvre her narrative style must be taken into consideration. Deshpande's narrative mode is best described by herself in her conversation with Gita Viswanath on 3rd June 2003:

It's not simple and it's not straightforward. I have a non-chronological narrative. I have to work extremely hard, it doesn't come to me in a linear fashion. I work through a person's memory. There is a person's narrative and the story comes through her memory. I have to put together a chaotic mass of material. It's neither simple nor straightforward as far as I am concerned. But in a way, it's realism. It is not magic realism. I don't see any reason why I should write excepting the way it comes to me. I have never felt the least desire to write any other way except the way I want to write (Naik 2005: 231).

The pattern of narrative in her novels is almost what Jaya, the protagonist of *That Long Silence* thinks about her writing:

All this I've written - it's like one of those multicoloured patchwork quilts the *Kakis* made for any new baby in the family. So many bits and pieces- a crazy conglomeration of shapes, sizes and colours put together. (188)

The narrative mode in *That Long Silence* is like an interior monologue where the protagonist looks back in life down memory lane. It resembles the stream of consciousness technique employed by Virginia Woolf or Dorothy Richardson. Jaya, the protagonist recollects her past life and tries to locate where she went wrong. Deshpande's another novel *A Matter of Time* is also an example of interior monologue. In this novel the memories are delivered through interior monologue. Sumi's anguished self is revealed through her monologues. Sumi's first person narrative of the past and the narrator's observation upon the set of events unfold the plot gradually. The perceptions of different characters like Aru, Gopal, Kalyani are also presented. The revelation of the psychological state, the emotional state and the practical considerations for the different

characters' actions could not have been possible without the help of the monologues. In *Roots and Shadows* and *The Dark Holds No Terrors* too the same method has been employed. Events do not appear chronologically rather they appear thematically. In *Roots and Shadows* the past and present is interwoven through the protagonist Indu's consciousness. She returns to the big house after a gap of ten years and in the process journeys back to her past life. In her interaction between the past and present Indu's personality matures significantly. The narrative in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* shifts from first person to the third person. In an interview with Lakshmi Holmstorm Deshpande reveals how she succeeded to employ this technique:

The present is in the third person and the past is in the first person. I was doing it throughout in the first. But that's often a perspective I use in my short stories. I wanted to be more objective. Yet I really needed to distance myself from the narrative in the present, otherwise it was going to be far too intense. And then I read an American novel by Lisa Alther where she uses this method. And the minute I came across her novel I thought-let me admit it freely-Oh god, this is how I am going to do my novel (Interview: Deshpande 1993: 23-24).

The narrative in this novel gracefully shifts from present to past and back to present. Meenakshi Mukherjee is of the opinion that the intricate web woven by Deshpande in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is possible 'through the superimposition of the past over the present, through dreams, nightmares, flashback, introspection and simple straightforward third person narration' (Mukherjee 1981: 31). In *Small Remedies* we find Deshpande to take the help of biography. She has beautifully succeeded to employ the device of biography within a biography. In it we find that the narrator Madhu attempts to write the biography of Savitribai Indorekar and in the process reveals her own self. In this novel several other characters like Leela, Joe, Munki etc are revealed. Madhu here finds the process of writing the biography tough for she had to depend upon Savitribai's version of truth which was distorted. In order to squeeze the truth, Madhu had to connect the disjointed material that Savitribai had provided about herself. Another powerful character in the novel is Leela whose life is also depicted through Madhu's vision. The narrative mode of *The Binding Vine* differs from the other novels. The three different stories of three different women of different class, age and education emerge in the novel interlocked by the first person narrator Urmi. We get to know the narrator, her long deceased mother-in-law, Mira and a rape victim Kalpana. Other women are also revealed

by Urmi like her present mother-in-law, Kalpana's mother Shakutai, Urmi's sister-in-law cum friend Vanna. Urmi's observations and perceptions at the different course of things are best narrated in the first person.

Deshpande has deliberately chosen to write in English instead of her regional language. To her English is yet another Indian language in which she can express herself best. Deshpande admits that rituals, religious practices, certain terms and phrases are very evocative in regional languages and become difficult to convey when one wants to try the same in English: 'I keep saying there are certain problems about writing in English. There are certain aspects of our life which are a bit hard to put into English' (Naik 2005: 231).

She generously admits this problem but she has her own strategy to express her mind. According to her a good writer can innovate his own way in order to overcome this problem. So in her own logical and rational way she weaves the plots to complete her patchwork quilt depicting Indian women's experiences. She has not resorted to fashionable magic realism instead she writes in realistic mode. She has taken the help of poetry and diary in *The Binding Vine* to recreate Mira's life. This method also contributed to her narrative to give it realistic appearance.

Deshpande's works are seen constantly progressing towards maturity. Her heroines grow up in a world rooted in Indian myth and tradition. As Deshpande has probed deeper in familial life she has been able to portray the realistic picture of her heroines. Her heroines are not perturbed by the political upheavals of the time like Sahgal's women. Nor are they westernised. Whether her characters live in small town or move to city they are very much grounded and rooted to tradition. Many of the characters in her novels like Kalyani, Akka, Atya sincerely carry forward the mythic tradition of India. Deshpande deconstructs these mythic traditions of Indian past through her heroines. Her heroines question the myths and traditions. They are unable to bow down in front of the glorified mythic culture. This is the characteristic of modern women in India who abstain from submitting to tradition. But what is more poignantly shown is the dilemma and inner conflict with which they are confronted. The women, who have grown up with the traditions and myths, gather courage to dismantle them. The tradition of myth that Indian families carry is seen in *A Matter of Time*. When Kalyani and Goda speak of Vithalrao and Manorama's marriage, their voices carry the ring of people retelling myths, of troubadours singing of

love, of storytellers relating the wondrous things that happened in the past. Sumi, overhearing them, thinks of Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhavam*.

Just so the poet sing of the marriage of Shiva and Parvati, making of it a magical, awe-filled story, yet one that falls within the realm of belief because it sings of love, of the love of a man and a woman. And you think - this is how it must have happened. (118)

In the same novel Sumi questions God's hand in human predicament when she finds Kalyani praying to Ganapati to protect them.

He doesn't do such a good job of looking after the women in the family, does he? (115)

Deshpande shows how powerful are these mythic patterns which contribute a lot in a person's upbringing. But her characters are not upholders of tradition and myths. They are torch-bearers who can show the road to emancipation from the mythic image of women. In her narrative strategy myths are evoked only to show how they are becoming insignificant in the lives of urban educated women and hence to all women. The myths carried down through the ages are primarily created by male propagators and hence become negative force in a woman's life. But myth can become an energising force by firing one's imagination, and as such become the bedrock of ideology. What women need to do is to relocate the positive mythic culture of women often suppressed by patriarchs. This energising mythic tradition can be relocated in the oral traditions like folk songs of women. Scholars, theorists, feminists and creative writers need to endeavour to relocate the positive mythic traditions of women. For the Indian mythic mode does not provide women the strategy for liberation from male and colonialist hegemonies. The mythic image of woman so far presented in the Indian literature was that of the *Pativrata* tradition of Sita, Savitri and Draupadi- the silent, suffering, sacrificing wife, mother and daughter. Dorothy Spencer recognises this phenomenon and comments:

It seems clear that in woman as wife we are dealing with a literary tradition. Sita, Savitri, Shakuntala.....At any rate, they exemplify the ideal and thus express society's values... that "a husband is a woman's god- how Sita submitted to Rama; she followed him into the wilderness and afterwards when he banished

her, she turned and went without one word, though she was innocent (Shirwadkar 1979: 49).

But if the present trend of novel writing is examined it is found that writers like Deshpande are engaged to deconstruct the negative myth making of the image of women. The women's withdrawal from the mythic culture provides them impetus for self-transformation and self-discovery. It is also a forward step in the direction of rewriting Indian womanhood. In the postcolonial period the history writing by male has been challenged in order to incorporate gender in it. Similarly the mythic patterns can be adequately contested in order to show how male politics used it to eulogise the image of women. The need of contesting negative myth is urgent as the demonic power of myth can only subvert women and present a dwarfed picture of women in comparison to men. Such is the power of myth.

In the critical moments of man's political and social life, myth regains its old strength. It was always lurking in the background, waiting for its hour and its opportunity. This hour comes if the other binding forces of our social life, for one reason or another, lose their influence; if they can no longer counterbalance the demonic power of myth (Cassirer 1979: 246-47).

The demonic power of myth creates an attitude in the society to view women confined by the regulations of male domination. Women are attributed with such qualities which often become fatalistic for them. The age old mythic tradition in Indian society has been successfully making women its prey. The mystic and magical qualities of myth have often kept women baffled and influenced them to follow myth in the name of protecting honour of family, society and nation. Sometimes women too endorsed their mythic image in order to avoid the harsh realities and to remain in the world of fantasy and romance in the name of satisfying the spiritual and cultural need. To escape in the mythic realm means the negation of the real and substantial. Mythic image of women has always been promoted in order to promote the cultural superiority of the nation. When women are kept within the periphery of mythical realm they are in stasis for any kind of progress is negated there. The mythical image of women was upheld during colonial regime. The same tradition was carried after independence until the intervention of the writers who wanted to put gender in the study of history. Significantly creative writers like Deshpande have also questioned this mythic image of woman. Deshpande's realistic mode of writing

is obviously a step forward to decode the mythic presentation of women. Her endeavour to present the true picture of a woman's life may become empowering to women to bring change and achievement in their life. In spite of the deconstruction of negative mythic image, Deshpande has made use of India's mythic heritage. Frequent analogy from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are scattered in her novels.

Deshpande is often blamed to create stereotype women who are seen to revolve in the same sphere. Her protagonists all belong to the urban middleclass. The names of the protagonists are all familiar names. Their short and commonplace names imply that they are very ordinary women whom we interact in our day to day life. They represent the mass of women who are ignored for their commonality. They are all brought up amidst discrimination at home and in society. All of them do crave for love as they do not get sufficient love and care in childhood. These women hanker for love and care in married life. They all split up from their husbands only to unite after maturing with time. They either return to their paternal home or stay alone to introspect and analyse the scheme of events. Their husbands who disrupt their world are also seen to mature with time. The women are seen to resort to writing to realise their true self. Deshpande makes them write instead of engaging them to some other modes of creativity. The women are seen to have a very sensitive mind and soul. They react to the events at home and outside. In their behaviour with others they are modest. They are not guided by any whims and moods. They carry out their responsibility as daughter, wife and mother with utmost sincerity. The past lives of the characters are important to them. Time and again they take a backward journey to make sense of their lives. The struggle to achieve one's own identity has been shown in each novel. In each novel the stress is on the character's assertion of the self. The characters are finally shown to carve a niche for themselves. Deshpande's novels seem to present the protagonists' journey from childhood to wifehood.

Yet amidst these repetitive similarities Deshpande's unique presentation of the plot and characters make her a novelist of considerable strength and verve. The following part of my study shows how the charge of stereotype presentation can well be refuted as her novel deal with multifarious themes and characters.

Deshpande's heroines are urban educated middleclass women. But it is not so that she deliberately chooses to focus on the middleclass women. In the writing process her women emerge to belong to that class. She strongly asserts that she only wants to tell

about the human feelings of women. But as she herself belongs to that class she knows these women best. Therefore her women resemble her class of women. But a close scrutiny of her novels shows that they encompass women belonging to other strata of life. Her protagonists may be tagged to be urban educated middle class women but they interact with women of different upbringing.

Her novels clearly show that the urban educated women are able to become professionals when women of the lower classes come to serve them. Saru, the protagonist of *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is a doctor by profession. She often comes late and cannot do all the household chores. She depends on Janakibai to ensure the smooth running of the household. Even when Saru returns late at night she finds everything ready for her:

Janakibai had, as usual, kept clean clothes ready for me. (79)

Then there is Rekha in *The Binding Vine* who serves the college teacher Urmi. Rekha consoles her even in time of emotional crisis.

‘Feeling better?’ Rekha asks me when I come out. She doesn’t wait for my reply, but I notice she’s got everything ready for me in the kitchen today. (202)

In *The Binding Vine*, Shakutai, a woman abandoned by her husband strains day and night to meet her ends. Shakutai is representative of thousands of working class women toiling day and night to look after the children. Her husband has taken another wife and does not even give the maintenance of the children. The physical fatigue and mental trauma of this woman at her dear daughter’s plight are presented graphically. Her daughter Kalpana has become a victim of rape and slipped into coma. Both the mother and daughter represent the victims of domestic violence.

Another servant woman’s plight has been focused in the novel *That Long Silence*. Jeeja wants Sumi to help her in order to save her son even though he has taken another wife. Her point is that he has to live to keep the *sindoor* of her daughter-in-law intact:

And that girl, let her have her *kumkum* on her forehead. What is a woman without that? Her husband may be a drunkard, but as long as he is alive, no one will dare cast an eye on her. If he dies...she is young and foolish (160)

Widows appear in her novels frequently. They give us a glimpse into the lifestyles of widows. In *Roots and Shadows* while Akka is a domineering bigot, Atya leads a life of

giver. This contrast of characters only enhances our understanding of the lives of Indian widows. Akka losing everything in her life had become a tool in the patriarchal machinery. She wants to perpetuate women's subdued role by inflicting her tirades over them. She bossed in her maternal home where Indu had grown up. Akka wanted the women of the house to conform to patriarchy. Indu's revolt against tradition was not welcome by Akka though she had herself led a very sheltered life in her in-laws' house. It is quite unnatural that a woman who herself had suffered in life should drag other women into that life. But Akka could not take the off the beat road. She led life in conformity with the tradition and wanted the same for other women in the house. She could never approve Indu's father's marriage with Indu's mother. She had thought that Indu's mother had entrapped him. She had prohibited Indu's mother from learning singing in the pretext that it was alright if a woman could sing one or two *aarti* songs. She could never approve a woman's learning music in the company of the males. When Indu married on her own she was not welcome at home. Akka could not approve any love marriage which she believed was sure to fail. But this is the same Akka who ultimately made Indu the heir of her property. May be she had acknowledged Indu's will power and judicious nature with which she only could do justice to all the members of the family. On the other hand there was Atya who had tolerated everything in life. She had known Akka quite closely and had deeper knowledge of Akka's life. She knew how Akka too had been tortured by her husband who had a keep in his life. Yet Akka had served him in his last days. Atya was with her in those days and had observed Akka's strength of mind. When her husband had wanted to see that woman in his last days Akka had not let that woman to enter. Akka had returned home after her husband's demise. After her return as a wealthy widow she had single-handedly ruled the house. Her transformation from a timid wife to a bossy widow is certainly awe-inspiring. But a probe into her inner mind would reveal that a woman in the traditional patriarchal world becomes another machinery to keep the wheel of tradition moving. Deshpande's novels abandon with such kind of women who want others to submit. This may be a peculiar state of mind where one woman who did not get the preferences of life prohibits others from availing those. Shankar's mother in *A Matter of Time* suggests Sumi to return to her husband even though he deserted her for no fault of her. In *That Long Silence*, Nilima's grandmother had always found Jaya's ways to be strange and queer.

Deshpande has presented complex relationship between mother and daughter. Most of her women like Indu, Saru, Mira revolted against their mothers who wanted them to lead a subdued life. The mothers in her novels are seen to be against their daughters' progressive steps. Indu's surrogate mother Akka and Saru's mother were against their love-marriage. In *The Dark Holds No Terrors* Saru's mother had always been against Saru's breaking the tradition and become a doctor and marry out of caste. Saru's mother cursed her to be unhappy.

... I will pray for her unhappiness. Let her know more sorrow than she has given me. (197)

Mira's mother in *The Binding Vine* wanted her to shape herself in her mother's image. Her mother wanted her to marry while she wanted to continue her study. As a result Mira was married off with a man who could never reach out to her soul. Mira never wanted to follow her mother's path. In the same novel Shakutai is seen to opposing her daughter's ways. When Kalpana was raped her mother blamed her for it.

The other set of mothers are seen to be bestowed with motherly care and concern. Urmil's mother is sympathetic towards her. Even her mother-in-law turns out to be a caring woman. Sumi's mother Kalyani becomes the sheltering tree to Sumi and her daughters after she returned to her parental home.

Deshpande's protagonists are all seen to engage themselves in writing to overcome personal trauma. What is hinted is that women need to step out of their shell and fulfil their dreams. Creativity may become a woman's zone where she can be only herself beyond being a daughter, wife or mother. Deshpande's heroines are seen to overcome the personal crisis when they give space to their creative self. Creation (in her novels - writing) becomes means of liberation to heal the wounds of drab domestic life. Deshpande hints at women's need of nurturing their creativity. Creativity can bring solace to women who otherwise remain stifled. Deshpande herself had said in her interview with Vanmala Viswanatha: 'Having a life outside the family is very important for women.' All her protagonists- Indu, Saru, Jaya, Sumi, Urmila, Madhu all are seen to be working.

Deshpande is often said to be a writer writing about women. She, however, denies the charge saying she writes about human relations. Therefore her novels portray men also. In order to present human relationships Deshpande says:

Marriage is a more complicated relationship because it is not a blood tie. Also there is the physicality of sex. And there are enormous demands made on each other and it is that which interests me....The parent-child relationship is equally important for me. This is again a very deep and complex relationship. But yet, marriage is important for me and so is the family. I am interested in the family, not just marriage. These are the two relationships one is generally concerned with (Naik 2005: 229).

As marriage and parent-child relationship are important for her, male characters do appear in her novels. The partners of her female protagonists are portrayed through which we have a glimpse into the male psyche. In the scheme of events of her novels, the male characters do play a significant role. In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Saru's husband Manu is a budding poet who is compared with Shelly. Saru and Manu had tied the knot out of love. But the sadist in Manu woke up when he found his wife to become professionally more successful and earning more money. Such is male ego which cannot eschew the fact that a woman may draw respect out of her own achievements and not by being someone's wife. Manu had arisen from working class background whose father kept a cycle shop. When he became frustrated with his writing he had taken a job of a lecturer in a third rate college. Their otherwise happy married life was stormed when people saluted his wife for being the doctor; his colleague taunted him that he could not afford a tour as his wife was not a doctor and finally a girl enquired about his feeling when his wife earns not only the butter but bread as well. Manu, the maniac started torturing his wife in the dark hours of their bedroom. In the same novel we see Saru's relationship with her father. It was her father who made it possible for her to pursue medicine for her mother was all against it. Saru's Baba was pragmatic in letting her pursue her dream and not forcing her into marriage as her mother had wanted to wash off their responsibility. The father- daughter relation here is easy. The filial love which Saru again experiences after returning to her parental home helps her to gather courage to face life.

Jaya comes to question her happy married life in *That Long Silence* after her husband Mohan goes hiding for business malpractice. In this novel we find another character Kamat who inspires Jaya to write her mind. Both the male characters are important in the novel for they help the plot to unfold.

In *A Matter of Time* we have two strong male characters. Here also one is Sumi's husband Gopal and the other is her father Shripati. While Gopal gives Sumi immeasurable pain by deserting her, her father gives her shelter and protection. Gopal's point of view for deserting his wife and daughters for no palpable reason is revealed in the novel. The dilemma of the man in taking such a decision is brought to justice in the novel. Gopal's inner conflict is clear in the following lines:

Perhaps they were right. Thus does your past come back to confront you, thus does it claim you. It's a fool's game trying to escape my past, how will my children ever be free of me? I thought I had snapped the thread when I walked out, I thought there was nothing left to connect us, but...

Yes, what about my children? (218)

Sumi's father Shripati supported her in her abysmal hopelessness. He had wanted to extend his financial help when Sumi needed money and supported her in every possible way.

And in the meantime, if you need money, ask me. Look upon it as a loan if you want. Don't let pride come in your way. (72)

The other novels too present male characters who play significant role in the lives of the protagonists. However, Deshpande's male characters are not static. They too mature with time. In *Roots and Shadows* we find Jayant comforting Indu saying he would publish her work if she finds no publisher. Whereas this is the same Jayant who had earlier prohibited her from pursuing the kind of writing she had always wanted to. Manu in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* comes to take Saru from her parental home to go back to their previous life. Mohan in *That Long Silence* is seen to post a telegram that says:

All well returning Friday morning (189)

Family is the microscope for Deshpande through which she peeps into the society at large. She takes the micro picture of society to understand life. Therefore her novels are

not set at the backdrop of any big event. She defiantly uses Erica Jong's words about all stories being stories of families as the epigraph to *Moving On*. She says that her novels are about women who try to understand themselves, their history, their roles and their place in the society and above all their relationships with others. To her, her novels are always explorations; each time in the process of writing, she finds herself confronted by discoveries which make her rethink the ideas she started off with.

As family is important to Deshpande she has explored the man-woman relationship. When this relationship was experimented certainly female sexuality came into question. Deshpande's bold treatment of female sexuality gave her characters the scope to express their sexual craving. Indu had physical closeness with Naren and thought of not telling about it to her husband. She thought that her act of sex out of marriage had nothing to do with her married life.

That had nothing to do with the two of us and our life together. (187)

Though her infidelity does not match with Indian ethos such is the turn of events sometimes. Jaya in *That Long Silence* had come in close contact with Kamat. She enjoyed his physical warmth and closeness. Kamat was a man in her life who inspired to write her mind. But Mohan, her husband knew nothing about Jaya's promiscuity.

Deshpande's writing came both out of her anger and confusion. She had found that something was wrong with the world and therefore with her world. It was hard for her to make sense of what was wrong. There was only confusion and anger. But gradually she could make out the reason behind her confusion and anger:

It was only much later that I was able to connect my anger to the sense of denigration I was made to feel about being a female, about the roles that my gender identity seemed to have locked me into, roles which I often chafed against. Worst of all was the idea that this gender identity and the roles that came with it, seemed to deny my intellectual self, a self that was as important to me as my emotional self. It was out of this turmoil and disturbance that my writing was born (Naik 2005: 24).

The anger and confusion of the writer is found in her female protagonists too. In fact every woman faces this turmoil within herself. When she writes about women she only

wants to present them as they are. But gender plays a significant role in their lives. With gender come the discriminations which bind women in patriarchal conventions.

In her mission to present life of women Deshpande shows the strength and weakness of women. She leads her women to progress from immaturity to maturity, from ignorance to knowledge and from weakness to strength and confidence. Her women become worldly wise as they contest and question their roles in family and society. Deshpande has not followed any feminist theory to propagate her ideas. She has just upheld the basic Indian life of women. The women who live in patriarchy are obvious subject to dominations. Subjugation of women is definite to surface in one's writing when the lives of women are portrayed.

One important trend in her novels is that her man and woman unite at the end (except in *A Matter of Time* where the protagonist dies). They do not take any radical decision like divorce. They are rooted in Indian culture and beliefs. Though they question the obsolete customs and beliefs, they too contribute in the India's continuing culture. They are witnesses to change and flux in Indian life and culture. They have evolved their own culture but that is based on India's past history and culture. According to the need of the time and space they have modified the past version in new folder. So the union at the end of her novels signifies that life gets meaning in facing the challenge and not escaping from it. Her protagonists value family and children. They are just one step ahead of their preceding generation of women. They are working women while their mothers remained only home makers. So Deshpande's women are basically home makers who have just another life outside their home. By creating working women she has stressed the need of women to have a life outside family and home. Her women try to balance between home and the world. To strike the right balance they are under continuous pressure and stress often inflicted by guilt and indignation. Her women present the true picture of urban Indian working women struggling to keep the balance between home and the world. Ibsen's Nora had stretched her wings beyond home and hearth to fly in the sky freely. She opened the door for millions of stifled women across the world. Women began to question their place in home and society. Indian women writers too have created the same ambience in their writings. Deshpande specifically has shown how women can achieve emancipation by having confidence in themselves.