

# Catastrophe Of Macho Ipseity Endeavour In The Select Novels Of Shashi Deshpande

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## **Abstract**

Shashi Deshpande is one of the noted Indian feminist writers who have shown their serious Concern within the depiction of women in literature and have expressed restlessness with the traditional positioning of women. Shashi Deshpande while fighting for the self-identity of women never failed to depict the insecurity faced by men secretly, because of the over expectation from them. When they can't meet the expectations of the society they feel inferior and frustrated. This paper presents men who react to such situation in their own way.

**Keywords:** Frustration, Expectation, Inferior, Gender equality, Charity, Masculinity

## **Introduction**

Men are considered as the masters of the universe. In a country like India, continuous negative portrayal of men has caused frustration and confusion in males. If a mother is proud of her daughter she says she is the boy in our family whereas she never proudly says her son as the girl of the family. In India there are many social taboo's as men should not cry, he should earn well to take care of the family, he should protect and take care of the women in the family and so on. He should take the role of the guardian angel or the protector either willingly or unwillingly. Men are constantly implored to prove their masculinity which truly injures up a deep mess of confusion. According to Sigmund Freud men are defined by their pursuit of women which makes them feel highly dejected when they are rejected by women. Generally the male struggle is overwhelmingly personnel and cannot be discussed in public and it's mostly hidden in the name of masculinity. Gender equality cannot be just women's issues. Both men and women should share equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. When feminism says that women are dominated and suppressed because of the male domination, men are also depressed because of excessive expectation and social taboos about men .When men cannot meet out the expectation of the society, they get entrapped in male identity crisis.

Mohan in Shashi deshpane's 'That Long Silence' tries to improve his position in the society by adopting all possible means. His main aim in his life is to keep his family with all the comforts. He tries to maintain his male identity through achieving this. He gets involved in a shady deal and consequently faces enquiry into charges of corruption. If the enquiry is carried on he will stand every possibility of losing his well –paid job which will mean terrible insecurity. In the Indian context it is important to understand why Mohan has resorted to the means of making money in a shady way. Mohan is not an exception from the stereotyped egoistic Indian husband who tries his best to prove his masculinity by all means.

He has been a dutiful son, in spite of the inhuman treatment meted out to his by his father and by extension he is a dutiful husband too. He regularly sends money to his family and makes it a point to attend the death anniversary of his father every year and even bears the expenditure of it. While working at Lohangar as an engineer he makes himself a scapegoat in the corrupt deals of the CE for securing spacious twin quarters for his family. And after moving to Bombay encouraged by his colleague Agarwal, he accepts illegal gratification, so that his family might live in comfortable house and his children might attend good school. He says 'It was for you and the children that I did this. I wanted you to have a good life; I wanted the children to have all these things I never had.'(6)TLS

This male identity crisis and ego causes Mohan losing his job, his subsequent disappearance coupled with the running away of his son who has been vacationing with their family friends Rupa and Ashok, comes as a terrifying prospect to him. The carefully built sparrow house appears to be cracked and the insider cruelly exposed. It was like a house collapse during monsoon when there was something desolating about the ease with which that had seemed almost contemptuously leaving behind an embarking nakedness.

From his boy hood Mohan desires to escape from the impoverishment of his youth through his own education as well as through the acquisition of a privileged language. The desperate poverty that resulted in his Brahmnical family having to accept charity from the community, the ignominy from a Brahmins perspective) of his mother's having to take work as a cook; and his father's heavy drinking and physical abuse of his wife and children. Mohan's desperation to transcend this background proves greater than his shame at receiving charity in only one area of his life. Seeing education as his only way out of poverty, he accepts school tuitions from a stranger; a wealthy old man takes special interest in him. Mohan's desire to marry Jaya is mainly because of her fluency in English. He wants to prove his identity in the society by marrying a convent educated girl and to have rich relations.

Even after marriage Mohan identity process continues. He wants to earn more money and give his family all the comforts by all means very often he boasts of his achievements to his wife Jaya. He talks about his friends and colleagues who are struggling to make both ends meet while he is well off and happy. Very often Mohan feels hopelessly insecure. Seeing my wives and children squatting on the bane ground, without having even master newspapers below them, in strike against the arrest of their husbands on charges of spying he says, 'Those women were sitting

on the bane ground...like beggars. Imagine Jaya, people like us in the situation...how those men could have done such a thing. Imagine putting your family in such a situation. It seems totally irresponsible to me.'(5). Being risen from a very low position, the fear inherent in him haunts him every now and then.

Even in the case of his wife Jaya, Mohan is so proud that his wife is a writer. He proudly says that my wife is a writer. But he strongly objects to her themes which he suspects to have strong autobiographical over tones on a particular occasion he says

'They will all know now, all those people who need this and know us, they will know that these two persons are us they will think I am this kind of man, they will think I am this man. How can I look any one in the face again? And you, how could you write these things.'(143)

Manohar's identity crisis in the 'Dark Holds No Terror' is more complex and crucial than Mohan's. Manu has had a special aura of his own as a promising poet and the dream boy of many of the college girls of his period. He used to take the girls by storm as a macho figure. Saru was enticed in his presence. Saru's admiration of his talents as a poet, the director of drama and the secretary of the literary association gives him the necessary confidence. When Saru wins Manu's love she sees it as her victory over the glamorous Padmini. But when they begin their life together it becomes a power race of two egoistic individuals. And in the race, Saru over takes him effortlessly as a successful doctor. It does not take a long time to make her realize that Manu is not an equal partner to her. Her respect for him wanes when she recognises him to be a failure. Her profession gives her an indispensable respect in the society which makes her important and powerful over her husband.

The dream of total submission to a 'superior, superhuman male' working with him, for him and being his subordinate is only a transcend stage in the emotional growth of Saru's personality. The disparity of achievements between Saru and Manu leaves him completely insecure. Saru happily accepts the fact and says, '...When we walked out of our room there were nods and smiles, murmured greetings and Namaste's. But they were all for me. There was nothing for him. He was almost totally ignored... and so the esteem with which I was surrounded made me inches taller, and I his bride. But now I was the lady doctor and he was my husband.  $a+b$  they told us mathematics is equal to  $b+a$ . but here  $a+b$  was not, definitely not equal to  $b + a$ . It became a monstrously, unbalanced equation top sided, unequal, impossible (36 – 37).

It is this inequality which tortures and hurts Manu's male ego. Manu is not a male chauvinist by nature. He definitely has no reservations about treating his wife as an equal and as an individual. But unfortunately when her success as a doctor begin to highlight his failure as an under paid lecturer he degrades. Saru never tries to dominate Manu but in her, self-centred March to progress she nullifies Manu's existence and totally ignores him. During Saru's interview for a

special issue on career women brought out by a woman's magazine the interviewer casually asks Manu – 'How does it feel when your wife earns not only the butter but most of the bread as well?' (182) Manu's total confidence gets shattered. His sense of insecurity starts with the explosion in the nearby factory. The loving husband in him dies when the neighbours wake up to the fact that Saru is not an ordinary house wife but an important doctor. But it reaches the point of culmination with the interviewer's query and a friend suggesting that a holiday could be possible if one had a doctor wife.

Saru's profession is exactly Manu's problem. But he shudders at the suggestion of his wife giving up the job. He cannot dream of going back to the shabby middle class way of life. Unable to accept the fact that he is a failure and Saru a remarkable success in her career, Manu lets his wounded male pride manifest itself in the form of sexual sadism. Sex is the only way through which he can assert his male power over her. Manu becomes a loath some, mean fellow when he enjoys the glory of his wife's success by day and tortures her at night. The economical superiority of Saru creates a terrible negative impact on Manu. It makes him feel like an impotent. He believes that sexual assault is the only way he can regain that potency and masculinity which gives assertion of his manhood. This makes him a perverse abnormal person. He behaves like a cheerful normal human being and a loving husband during day and turns into a cruel rapist at night. Manu's ego is hurt and he loses his confidence and becomes insecure if his wife's intellect, her career her achievements, her ambition supersedes that of her husband.

Feeling inferior, and incapable Manu did not even questions Saru about her relationship with Boozie, when it reaches stage where Boozie helps her with enough money to set up a practice in a decent locality. She manages to fulfil her desire of attaining higher education and also better quality of life which otherwise may not be possible for a common girl. Saru, herself has contempt for Manu for not questioning her as to why Boozie has given her so much money for opening a new consulting room. She becomes more and more resentful of her husband, who deliberately closes his eyes to Boozie displaying his affection towards her in public, at the inauguration in her consulting room.

'I could feel the stares. Everyone's except Manu who would not look at us. And I should hated him then...no Manu, for he had done nothing then for which I could hate him, but this attractive, ravish masculine man who was doing this deliberately. Attracting attention to the two of us. But, funnily, enough, it was not him I hated. It was Manu for doing nothing. This man...no could not hate him knowing what I did about him. that behind the façade of aggressive, vesicle masculinity there was nothing at all' (94).

Manu actually feels more and more jealous and inferior but he never deliberately express his inner mind which makes him behave like a psychopath and impart physical torture upon Saru during night. But he behaves like a normal loving and caring husband in the morning. He never apologises for his rude behaviour he even questions her how she hurt herself. Against the back drop of the society where it was belived as Saru says,

‘a wife must always be a few steps behind her husband. If he’s an MA, you should be a BA. If he’s 5’4 tall, you should not be more than 5’3 tall. If he is earning five hundred rupees, you should never earn more than four hundred and ninety-nine rupees. That’s the only rule of follow if you want a happy marriage. Don’t ever try to reverse the doctor – nurse, executive, secretary, principal teacher role. It can be traumatic; disastrous ...no partnership can ever be equal. It will always be unequal’.(124)

### **Conclusion**

As basically a male dominated society the Indian society does not allow tolerance for a better woman even within a marriage. It’s a common concept in Indian society that success in marriage means manipulating, sacrificing, adjustment and silently manoeuvring her relationship with her husband according to the socially accepted norms Not only Mohan and Manohar the entire male society struggle hard to prove its supremacy. Women today are not what they used to be. They get educated, go to job, earn money and play important role both as a bread winner and family care taker. Having understood the pivotal role played by women, men must give up their ego and must treat women as their equal partners otherwise they have to face the identity crisis and struggle to survive with confidence.

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