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Woman dignity: Study of Human Rights With Reference to Shashi Deshpande's Novel *A Matter of Time*

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Abstract

Dignity gives a sense of value to an individual being. Everyone's dignity must be respected. Human rights allow people to live together comfortably. Rejection of rights and freedoms gives birth to personal tragedy as well as social unrest. Race, religion, nationality, language and gender are not impediments in experiencing dignity, rights and freedom. Globalization has influenced women rights.

Keywords- dignity, rights, freedom, globalization, woman.

Introduction

Human rights and freedoms are need of everybody and they are not denied on any ground. Every human being has dignity. There are some inherent rights that they pledge dignity of everybody without concentrating on race, religion, nationality, language and gender. The rights which are constituted by the society are demanded by the person. The arrival of the globalization has brought changes in the field of political regime and economical structure. The cultural ideologies tremendously have influenced the women rights.

Nature of dignity, human rights and freedom

Dignity which is termed as a vital ingredient of common humanity gives a sense of value to an individual being. Hence it is a need of every human being as the food and water. Now it is time to respect everyone's dignity. Human rights not only enforce everybody to respect each other but allow them to live together comfortably. As the right is need of one person it is need of other persons. Human rights and freedoms are not denied on any ground. The very thought of rejecting rights and freedoms is the devil mother who gives birth to personal tragedy as well as social and political unrest and later but very soon up-heaval.

Why do we need human rights? Human being possesses more or less human qualities like intelligence, talent and conscience. He or she uses them as his abilities to develop himself or herself completely and to fulfill spiritual and material needs. There are some permanent and inseparable what we call inherent rights that they pledge dignity of everybody without concentrating on race, religion, nationality, language and gender.

As a member of the society we demand freedom and rights but 'freedom to live as one wishes to or to do whatever one wants to do, cannot be treated as human rights' (Naseema, 2002:2) The rights which are constituted by the society are demanded by the person whenever very much eagerly he is in need of them for personality development.

The end of the 19th century witnessed arrival of the globalization on the land of the world. The changes in the field of political regime, economic and cultural ideologies tremendously influenced women rights. Social and economic variation secured their space. Expansion and extension of global market, economic and financial tendency and attitude and cultural alterations are the sources of positive and negative effects of globalization. The effect of globalization is at the root of human suffering, disorder and feelings of unrest. The financial crisis at the high level degree began to result into degraded and unstable global economy which affects human life.

Study of novel '*A Matter of Time*' in the light of human dignity, freedom and rights

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In relation to rights I want mainly to focus on woman as a being. A woman phenomenon does not represent only a woman but women as a whole in the country. I would like to refer Shashi Deshpande's novel 'A Matter of Time' in the light of dignity, freedom and human rights. Projecting middle class woman the novelist tries to occupy a unique position in the record of the contemporary Indian writers who are writing in English language. The writer's attempt is to show how women under the influence of modern education are deeply rooted in the Indian tradition. One may dare to call them traditional and unconventional, emotional and rational.

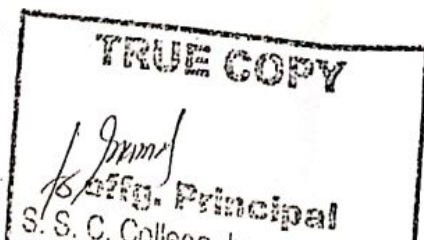
The novel 'A Matter of Time' moves around thought of freedom to women due to crisis in their life. It presents a journey of freedom and dignity in the life course of four generations. One may underline how a woman, Manorama is caught up in the whirlwind of freedom and forgets intimate relatives. Despite Parent's poverty she is married to Vithalrao, a rich but intelligent man. In order to seek freedom from parental poverty she breaks contact with the parent's house. Vithalrao seems to be a 'doll-husband' in his wife's hand because of her possessive and dominating attitude towards him. Her decision is regarded as final. She stops Kalyani's education due to love letters given to her through unknown boy. This act of Manorama shows there is no freedom for emotional in the life of woman. The freedom of an individual life is decided by the elders in the family. Her decisions and concept of freedom is tradition bound. Being greedy of wealth she marries her daughter Kalyani with her own brother Shripati thinking that money will not go out of the house. It reflects that Manorama has forgotten her past life at parent's house, she is unable to understand dignity of other person and value of freedom and money is not the final aim of life.

Freedom has different sheds of meaning in the second generation. The character of Kalyani is presented as a contrasting character to Manorama who has been restricted from enjoying freedom and rights. She is economically dependent and submissive to her husband. The only option to her is to obey her husband Shripati. Kalyani's right of disclosing heart to the husband is locked up in the darkness. There is no conversation between Kalyani and her husband in the last thirty years. Kalyani frees herself from the clutches of her husband Shripati by supporting Sumi to marry Gopal against the wish of her father.

Material world does not keep Gopal happy at home which causes his leaving the family behind. The entry of freedom and right of third generation differs from the last. The crisis gives her a chance to identify dignity and enjoy freedom in the right way. Now a life of establishing individual authority begins. Accepting the reality Sumi becomes bold enough to face the disaster. She says 'two hearts, two minds, Gopal is right'. (Deshpande, 1996:24) Sumi has complete freedom for doing many things. She has spent lot of life time in doing nothing. Her way of searching a job is a symptom of economical freedom. Getting a teachers job again after a long gap of resign she becomes financially free. Sumi does not want to avoid responsibilities in the life by disrespecting her husband's freedom and decision of leaving the house.

Sumi acts violently against the attitude of the society 'What is woman without her husband' (167) She views this attitude of the society spoils individuality and freedom of woman. Her efforts to find equality in which gender is not an impediment. Sumi desires to experience life without any complaint with new challenge. So she does not allow the thought of possessiveness to enter in the mind. Sumi emerges as an independent and indifferent kind of a woman by rejecting the role of traditional woman.

The eldest daughter Aru, symbol of fourth generation is conscious about freedom and dignity. She achieves power through the course of transformation which is a great help to her to defend herself. Aru wants rights to create individual world of capable woman. Charu, second daughter of Gopal and Sumi hopes strongly to join medical college. Seema is the youngest daughter of the family whose attachment with her father is underlined easily when she asks her mother, Sumi to go outside in her meeting with her father Gopal. This episode reflects her freedom of expression. It also shows her love and close acquaintance for father. The character of the lawyer Surekha



represents women who are leading an independent life where there is no botheration of the society. She feels happy with her life style which is governed by freedom and dignity.

Conclusion

Globalization has created crisis in the life of human being in the modern times but it leads them to know value of dignity, freedom and rights. The women who are treated as children producing machine begin to think of their life in relation to rights. Because of freedom and rights they have become bold enough to face calamities and to lead life independently even in the absence of man in the family. The women also started thinking that parasite to the parents is disillusion. They are free to make their opinions and seek purpose in the life despite impediments.

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