

---

## **A study of mental turmoil in women characters in Shashi Deshpande's novel- A Matter of Time**

---

**Dr. Sandeep Kumar**, Assistant Professor of English, Govt. College for Women, Gohana

---

**Paper Received on 12-08-2023, Accepted on 12-09-2023,  
Published on 12-09-23; DOI: 10.36993/ RJOE.2023.8.3.182**

---

### **Abstract**

"A Matter of Time" was written by Indian novelist Shashi Deshpande, who is renowned for her perceptive examination of social and psychological problems. The novel, which was published in 1996, explores the difficulties of interpersonal relationships, self-discovery, and the passing of time. The female characters' terrible emotional anguish is depicted. They all have issues with society, life, traditions, and patriarchal society that are causing them emotional distress. Novels tackle bigger issues, including personal development, societal expectations, and the way time affects our lives and decisions through the examination of Jaya's relationships and internal conflicts. The novel is a profound examination of the inner lives of women in changing times, obliged to Shashi Deshpande's deft storytelling and keen insights into human psychology.

**Keywords:** Emotional, distress, internal conflicts, etc.

The protagonist of the narrative is a middle-aged woman named Jaya who has devoted her life to her family and their traditional ideals. When Jaya receives a letter from her childhood friend, Manju, after years of no communication, her life is

dramatically changed. The letter triggers memories of their shared past, causing Jaya to take stock of her decisions and the course she has taken.

Jaya realizes that she has frequently put other people's expectations above her own needs as she takes stock of her life and starts to doubt her roles as a wife, mother, and daughter-in-law. Jaya's experiences in the present and her memories of the past are intercut throughout the story to show how her relationships with her husband, kids, and in-laws have changed through time.

Jaya has a number of emotional changes as a result of Manju's reappearance. The book explores issues of identity, freedom, and limitations placed on women by conventional social conventions. Jaya struggles with the decisions she made and the pathways she chose not to follow as she navigates her inner turmoil.

Jaya, the main character, as she confronts her past, her present, and the decisions she has made. It explores topics like self-discovery, societal expectations, and the effects of time on people's lives, providing a narrative that challenges readers on many different levels. The book "A Matter of Time" was written by Shashi Deshpande, an Indian author. The story explores the intricacies of interpersonal connections, the frailty of life, and people's

existential concerns, particularly women's struggles, in traditional Indian society.

The lives of three generations of women are the focus of the narrative. The main conflict is around Gopal, a professor, and Sumi's husband, making the abrupt choice to abandon his family without warning. Sumi and their three girls must deal with the unexpected shift in their lives as a result of this abrupt abandonment. The story alternates between the past and the present as it follows their struggles with both the social shame and their inner torment. It also weaves in the narratives of Sumi's grandmother, Indu, and mother, Aru.

"Now she sits unusually silent, frozen into an immobility, unable to shake off the paralysis of fear. She takes no part."

The novel examines marriage as a social institution with both societal significance and personal difficulties. Sumi is forced to reevaluate her life and her reliance on her spouse as a result of Gopal's unexpected departure. "Ramesh gives Sumi an embarrassed, almost agonized look that silences her." (AMOT 20)

Deshpande brings up important issues, including expectations placed on women in this institution and marital roles. **Three Female Generations:** The story creates a realistic picture of the shifting roles and difficulties faced by women throughout generations through the connected histories of Sumi, Aru, and Indu. Even while every woman has her own particular struggles, societal pressures and expectations bind them all.

Beyond the main characters, the work also examines the dynamics of the interactions among other family members.

The way Sumi's parents, sisters, and in-laws reacted to Gopal added depth to the story by underlining the complexity of family ties and the importance of social expectations.

**Emotion Changes and Progress:** The narrative is a thorough examination of emotional development, resiliency, and personal progress. Each woman's character feels changes, driven by self-reflection and a search for meaning and purpose in the face of mental turmoil.

In essence, "A Matter of Time" offers profound insight into the human psyche and the cultural structures of women in Indian society. It is a heartbreaking reflection on the tangled web of family, community, and personal identity.

The story of Kalyani's life is evidence of the hardships imposed by societal conventions and expectations. Kalyani gave up her affection for her younger brother-in-law when she forcefully wed Shripati. She is extremely unhappy about her choice, as evidenced by the terrible connection she has with her husband and son, Arun. Her mental anguish is apparent throughout the entire book in her reserve, isolation, and tendency to stay mired in the past. Her regrets act as a sobering reminder of the harm cultural demands on women may do. "Husband and wife. Bride and groom. Kalyani and Shripati, my parents. To see them together, even in a picture, gives me an odd, uneasy feeling. It seems wrong somehow, unnatural, even slightly obscene. 'Destiny is just us.' Yes, their future is here; it can be seen in this picture clearly what is to happen to them, to their marriage. We don't always need astrologers, palmists, or

horoscopes to give us a glimpse of our future lives. They lie within us." (AMOT 25)

Aruna may appear to be the ideal, prosperous woman at first glance, but she actually has mild mental health issues. After deciding to live a life of freedom and empowerment, Aruna frequently finds herself up against social criticism. Her character is more complex as a result of her single status and choice to adopt a kid rather than give birth. The mental turmoil that women who defy conventional expectations must overcome is shown through Aruna's life decisions.

Indu's persona is a representation of the struggles that many contemporary Indian women experience. She is torn between her family's obligations and her desire to pursue a higher education since she is caught between tradition and modernity. Her struggles represent the plight of many women who want more but are frequently constrained by society and familial expectations. The grandmother is a strong, silent character who tells the story of numerous women who were forced to live under patriarchal social norms. Her experience, which includes the agony of losing a child and the suffering of an uncaring husband, illuminates the sacrifices made by women of her generation, frequently in silence.

The grandmother is a strong, silent character who tells the story of numerous women who were forced to live under

patriarchal social norms. Her experience, which includes the agony of losing a child and the suffering of an uncaring husband, illuminates the sacrifices made by women of her generation, frequently in silence.

Vimala: Vimala is a maid who works in the family's home; she is quiet yet effective. Her story contrasts with the stories of the other women in the novel since it is distinguished by poverty and the difficulties of being a single mother who faces severe mental conflict. Her tenacity in the face of hardship serves as a metaphor for the resilience of numerous Indian women who live on the periphery of society.

At the end of the novel, one of the daughters expresses her helplessness to the circumstances and remarks in a state of mental turmoil. "If it is indeed true that we are bound to our destinies, that there is no point struggling against them, even then this remains—that we do not submit passively or cravenly, but with dignity and strength. Surely, this, to some extent, frees us from our bonds?" (AMOT 254)

#### References:

- Deshpande, Shashi. *A Matter of Time*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1996. Print.
- Keerthi, Ramachandra. *Of Fate and Eternity*. Biblio, 2000. Print.
- Vimala Rama Rao. *A Conversation with Shashi Deshpande*, *The Journal of Indian Writing in English*. Ed: Balam Gupta. New Delhi. University Press, 1997. Print.

#### How to cite this article?

**Dr. Sandeep Kumar** " A study of mental turmoil in women characters in Shashi Deshpande's novel- A Matter of Time " *Research Journal Of English (RJOE)*8(3), PP:180-182,2023, DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2023.8.3.182