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Various Conflicts In Relationship Due To Communication Gap: With Reference To Cry, The Peacock, Fire On The Mountain, Where Shall We Go This Summer? The Dark Holds No Terrors And That Long Silence

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Abstract: Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande, the two pioneer female writers of India, are deeply concerned with the lives, struggles, and suffering of women, which has been beautifully shown in their novels like Cry, the Peacock, Fire on the Mountain, Where Shall We Go This Summer?, The Dark Holds No Terrors, and That Long Silence. The novels showed various problems faced by women in the society of that time. Along with this, it has also been seen that there is a lack of interpersonal communication between the main characters, which leads to poor mental health, feelings of isolation, reduced emotional support, misunderstanding, and conflicts. Communication is the exchanging of thoughts and feelings or sharing each other's problems and troubles that increases the elasticity between any relation. Both writers showed that the characters did not give importance to their communication skills. The gender domination also plays a key role in the communication gap among the various relations. In patriarchal society, men take the decision and impose it on others and don't think to concern themselves with their female partners, which shows negligence towards females. These negligence and unwillingness decrease the attachment, and hence the suppressed entity has to go through various issues. Through this article, I would like to focus on the importance of communication that might diminish various conflicts between Maya and Gautam, Nanda and Raka, Sita and Raman, Sarita and Manohar, and Jaya and Mohan.

Keywords: Isolation, mental health, unwillingness, elasticity, gender domination, Interpersonal communication

INTRODUCTION:

Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande, the two most prominent female writers of India, show Indian society as the miserable plights of alienated and lonely women suffering under their insensitive and inconsiderate husbands. Along with these, their novels also show a lack of communication between the central characters, which creates psychological issues, loneliness, depression, and much more. All the protagonists suffer in the novel due to various troubles, but the gap of communication is undeniable.

The heart of a successful relationship is the power of communication. It ensures the relationship remains strong and lasting. A solid foundation of communication leads to a long-lasting and fulfilling relationship. Strong communication is understanding each other's needs and feelings, expressing their own needs and feelings, showing empathy and compassion for each other, and respecting and supporting each other. While talking about the communication in between relations portrayed by Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande, there is no effective communication, especially between Maya and Gautam, Nanda and Raka, Sita and Raman, Sarita and Manohar, and Jaya and Mohan. Both the writers show their main women characters are sensible with an aesthetic aspect, and their male characters are practical, rational, and logical. They highlighted the problems of independence and communication, male-female contrast, and gender domination. However, lack of mutual concern and understanding can be clearly visible in their relations. The characters of both writers'

novels made us think about our society and its functions that ignore the interpersonal communication that may help to maintain elasticity in every relationship.

The novel, *Cry, the Peacock*, mainly shows psychological chaos, the complexities of marriage, the pressures of societal expectations, and gender roles. Maya and Gautam, the husband and wife, have been seen in a tense relationship because of their conflicting personalities. Maya and Gautam are very different in terms of characteristics. Maya is shown as sensitive, and Gautam is shown as insensitive.

In the novel, they barely express their feelings with each other. After the marriage, Maya faces a totally different code of conduct in her husband's house and finds that her feelings are not cared for and feels neglected and alienated there. Neither of these feelings are expressed to Gautam, nor does Gautam realize her discomfort.

Maya is very attached to her father, and even tries to see Gautama as a substitute for her father but never expresses this to Gautam. And in return Gautam is unable to be that man she is expecting. She starts intrapersonal communication that slowly makes her superstitious and psychic. She lives on her own island of grief, sorrow, and loneliness because of Gautama's inability to fulfil her expectations.

Gautama is portrayed as a practical man who does not respond positively to the feelings of Maya's young heart and also fails to remove Maya's father's obsession. He doesn't understand her abnormal psychology and cannot even realize the painful and traumatic experiences of his wife. It is said that husband and wife know about each other almost everything, but it is strange to see that Gautam does not even know that Maya thinks about the astrologer's prophecy and the image of the dancing peacocks.

Even he also doesn't bother to talk with his wife to make their bond strong. Maya is extremely upset at the death of her dog, Toto, and due to this death, she loses her mental peace, but Gautama neglects that too. A sense of suffocation can be seen in their relationship, which leads Maya to a fall in a psychological trauma. She wants someone who can take care of her, someone with whom she can share all her pain and other stories. But she was all alone. She started thinking about her past life and thought about the astrologer who predicted that after four years of her marriage, one member from her family will die, because of which Maya is very unhappy, as she believes that she will die after four years of marriage. But she pushes Gautam from the roof, due to which he dies on the spot. She felt free from her arrogant husband, who was not fit for her from the start of their marriage. Lack of clear communication and understanding brings the tragic ending of a beautiful relationship.

Anita Desai, in *Fire on the Mountain*, beautifully showed how women are victims of circumstances in an incompatible environment. Through the characters of Nanda and Raka, Desai perfectly showed the isolation and loneliness of a woman's life. Along with this, it has also shown the gap in communication and understanding between Nanda and Raka. Nanda is portrayed as a responsible woman who always takes care of her husband and children. While doing her duties, she completely ignores her desires and ambitions and sacrifices her friends, relatives, etc., and merges with the family, losing her identity. She is the wife of a vice-chancellor and leads a luxurious life, but she is still left alone because she doesn't get attention from her husband, and her self-esteem does not allow her to beg for her husband's love. We can see that, like Maya, Nanda Kaul is also leading a life without true love from her husband. He has never treated her as a wife and had an affair with another woman. She never shared her feelings or showed anger to her husband; neither he cares about her nor does he want to understand her feelings. She has been observing all these acts and negligence for long years, due to which she has gone through the trauma.

She has been rejected and discarded all her life by her husband and children, and now at the elderly age she lives her life in isolation in the mountains of Kasauli, and she doesn't even talk with anyone unless it is required. She was in a complex relationship where she was constantly facing alienation, withdrawal, loneliness, isolation, and lack of communication, and now she doesn't want any new responsibilities. Raka, her great-granddaughter, an independent and fearless girl, couldn't connect with Nanda when they first met. She spends most of her time exploring the countryside. She also faced domestic abuse, which makes her unstable sometimes. She doesn't have friends and created a world of inner fantasy. Nanda observed about Raka that two of them have things in common but that a major difference exists as well. Nanda slowly begins to want to be part of the child's life and wants to share her world with her. Her great-granddaughter will let no one enter her life. Nanda is not discouraged and attempts to connect to the child by sharing stories with her. Through the activities of Raka, it can be clearly noticed that she is also having some trauma, which could have been dissolved through understanding her feelings and exploring her inner mind with the help of effective communication. Although Nanda tried a bit, there is a huge gap in communication between them.

In, *Where Shall We Go* This summer, Anita Desai focused on alienation, identity crisis, and the psychological interiority of Sita, the protagonist of the novel. If we deeply analyze Sita and her husband Raman, we will find miscommunication and lack of understanding between them. The tension between a sensitive wife, Sita, and the rational husband, Raman, can clearly be seen. Sita's main problem is maladjustment with her husband, Raman, who ignores her desires, and misunderstanding between them. The novel shows her restlessness and frustration as she is fed up with her husband, his business, his surroundings, and also his friends. Raman's lack of love and ignorance toward her made her very upset. She lives in Bombay with her family. She is a mother of four children and pregnant with her fifth child. Her fifth pregnancy makes tremendous changes in her life and behavior. She got irritated by his four children and husband, and she wants to move away from her family. The busy life of Bombay suffocates her. It has seemed that she is unable to express her feelings toward her husband, and on the other hand, Raman also ignores her recent behavior. Sita wanted to spend her life on Manori Island, which represents a simple and peaceful environment. So she escaped to Manori Island and planned to give birth to her 5th child. Her stay on Manori Island did not go peacefully, as she is not alone now. She has four children and a husband with whom she doesn't have effective communication. However, at the end she returned to Bombay for her family's sake, leaving her desire. Anita Desai in her novel mostly shows the effort of a woman to adjust in a society and in her respective familial relationships. This is beautifully portrayed through the character of Sita, who is an emotionally unfulfilled soul. If we deeply observe both Sita and Raman, they are having a complex relationship, and along with this, lack of communication brings Sita into alienation, withdrawal, and loneliness.

Shashi Deshpande, a contemporary of Anita Desai, also writes about women's lives in modern Indian society. She beautifully shows the women's struggle to free themselves from the restrictions imposed by society, culture, and nature. Deshpande's *Dark Holds No Terrors* portrays the struggles faced by women in their search for liberation and self-realization, challenging the prescribed roles and expectations imposed upon them by society.

Sarita and Manohar, the main characters, are shown as facing an inferiority complex and lack of communication. They did a love marriage, and Sarita expected that she would get the love and respect at her husband's house. But their thoughts and feelings have changed after the marriage. As Sarita is a doctor, she earns more compared to her husband, Manohar. His male pride was hurt, and he decided to take revenge, and he started to tease and torture Sarita. She felt that she was trapped. She did not even raise her voice against the torture. In a male-dominated society, women are bound to bow down in front of their husbands. This chauvinist thinking makes their relationship worse. Sarita wanted to end the marriage, but due to the pressure of society, she tried to compromise with the situation and decided to talk with her husband about the discomfort and troubles in their relationship. Along with the exploration of various complex themes, Shashi Deshpande also focuses on the importance of sharing and expressing their thoughts.

In the novel *That Long Silence*, Shashi Deshpande clearly shows that silence cannot remove distance or decrease difference. Jaya, an educated girl, married Mohan, a successful businessman. Both disagree on many things, and their marriage is not happy. Jaya never expresses her feelings with Mohan and does whatever Mohan expects of her. She has always made compromises to please her husband. She even adopted a new name for her husband's sake. She realizes that her husband takes her for granted and is never bothered by her emotions, likes, and dislikes. It has found that Jaya and Mohan hardly had any kind of frank communication between them about their sexual life. Jaya always dreamt of love followed by physical relation in her marital life. Nonetheless, their marriage resulted in a mechanical relationship and artificial love.

When Mohan loses his job, Jaya begins writing more to support the family income. It is quite appreciable that Desai has shown women as financially independent and supporting the family. Jaya's journey to discover herself and her empowerment is not simple and easy. She belongs to a conservative family where women are advised to learn household work to make their married life happy. But Jaya is not shown like other common women; she is portrayed as an ambitious girl. However, after marriage she left her ambition of writing, but got a chance to fulfill her ambition while Mohan was suspended from his job, and then after some time he was fired.

Mohan doesn't like the articles of Jaya, but he never says anything about it. She is unable to catch from his expression that he does not like her writing. There was a time in their relationship when Mohan needed Jaya's support and love, but neither of them has ever been comfortable talking about their feelings and fears with each other. Their communication gap increases for so long that Mohan has no idea how to ask for what he needs, and Jaya has no idea how to offer it. Mohan was upset as he had no job and left the house. Jaya realizes her silence in their relationship and no communication and openness in her family, making it difficult to support her husband and vice versa. However, she understands the importance of communication and is ready

to leave her silence and accept her husband back in her life. Deshpande very cleverly shows that along with the gender dominance and society pressure, there is also a lack of communication between the central characters of the novel, which is closely related to the problems of the novel.

CONCLUSION:

We have seen that all the main characters of *Cry, the Peacock*, *Fire on the Mountain*, *Where Shall We Go This Summer*, *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, and *That Long Silence* are not giving emphasis to the interpersonal communication, due to which many issues are raised in the novels. They are surrounded by lack of trust, conflicts, differences of thoughts, aloofness, and much more. These issues increased loneliness, depression, frustration, and psychological issues. However, Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande don't focus on the gap of communication, but their focus on women's lives and roles in society is indirectly related to the ineffective communication. Time has changed, but the society and the women's problem haven't changed much.

Effective communication helps resolve conflict and experience greater relational growth. On the other hand, bad communication can impact the individuals in many ways, like increasing depression, anxiety, loneliness, mental imbalance, etc. These issues can clearly be seen in the central characters. Therefore, the gap and problems in the relationship among the characters, like Maya and Gautam, Nanda and Raka, Sita and Raman, Sarita and Manohar, and Jaya and Mohan, should be taken into consideration and should not apply in practical life.

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