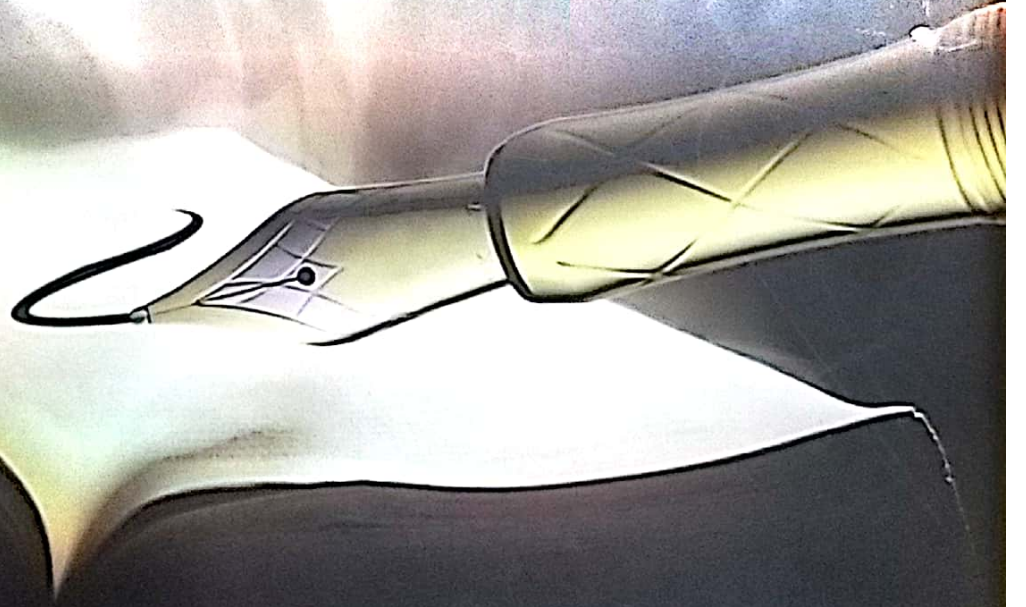


# साहित्य और विमर्श



मुख्य सम्पादक  
डॉ. हरप्रीत कौर

सम्पादक  
डॉ. लोकेश कुमार गुप्ता

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## **Shashi Deshpande-More a Humanist than a Feminist**

**—Ms. Gurpreet Kaur**  
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Mata Sundri College for Women  
(University of Delhi)

“I don’t like to call myself a feminist writer. I say I’m a feminist, but I don’t write to propagate an ism”<sup>1</sup>

The discontentment shown by Shashi Deshpande with the label “feminist writer” attached to her sets me to reconnoitre the issue to its core. Why does she claim herself not to be a feminist writer when her novels overthrow the sexiest ideologies of womanhood and allow freedom for growth and self-fulfilment to her female characters? This question roused my curiosity and impelled me to glance at the representation of these women and how it deviates from the concept of feminism.

Deshpande, like other feminist writers, has not presented a woman in her novels harbouring at the two extreme positions, that is, as a victim or as a rebel but rather she portrays a picture of a transitional woman who is in flux, neither a total stereotypical suffering woman nor an entirely modern one. She is a woman whose sentiments reek of an emotional tug of war between two opposing forces – tradition and modernity, family and profession, submission and confrontation, conformity to convention and obligation for oneself. She does not accept to be considered merely as an object of gratification. She challenges her victimization, breaks herself from ideal womanhood to make a mark in public sphere, but rejection of the cult of