
FAMILIAL CONFLICT IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF SAHSHI DESHPANDE

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Abstract

Parent-youth conflict is universal and differs from one society to other. The first conflict according to Davis' analyses is "the rate of social change" (Generation Gap, a Sociological Study of Inter-generational Conflicts, 5). The extreme social change of USA tends to increase the parent-youth conflict. Though in India, the social change is not rapid like USA, it could easily impact the country. Thus, the generation gap is the result of the fast paced development of the society as well as conflicts in the family.

Keywords: parental conflict, communication, physiological difference, psychological difference.

Parent-youth conflict

Deshpande strongly emphasizes the conflict between parents and youth in her novels *A Matter of Time* and *Shadow Play*. There are many reasons for parent-youth conflict. The main reason for conflict is insufficient communication. The people in the family could not find to talk to each other. Living in the urban society parents is busy with their works. Majority of the parents are not spending time with their children even though they have time. The novel *A Matter of Time* seriously exposed the problem of communication between parent and youth. The conversation between Sumi and her daughter was less and Sumi's children were emotionally close with their grandmother Kalyani than Sumi the mother and Gopal the father. In fact, Sumi did not want a baby when her daughter was born. She always felt difficult to reach her, though she loved her so much. Parents are under a lot of pressure they could not balance the work and family together. On the whole, they are actually doing great sacrifices to earn a living. On the contrary, the children are being neglected and find difficult to predict their parents thinking. This causes communication barriers in the family and this leads to the conflict in the family.

The extreme control over the children is another cause for parent-youth conflict. In *Shadow Play*, parents have a lot of concern on their children's academic performance at school instead of paying attention to them and their other needs. Through Nikhil Deshpande steadily narrates how parents control over children in the name of love. Nikhil was an only grandson of his family. Since his childhood he has been pampered by everyone and was expected to follow the family tradition without fail. His parents believe that having education in English and learning many languages is a privilege for the rich. He was not allowed to take leave even when

he was studying third standard. He was sent to a school where he could not hear anything other than English.

He's trapped now into doing what he's not interested in doing. Worse, he doesn't seem to know to do. (*Shadow play*, 103s)

Premi and Anil wished Nikhil to have more advantages and opportunities. But he did not have any complete freedom in his life. They have seen Nikhil as a little bird trapped in a very small cage. As a result, he always believes that his parents are going against his desires all life.. So he tries to keep everything secretive and do not tell his parents even when he encounter problems. At the time of adolescence the young people reach the fullest of their physical energy. In childhood days, everyone needs of their father's love and care to protect them. But when the parents reach around fifty, they became physically weak. This physical weakness makes conflict between parents and youth . The same happens here too in the novel.

The novel *A Matter of Time* seriously depicts the psychological difference. The major reason for the conflicts between parent and youth is the psychological and emotional gap between them . Deshpande presents Sumi as an introvert and she never expresses her feelings when she talks to her daughters. It creates misunderstanding and lack of attachment between them.

These psychological differences lead Sumi's grown up children to get disappointments on them. Most of the parents handle things less seriously but on the contrary youths are little serious. The novel *Shadow play* implies parental authority through Premi and Anil. They did not understand Nikhil's growth. The problem arises when they misunderstand his change. They saw him as a small child and became distressed by his activities. Gopal was not happy about Premi's immaturity.

Mother and son were very close when he was a child, but like all children, he moved away from her in adolescence, leaving his mother confused and distressed" (*Shadow play*, 266).

He always wished to stay away from his parents. Besides, he did not want his parents treat him as a three-year-old child. The youth want their parents to believe them that they are grown and it is the time for them to be independent. From this they could gain more self-esteem. On the whole, both parents and their children do not see things from the perspectives of each other. Thus, misunderstanding causes the generation gap .. The valuable understanding could be gained by parents only when they treat their children not as an opponent to defeat but a friend to love.

Parents are afraid of socializing their children. In modern society education empower them with new advanced ideas and widens the intellectual gap between parent and youth. Values and norms are personal for the young ones and they are often come out of strong conviction, including beliefs also they are strongly committed to their values, principles and norms and they would feel disgust when their parents attack and disagree with them or tries to inflict their own values on them. As a result, conflicts would occur when their parents tries oppose them.. The modern societies have progressed from extreme of permanent parental

authority but not yet reach the other extreme of complete emancipation.

Margaret Mead says that, “in a family where there are several adults’ male and female relatives within effective kinship group whom the child turns for affection, and many members of the younger generation in whom the parents have the parental interest, there appears to be less intensity of emotion for any particular kinsman and consequently less chance for severe conflict.” (Prasad, Generation Gap, a Sociological Study of Inter-generational Conflicts, 10)

In India cultural, religious and social changes are affecting the family system largely. The Indian family is trapped between traditional and emerging new patterns of family life. Some changes provide new freedom, new assurance and new opportunities to a person for being according to their own likes and dislikes. An analysis of conflict in India, appeals for a study of the crisis in youth values. The decreasing of parental influence and authority on the youth is certainly an important factor of inter-generational conflict. Each generation, adopts a new definite set of values, attitudes and follows its unique behavioral pattern which may not happen together with those of the previous generation, and may possibly be a conflict with the other.

A change in the socio-cultural development starts the conflict. This pressure results in inter-generational conflict, and it is more apparent among the urban educated society. The conflicts between the generations do not depend only on completely on the existence of extreme differences of opinion regarding social values between the different generations. The most important feature of the conflict is the disharmony in the attitudes of the younger generation, and the conventional social context. This conflict is due to authoritarianism of the elders, and the urge for individual identity in the adolescents. Generational differences are an importance of the biological facts of human life. It creates both emotional and communication gaps. Parents, although aware of the rapid social changes, do not always pay attention to them. They do not realize that the time has changed. Most of the children, irrespective of sex at college-going age, mostly prefer the company of their friends. The peer group influence on decision making is very strong. By failing to understand such changes among youth ,parents widen the inter-generation conflict.

Conclusion

Communication is extremely crucial. In order to break the gap , both parent and children have to rebuild a close parent-children relationship. Parents should not only focus on their jobs and earning alone. They have to spend some specific time to be with their children and have to spend time to listen to them, care them, entertain them and to help them to sort out their problems too. Similarly, children too should discuss personal matters with their parents. If both the children and parents schedule time to spend together as friends the many of the conflicts in the family be settled easily and promote happy family.

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