



Social

**WOMEN'S ENDURING SILENT IN SHASHI DESHPANDE'S 'THE  
BINDING VINE', 'THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS' AND 'ROOTS  
AND SHADOWS'**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The heroines of Shashi Deshpande's novels has to pass through difficult situations all of her life. They have continued to get attacks of depression and dejection all through even when they are in the happiest moments of their life, they are not free from a fear of some misfortunes as they could see lurking in near future. As the novel "The Dark Holds No Terror" Shashi Deshpande records a deep impression upon Sarita's psyche and also in the novel "The Binding Vine", the women characters are unhappy mostly due to their being superstitious conservation and reactionary. Then in "Roots and Shadows", which describes how a woman dependent, insecure and gives her an incomplete sense of identity.*

**Keywords:**

*Sufferings, Oppression, Dejection and Depression.*

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

A girl is the young plant that gets neither light nor water. She is the flower that would have blossomed but cannot. Half fed and half-heartedly educated she gets only half wage for her labour. The country got its freedom but she continues to be bonded. -- [kamala bhasian]

In Shashi Deshpande's "The Dark Holds No Terror", Sarita has the motion from the beginning that she is an unwanted child, that she has written in a note book, when she even a child, "nobody likes me nobody cares for me nobody wants me" perhaps it is feeling of Sarita suffers for being woman and this feeling has gone deeper within her ,after her brother, Dhruva, has drowned in a pool and she is held responsible for the death of the child that's made her become a

wrong and unwanted daughter. Her mother has indicted her directly and her father has failed to rise to support her. She has remained alienated from her parents to such an extent that she is not informed even about the death of her mother. It is indeed unfortunate of her that her parents did not even try to know whether she is happy after marriage and how many children she has. Then her marriage with Manohar, her husband does not show the natural inherent qualities of love and sympathy towards her when she rose inches taller than her husband in status. The consequent depression makes Manohar a psychopath. At one state, she has left her husband because she has found it impossible to live with a psychopath, who has inflicted wounds on her every night with his nails, hands and teeth. So that becomes an unbearable to her, not that Sarita's way is indifferent to women's course, even Sarita's mother is also has subsumed in this way. Her mother has remained an unsatisfied woman through her life, when her husband has given a tray as a retirement gift; she has moaned that it is nothing for a long service. Then the other women characters in "The Dark Holds No Terrors", Smita and Nalu are friends of Sarita, who are also partaken as an distressed women. Smita is worse than slavery; she is a kind of woman who has satisfied if she gets a square meal a day clothing and sex. Then Nalu, an another kind of broken woman, whose Deshpande has revealed Nalu as a typical spinster because Nalu has remained unmarried, Saru is surprised to see that Nalu, who is so bland and amiable, has become bitter in her remarks not that the women in married life should be the suffer. Even the woman like Nalu, who is well off financially, but she lacks in the sweetness and composure, because she has never tasted love of husband and children.

On the other hand, Mira in 'The Binding Vine' also one such women who bears the oppression and sexual assaults of her husband silently. The other woman character in the novel, Kalpana, the second heroine of the novel, undergoes the rape, but due to poverty, her mother wishes to conceal the whole episode. Unlike these women, Urmi journey is not an excursion into her own past, but the buried life and thoughts of her mother-in-law, Mira and Kalpana, a poor domestic servant's daughter, where these women are crumbling under the weight of their sorrow. So some incidents which sets the tone of this novel "The Binding Vine", it express the tremendous familial and cultural pressures which succeed in making women both silent and invisible.

Mira is a dead mother-in-law of Urmi, who has regarded through her writings Mira has lapped in an unhappy marriage at the age of eighteen by her husband who became 'single minded' in his pursuit after seeing her in a wedding. "Mira finds solace in her careless crawl" (50), because to her writing was "A link with the happier, lighthearted times..." (51). Urmi learns that her mother-in-law has subjected to rape by her husband every day. This anguish finds expression in a number of poems written by her. She disliked every form of physical intimacy because her marriage is only "a dark-clouded with dread. The torture of living with an obsessed man all her life made her recluse. The entry in her dairy is a case in point." He knows what I'm doing and he angry with me. I don't mind his anger, it makes him leave me to myself, it is bless when he does that. But he comes back, he is remorseful, repentant, he holds me close, he begins to babble. And so it begins please,' he says, 'please, I love you' and over and over again until he has done. 'I love you" (67). As a result, Mira began to loathe the word 'Love' because it has brought only pain and suffering in her life. So Mira meekly submitted to her husband's needs, despite the urge to defy him besides that Mira 'shrinks further '. She cast her feelings in her poems, When she is renamed as Nirmala after marriage, that is strongly asserted her individuality in her poems.

Then Urmila involved with another victim Kalpana, daughter of Shakutai, who has been brutally raped and has admitted in an unconscious state. Shakutai blames her daughter, Kalpana for her misfortunes “she’s shamed us, we can never wipe off this blot... you should have been her walking out, head in the air, caring for nobody. It’s all her fault. Urmila, all her fault” (147). Upon seeing Shakutai crying, Urmila decides to fight for Kalpana’s justice. What surprise the readers is the reason why Kalpana chooses to remain silent inspite of being aware of her uncle’s advances. It is the day prior to the death of her sister Salu that Shakutai learns the truth. Salu breaks her silence about her husband’s obsession for Kalpana. She immolates herself the following day to atone for her husband’s misdeeds. Shukatai who had been blaming her daughter so long is left to cope with the bitter truth that it is her own blindness and ignorance that have destroyed her daughter’s life and not Kalpana’s “willfulness and stubbornness”(172).the reason why Sulu remained insecure, frightened and unloved throughout her life was because she was barren . Through Shakutai has had her own share of problems like her sister Salu.

Like Salu and Shakutai, vanna, Urmila’s sister-in-law,also suffers in silence. In order to provide a condusive atmosphere for her growing children, Vanna never voices her feelings. She continues to be mute till the end. Considering the fates of Mira, Kalpana, Shakutai and Salu, Urmila regains confidence. Realizing the importance of survival and need to cope, Urmila marches forward nourishing the idea that life is “worth-living” in spite of all the betrayals and cruelty.

An additional to Shashi deshpande’s novel ‘Roots And Shadows ‘ ,which explore and expose the struggle of the protagonist, Indu, an educated middle-class woman, in a male-dominated tradition bound society. Indu symbolizes the new women, who is educated and who lives in close association with society brushing aside all its narrow conventions. The novel presents a typical aspect of dispossessed womanhood through the character of Akka, who is the youngest sister of Indu’s grandfather. Indu, a sensitive, educated and liberated woman, questions and challenges Akka’s authority and considers Akka a callous and domineering woman. She hates and challenges Akka’s domination. She thinks that: “There was only one thing she wanted and that was to dominate”. (68). Then Indu comes to know about the pathetic story of Akka after her death through Narmadaattaya, daughter of Indus’s grandfather, that Akka had a terrible past hidden away in the vaults of the family narrative; a past of marital rape as a thirteen years old wife, of betrayal, and of her revenge on a dying husband . At the age of twelve her marriage has performed with a man of thirty years old. As a married woman Akka was expected to bear children but she had many miscarriages due to kind of life she led. Her mother-in-law has made her life miserable for her inability to give birth to a living child. Her early marriage, her miserable life with her mother-in-law, her childlessness and her husband’s obsession with other women, and her widowhood are the various blows that Akka receives in her life, which imposes Akka to follow a strict rules as to how a girl should talk, dress and behave. In spite of being a victim of gender oppression, she imposes the same victimization on all the women in the family. Similarly Indu is painfully aware that she is not different from the women at home. At the time she misses Jayant, her husband and wants him to be beside her. She feels miserable and incomplete in Jayant’s absence. Jayant who hates any display of passion on Indu’s part denies her even the most basic sexual need in marriage. Even in the privacy of their bedroom, she is not let to shed her inhibition. She tells Naren, her cousin: “ Jayant, so passionate, so ready, sitting up suddenly and says ‘no, not now’, when I had taken the initiative” (91).Being so affronted by

Jayant she feels humiliated and disillusioned. So she is not much different from the other household women. Like them she too has become “still and dead”, she rebels to become complete and independent, but painfully realizes that she is neither of the two. She thinks, “This is my real sorrow. That I can never be complete myself” (34). The problems, which she faces in her life divulges to Naren even a every little detail of her married life and he makes her take the most daring step of surrendering herself to him not once but twice in the novel. She indulges in the act with much wild discard and cherishes it later without any guilt consciousness.

## 2. CONCLUSION

Woman at every stage should be under the domination of someone: her father, her husband, or her son. Marriage is considered transference of the dominion over her from her parents to her husband. The chains of traditional marriage are heavy and the escape routes are not available to a wife, who often seeks consolation and refuge in obsessions, masochism, or mental slavery, often leading to her physical decay and death. The social ethos which has been contributing to the continuity of woman suppression sees to it that unacknowledged martyrdom becomes a part of a housewife’s existence and the women are become the silent suffers throughout their life.

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