

A Woman's Voyage to the Inner Psyche in Shashi Deshpande's *Dark Holds No Terror*

¹K.S. Priya, ²Selva Mary Gokila S. George

^{1,2} Assistant Professor, Department of English Arunachala College of Engineering for Women Vellichanthai

Abstract: Novel is probably an outcome of western culture and custom. Its arrival in India has taken its shape in different forms. Indo-English novels of the early nineteenth century have portrayal of male characters as stereotyped. Perhaps the societal influences made men and women writers to pen the suppression of women in their writings. A handful of women writers' like Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Shobha De, Namitha Gokhale, Kamala Markandaya gave voice for women's inner struggles. These women novelists have incorporated the recurring female experiences in their writings. They tried to create awareness through their writings, which brought reformation, and it echoed over time. Issues on women are still prevailing everywhere. Ostensibly, every writer focuses women on asserting her rights.

Keywords: women writers' like Shashi Deshpande, *Woman's Voyage to the Inner Psyche*.

Shashi Deshpande is a well-known author in the field of Indian Literature. She has a very sharp mind. Her writing career began initially with short stories. Some of her best known works are **Dark Holds No Terror**, **That Long Silence**, which won the Sahitya Academic Award. Her first novel **Dark Holds No terror** was published in 1980. She also has a passion to write for children. Deshpande's grave focus on the despicable conditions of woman who is ignorant of her self and rights has been on the stream of her writing.

Shashi Deshpande significantly brings out the inner struggles of women wherein they emancipate for a better solution. This theme turned the readers to look upon her novel as a soothing balm to one's psyche. Most of her novels shed light on her voracious interest in bringing new ideas. Her feminist ideologies and her way of perceiving issues began to influence the woman society. While reading her novels we lose ourselves in her lines but we find ourselves in theirs. In **Dark Holds No Terror**, she illustrates the story of a young woman who makes a tussle with her inner self striving to find out the real paradigm in her. Women were considered as marginalized in the male dominated society. They are always under the command of their parents or husbands with some do's and don'ts like: 'Do this', 'Do that', 'Don't do this', 'Don't do that'. Simone De Beauvoir reveals that:

The man is typically the hero, the subject, the representative of humanity, the winner and conqueror, while the woman is mother, background, landscape, temptress or goal. She is so much an outsider that she is not human. She is "other": She is "natural" or childlike or holy or evil, while the man is "man" (humanity). (qtd. in Little 10)

The protagonist of the novel Saritha called "Saru" returns to her father's home after 15 years to look after him. She was taken aback of her old memories which she experienced with her mother. She remembers her mother's height of hatredness when she failed to save her drowning brother Dhruva. As we find in many novels, portrayal of Saru's mother is that of a typical Indian woman who cares and pampers her male child than female. Saru has her own liking to get along her life in its own way but it is never recognized by her mother who gives the maximum rapport to her son. Her dependency on her son makes her feel her life is complete. Saru's mother Kamala follows rigid traditions, which she finds lacking in her daughter. She keeps on instructing her to abide by the customs that is framed by the society. The relationship between

Saru and her tyrannizing mother is bound with incompleteness, even if being the same gender they both find a vacuum between each other. Mother and daughter's relationship is seen in the following dialogues:

"Don't go out in the sun. You'll get even darker.

Who cares?

We have to care if you don't. We have to get you married.

I don't want to get married.

Will you live with us all your life?

Why not?

You can't?

And Dhruva?

He's different. He's a boy". (p.45)

Society has kept its rules for both the sex. The author clearly brings the imbalance between the genders. A woman who is a daughter takes the promotion of mother later finds no bettering in her life. Furthermore, they are made ignorant and they find a path, which is designed by the patriarchal society. In "Writing and Displacement: Women in Theatre" Josette Feral states, "Woman as mother, woman as wife, woman alone, girl waiting to become a woman, grieving wife, woman's experiences . . . to break the silence surrounding her most intimate self and her being as a subject"(552). Saru weaves a web of memories with the past events. She loves her childhood days, which she really enjoyed through. Her school friends, studies, her chase with "searching for new" give her pleasure. Yet, she finds everything to be ransacked after her second phase of life. People in those days call this phase "marriage" But she never understood this undefined word and it always remained a puzzle to her. Deloris Jordan in an article "I hope to help women find a voice" written in *Times of India* opines:

One thing that I would like to tell all women is that you should be confident about who you are. We all have choices to make and the choice is we make should help us to grow stronger. If you are looking for joy, it comes from within. If you know how to demonstrate this, then you will have no fear.

Saritha then brings back to her mind her days with her husband Manohar, a school teacher and young poet, a symbol of dominion and despotism. Saru is a successful medical practitioner. During daytime, her medical service is remarkable with her patients. On the contrary, it is almost well nigh to prove herself with her husband. Manohar who treats her brutally during night. His sexual sadism hurts her feelings intensely. His inability to beat his wife's talent in other way is explicated in bed, thinking this attitude as superiority. At a point Saru realizes there is no more to her life than dependency, marriage and children. When she comes to know of her mother's death, she drops in her father's house seemingly to take care of him. However, the fact is she came to find her life, which she lost somewhere. She gets a chance to brood over her sorrows and cross-examine her relationship with her husband, her dead mother, her dead brother Dhruva and her two children Renu and Abi.

Saru receives several letters from Manohar stating her to come back. But Saru was unresponsive. Leafing through the last pages of the novel we find Saru coming out of her home with revolutionary thoughts hoping it would make some changes in her life. She gears up her courage to face her life bravely. Her bitter emotions give her the guts and she is strengthened now. She is ready to confront with her husband who is prompt in his ideological statements. She did not realize her suppressing attitude in the past but now she is ready to turn over a new leaf and she walks off. Feelings and emotions are to be shared and recognized. When it is hurt and unrecognized, it becomes sensitive. Saru has her own likes and dislikes. She established herself as a doctor. Through her profession, she hopes to find a place in life and society. However, the society and its framed rules laid back her desires. Her inner questions are always unanswered. Since she is a woman, she is not treated as human. It begins from her home to her marriage life.

Deshpande has used the stream-of-consciousness technique in order to get an answer to one's thirst for independence and self-identity. The portrayal of Saru is 'the pathetic unheard world of women' filled with hopes, aspirations, search and chase. She realizes that no one can be her guardian angel she herself has to fight back. Saru decides to face the

reality. Deshpande almost shows her character seeking solutions to her problems within marriage. Saru realizes that the dark can no longer bring her terror in her life. The Nothingness and Darkness in Saru's life is no longer a holding then, it is now transformed to a Solution.

REFERENCES

- [1] Feral, Josette. "Writing and Displacement: Women in Theatre." *Modern Drama* 27.4 (December 1984): 549-563. Print.
- [2] Little, Judy. *Comedy & the Woman Writer Woolf, Spark & Feminism*. United States of America, 1983. *Google Book Search*. Web. 9 Dec 2014.
- [3] Deshpande, Shashi. *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, India 1990.
- [4] Jordan, Deloris. "I Hope To Help Women Find A Voice." *The Times of India*. 28 Jun.2015
- [5] <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/people/I-hope-to-help-women-find-a-voice/articleshow/47843070.cms>. Web.