

**Tracing the Negotiation of Gender Narratives in
Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terror* and *Small
Remedies***

Abinaya. A

(17PEN001)

Thesis submitted to

**Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for
Women, Coimbatore-641 043**

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master's Degree in English

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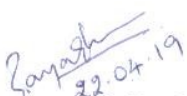
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Signature of the Supervisor


Signature of the HOD

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Chapter – 1

Chapter-1

Introduction

The best gift that man has received is 'Literature' which is a form of expressing one's personal view through writing. From the world of literature there emerged various writers who put forth their thoughts in words. Literature brings out creativity in everything- words, opinions, actions and thoughts. Different countries exhibit different forms of writing and the methodologies differ from each other. Indian writing in English, has reached the pinnacle of fame and success through its marvellous publication of works by most talented writers.

In India, the seed of writing in English as opposed to the diverse languages spoken by different people in the country was sown during the period of British rule in India. Indian fiction in English from the latter half of the nineteenth century till date, along with other issues has also been dealing with the changing positions, role and problems of women in society. Many works highlight this fact that women have been oppressed, suppressed, repressed, victimised and marginalised, despite the fact that they possess equal capacities, skills and intelligence, and work whole-heartedly for the development of their family. The value of sacrifice, submissiveness, excessive endurance, series of adjustments and self-effacement have been demanded and desired from them alone as the normal way of life. Indian women have been expected to follow the role models of Sita, Savitri and Draupadi who always

suffered and sacrificed for the comforts of their husbands and exhibited commendable forbearance.

Dr. Murlī Manohar in his recently published book *Indian English Women's Fiction, A Study of Marriage, Career and Divorce* appropriately identified the of changing facets of Indian women portrayed in the post-independence Indian English fiction. He has studied this change in five phases: Trembling Silence, the 1950s, standing up for the Rights, the 1960s, Rebellious Spirit, the 1970s, Self Determination and Assertiveness, the 1980s and Rejecting the Hegemony the 1990s. Thus, in Indian English fiction we see growth in the consciousness and awakening among Indian women since the 1870s to their miserable plight, their desire and determination to better their lot and assert for their rights by rejecting the systems which have proved oppressive for them and also making efforts to transform and reconstruct them.

The women writers share their stories to the world in the hope that their voices would contribute to diminish the sufferings of future generations of women from violence. Violence against women is imbibed in patriarchal system and is responsible for the internalization of female inferiority in the name of socialization, customs, religious laws and rituals. Shashi Deshpande creates a world in which men exert their influence and women do not have any voice for themselves. The writer asserts that sexuality, gender and the body, in a complex interplay of dominant forces, are clearly at the root of woman's oppression in contemporary society. The young female victim's lack

of maturity, powerlessness and her physical weakness restricts their confrontation with the abuser.

The most controversial thing that any Indian Feminist writer must negotiate is the family situation of women. A woman's identity is literally judged based on the way their father/husband treats her, she is labelled by the way they treat her. In few instances, if a woman is left to be independent she is named as 'unruly' or 'unfit' for the society. Mostly she is inscribed within their own class, caste, and religion-defined identity. For it is within the family that girl-children experience their first feelings of rejection or discrimination on account of their sex, where they may be required to perform hard domestic labour, they are denied the freedom to travel or undergo any personal experiences, either they married off most frequently it is done without their consent and on payment of dowry, and then subjected to the all the problems of married life, which would include harassment by in-laws, marital discord, forced pregnancies, domestic drudgery, and the continuing cycle of the burden of girl-children of their own.

Women's writing is considered both as social practice and as a symbolic structure, occupies a privileged location in their confrontation with family. The women's text cannot be regarded simply as the transparent medium of self-expression, but becomes a significant mediator between the private self of the writer and the public world of letters. In short, it is used as a medium. Not only do women write about their families, but in doing so they commit acts of

betrayal against them. In the preface of her book *Daughter's Daughter*.

Mrinal Pande explains what it means when women write:

Since the human mind cannot think only what the families want it to think, and since independent observations and experiences independently derived and analysed have no place in the hagiography of most family systems, to be a writer is to accept the possibility of being harangued and condemned by the very people whose unspoken sorrows, whose solitude of self, one has tried to grasp and record. Sisters, brothers, cousins, aunts, one by one they will all denounce and leave us, and all that we writers are to be left with will be the stories... [women] writers [are] cast out by the family whose demands for loyalty and silence we have defied. (81)

During the British colonial rule, the exploitation of Indian women continued but the English missionaries, their wives and a few British administrators worked against the cruel customs of sati, infanticide, forced labour, slavery and demanded human treatment for women. A few acts were also passed to make the lives of women better. Indian social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan ray, Ishwar Chandra, Vidya Sagar, Keshab Chander Sen, Jotiba Phule and a few others started new movements to reform the Indian society and especially the condition of women in the country. Along with these reformist movements, Indian society was also passing through the impact of the west in the wake of Renaissance. The monumental minutes of Lord Macaulay provided for the adoption of English language as medium of instruction in

educational institutions, important offices and judicial courts, which opened up for Indians fresh avenues of thought in culture, art and literature, science and technology, strongly backed by many progressive thinkers.

There are many Indian women writers who have contributed immensely to the country's literary scene, and who deserve to be recognized for their vision, their fearlessness, their originality, and the barriers they broke in the literary world and beyond, Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai, Anita Nair, Kiran Desai, Meena Kandasamy, Kamala Das, Nayantara Sehgal, Kamala Das and Shobha DeIlavenil Meena Kandasamy is a poet, fiction writer, whose works are centered on feminism and the Caste Annihilation Movement of the contemporary Indian milieu. She holds a PhD in sociolinguistics and has published two anthologies of poems, "*Touch*" and "*Ms Militancy*", and a novel "*The Gypsy Goddess*". Her most recent work "*When Kamala Das I Hit You or a Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife*" is a provocative novel of an abusive marriage.

Kamala Markandaya, is a post-independence female novelist whose works deals with the themes related to the rural and urban divide, modernism, spiritual quest, attitude toward feminine superiority and conflict between tradition and modernism. Focussing heavily on the rural India women, Markandaya's first published novel, "*Nectar in a Sieve*", was a bestseller and cited as an American Library Association Notable Book in 1955.

Kiran Desai, is another Indian author to win the Winner of the Man Booker Prize. She also won the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award.

Desai's use of magic realism with socio-political realism is beautifully depicted in her works. The way she presents the vast canvas of contemporary society in the broad perspective of globalization is what makes her work so fascinating. Her award-winning book "*The Inheritance of Loss*" is a proof to this enduring quality of her work.

Anita Nair is a well-known writer in Indian English literature, she wrote poems, crime fiction, short stories and even children's stories. She is known for her novels "*The Better Man*" and "*The Ladies Coupe*". The work like "*Mistress: a Novel*" highlights the relationship between a woman and her husband, Nair brought the life experiences of everyday Indian woman in her fiction.

Nayantara Sahgal is the niece of Jawaharlal Nehru, and a noted novelist with her powerful political columns. Her close association with India's power centre is reflected closely in her works deals with India's elite and the political changes around them. Sahgal won the Sahitya Akademi award for "*Rich like Us*", set between 1932 to the mid 1970's, the time of great political unrest in India.

Kamala Das is one of India's finest confessional poets who also wrote beautiful prose in two languages, Malayalam and English. Her writings reflect her strong feminist ideology that portrays female sensibility with a rare honesty.

Anita Nair is a well-known writer in Indian English literature, she wrote poems, crime fiction, short stories and even children's stories. She is known for

her novels “*The Better Man*” and “*The Ladies Coupe*”. The work like “*Mistress: a Novel*” highlights the relationship between a woman and her husband, Nair brought the life experiences of everyday Indian woman in her fiction.

Meenakshi Reddy Madhavan is a blogger and a writer. Madhavan writes under the pseudonym on her blog which is called The Compulsive Confessor. A semi-autobiographical piece of work titled “*You Are Here*” is her first work. Madhavan is also a regular columnist at Youth Ki Awaaz as an Aunty Feminist.

Anita Desai is a well-known novelist, short-story writer and children’s writer. Desai has many awards to her credit including the Padma Bhushan and The Guardian Children’s Fiction prize. Her novels mostly revolve around working out through the mystery of the inner life of her characters. She is usually compared for her modernist sensibilities to writers like T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner.

Chitra Banerjee Divakurni writes with a fiercely powerful voice and strong female protagonists. Divakurni’s writing seeks to capture the soul of a woman’s being. She has written fifteen books, all of whom is a blend of prose and poetry, magic and realism beautifully to get at the heart of her character’s stories.

Bharati Mukherjee is an Indian-born American writer; Mukherjee explores beautifully the internal cultural clashes of immigrant’s characters through her books like the “*The Middleman and Other Stories*” and “*Jasmine*”.

These stories are self-discovery of female protagonists that leads to interesting places in the existing crisis that ensues.

Mahasweta Devi is also a very famous writer and social activist who focus on telling tales of injustices meted out to marginalized communities in the country in fiction. She was the bold voice behind the sensational short story “*Rudali*” that delved into the lives of women belonging to the lower caste in Rajasthan who were hired as professional mourners during the death of upper caste men.

Arundhati Roy is one most famous Indian women writer in English. One of her best works *The God of Small Things* (1997) won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 1997. One of the most important aspects is her novel style of dealing with the representation of characters in 3 dimensional perspectives here. Her writing doesn't mean that every character is equal. If the novel is seen from the perspective of Rahel, who is a character in *The God of Small Things* (1997) we can get a pretty good idea of each. In this novel she emphasises the suffering of the characters, the political issues faced by the deprived people, the caste and religion. Anita Nair is a well-known writer in Indian English literature, she wrote poems, crime fiction, short stories and even children's stories. She is known for her novels “*The Better Man*” and “*The Ladies Coupe*”. The work like “*Mistress: a Novel*” highlights the relationship between a woman and her husband, Nair brought the life experiences of everyday Indian woman in her fiction.

Anita Desai ventured into the field of novel writing with her *Cry, The Peacock*, followed by *The Voices of the city* and *The Fire of Mountain*. She is a novelist, short-story writer and children's writer. Anita Desai has many awards to her credit including the Padma Bhushan and The Guardian children's Fiction Prize. Her novels usually revolve around working out the mystery of the inner life of her characters. They use stunning visual imagery to show this inner working, and many have compared her modernist sensibilities to writers like T.S Eliot, William Faulkner and Virginia Woolf.

Shobha De is an Indian columnist and novelist. De is best known for her depiction of socialites and sex in her works of fiction, for which she has come to be known as the "*Jackie Collins of India*". ShobhaDe's novels throw emphasis on men's pride, incompatible marriage, traditional norms of behaviour and patriarchal social system as the real forces of the oppression and exploitation of women. As a feminist writer, Shobha De's novels raise a strong protest against the male-domination in Indian society. The novels deal with the theme such as family, marriage, patriarchy, quest for identity, struggle for survival and marginality.

Nayantara Sahgal, a member of the Nehru-Gandhi family. Her close association with India's power centre reflects in her work, a lot of which deals with India's elite and how they responded to political changes around them. Her Notable works are *Prison and Chocolate Cake* (1954), *This Time to Be Happy* (1963), *The Freedom Movement in India* (1970), *A Voice for Freedom*

(1977), *Rich like Us* (1985). Sahgal won the Sahitya Akademi award for *Rich like Us*.

Shashi Deshpande and Manju Kapur explore the truth that women's bodies are exploited for a man's need and this enforced sex has traumatic effect on women's psyche which has effect on her mindset and her behaviour. Here, female perspective is most essential because it constitutes reclamation of power through the name of violence. It is also essential in that it provides a female definition of sexual assault, which can counteract, or at least balance, the dominant discourse revolving around the male definition. Ending sexual violence is a shared responsibility that requires the efforts of all, men and women. Patriarchal and sexist attitudes, behaviours and beliefs have to be changed so that women live in safety, and are free from the threat, fear or experience of sexual violence.

The Thousand Faces of Night by Githa Haariharan was received with much critical acclaim winning the 1992 commonwealth fiction prize for the best first novel written in the Eurasian region. It is indeed a skill in the point of view and consciousness to create an impressionistic and collage-like narrative. In many aspects, it also marks a coming-of-age of a certain kind of women's fiction in English in India, one that is written undisguised in a 'woman's voice', a condition-of-woman novel. Its narrative traces the female protagonist's process of learning to come to terms with her family, understood both as the filial relationship and as the marital situation. The novel begins with

the last day of Devi's stay in the United States, the conclusion of her education as well as her vaguely defined affair with an American man.

Thousand Faces of Night departs from the form of *That Long Silence*, even though it reiterates the centrality of the family to the definition of the middle-class women's existence that the earlier book had accepted as its premise. In place of Deshpande's narrative mode of retrospective upon, and brooding analysis of women's condition. Here, Devi's 'character' as representative of a certain female 'sensibility' rather than as the product of a specific social condition, it would remain a matter of puzzlement to the contemporary reader of this novel why American-shorthand for 'western' values, education, sexual freedom—should be invoked in the narrative of Devi's growth only to be made of no further account whatever in it; why her wish for a career should be so easily scotched by a husband; why modern literature, politics, travel, or other interests are so remote from Devi's existence; why instead the past-childhood memories, ancient and medieval Indian myth and poetry, the companionship of old people and their reminiscence- should weigh so heavily upon her being and existence: unless indeed Hariharan's 'explanation' of Devi's life is to be read in these individualized psychological terms, rather than in the social-political term of critique of marriage, family and society. Here too, as in *That Long Silence*, we encounter a complex mix of disavowal of responsibility, with the agency of self-blame in the protagonist's reckoning up of her life:

My grandmother fed me fantasies, my father a secretive love. My mother sought me out with hope, and when disappointed, pushed me forward in the direction she closes..... I [have been] an obedient puppet whose strings they pulled and jerked with their love. I have made very few choices, but once or twice, when a hand wavered, when a string was but loose, I have stumbled on-stage alone, greedy for a story of my own..... I have run away from all my trials, my tail between my legs, just as I turned a blind eye to my father's helpless thrashing about for an ally, or my mother's lonely hand stretched out towards me. (*The Thousand Faces of Night*, 136-7).

Manjula Padmanabhan's collection of stories, her first book, *Hot Death, Cold Soup*, breaks with the continuities of 'women's fiction' that other recent women's novels, by Hariharan, da Cunha, ShamaFutehally, BelinderDhanoo have maintained into the nineties, stories and novels whose protagonists are women and whose narratives trace their coming to terms with their perceived as female: growing up into womanhood, marriage, compromise within it, or separation, and widowhood. Padmanabhan too writes about 'women's issues' unapologetically, in some of the stories in the volume, but does not, equally unapologetically, in the others. In the 'feminist' stories the focus is on recognizable, even well-worn gender issues: sati, dowry eve-teasing, sexual reproduction, coming of age, arranged marriage; and on less-discussed issues like the rituals and practices of menstruation. The genre of the remaining stories may be loosely described as futuristic, or science fiction; I shall ignore them for now as lying outside the scope of my discussion here. In spite of the

strongly satiric tone and polemic feminism of the plots of the stories, Padmanabhan does not replicate the female world of the bourgeois home as the exclusive sphere of women's activities in her fiction. I shall indicate the major departures that her book marks from the burden of other women's fiction in English in India today.

The representation of women who work in itself, an unremarkable observation about the Indian middle class, but, as have remarked, not one that has been routinely recorded in women's fiction. The roles and attitudes of padmanabhan's female character with careers, who are also often single women-even women who choose to be single, as widows, spinsters, fiancées who refuse marriage-are marked by defiance of convention. The first-person protagonist of the opening story, '*Hot Death, Cold Soup*,' Shona Sen, is a widow who angrily repudiates the emotive logic of sati propounded by the elderly American wife of an Indian man:

"I don't think of myself as a feminist" (48). I belong to the generation before the movement took to the streets and the market-place. But in the face of Sally's gloating conservatism, I felt like a one-person shock troop. I felt that her very presence, the very fact of her existence, was a threat to all that I stood for, the freedoms I had come to recognize and appreciate as my right. It maddened me that she should choose to flaunt as jewellery, the very chains that have bound and curtailed the lives of so many women.....'I was going to tell you that I was actually delighted when my husband died. I wanted to dance on his ashes! I felt unbound-! (*Hot Death, Cold Soup*, 16).

Man's relationship with woman is most often the bond that exists between a master and a slave woman is an object and she is essential to man because "it is in seeking self-realization." The influence of feminism in her novels, it is the core of her novels. Her heroines speak of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* and Betty Friedan and it becomes quite obvious that the women she has created are feminists. One of the primal and seminal concerns of feminism is to declare that a woman is a being. She is not an appendage of man. A woman is not the "other"; she is not an addition to man. She is an autonomous being, capable of, through trial and error, finding her own way to salvation. The attempts to create "female enclaves" are extremist reaction but the recent trends in feminist literature are an indication that it is possible for a woman to live in the world where men also live. From the limited perspective of women's rights and suppression of women, feminist literature has moved a step ahead in the right direction-that of painting up, through a study of "*feminine mystique*," that whether it is woman or man, the world we live in is disintegrated and all of us are alone. Loneliness, one of the concerns of modern society, not a disease, but a symptom of man's condition and this awareness is the first milestone in one's journey into oneself. Shashi Deshpande's novels are concerned with a woman's quest for self; an exploration into the female psyche and an understanding of the mysteries of life and the protagonist's place in it.

This thesis is going to deal with Indian constitution of women's rights in Shashi Deshpande's novels. Shashi Deshpande was born in India in 1938 at

Dharwad, Karnataka. Deshpande pursued journalism at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhava, Mumbai and she took journalism as her profession for the magazine “Onlooker”. She also has obtained degrees in Economics and law.

The women writers have developed an alternative expressive space in their writings where they voice against resistance and reconstruction of the norms. There is nothing more evident than this in the literary representation of rape and sexual assault against women. The writers in their writing indicate that rape has a very little part in claiming it as sexual desires but is an act that totally dehumanises the victim without any menial considerations and turns her into an object of complete domination. Male sexuality is regarded as symbol of ‘power’ and ‘strength’ whereas female sexuality is considered ‘passive’ and ‘something to be ashamed of’. In the prologue to the novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, a frightening experience is portrayed where the female body is aggressively tortured by the male character.

The Dark Holds No Terror (1980) is Shashi Deshpande’s first novel which was written in 1980. She published *That Long Silence* in 1990. She won the Sahitya Academic Award and Padma Shri award in 2009. She has written four books for children. She wrote several short stories, novels and many essays. All her essays are available as a volume entitled “Writing from the Margin and other essays”. Her 2014 novel *Shadow Play* (2013) was shortlisted for the “The Hindu Literary Prize”. In most of her novels women play the role of the protagonist this makes her readers call her a ‘Feminist writer’ and her name is a very prominent one in the realm of Indian English Fiction. *The Dark*

Holds No Terror (1980) shows the women's stages and sufferings in Indian society. "Legacy" is her collection of short stories published in the year 1978. Some of her other notable works are *If I Died Today* (1982), *Come Up and Be Dead* (1983), *Roots and Shadows* (1983), *The insand Other Stories* (1993), *A Matter of Time* (1996), *The Binding Vine* (2002), *Moving On* (2004), *In The Country and Deceit* (2008). In her novels, she gives importance to the women characters.

This dissertation focuses on Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terror* (1980) and *Small Remedies* (2000). *The Dark Holds No Terror* (1980) is the reflection of the feminist aspiration and *Small Remedies* (2000) is a sensitive portrayal of women's quest for identity, it is intermixed to analyse the role played by the Indian penal code in the life of the life. The Educated women in a traditional bound Indian society is the theme of her novels. This shows how the woman suffers in the present day scenario in the Indian context. Usually in India, women suffer from male domination patriarchy which is effectively showed in this novel. The explanation of these two novels has been undertaken from the perspective of the rights spelt out by the Indian constitution. Here the implications of the problematic of family and its outside, home and 'world', in women's fiction is explained, with reference mainly to three recent texts in English: Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* (1988), Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992) and Manjula Padmanabhan's *Hot Death, Cold Soup* (1996).

The novel *Roots and Shadows* was written by Shashi Deshpande in 1983. This novel focused on the protagonist Indhu's interaction with others in her large family and the manner in which she helps to resolve their future and her own personal crisis. The novel *If I Die Today* was published in the year 1982. Guru, an end-stage cancer patient, comes to a quiet medical campus and quickly befriends his host's friends and neighbours, his warmth and sympathetic manner encouraging them to confide in him. Out of these conversations emerges a name Prabhakar Tambe which spreads a pall of uneasiness over the doctors and triggers a chain of events that leads to catastrophic results. Rumours start to fly, old tensions and rivalries between colleagues and friends re-surface, and every family on the campus is caught in a web of suspicion. Within weeks, two people die in mysterious circumstance and it seems that life will never be the same again for the doctors and their families.

One of Shashi Deshpande's remarkable novels is *That Long Silence* (1988). The novel is about Indian women's marital life and their suffering. Jaya's life comes apart at the seams when her husband is asked to leave his job while allegations of business malpractice against him are investigated. Her familiar existence is disrupted, her husband's reputation is questioned and their future as a family is suddenly in jeopardy.

Jaya, a failed writer, is haunted by memories of the past. Differences with her husband, frustrations in their seventeen-year-old marriage, disappointment with her two teenage children and the claustrophobia of her childhood all begin to

surface through the narrative. In her small suburban Bombay flat, Jaya grapples with these and other truths about herself. Shashi Deshpande gives us an exceptionally accomplished portrayal of a woman trying to erase a 'long silence' begun in childhood and rooted in her and in the constraints of her life.

The Novel *The Binding Vine* published in the year 1992 explores acuity and compassion the redemptive powers of love. The narrator of *The Binding Vine* is the clever, sharp-tongued Urmi, grieving over the death of her baby daughter and surrounded by, but rebuffing, the care of her mother and her childhood friend, Vanna. Instead, she becomes caught up in the discovery of her long-dead mother-in-law's poetry, written when she was a young women subjected to rape in her marriage: and Kalpana, a young woman hanging between life and death in the hospital ward, also the victim of rape. Yet, in this web of loss and despair are the glimmerings of hope. Shashi Deshpande.

Shashi Deshpande's novel *Moving On* (2004) is about the secret lives of men and women who love, hate, plot and debate with an intensity that will absorb every reader. The characters such as her father, mother, sister and uncle add essence to the novel through the display of different characters her father delights the human body, its mysteries, its passion and the knowledge he contains and conceals. A mother wields the power of her love mercilessly; there is a sister who gets separated in her childhood. An uncle plays the games of life and death as a member of the Bombay underworld. A passionate love affair tears the family apart and a young woman is left to make sense of the

world and of her own sexuality. It is a story that begins conventionally enough, with a woman's discovery of her father's diary.

As Manjari unlocks the past through its pages, rescuing old memories and recasting events and responses, the present makes its own demands: a rebellious daughter, devious properly sharks and a lover who threatens to throw her life out of gear again. The ensuing struggle to reconcile nostalgia with reality and the fire of the body with the desire for companionship races to an unexpected resolution, twisting and turning through complex emotional landscapes. In *Moving On*, Shashi Deshpande explodes the stereotypes of familial bonds with an uncanny insight into the nature of human relationships and an equally unerring eye for detail.

Shadow Play by Shashi Deshpande was published in 2013. The novel is about the relationships, families and the lives of women. *Shadow Play* is about the bonding between women in family, and how important these strands are to hold the family together. It is about women who battle a hundred internal confusions but carry on bravely. The novel starts with simply the wedding of the eldest daughter of a middle class urban family. This happens to the family we've been introduced to earlier, in Deshpande's novel *A Matter of Time* (1996); Sumi and Gopal, and their three daughters. Gopal had walked out on his family for not fully explained reasons, leaving his wife and daughters struggling. As a result, it turns out to be a humiliating betrayal for them in the society. Then their tragic experience strikes for a second time where Sumi and her father are killed in an accident. *Shadow play* starts here, with Sumi, the

central character in *A Matter of Time* (1996), dead and her daughter all grown up.

Shashi Deshpande creates a realistic picture of the contemporary middle class woman, presenting their delicate positions and challenges at the same time trying to analyse the change has taken place in women through the centuries. Laying more emphasis on the 20th century change, position in the family as well as in society kept on changing all through the ages and is almost invariably an inferior one. A woman is hardly given any freedom, the dominance of male is seen more and the submissive nature is most prominent from the portrayal and of women. Nature of women has been embedded so deeply into the Indian psyche that the opportunities and rights given to women remain only in word and nature that comes from their shared history of oppression by a patriarchal western society.

The male-dominated society does not want women to be equal and they cannot believe in woman being equal to them. In spite of the educational opportunities and economic independence, women are surrounded by domestic injustice and the crude customs of our society. The dominating men and the submissive nature of women have been embedded so deeply into the Indian psyche that the opportunities and rights given to women remain only in word. Education and economic conditions have changed the attitude and have created a need to work.

The working wife has to face the problems of marital adjustment. She experiences a conflict of values. Shashi Deshpande wanted to bring forth

changes in her novels that changed the society but as a writer favourable to the women characters, she laid much emphasis on them. She has much personal experiences through her presence in India. The predominating issues and themes in her novels emerge from the situations that focus on woman caught in the crisis of a transitional society where the shift is taking place from conventional to unconventional. She traces out the tension in which arise in such a transitional world.

The prevention of Sati Act in 1829, the Widow Remarriage Act 1856, the establishment of reformist cults like the Brahmo Samaj in the east-the Pratha Samaj in the west, the Arya Samaj in the north and the Theosophical Society in the south drew attention to the plight of women in India. The Indian woman presents a curious paradox; she is either worshipped as a goddess or burnt as an object. The ambivalence which defines the Indian women today is expressed in texts by women writers who are in the process of writing/righting women.

Shashi Deshpande looks into the childhood of her female characters and shows how childhood experiences go a long way in determining or influencing their adult lives. Deshpande strongly believes in the influence of childhood on adult life. There are a lot of quotes in her novel about childhood life. Mostly, in her novel she gives importance to the childhood characters also. "The First time he was really in to when she had completed her medical finals; he had called her up to his room then, summoned her actually, to tell her she would be marrying Anil" (*A Matter of Time* 18).

Deshpande, unlike many novelists does not dwell on the issues of nationalism, caste and other issues. She majorly focuses on women issues and their sufferings. She uses literature as a medium to express her own views, literature is a well linked subject for her characters. She brings in the western concepts of the individual through her protagonists. Many of her characters that she has expressed are traditional. When considering the novels of women writers in the Indian Writing in English it can be noticed that women are deprived of their rights in many aspects. In extension to the thesis a comparison of the novels *The Dark Holds No Terror* (1980) and *Small Remedies* (2000) to the Indian Constitution will be done.

When the women from India are compared to the other women around the world there is always a difference in the way in which the women are treated. Women are considered to be inferior to men in many of the Indian contexts. Women are treated and regarded as equals in many other countries. India has always been a place with traditional and moral values where women are considered to follow them strictly. Indian women always consider that men have to be respected and treated with superiority where they do not stand for their rights or choices. Indian women always take the words of their husbands onto a very serious note and blindfolded by their words they follow every saying even though it makes lesser sense for example the practice of Sati was vigorously followed by women for a particular time.

There are six fundamental rights which are framed by the government of India. Both the novels which are taken for study depict the struggle and

sufferings of women which can be studied from the perspective of violation of the fundamental rights. Both the novels depict the sufferings of women in different aspects. But in the novel *The Dark Holds No Terror* (1980) the protagonist Sarita faces a lot of problems from childhood and even after marriage. There is no equality given to her state of livings even among her siblings. She does not seek refuge from her marriage life, she is forced for every single thing she does, and her husband is thus compared to a terrible animal.

In the article “Sufferings of female Character in Shashi Deshpande’s *The Dark Holds No Terror*” by A. Thirumani Aarthilaxmi she refers to women in Indian context as

In our Indian society, a woman is put under restrains right from the day a girl becomes a woman. At home, a girl enjoys the full freedom and gets the unconditional love for her family members. The condition becomes worse after their marriage because they are under the victims of men. All their small freedom is driven out and the irony is most women accept this with pleasure. (23)

Many of Shashi Deshpande’s novels convey that women are always victims of exploitation and negligence and sometimes they are even raped by their own members. As mentioned above female characters are left in peace and freedom when they are in their mother’s place but Sarita faces discrimination and inequality within her house because of a menial fault which is not her mistake. According to the fundamental rights, right to equality is the

most prior law because it is the most sought after law while compared to any other law but the first law is denied to the protagonist.

Further chapters will deal with a detailed comparison and study of the novels *The Dark Holds No Terror* (1980) and *Small Remedies* (2000), the female characters, the protagonists, other characters and the other inequalities. Every right denied to the women characters especially the protagonist Sarita will be detailed and comparison will bring out the injustice done to her even though there are laws which are seriously not brought into action.

If the laws which were set into amendment had been followed strictly, characters like Sarita, Madhu and many others would have not suffered differences from the patriarchal society. The laws which were implied were not implied in an appropriate manner. If it was set in a proper manner then writers and writings regarding women struggles and the male dominance would have not come into writing. The objectives of the thesis are to bring out the suffering of the women in the Indian society, to emphasise on the implication on women's rights to equality and rights to freedom, to explore the works of Shashi Deshpande and bring out the sufferings of women and to examine the gender discrimination that is prevailing in the selected novels.

Chapter two will discuss about the women and rights to equality and rights to freedom in Shashi Deshpande's selected novels. In Chapter three talks about the women suffering and gender discrimination in Shashi Deshpande's selected novels

Chapter – 2

CHAPTER-2

Women and their rights

Dark Holds No Terror (1980) is Shashi Deshpande's famous work which deals with the scenario of working women and their interactions and challenges in the society. Saru's childhood is significantly damaged by her mother's preconceived notions. The first half of the novel deals with her childhood life, where she suffered because of her mother, the mother shows irredeemable hospitality towards the daughter, and she chides her daughter "Why didn't you die? Why are you alive" (67) who wouldn't free herself from the shock of that blame?

After the death of her brother, her mother started to scold her every day. She didn't have any rights in her house. After some time, she loses her hope, and she gets fed up with her life. Sarita remembers her mother's preference for her brother and gets worried about the same. Saru reminds herself that she is a girl and her fate that a girl has to get married at the earliest and leave the maternal house. She reminds herself of the conversation that took place between her mother and herself about her skin tone and how the girl does not belong to her parental home. As women, it is understandable without explanation that her life is full of sacrifices and changes. A woman has to adapt to the scenario instead prioritizing her wishes and wants.

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 (*Dark holds no Terror* 45)

The whole novel is full of such incidents which shows a mother's lovelessness and the gender discrimination towards her daughter. As she moved to the next step in her life she again faced a lot of problems. She gets married to her loved one and starts her life happily. The line "He had been the young man and me his bride. Now I am a lady doctor, and he was my husband" (*Dark holds no Terror* 42) brilliantly sums up the husband and wife equation in a line.

Then her profession increases the ego of her husband and he begins torturing her. Her marriage life becomes a platform of suffering because of her husband and his character called as a terrible animal, Sarita's dream for love begins, and it ends with her husband, Manohar. Sarita says, "Today everything has a sexual nuance, and when a girl says she loves another, it can mean only one thing," That one thing is only sex, the code word of our age" (*dark holds no terror* 61). The hunting hands, the natural teeth, the monstrous assault of a familiar body. And above me, a face I could not recognise. Total Non-comprehension, complete

bewilderment, paralysed me for a while. Then I began to struggle. But my body, hurt and painful, could do nothing against the fearful strength which overwhelmed me (112). Sarita explains her pain that “the pain is not only in physical but also psychological” she considered this pain as ‘rape.’ Because of the suffering she again moved to her father’s house. Shashi Deshpande’s *Dark Holds No Terror* is an openly ended novel. It is not completed, whether Sarita will return to her husband or continue living with her father.

The Fundamental Rights are sections of the Constitution of India that provides people with their rights. These Fundamental Rights are considered as basic human rights of all citizens, irrespective of their gender, caste, religion or creed, etc. These sections are the vital elements of the constitution, which was developed between 1947 and 1949 by the Constitution of India. There are six fundamental rights in India. They are Right to Equality, Right to Freedom, Right against Exploitation, Right to Freedom of Religion, Cultural and Educational Rights, and Right to Constitutional Remedies

Right to Equality is the first fundamental right assured to the people of India. Article 14-18 of the Constitution guarantees this right to every citizen of India. Equality is one of the great corner-stones of Indian democracy. “In other constitutions generally this right is embodied in Article 14. As such this right was considered to be a negative right of an individual not to be discriminated in access to public offices or places or

public matters generally. It did not take account of the existing inequalities arising even from public policies and exercise of public powers. The makers of the Indian Constitution were not satisfied with such type of undertaking. They knew of the widespread social and economic inequalities in the country sanctioned for thousands of years by public policies and exercise of public power supported by religion and other social norms and practices”(115).

They were of the opinion that only Article 14 would not be sufficient enough to deal with these inequalities, so they introduced Articles 15-18 in the Constitution along with Article 14 which deals specifically and expressly abolished and prohibited some of the existing inequalities. “Thus, the right to equality in the Constitution of India is not merely a negative right not to be discriminated against but also a positive right to be treated as an equal. Under the following aspect of the right, which is the essence and core of the right to equality, the State is under the obligation to take necessary steps so that every individual is given equal respect and concern which he is entitled to as a human being.”

The general principle of “right to equality” the word “Right to equality” need no explanation because it tells its meaning itself. And it is one our fundamental right. But there are some hidden points which are required to explain and this research project highlights those points and exception, which are suitable by our Indian constitution. Does it also help to know why discrimination accepted under constitutional law of India?

Right to equality given under article 14 of Indian law. It is one of the fundamental rights. It ensures the guarantees to every person the right to equality before law & equal protection of the laws .it is not only right of Indian citizens but also right of non-citizens. Article 14 says “The state shall consist of India.” article 14 define no one is above the law. All are equal in the eye of law. They mean that every person, who lives within the territory of India, has equal freedom before the judge. The purpose of this all are similar in the same line. No discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex, and place of birth. Its mean that all will be treated as equality among equal and there will be no discrimination based on lower or higher class.

Right to Equality is one of the chief guarantees of the Constitution. It is embodied in Articles 14–16, which collectively encompass the general principles of equality before law and non-discrimination and Articles 17–18 which collectively encompass further the philosophy of social equality. Article 14 guarantees equality before the law as well as equal protection of the law to all persons within the territory of India. This includes the equal subjection of all persons to the authority of law, as well as equal treatment of persons in similar circumstances. The latter permits the State to classify persons for legitimate purposes, provided there is a reasonable basis for the same, meaning that the classification is required to be non-arbitrary, based on a method of intelligible

differentiation among those seeking to be classified, as well as have a rational relation to the object sought to be achieved by the classification.

Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any of them. This right can be enforced against the State as well as private individuals, about free access to places of public entertainment or places of public resort maintained partly or wholly out of State funds. However, The State is not precluded from making special provisions for women and children or any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens, including the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. This exception has been provided since the classes of people mentioned therein are considered deprived and in need of special protection. Article 16 guarantees equality of opportunity in matters of public employment and prevents the State from discriminating against anyone in matters of employment on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, place of residence or any of them. It creates exceptions for the implementation of measures of affirmative action for the benefit of any backward class of citizens to ensure adequate representation in public service, as well as reservation of an office of any religious institution for a person professing that particular religion.

The practice of untouchability has been declared an offense punishable by law under Article 17, and the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 has been enacted by the Parliament to further this objective. Article 18 prohibits the State from conferring any titles other than military

or academic distinctions, and the citizens of India cannot accept titles from a foreign state. Thus, Indian aristocratic titles and title of nobility conferred by the British have been abolished. However, awards such as the Bharat Ratna have been held to be valid by the Supreme Court on the ground that they are merely decorations and cannot be used by the recipient as a title.

The state does not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India. Protection prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Prof. Dicey, explaining the concept of legal equality as it operated in England, said: “with us, every official, from the prime minister down to a constable or a collector of taxes, is under the same responsibility for every act done without any legal justification as any other citizen.”(89).

The phrase “equal to the law” find a place in all written constitutions that guarantees fundamental rights. “All citizens irrespective of birth, religion, sex, or race are equal before the law; that is to say, there shall not be any arbitrary discrimination between one citizen or class of citizens and another.” “All citizens shall, as human persons be held equal before the law.” “All inhabitants of the republic are assured equality before the laws.” Patanjali Sastri, C. J., has expressed that the second expression is a result of the first and it is difficult to imagine a situation in

which the violation of laws will not be the violation of equality before laws thus, in substance the two expressions mean one and same thing.

According to Dr. Jennings: “Equality before the law means that equality among equals the law should be equal for all” (79). And should be equally administered, that like should be treated alike. The right to sue and be sued, to prosecute and be prosecuted for the same kind of action should be equal for all citizens of full age and understanding without distinctions of race, religion, wealth, social status or political influence.

Applying the constitutional rights to literature, the field of law and research is not new. Nineteenth-century English lawyers wrote about depictions of the legal system by Shakespeare, Dickens, and other famous writers. Wigmore thought lawyers should read the great writers to learn about human nature.” Cardozo’s paper “Law and Literature” analysed the literary style of judicial opinions. But only since the publication in 1973 of James Boyd White’s *The Legal Imagination* has a distinct, self-conscious field of law and literature emerged. Until then the area consisted of little more than reminders that law is a surprisingly frequent subject of research and that judicial opinions, and to some extent other forms of legal writing, often have a literary character and quality. The frequency with which legal subject matter appears in literature. I shall argue later, a mostly adventitious circumstance. The literary style of judicial opinions, on the other hand, is an exciting and significant phenomenon, though regrettably a diminishing one, as more and more

ideas are ghost written by newly graduated law students neither chosen for nor encouraged in literary flair.

The field of law and literature has grown in recent years for both institutional and substantive reasons. The institutional reasons are the displacement of many graduate students, and some faculty, from the humanities into law, following a decline in academic job opportunities in the humanities that began around 1970; the growing receptivity of academic lawyers to the insights and methods of other fields of learning; and the sheer increase in the size of law school faculties, which has permitted faculty members to specialize. The substantive reasons are also threefold. First, the 1970s saw many literary scholars mount a sustained attack on the possibility of objectively interpreting works of literature. Instead of “construing” these works, more and more literary scholars “deconstructed” them and deconstruction, perhaps imperfectly understood (as we shall see), seemed to offer academic lawyers, particularly those of radical bent, grounds to doubt the possibility of objective interpretations of statutes and in particular of the federal Constitution—perhaps even to question the objectivity of law itself.

Second, the areas of the law that deal explicitly with literature have gained increasing importance in recent decades. Defamation has constitutionalised; sexually explicit expression has increasingly been made privileged from government regulation; copyright law has overhauled under the pressure of new technologies. Third, the growth of

science and technology—a growth dramatized in academic code by the emergence, and rapid growth of my field of significant interest, economic analysis of law 3—has provoked a counter current of concern with preserving humanistic values in law.

The literature contains a surprising amount of legal subject matter—surprising, at any rate, given how dull most people (including a disheartening number of lawyers) think a law is. For example, a trial provides the climax of the *Oresteia*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Billy Budd*, and *L'Etranger*; the focus of attention in *Bleak House* and James Gould Cozzens' fine novel *The Just and the Unjust*; the title of Kafka's most famous novel (though a better translation of *Der Prozess* would be *The Case or The Proceeding*); and the incidental symbology of many of his stories and fragments, including *The Judgment*, *The Penal Colony*, and *Before the Law*. Will contests are a staple of Victorian fiction—witness *Bleak House* again, plus, it seems, almost every novel by Trollope. Law and judging figure prominently in the Bible, the Norse Eddas, and Heinrich von Kleist's classic novella, *Michael Kohlhaas*. *Measure for Measure* is, at least superficially, about the problem of discretionary non-enforcement of law. Shakespeare's plays contain so many related references to law" that some people have speculated that he had some legal training. Indeed, the statutory references in Shakespeare have led some foolish people to ascribe his plays to Francis Bacon.

Law is subject matter rather than technique. Legal analysis is the application to the law of analytic methods that have their source elsewhere: mainly the careful and logical reading and comparison of texts, but also an increasing economics and, how fruitfully we shall see, techniques of interpretation used by literary critics. One would not expect a lawyer to have an advantage in dealing with the problems of another field unless the works in that field used law in some organic sense, which, I have argued, is rarely the case in the literature.

Applying the Indian constitutional rights in Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Dark Holds No Terror* in this novel *The Dark Holds No Terror*, the protagonist Sarita had suffered because of inequality. She belongs to a traditional Indian family. Her mother not allowed Sarita to go anywhere. One day she asked that she want to watch the cinema along with her friend's family. But her mother didn't recognize her, but she allows her Brother to explore the world and travel anywhere. In India, women are not permitted to go out, and the men and women treated differently. They were given freedom to men, and they provide essential to men, for the men they give the rights to give their opinion, but the women can't open their mouth. The women are not permitted to continue their academy, and they are not permitted to decide their academy by their wish. Till now a day most of the women are suffered because of this problem.

Her mother gave restriction in the dress which she wears inside the home. She teaches as her how to behave in-front of her Father and

brother. In Indian society the women have a restriction to wear a dress what they like, they have a rule that after getting married they want to wear saree, before getting married they want to wear half-saree, even a small childish also want to wear a traditional dress. Even inside the house they also wish to follow the rules. They have rules and regulations to express their opinion to the Father and Brother. They are not allowed to be friendly with father and brother even they wish to be.

For her brother's Birthday, there is a *pooja* celebration will be arranged in the home. But for her Birthday there is no celebration and *poojas* in the house. Through this incident, we can easily find how inequality is happening in the Indian society. Even though the mother it's self-show the difference to her children. They give more importance to the male child comparing to the female child. They offer what the male child wants, but they ignored the female child wish. While Sarita and Dhurva were playing near the good accident he fell into the well, but everyone blames Sarita because she is the elder sister of Dhurva. In India, most of the families were commit the same mistake that if the male younger ones commit any error means everyone blames the elder ones. If the male child determines any mistake means everyone blames the elder ones. Through this incident, Sarita's mother blames her for every single moment. She asks her to do every household works, and she didn't allow her to continue her higher education. In Indian society, women are not permitted to pursue their higher education.

Such incidents in the novel show the inequality that is present in society, such as Education, Gender Discrimination, etc. Even nowadays also the Indian women are not permitted to go out by her own even though they are not free in the home its self. Each and every movement someone restricts the women. In Indian society, the men and women are not equally treated.

However, Times are changing. Today we can see a tectonic shift in the awareness regarding women's rights. This is the fundamental step required for women's empowerment. Shashi Deshpande beautifully highlighted.

Chapter – 3

Chapter-3

Men and Women, Men vs Women

Shashi Deshpande, as a profound writer has performed her role as a torch bearer for the oppressed woman. As a writer she feels that a woman, not only in India but also in other countries, is not treated on par with man in any sphere of human activity. Thus women in the current scenario face many problems and sufferings inside the house and try to come out and become an empowered woman in the society. In Shashi Deshpande's novels many men and women live together, journeying across life in their different age groups, classes and gendered roles. The old tradition bound world consists of modernism, creating unforeseen gaps and disruptions within the family fold. Women's understanding becomes questionable as the old patterns of behaviour no longer seem to be acceptable. These struggles become intense quests for self-definition, because it would not be possible to relate it to others with any degree of conviction, unless one is guided by clarity about one's own image and role. Here suffering means the act of distress and pain.

Shashi Deshpande gives minute details of the development of girl-child in her novels. She has displayed a series of girl-children, where each girl faces a different problem within the family. Violence against women—whether physical, mental or emotional is an issue that crosses all borders and all classes of women. Feminism and its crusade against a male dominated society are of special importance in the Indian context.

In her novels the victims are caught in loveless marriage. They are brutally beaten and sexually harassed. Marriage is presented as the most important weapon to subjugate women. It is a pity that in the present age it is a means of exploitation. Men consider their wives as their own possession completely forgetting the fact that even women have their own existence and identity. There are many women who are assaulted. They work like slaves in the gallows. They work all through the day and still their value in the household is neglected. Women are suppressed in male dominated society and face many problems such as loss of identity, male domination, marital disharmony, etc. A woman is unable to take her own decisions. She is imprisoned in the four walls of the house where there is no one to share her grief. Even if she is provided with the material comforts, she tries hard to let others listen to her agony.

Among the recent women novelists, Shashi Deshpande is one of the famous contemporary Indian novelists in English who writes about the situation of women and their failures in the fast changing socio-economic milieu of India in her novel. In *The Dark Holds no Terror*, the female character Sarita, undergoes lot of sufferings, loses her identity and finally she becomes empowered. Man always tries to dominate over women in the Indian scenario. Most of the Indian women suffer from many physical disabilities and health ailments like backache, headache, and loss of appetite and burning feet. Shashi Deshpande is a feminist who creates her women characters as contemporary ones. Deshpande's women protagonists are victims of gender discrimination,

first as daughters and later as wives. The novelist being a woman herself has presented a realistic study of the attitude and conduct of women in Indian middle class families.

Deshpande writes about the conflict between tradition and modernity in relation to women who represent the middle class society. Deshpande's forte is her ability to explore the psyche of women. It is often cited that these factors combined to make her one of the most powerful women writers of our times. Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terror* is a telling example of men who are intolerant when they have second-fiddle role to their wives. It shows how their manhood gets hurt when their wives gain a superior status in the society. Manohar who is called Manu feels embarrassed and insecure with the rising status of his wife Saru and with it all the troubles start. But, in this novel, Deshpande has made society equally responsible for their deteriorating relations. Going back to her father's house after a hiatus of fifteen long years is the commencing point of the novel. Her visit to her father's house is occasioned by her mother's demise. Staying away from her husband Manohar, seems to her a good riddance for some time. "It was not to comfort her father that she had come. It was for herself." (43) She has been living with him in a very oppressive silence. That is why she does not keep her word namely to never to step into her father's house; an oath that she has taken when her parents did not consent to get her married to Manohar as he belonged to another caste. Here in this house she scans her life from the very beginning till the present and feels empowered to have her say. After this the rest of the novel

is her own musings on the past as the past seems unavoidable and haunts her time and again. Her past acquaints the readers with the suffocating silence and the emotional disinterestedness between her and her husband as the words of her father “silence has become a habit for us” (199) are even quite applicable on their relationship too. She reflects on her past and examines her relationship with her mother, her brother Dhruva and her husband Manohar.

The dark no longer is a scary thing for Sarita and hence the novel’s title proves apt as ‘dark holds no terrors’ for her. Her rumination not only articulates before us the sufferings but also enables her to have a new understanding of her relationship and she ultimately comes out of her fears. As she thinks, “The dark holds no terrors. That the terrors are inside us all the time. We carry them with us, and like traitors, they spring out, when we least expect them, to scratch and maul” (78). *The Dark Holds No Terrors* presents a marriage which is in jeopardy; on the verge of collapse. Sarita whom all consider and esteem as a very reputed doctor finds herself a trapped animal in a cage when her husband assaults her sexually at night. Thus she becomes a victim of marital rape; a theme that Deshpande later on picks up in *The Binding Vine* in the character of Mira. The trauma is too much for her as she married Manohar according to her own wishes and against her parents’ command. This silence which exists between both of them is the result of the incompatibility which emerges out of Manohar’s incapacity to deal with her wife’s growing social status as contrasted to his own status which pales in comparison to hers.

In modern times, women refuse to don the caps of traditional women who used to keep sitting idle at home doing nothing but the household chores. They are equal partners in the family earning bread for the family. But still in some part of the Indian society this fact creates ruckus in the family life. The situation sometimes gets aggravated when wife's earnings is markedly more than the husband's; a fact that husband finds quite convoluted to cope with. It is the case with the protagonist Sarita who earns double than her husband and her recognition in the society is remarkable. People know her well and admire her for being a self-made person; one who has worked day and night to achieve her dreams. But the same fact overhauls her husband's perception about her and Sarita notices metamorphosis in him; one who becomes a mentally sick, moron and sadist to degrade himself to such an extent that he starts pushing his masculine lust on her wife at night; a fact that she cannot live with. (85)

Sarita meets Manohar in Bombay; the man of her dreams. She falls in love with him that very moment, "After that day he was a figure I fantasised about, the person round whom I wove my foolish dreams. No, not dreams, just one dream really. Always the age old feminine dream of a superior conquering male." (53) She falls in love with him and wants him passionately. She dreams of him. Gradually their intimacy grows and Manohar starts taking interest in her. Her joy knows no bounds when he proposes to her, "and that he, a man set apart from others, above the others...should love me seemed even more incredible. The fisherman's daughter couldn't have been more surprised when the king asked her to marry him, than I was by Manu's love for me." (66) She

could not imagine that she can be someone's sweetheart, so special, to mean so much to someone. "It was impossible that I could mean so much to any human being. It was impossible that such things could happen to me. They happen only to girls in movies and books, not to girls like me and yet I could not doubt his love. He cared for my feelings as no one had ever done." (39)

They resolve to marry despite the fact that her parents did not concede to this relationship. Sarita quits her parental home to be with him forever. Manohar feels perhaps she might have felt pain and anguish. Leaving one's parental home is not as an easy task. But for her the idea is revolting as, "suffering? Painful? I was impatient with the words because they meant nothing to me. After my last confrontation with my parents, I had already detached myself from them. For me, they were already the past and meant nothing." (39) As she knows that the child has to be separated from the mother so there is no meaning of feeling pain or suffering as, "have you seen a baby being born? Do you know, Manu, how easy it is to cut the umbilical cord and separate the baby from the mother? Ligate, Cut and it's done. There's scarcely any bleeding either. It's as if nature knows the child must be detached from the parent. No, Manu, for me there will be no trauma, no bleeding?" (39) But they could not marry as they did not have a place of their own to stay. Later Manohar breaks the news to her of him getting a single room. He announces the clarion of marriage. But Sarita feels trapped and terrified. She tries to reason out why she feels the way though she could not doubt even an iota of Manu's sincerity. Manu who has triumphantly declared, "When we are

together, it's heaven, wherever we are" (38). With him she had not transgressed the limits. She had no physical intimacy with him. "Why then this fear, this trapped feeling? Clinically, rationally, I analyzed my own feelings. It was not sex, not fear of sex. I was after all, I told myself, a medical student, knowing all there is to be known of male and female and what goes on between them" (39). She reasons it is not even the fear of sex after marriage that has made her so then why after all she is bent to have fears.

Sarita is the love sick daughter of her parents and she lives under the burden of crime often imposed on her of her brother Dhruva's death. When she first happens to meet Manohar, she is quite impressed. He is a poet and orator. Being lovesick she wants a person to shower all his love on her. A person who can be her soul mate and when Manohar comes across her, she thinks he is the one who can fulfil all of her dreams. It is human nature that a love starved person takes fancy to anyone from whom there is an iota of hope of love and affection. It is what happens to Sarita also. She finds him the one who can solidify her and shower his love on her. She sees the hope of the fulfilment of love from her husband Manohar and after her marriage she enjoys the feeling of being the cynosure of someone's eyes. As she recollects the time of initial period after her marriage: "It was a heaven, in spite of the corridors smelling of urine, the rooms with their dank sealed-in odours, women with inquisitive, unfriendly eyes, men with lascivious stares. And we were happy." (40) Everything seems to be pleasant. The bond between them is so strong that they entirely forget all other considerations. Like any newly married bride she has

fear of the fore comings of the marriage. There is a bit of tension in her. She is anxious of the first sexual encounter. But gradually her fear sheds her off. She revels in the sexual act with Manohar. It was not actually an act of sex rather a very fact of her being loved by a person who is her paramour. She was never satisfied with her physical love with him and wanted more. Whenever she has any doubt of her being unloved, she would turn to him to get reassured of his love.

Sarita was a lady doctor and her husband is only an English teacher in a not so important college. Hence no wonder her fame in society shoots up like a rocket out of a sudden. The people she meets applaud her for getting so much in life. She is respected everywhere. The people start recognising her and generally bypass Manohar. “When we walked out of our room, there were nods and smiles, murmured Greetings and Namaste’s. But they were all for me, only for me. There was nothing for him” (42). Whenever someone happens to visit them at home, it is Sarita whom all want to meet as they need her help for their ailing family member. The scene was so common that without opening the door Manu would gauge who might be coming and for whom, “Open it, Saru, it must be for you” (42). This realisation slowly begins to grow inside his heart. It is strong enough to convert him into a non-entity; developing in him a kind of sadism: “And so the esteem with which I was surrounded made me inches taller. But perhaps the same thing made him inches shorter. He had been the young man and I his bride. Now I was the lady doctor and he was my

husband”(42). Sarita reasons that marriage is not a partnership where equality reins supreme rather it is a confused imbalance.

The problem takes huge dimensions on a day when there is an interview on career women brought out by a woman’s magazine. The day brings the culmination point of their shattering married life. The interviewer casually questions Manohar, “How does it feel when your wife earns not only the butter but most of the bread as well?” (35-36) This statement shatters his equilibrium and makes him feel inferior. This question arouses his sadism which has been smouldering inside his heart. Though still latent, the question by the interviewer adds fuel to the fire and stimulates his sadism so much as to make it acquire huge forms. Sarita herself recalls the day later on in her father’s house: “The bitch. Why did she have to say that? It was the day that it began.” (36) Being a male dominated society, it is but natural that a man feels suffocated if his wife starts getting name and fame. This fact jeopardises their life. It makes husband sink into a non-entity; a fact that he can never digest. Consequently, the cracks in their married life become visible. Marriage is a brittle affair. Love and trust are the two vital factors that keep it intact but in case anything of it is missing, life becomes hell. The same happens with Sarita’s married life. Manohar cannot digest the fact that his wife is earning more in her life than him.

Manohar’s sense of insecurity starts with the explosion in the nearby factory. The lover in him dies when neighbours wake up to the fact that Saru is no ordinary housewife but an important doctor but it reaches the point of

culmination with the interviewer's query and a friend suggesting that a holiday tour could be possible if he had a doctor wife. Manohar is no God but a human being marred by ego. The inferiority complex is generated because of Sarita's social status. Manohar is known by the diminutive Manu, "A name no doubt carrying overtones of the legendary patriarchal law-giver who saw the world from a male centred perspective." (18) Soon Sarita wakes up and the fool's paradise she has entered into, no longer shelters her with love, affection and security. The facade of the marital bliss lifts its veil and what remains is the eroding surface and it leaves her shattered. The sexual act now for her becomes a dirty word. Earlier the same word meant heavenly bliss. Her husband's sadism leaves her with contempt for the word. She stops to revel in its mystery. She rebels against this act of love which has nothing but lust; but she cannot deny him straightforward. But the cracks seem visible now in their relationship. While sleeping on the hard floor at her father's house, she is hurt as it is difficult to sleep on that floor which is not convenient at all.

The pain reminds her of the pain that Manohar's sadistic nature gives sarita and then the pain of floor seems like a speck of dirt having no material existence indeed. The pain she gets in her father's house by sleeping on the floor is contrasted with the pain that she suffers at her own home. It is the pain of being brutally raped. She struggled to a sitting position, her body waking up to an awareness of new pains, of new areas of soreness, that come from sleeping on the hard ground. Blessedly clean pains. Not like the others. I am dark, damp, smelly hole; she often thought when the pains of the night come

back to her in the day, shaming her as if they were evidence of her wrong doing. I am like a house full of unclean things, never cleaned, and never opened. (29). the pain of sleeping on floor is a blessed pain as it contains nothing of the ignominy.

Sarita's body is enthralled by a male's ego. It is not about Sarita only but the novel universalises the situation of Sarita with that of thousands of other women who are faced with the identical crises in their lives. The female body is colonised by the male body and she dare not make any grudges about it. Consequently, she is being silenced and subjugated. She has to bear the trauma of being a partner in the sexual act; an act which is emotionless and loveless. It is an act where there is no union of souls rather only the union of bodies. Many times this female self tries to utter the words of revolt and protest but she cannot as it is against the social norms and not in favour of her own marriage. "I struggled to utter the usual words of protest, to say, No, not now, stop it. But the words were strangled in my throat. The face above mine was the face of a stranger. Blank, set and rigid, it was a face I had never seen. A man I did not know" (19).

Sarita has her nightmares where she is assaulted. She visualises nothing first. There were only hands and teeth trying to tease her. But gradually these nightmares grew in number and also became more intense. She saw now not only hands and teeth rather a full-fledged body which was trying to force him over her. But every time it came she woke and she could not see the face of the man. But then one day she had the nightmare and she also saw her face. It was

to her very astonishment, “but my husband” (12) as she says, “Panic and sensation came back simultaneously. I turned my head slightly, fearfully, and saw him beside me, snoring softly. No more a stranger.” (12) In this context her earlier notions of assurance, love and emotional bonding have fled and what now remains are the dirty implications of the word.

Sarita knows there is nothing like love in this world. Paul observes in this context: “She sees sex as a dirty word and the experience as a terror, an inhuman insult to her personality. Though sex is often said to be an essential part of love, in Saru’s case it acts as the instrument of estrangement. With her responsibilities increasing outside of home, she recoils from Manu’s love making. Manohar loses all charm and beauty for her. She is averse to the idea of him being so attractive once those girls would do anything to augment intimacy with him. She had herself been one of those girls who were mad after him. He is unattractive, silly, flibbertigibbet now; one who can brag of just ugliness. This ugliness is not wrought upon him by his increasing age or getting bald. It is however concerned with Manohar’s sadistic nature. Sarita despises him and eventually wants to evade him at night so that she can hope for more mature relationship but what she gets is nothing but only sex.

Distressed and anguished at heart to know that the man she loved more than her own life can be so ruthless is a fact that she can never digest easily and becomes a neurotic; a mental patient who loses all her power to live her life nonchalantly. Every night is a horrible night for her. The hurting hands, the savage teeth, the monstrous assault of a horribly familiar body. “And above

me, a face I could not recognise. Total non-comprehension, complete bewilderment, paralysed me for a while. Then I began to struggle. But my body, hurt and painful, could do nothing against the fearful strength which overwhelmed me.” (112) she endures as it is a woman’s fate to endure. But every night she has to keep silent, “and each time it happened and I don’t speak. I put another brick on the wall of silence between us. Maybe one day I will be walled alive within it and die a slow, painful death.” (88) Earlier she thinks it is because that she is very busy in her professional life and perhaps is unable to devote time to her husband but gradually she realizes it is because of her higher social and professional status which has relegated Manohar to a secondary position and made him sadistic. She is unable to believe the fact that Manohar can even think of this.

The man she married as she loved him; the man she thought she could harbor piece of love and emotional bonding; the man she trusted the most; the man she once thought fit enough to be married how can he be so mentally derailed to even ponder on such a thing? The realisation is too heavy for her. Sylvia Plath has rightly said: “And I know that in spite of all the roses and kisses and restaurant dinners a man showered on a woman before he married her, what he secretly wanted when the wedding service ended was for her to flatten out under his feet like Mrs Willard’s kitchen mat.” (6) In a speech which she delivers on medicine as a profession for women, Sarita eloquently puts forth the women’s dilemma which speaks of their inferior status in society that male dominated Indian society has awarded to them. She very well exposes the

dichotomy in the man woman relationship. A woman can never be equal to a man however smart and independent she might be. She might fend for herself and the family but still she incurs the wrath and not praise for her own self.

This is monstrously improper and imbalanced scale. “Women’s magazines will tell you that a marriage should be an equal partnership. That’s nonsense. Rubbish. No partnership can ever be equal.” (137) All married couples share inequality as she believes. Marriage is an instrument to sustain this monstrous imbalance. “It will always be unequal, but take care that it’s unequal in favour of your husband. If the scales tilt in your favour, God help you, both of you.” (137)

The sense of love and affection is quite missing in her father’s house for her. There is no comfort that she can seek even in her father’s house. Her mother has already breathed her last and her father does not ask her about her married life just because hers was a marriage that none of her parents really supported. It was an inter caste marriage and no one favoured her. She is pained at heart to think that she is not showered love just because she is herself responsible for her married life. She cannot blame her parents for the consequences that now she has to face. If, hers had been an arranged marriage, she would have got real sympathy and love from her parents. As in that case the blame would have fallen on their shoulders for arranging such a match. “It’s my fault again. If mine had been an arranged marriage, if I had left it to them to arrange my life, would he have left me like this?” (218) she thinks of her friend’s marriage which has been quite unsuccessful. But the woman was

not that tense as she was sure of getting the strength from her parents. Her parents gave her love and affection as it was their decision to get her married to the person they thought is suitable. She had no responsibility in that case. She thought of the girl, the sister of a friend, who had come home on account of a disastrous marriage. She remembered the care and sympathy with which the girl had been surrounded, as if she was an invalid, a convalescent. “And the girl’s face with its look of passive suffering. There had been only that there, nothing else, neither despair nor shame. For the failure had not been hers, but her parents’; and so the guilt had been theirs too, leaving only the suffering for the girl” (218-219). Her father never took any interest in her as a child. She was an abandoned child. The responsibility of her upbringing was vested with her mother only. She was surprised how could the same man take keen interest in Madhav with whom he has no relation at all? Her mother never cared for her. “He never took any interest in my school or college. He left it all to her. And she never really cared. No after Dhruva’s death. I just didn’t exist for her. I died long before I left home.” (32) Sarita wants to disclose to her father, “My husband is a sadist” (199) but she finds it difficult. She tells her father that she does not want to talk to him as a daughter but as a woman but her father cannot understand her. She tells him finally about the sadism of her husband and announces, “He’s cruel to me...in bed.” (200) and she informs him of the day when the lady asked him about his response on her wife’s shouldering all the liabilities of the family.

Although there was no transformation in his behaviour in his mood during day at night he transmuted himself into an animal, “He attacked me like an animal that night. I was sleeping and I woke up and there was...this man hurting me. With his hands, his teeth, his whole body.” (201) What shocked her more was his usual conduct during the next morning as if he had not been all cruel with her. He behaved as if everything has been a part of married life about which no fuss should ever gather. “I wondered what we would say. Would he apologise? Or explain? Would he look guilty and shamefaced? But when I went out, there was nothing. He said, as if it was just any day, ‘Morning, Saru. Slept well?’”(202)

In the novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* Manohar’s male ego tries to dominate Sarita which ultimately results in disintegration, Sarita is an individual who is not dependent but is capable of withstanding trials in life alone. Her identity is no longer in terms of the identity of her male counterpart, even in simple and small situation in their married life; women face many problems and troubles. A man always tries to dominate women in the Indian lifestyle and Indian context. Deshpande’s woman protagonists are victims of gender discrimination, first as daughters and later as wives. Many women are treated like animals which are seen in several incidents from the novels.

In *Small Remedies* Deshpande presents another kind of attitude, that raises the delicate issue of sexual fidelity, through the life of Madhu. While Shagun in *Custody* is a rebellious woman, Madhu suffers for the fault that is not exactly hers. She marries Som and gives birth to her son, Aditya.

Deshpande gives importance to motherhood in this novel as stressed by Kapur through the character of Ishita. Madhu says, “A Child’s birth is a rebirth of a woman, it’s like becoming part of the world once again”. (88) She suffers for being so frank to her husband by revealing her premarital sex activity. When she reveals the incident to Som, she thinks that Som would take this as an accident in her life but ends up as a total misjudgement. Som thinks otherwise as he snatches the single fact of her lost chastity. They have a son, Aditya, and Madhu completely loses herself in her love for her son. But the irritation of Som leads to quarrels with Madhu all day and night. One day Aditya sees his father bang his mother on a wall. Agonised he moves away and never returns and he is killed in a bomb blast during a riot which makes Madhu lose her heart. Madhu’s mind is diverted from her pain when Chandru convinces her into taking the job of writing the biography of Savitri Bai.

Madhu hopes to forget her sorrow and anguish in her new venture. She has known Savitribai from her childhood. The classical dancer was a New Woman even when Madhu was a child and she moves to the next door of Madhu with her lover, a Muslim Gulam Saab, a tabla accompanist. Earlier she was the daughter-in-law of a traditional and conservative Brahmin family. She had given up that life for the sake of learning music and devotes herself to that art. Initially she takes the help of Ghulam Saab, the tabla player, but later on she gives up her lover too and devotes completely herself to music. Savitribai meets the challenges that life throws her way, one by one and deals with them successfully. With a single mindedness of purpose, she asserts her own self and

is self-reliant and self-sufficient. This quality is visible even to the publisher who asks Madhu to take interviews and remarks: “Her life is like a novel”. (19) P.G. Joshi has commented: “In marrying her accompanist and Tabla player Ghulam Saab, she decolonises the patriarchy in more ways than one. Firstly, she is already a married woman from a respectable Brahmin family of Pune. Secondly, the man she married is a Muslim. Leela too marries out of her caste and her religion and decolonizes the patriarchy.” (112) the reader can see that Leela is found to be busy in her party politics, Savitribai in her music and Madhu in her writings. All belong to an educated class, making efforts to rise professionally and in this race ignore their traditional female roles.

Deshpande has concentrated only in the professional advancement of her protagonists, and has made her protagonist come a long way from the traditional environment. Her women are rebellious because that is the only way they can achieve what they desire and Savitribai is exemplary of this quality. Savitribai’s revolt against the longstanding customs and the way she discards her family and society in order to reach her goal are remarkable. She is courageous enough to elope with Ghulam Saab and has a daughter Munni with him. Later, Munni rejects the name given by her parents, and calls herself Meenakshi. This is just indicative of her denunciation of the life led by her parents, and her longing for respect and Madhu and Munni get closer together. Munni later moves to her grandparents breaking the bond from her parents and gets a new identity as Shailaja Joshi. After a long period of time, Madhu meets Munni in a bus in Mumbai but Munni pretends that she does not recognise her.

Munni has actually wanted to forget the past. Madhu wonders how one can refuse the mother and how a mother can reject one's own child. But here one finds in Savitribai is the emergence of the new woman who takes decisions on her own, no matter what price she pays for them.

Savitribai's assertion of identity and individuality does not come without a price: Munni's rejection was the price Savitribai paid. Munni who yearned for the commonplace, the ordinary, and stifled everything that connected to her parents... "Bai lost her daughter, but her life moved on. Even today, sick, old, dying, childless, when everything seems to have ended for her, she's not wholly bereft" (285). Madhu's silence becomes the answer to the squabbles of her husband. She does not set a trend like Savitribai or her aunt Leela, but she is the epitome of all the middle class Indian women who employ silence as the most lethal weapon to defy the patriarchal system. Her anguish and her pain is the pain of all the women of her age and her status in this male chauvinistic society. *Small Remedies* is a story that cuts across timelines and according to Chandra Holm: "*Small Remedies* is a complex novel. It is a novel about myriad feelings-love, courage, honesty, truth, trust, death, the pain associated with death, about music, about the power exerted by time and by words. It is a novel in which past and present are intermingled, in which the word chronology has no meaning". (59) Almost all the women portrayed in the novel proclaim the emergence of the New Woman.

Deshpande makes an honest attempt in projecting Savitribai and Munni as failures due to their denial of a certain part of their lives. The ability of both

Madhu and Leela to accept the facts of their life contributes to their success in their quest. Madhu may learn from the experiences of Savitribai, Munni and Leela but she alone has to find her identity by understanding her life. Urvashi Sinha points out, “Shashi Deshpande through her novel *Small Remedies* projects the quest for self-realization of Indian women in a hostile patriarchal society” (129). Som in *Small Remedies* loves Madhu with lots of affection and care. After the death of Madhu’s father he marries her. His affection towards his wife made Madhu feel like a very lucky person. She considers her husband to be the best amongst all the others and he stood unique in his own ways.

Som was a very supportive person to Madhu irrespective of all the situations. In an instance when Madhu loses her son Adithya, Som gives his moral support to her and consoles her. Som feels Madhu’s pain from her side and hence he is able to render his support. As a mother, Madhu is upset and totally torn up losing her son. His loss is unbearable and irreplaceable. Even though Som misses Adithya, he sets aside his own emotions, in spite of being a loving father; he considers Madhu’s pain greater than his pain.

Madhu was given immense freedom and she was like a bird wandering her own way. She had no restriction from Som as to how she should behave. She did not have any restrictions and boundaries for what she had to do. Som lets her be so independent that she turns out to be a journalist. She reaches the peak of her journey in life and she feels complete with whatever life provides her. Madhu’s life in her husband’s house was more comfortable and safe as she was brought up by a drunkard father in a male dominated society. All the

servants in their house were men, she had no mother to experience the woman touch. She had no idea as to how a woman should behave. As a girl she struggled coming up in male presence.

Madhu wanted to be loyal to her husband, she feels that she has to be true to the love she gets from him. She reveals that she has been exploited by a male servant who served in their house. Som gets disappointed and distressed with Madhu for revealing such a bitter truth. Som is in a rage of anger and he never wants to see Madhu in his life again. Madhu feels sad for what she had done for it had ruined her beautiful life. She is upset with two incidents following each other; one- her son's death and the other one was her husband's rejection. Their separation makes a great impact on her life.

Madhu takes it as a motivation to succeed in her life and moves on to be a successful journalist. She interviews Savitri Bai, who is a prominent person in her musical journey. She writes an article based on her interview with Savitri Bai. Being the narrator of the novel she narrates the incidents in a subtle tone. Savitri Bai belongs to a Indian traditional Brahmin family, she is married to a typical brahmin person. The couple have a daughter named Munni. In spite of being a loyal wife her aspiration is to become a musician, but her dream was denied by her husband who follows old tradition and culture present in the olden days. Following his tradition and culture, Savitri's husband doesn't consider her as a human being. If he had accepted her as a human, he might have understood her dreams and her longingness for independence. Since her husband does not accept her as a music person her determination towards her

dream makes her re-marry aabela master, Ghulaam. He accepts Savitri Bai and her daughter. After this drastic change in her life she turns out to be a successful person.

Another women character who is vibrant and determined person in the novel *Small Remedies* is Leela, who is the aunt of Madhu. Comparing Leela to Savitri her likings are different. Leela is a person who is interested in communist party. She is more concerned about the society's welfare. Her aim is to serve for the betterment and the wellness of the people. Leela's husband Joe is a great supporter and motivator for Leela. He is well versed in English language and he has a great knowledge about the outer world. But he never tries to show off his skills in front of his wife. He never wants his wife to feel low or timid in front of him or anyone else. He considers this as an opportunity to express his care and love in through this means. Compared to Savitri's husband, Joe is a mentor for Leela. He is comparatively supportive. Instead of following old tradition and culture, Joe wanted his wife to become an independent woman in the present day scenario.

In *Dark Holds no Terror* Sarita is the protagonist, her brother Dhruva is an adamant boy. He is playful and does not behave seriously in necessary situations. She lives a life of suffrage. It is evidently seen when his brother Dhruva dies of his negligence but the blame is shifted on Sarita. She knows in her conscience that she has not committed such an act. She tries convincing her family members regarding this but the views are not taken to consideration. She is blamed and isolated by the members of her family. She is not provided

with essentials like education. She is tortured by her own family. She is in a helpless situation. Sarita's father does not bother about her. He responds and acts only according to his wife's word. She is portrayed as a very lonely person.

After all such struggles she leaves to Bombay for higher education, there she falls in love and marries Manohar. Initially, their love story begins like a fairy tale but later it turns out to be disastrous. His character changes and he is called as a "terrible animal" by the author. He turns arrogant by nature. He cannot accept the growth of her wife. She is a doctor and he turns to be egoistic when she attends to patients. He is jobless and hence he feels this way. He begins to torture his wife through various means. He begins to assault her sexually. Sarita's father also hates Sarita because of the death of her brother Dhurva. He does not care about Sarita neither he wants to speak to Sarita. Sarita expects love and care at least from her father. She tries to speak with him and convince him to talk to her but he considers her as a burden and purposely avoids her.

In Shashi Deshpande's novels there are different types of male characters who dominate women. In her novels there are both sides of male characters. Few of her characters are positive and few are negative. Some of the male's supports the women some of them dominate and make the women suffer. Deshpande portrays how the female characters suffer because of the male characters. Through this we can easily find that Deshpande gives an equal importance to male characters also. There is contrast in their behaviour.

Deshpande's novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, portrays the psychological problems faced by the protagonist, Sarita. In this novel, Deshpande shifts the narrative from the first person to the third person. When Deshpande was asked by Lakshmi Holmstorm in an interview as to how she had hit upon this technique, Deshpande replied:

The present is the third person and the past is the first person. I was doing throughout in the first. But that's often a perspective I use in my short stories. I wanted to be more objective. So, then I tried it in the third. But it wouldn't work at all. Yet I really needed to distance myself from the narrative in the present, otherwise it was going to be far intense. And then I read an American novel by Lisa Alther where she uses this method. And the minute I came across her novel *I thought Letme* admit it freely-Oh god, this is how I am going to do my novel
 ("Interview: Shashi Deshpande talks to Lakshmi Holmstorm,"
 1993: 23-24)

Deshpande's novel *Small Remedies* deals with different themes-the personal, the worldly, women's rights, communal violence and motherhood. It mixes the past and the present focusing on the lives of Savitribai, Leela, Munni and the narrator Madhu herself. The novel is structured as a biography within a biography, with the writer Madhu, the narration is often in a dilemma about how to tell her story. Madhu narrates the story of the novel. In this story, woman's dilemma, Indian tradition and woman's struggle for freedom is

skilfully presented by Deshpande. Deshpande faithfully reflects the life as it is without any personal commentary and explanation in this novel. The present touch in novel is highly feminist novel. But she does not want to teach a moral lesson to the society through this novel. Hence, Deshpande says in an interview to Sue Dickman: “Somebody once asked me if I have a social purpose in my writing and I very loudly said, ‘No,’ I have no social purpose, I write because it comes to me” (Sue Dickman. 1995:34). Deshpande makes it clear that she does not write her novels with social purpose. They are written spontaneously whatever she thinks in her mind.

In the novel *The Dark Holds No Terror*, Saru, the representative of middle class working women in modern India, rebels against traditions, but ultimately tries to compromise with the existing reality. When Saru, the doctor, takes great interest in her profession and in her patients, her professional success casts a dark, negative shadow on her married life; she undergoes a trauma, but very bravely stands up to the situation. After a long painful experience, she realises, that escapism is never a solution and she is her own refuge. Through Saru, Deshpande endeavours to establish woman as an individual, who breaks loose from the traditional constraints and refines one’s identity in tune with the changed social ambience of the modern times. At the same time, she can have some significant control over their relationships and professions. Though coming back to their natal home, provides nothing like a womb-like security, yet helps them to raise questions, which they had never dared to ask themselves. Using her mother’s death as excuse, she goes back to

her father's home, hoping to find solace away from her husband's frightening and inexplicable sadism. Unable to adjust to the social demands, Saru withdraws within, to probe into her inner psyche and attempts to understand her hidden strength and potentials, in a way, she rediscovers her personality and digs up her hidden skills and learns not to suppress her talents.

Sarita very well understands her inner strength to overcome the hurdles of her life. She is anxious, eager, ambition, confused, hopeless, dull, and almost thoughtless and a recluse run-away. Sarita needs this temporary withdrawal to resolve her doubts about her life and relationships. She attains her inner strength and tells her father, to request Manohar to wait. Her withdrawal is not escapism but a withdrawal, which is essential for her re-integration into society. She is able to break the illusions that she had created and face's life courageously.

Shashi Deshpande's *Small Remedies*, brings out the novelists professional endeavours, articulated woman's aspirations, and her relationship with her husband, and the changed expectations of motherhood. Deshpande evolves a balance between traditional demands and modern compulsions and renegotiate the power relations in an attempt to resolve the crisis. In *Small Remedies*, the cultural ethos is of the orthodox Brahmin Community, Pune, in the late nineteenth and during the early twentieth Century. There is convincing intermingling of the past with the present, which paves an important point to question the revived hegemonic structure. Savitri Bai's bold and rebellious act to run away from her family, her love for music is not an isolated, whimsical

and individual decision. Madhu, the protagonist—biographer is a very strong character, exercises her choices, rejects her husband's ideology of essentialist approach and rebuilds her emotional, creative, imaginative and realistic self. By writing the biography of Savitri Bai as a challenge, she exerts her artistic and intellectual capacities. Writing itself is an act of empowerment. She knows that, where there is power there is resistance. The female characters in the novel try to live life on their own terms, resisting its vagaries with stony silences, balanced self-assertion and deep involvement in their arts—for Savitri Bai, it is music and for Madhu it is writing. Music is at the core of the story and so is creative writing. Bai forgets herself in her world of music, while Madhu drowns in her writing.

In Shashi Deshpande novels, we can compare the positive and negative male characters Bai's her Husband didn't allow her to achieve her ambition, and he didn't give any importance to her feelings and her desire. He didn't take care of his wife, he didn't show any love to his wife. Later she becomes a diva in classical music all by her own effort and brightens the Gwalior Gharana. Here, Leela is an independent woman who strongly believed in the communist ideology. Leela's husband gives care to his wife and he shows a love to his wife. He supports his wife to move through the way she likes. Leela likes the communist and she wants to sacrifice her life to the society, Because of Leela's wished her husband Joe supports and makes her to achieve the goal in life. Through this we can see that how in contrast both the male characters are, both characters see woman in different aspect. Savitri Bai's husband give

importance to the tradition and the society not to his wife, but here Leela's husband give importance to his wife not the society.

Manohar from *The Dark Holds No Terror* is an egoist; at first he loves his wife a lot. But he becomes jealous of his wife's success as a doctor. When Sarita went for the night shift to the hospital, Manohar feels abandoned. He thinks that she does not respect him and she does not love him because she is earning money and so she does not respect him. He thinks that his wife should to be with him, his wife wants to do everything for him alone. He didn't like that she is going to the work and doing the work for others.

Later Manohar becomes very strong in his thought that his wife does not love him and she is moving from him so he begins to torture her. Later she is afraid of her husband because he tortures her a lot and he is changed like an animal. He starts sexually harassing her, every night he tortures Sarita. She is fed up with her life and she hates everything in her life, she just lives because of her children. We can compare Madhu's life with Sarita life. In Sarita's life her husband had ego because of her job so he made Sarita to suffer. Here, in Madhu's life her husband loved her very much and he takes care of her. Madhu's husband Som supported Madhu and gave freedom to her allowed her to go to the job what she like. While their son Adithya dies at that time also Som take care of Madhu and tries to make her smile. He loves her a lot. While, Madhu reveals the darkest secret that she has slept with a man when she was merely fifteen to her husband Som, he is not able to accept this of his wife. Som had been a good husband to Madhu but after the revelation becomes

indifferent towards her. It is another matter that he had also a pre-marital relationship with a woman. Madhu, actually, was not willing in that act. She was forced to do but how can a male understand this: But it's the single act of sex that Som holds on to, it's this feel that he can't let go off, as it's been welded into his palm. Purity, chastity, an intact hymen – these are the things Som is thinking of; these are the truths that matter. But these truth matter to women only. Every man, in this society, expects his wife to be pure and virgin, what if he himself has so many relations with other women.

Deshpande has presented this bitter reality of the world. It happens because it is the patriarchal society in which we live. Madhu thinks, that he could, perhaps, have borne: that I had been raped, forced into the act, that I was a victim, not a participant. Women are never willing in this mean deed, they are violently forced into this act and that's why they are the victims. Once in her life, Madhu was raped physically but later on when she depicts her misery to her life partner, she gets shocked that it is difficult for a male to feel the woes of a woman has to maintain her virginity.

Sarita's father didn't take care of her because the death of her brother Dhruva. While playing her brother accidentally fell into the well. But her parents think that because of her only he died so they hate Sarita. Her mother doesn't give any importance to her and always scolded her and make her to cry. She was always discouraging her she didn't allow sarita to pursue her higher education also. Her father who believed only his wife's words, doesn't allow Sarita to achieve her goal. He does not do his duty as a father. As a father he

should support his children to achieve their goal but on the contrary, Sarita suffer because of the neglect of her parents.

Sarita also longs for her father's affection as any normal kid, but till the end she does not get the love and care from her father. Savitri Bai and Leela fight for their own rights. Leela cannot speak English like her husband but it does not mean that it makes any difference in their relationship. Leela's second marriage links her with the changing direction of society. She gradually comes to know the reality that a person should have the courage to face the entire situation. It is noticed that these three women are living life with the gradual exploration; the bitterness of life is everywhere. The same society which gives her name and fame, had earlier criticised her elopement with a Muslim tabala player.

That good and evil reside in this society has been Portrayed by Deshpande with the presentation of these three women. The writer takes steps to bring out the truths of life which is hidden under societal and family pressures. The writer brings out instances which project and support the causes. The evil is never known because women do not come out with their problems. Women feel insecure to publicize the incident due to victim blaming. The girl has so many restrictions in everyday life. To think about exposing incidents is a nightmare to all the girls. Bai's elopement is not appropriate, Leela's remarriage is unfair and Madhu recognizes that it is only the hope and determination which provide a meaning to life. A woman living in a four walled room cannot understand this. She has her limited scope of life. *Small Remedies* provides the

women who can walk become successful. Our society does not accept a woman who has pre-marital relationship, so women are always looked at with doubtful eyes. Bai's elopement, in the novel, is not accepted by the society.

Deshpande does not mirror the single aspect in her novel *Small Remedies*. Women are of many types—some are bold enough to take the decisions like Bai and Leela and, on the other hand, weak like all the minor woman characters under the into those places which make them popular as well as satisfied.

Nevertheless, the portrayal of women by Shashi Deshpande is unmatched in its depth and realism. She effectively highlights the twists and turns in the life of a woman because of a man. Men are sometimes supportive of women and at other time against them. Shashi Deshpande shows the fact that both men and women should complement each other for society to truly progress.

Chapter – 4

Chapter-IV

Conclusion

Discrimination has become a great part of the society, where one group of people are always discriminated and are considered to be negligible. In most of the societies women become the victims of the cruel discrimination. They receive unequal treatments with comparison to men in all walks of life. Gender inequality, mostly based on women has been practiced in Indian society. The areas of inequality include right to work, equal access to education, right to own property, so on and so forth. These inequalities are also witnessed in the selected two novels of Shashi Deshpande.

Shashi Deshpande, an eminent novelist, has established herself as a writer possessing deep insight into the female psyche. She is also one of the most popular short story writers in India. As a writer she reflects a realistic picture of contemporary middle-class woman in her writing. Her novels are set in big towns like Mumbai, Bangalore. Sometimes the town is mentioned; sometimes it is left to our imagination.

Deshpande has used a fine narrative technique and style to make her novels interesting and realistic. Indian English novelists used a plain narrative or storytelling, which is the most common method of storytelling and the novelist, is omnipresent and omniscient in this type of writing. The first person narrative is usually employed by the novelist to make her story appear more realistic or more credible. While novels written in such a manner have a ring of authenticity to them, they do not enable the novelist to look deep into the minds

and motive of the rest of the characters. But Shashi Deshpande overcomes this problem by using a combination of the first person and the third person narrative coupled with flashback devices to lend force and realism to the novel. A chronological analysis of Deshpande's development as a novelist requires a close study of her narrative technique and style used by her in her novels. All Deshpande's novels have a very fantastic and realistic narrative technique.

Deshpande avoids the simple technique of straightforward narration and employs the flashback method to capture the interest of the readers. In the novel, *Roots and Shadows*, the first chapter deals with the present and the other chapters move backwards in time in the past and the final chapter of the novel is again in the present. This type of narration has been criticised by various critics and reviewers. These critics and reviewers say that this type of narration creates confusion in the mind of reader. The narrator is a young woman writer who returns to her childhood home after a long gap of fifteen years and finds herself in the whirlpool of family intrigues. The first person narration also allows the author to probe deep into the mind of the protagonist, exposing her fears and frustrations with admirable candour, inviting the praise of reviewers and critics.

Deshpande's, *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, portrays the psychological problems faced by the protagonist, Sarita. Even though the writer is accustomed to first person narrative in this novel, Deshpande shifts the narrative from the first person to the third person. Deshpande's novel *Small Remedies*, deals with different themes-the personal, the worldly, women's

rights, communal violence and motherhood. It mixes the past and the present focusing on the lives of Savitribai, Leela, Munni and the narrator Madhu herself. It is structured as a biography within a biography, with the writer Madhu, often in a dilemma about how to tell her story. Madhu narrates the story of the novel. In this story woman's dilemma, Indian tradition and woman's struggle for freedom is skilfully presented by Deshpande. Deshpande faithfully reflects the life as it is without any personal commentary and explanation in this novel. This is a highly feminist novel but she does not want to teach a moral lesson to the society through this novel.

Deshpande makes it clear that she does not write her novels with social purpose. Shashi Deshpande utters her feministic views in an excellent way with her distinguished literary style. Her unique literary style can be seen in her works like *That Long Silence*, *Small Remedies*, *A Matter of Time*, *The Dark Holds No Terror*, *Roots and Shadows* and so on. Her simple style can be noticed in her words which recounts the influences in her life. Shashi Deshpande's novels focus on the atmosphere of her women characters in which they are living. Most of her women characters belong to male-dominated society and are searching for their own identity in their society. Her novels focus on the plot movement by telling the story of women belonging to different generations through the protagonist of her novels. The plot moves from one story to another by expressing the sufferings of different generation of women in their own way and finds remedy to overcome their struggle in the male-dominated society. Pleasant literary style that induces the readers into

reading her novels. She has portrayed women's issues realistically in her novels with effective literary style. Her success lies in her representation of real life experience in a simple and pragmatic way.

A study of Deshpande's novels in the context of gender discrimination shows that her novels generally centre on family relationships, particularly parent-child relationship, husband –wife relationship, extra-marital relationship, professional relationship choosing dwell on how women suffer in these. The families which she chooses to represent are the Indian urban middle class families, mostly joint families incorporating even the extended families, and she deals with their actions and reactions in personal interactions and relationships rather than looking at their external life. Deshpande does so because she believes that the relationships which exist within the family are to an extent parallel to the relationships which exist between human beings outside.

Deshpande's men and women, who forge different kinds of relationships at different stages of their life, are caught in the crisis of transitional society where the shift is taking place from conventional to unconventional. Therefore, human relationships depicted in these novels are not normal but problematic. In most of her novels the story begins with an unconventional marriage and problem of adjustment and conflict between male ego and female resistance follow. The problems in human relationships arise mostly because of the gravitational pull of tradition which binds in its invisible threads even those men and women who are modern, educated and financially independent.

The protagonists in her novels belong to the middle class-the class which ever aspires to reach the zenith and is always afraid of falling into the abyss and which consigns its members to eternal struggle against the forces of tradition and modernity. Deshpande's novels present various aspects of women's lives and their roles as daughters, wives and mothers but she is mainly interested in the lives of modern Indian women who have come out in the open raising their voice and forming a community.

Deshpande's female protagonists mostly are married women in search of some kind of freedom, self-identity, economic independence and individual autonomy, even though they do not always succeed. Being adults, their relationships mainly concern the partner, spouse, and lover and husband whoever it may be. Presenting these women as wives seems to be the dominant concern of the novelist but almost all the protagonists like Sarita, Madhu, turn to their past at some critical moments to reflect on their relationships with their parents, grandparents, siblings, cousins, friends and neighbours and redefine their relationships in the changed context.

Husband and wife are quite important as they play the most dominant role in the traditional structure of Indian families, but the older persons in the category of grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts not only play a significant role in shaping their personality in their early years but also represent the traditional value system prevailing in different generations.

The narrative technique of Deshpande has earned criticism from some critics who feel that this leads to confusion in the mind of readers. In novels

where the writer is to present a gallery of characters along with their relationships and interactions, it becomes necessary for him to present things in their chronological order and not indulge in too much experimentation.

According to ShamaFutehally the narrative technique of the writer is a device which is useful either when some element of suspense is needed, or for a novel with a non-narrative structure. In Shashi Deshpande's novels the reader has to cope with an abundance of characters simultaneously and without introduction. Her heroines are educated young women with liberated and progressive ideas; therefore even ordinary incidents acquire a new meaning. The first person narration helps the writer to probe deep into the mind of the protagonist, her hopes, fears, aspirations, and frustrations and so on and thereby highlight the gross gender discrimination prevalent in society.

Deshpande's development as a novelist necessitates a chronological study of the narrative techniques employed by her in her novels. A close study of the two Shashi Deshpande's novels chosen for study reveals her deep insight into the plight of Indian women, who feel smothered and fettered, in a tradition-bound, male dominated society. She delineates her women characters in the light of their hopes, fears, aspirations and frustrations. These women are aware of their strengths and limitations, but find themselves thwarted by the opposition and pressure from a society conditioned overwhelmingly by the patriarchal mind-set. She highlights their inferior position and the subsequent degradation in a male-dominated society.

Shashi Deshpande's protagonists' quest for identity gets largely accentuated due to their frustrating experiences born of the prohibitive nature of the Indian patriarchal society. In her novels, the host of male characters — husbands, lovers, fathers and other relations — display different aspects of patriarchy and oppression. The older men, particularly the fathers, are broad-minded. The male friends are “feminist” in their approach and sympathise with the protagonists' lot. Deshpande's male characters only serve to enable the protagonists to define their identities more fully. Shashi Deshpande keeps her narratives female-centred and gives an intimate insight into the psyche of the middle-class Indian women who feel oppressed and hemmed in by their patriarchal socialisation. She provides new ideals for a better man woman relationship, thereby broadening the scope of woman's existence. She not only presents a feminist insight into patriarchal values, but also prescribes a balance between tradition and modernity as a working philosophy for the contemporary woman in her novels.

Deshpande's women protagonists are victims of the prevalent gross gender discrimination, first as daughters and later as wives. They are conscious of the great social inequality and injustice towards them, and struggle against the oppressive and unequal nature of the social norms and rules that limit their capability and existence as a wife. Fettered to their roles in the family, they question the subordinate status ordained to them by society. Deshpande has made realistic representation of the Indian middle-class women and her sincere

concern for women and their oppressive lot is reflected strongly in all her novels.

The women protagonists in Shashi Deshpande's novels go through a thought process after which they see themselves differently. There is a change in their mental attitude, which is spelt out in a change in action. There is a feel that the revolution comes not out of escaping the situation, but facing the situation with a different idea of Shashi Deshpande means being humanitarian, being aware of responsibilities and duties refusing to give in to oppression and cruelty. Her protagonists, in moments of crisis look to the past; they are shown going to their parental home. Reasons of disorder in the family life are given in her novels in various ways. The novels can be seen as different expressions of the problems in real life situations. To that extent the novels can also be seen as realistic. The concept of sisterhood is more prominently seen in two recent novels.

The central female characters of the novels take immense pains to inform these women about their own rights, and possibilities. The last, but the most important type of women is the new women characters who have the will, and wisdom for a change. They are politically enlightened women who deeply understand their privileged fellow women who sadly yet successfully suppress their sorrows, and sufferings, and lead a life of self-sacrifice. They are the liberated women or new women who are intelligent, independent, self-confident, and self-sufficient. According to Shashi Deshpande, women's

problem is so deep rooted that it urges the women readers to overcome fear, and anxiety, and to take a brave decision to grow, and succeed.

Shashi Deshpande communicates a very relevant and important message that women's energy, creativity, and intelligence can be wisely tapped, and used not only for the welfare of the family but also for the betterment of the society. When they become significant contributors, they will become visible in the society, and will be respected, and appreciated by the society. It is interesting to note the different stages of the developments of the feminist consciousness, and female freedom in the women characters of Shashi Deshpande.

The socially constructed ideals of maleness and femaleness obstruct freethinking, and freedom of choice, and action. External barriers such as social restriction, and patriarchal expectations become negligible for women who overcome self-imposed restrictions, and inner barriers of limiting thoughts, and beliefs regarding themselves. Through her central characters she conveys the idea that it is not necessary for women to wait for the approval of the society but that they should go along with their goals. Finally Shashi Deshpande believes that the first, and the most important step in women's empowerment is conscientisation or awareness raising. She prompts her women readers to make an inward journey to realise the depth of the dehumanizing process which they have been undergoing due to excessive male demands. She does not leave the readers at this juncture of self-pity, and frustration but lead them to a regenerative process by providing them ideological weapons, and the ideal of

self-help. Thus the novels under study have a particular significance for today's Indian society, in which the girls have to put up not only with the social discrimination, but also with the victimization by their near, and dear ones. To come out all these social evils one has to be empowered.

Shashi Deshpande offers new insights into Indian women who are seen moving slowly but surely from subordination to autonomy, from Dharma to individual goals, from sexual lucidity to sexual emancipation, and from silence to speech. Brother –sister relationship is another concern of Shashi Deshpande. Most of these relationships depicted in her novels are marred by jealousy and rivalry. In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Saru has great love for her brother, Dhruva but she is a little jealous of him because he gets more love and attention from his mother.

Apart from brother-sister relationship, Deshpande also highlights sister bonding-the relationship shared by sisters whether siblings or cousins. It is a very strong and meaningful relationship though it is the most understated one. There is less sibling rivalry between two sisters than between two brothers or between a brother and a sister. Sister bonding never wanes; rather it gets stronger with time. The fact that Shashi Deshpande has foregrounded the sister bonding in her later works like *Moving On and in the Country of Deceit* is a welcome move. A study of other relationships in these novels reveals that these relationships are mostly quite comfortable as there is less expectations on either side. Relationship, it may be noted, is inversely proportionate to expectations.

The study reiterates the facts that a writer matures with every work and the visions and concepts of the writer get clearer in successive works. The study shows that there is a gradual shift and steady progress in the presentation of human relationship in the successive novels of Shashi Deshpande. Her early novels *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *If I Die Today*, *Come Up and Be Dead*, *That Long Silence* and *The Binding Vine* deal with the traditional patterns of human relationships with a possibility of certain traditions to be broken.

The protagonists in these novels face crisis in their life at some point of time that necessitates a readjustment to the external world and which at the same time sets in motion introspection capable of bringing a definite change. They question traditional man-woman relationship and the protagonists like Saru, Indu, Jaya and Urmi go far and wide to reject tradition and assert their modernity though their retreat and reconciliation at the end of the novel remains vague and baffling. But in her subsequent novels, *A Matter of Time* and *Small Remedies*, there is a shift in the perception of human relationships and the novelist is trying to evolve a balance between traditional demands and modern compulsions and to negotiate the power relations in an attempt to resolve any crisis in the wake of polarity between tradition and modernity, between relationship and character. However, some minor characters in these novels reject marriage and ring the warning bell for traditions.

In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Saru, who is not on natural terms with her husband and somehow is dissatisfied with the whole relationship, finds it very difficult to express herself in front of her father regarding their conflicts:

“And each time it happens and I don’t speak, I put another brick on the wall of silence between us.” (88) Whether women be educated, professional or housewives, they are always suppressed with the weight of imposed traditions. Smith, another girl in the novel, is always in search of shelter. She never does the work she wants to, but is always ready to do what her husband asks her to do. Her name, after marriage, is changed twice and she accepts it willingly. Her friend asks: “This drastic change of identity, changing both the names that identified you for so many years...how then do you know yourself, and who you are?” (96) Shashi Deshpande’s protagonists are women struggling to find their own voice. The protagonists — Jaya in *That Long Silence*, Indu in *Roots and Shadows* and Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* — continually search to define themselves and ask themselves if there is any “self” to be found. Indu wonders whether in trying to please her husband, she has “become fluid, with no shape, no form of her own.” Jaya sees herself in two pictures: Jaya, who is searching for individual identity although she does not know what she really wants; and Suhasini, who is soft, smiling, placid, mother, still she knows that “The real picture, the real ‘you’ never emerges. Looking for it is as bewildering as trying to know how you really look. Ten different mirrors show you ten different faces.” (77) Deshpande’s women characters show traits of a woman in a period of transition. They belong to the post — 1960 period and are economically better, but they do not know how to express themselves in this new socio-economic set-up. Their ways of behaviour express this dilemma.

In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Deshpande shifts the narrative from the first person to the third person narrative in every alternate chapter. This double narrative method helps to lend great authenticity to the portrayal of the main woman character Sarita's inner self. Deshpande has commendably accomplished the task of giving a realistic portrayal of the mental trauma Sarita undergoes. While using efficient narrative technique, Deshpande has succeeded in the portrayal of Sarita's mental state with remarkable objectivity. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* shows that characters also have a marriage of their own choice where dowry was quite immaterial. Another striking fact about these marriages is that there is no extravagance or large crowds at the wedding. These brides do not give undue importance to gold and costly ornaments. Shashi Deshpande is raising her voice against the evils of dowry. In order to ensure happiness, and a comfortable existence for their daughters' parents struggle hard to satisfy the indecent, and incessant demands of bridegroom's party. It is to be noted that dowry is a transfer of wealth from men of a family to those of another with women acting as a vehicle of transfer (as brides) or as a watchdogs (as mother-in-law, and sister-in-law); its significance is not primarily economic but political in the sense that it defines a power relation between the man, and woman. Hence marriage, which is made out to be an inevitable, and indispensable goal in every woman's life. It should be re-evaluated. Marriages at the cost of dowry deaths, marital cruelty, divorce or even self-negation should be avoided. Whether to marry or not and whom to marry should be left to the woman. Shashi Deshpande likes women to be

empowered in marriage, and motherhood. Patriarchal society deems reproductively as the greatest creativity of women, and assumes power over women's body, reproductive capacity, etc. Being an emancipated woman, Indu has an entirely different opinion about marriage, and having children. By presenting Indu as a married woman, who is not yet ready for motherhood because of her serious engagements, Shashi Deshpande challenges the myth that motherhood is the absolute fulfilment of women's lives.

Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terror* is an example of this type of women. They are women who are really to co-operate with those who keep them in subordination. Such women have foolish sense of complacency, and lack of concern for other women. The novelist has presented another set of women who are covered by the clouds of ignorance, and absolutely lack the awareness for the need to change. Most of them are illiterate women or women who do not know the rights of women as human beings.

In *Small Remedies*, we find that Savitribai Indorekar's relationship with her daughter Munni is not warm. Munni feels unwanted, unloved and rejected by her mother and she develops a feeling of aversion towards her. Munni even goes to the extent of taking a new name, Shailaja Joshi. Shashi Deshpande's novels say that, "There is no mother who could serve as a model for the daughter." (3) Mothers in Shashi Deshpande's novels do not realise the fact that the traditional middle-class idea that a woman's only career should be her family is now rejected by the up-coming girls who are very much influenced by factors such as the spread of scientific ideas, the growing impact of other

cultures on the individuals, and the availability of a vast body of literature. Though most of the educated working women still give preference to marriage and their family life, the wish to be economically independent, to have an individual identity in society is more pronounced among the majority of women than was found earlier. This becomes the reason why the girls insist on continuing their studies even when they don't get any support from their family.

Sam, in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, hates her mother as she puts all sorts of restrictions on her freedom. The mother equally hates the daughter, "What daughter? I have no daughter" (100) is the kind of attitude she has. She falls ill, but hates to go to the doctor for the simple reason that her daughter belongs to the same category. Saru hates her mother even when she is dead: "I hate her, sapping me of happiness, of everything. She's always done it to me...taken happiness away from me. She does it even now when she's dead." (100) Even at the time of taking admission into a medical college, Sam does not seek her mother's advice but asks her father only giving more respect to him. Jaya, in *That Long Silence*, is typical of many women in dealings with her father. Similarly, Indu, in *Roots and Shadows*, whose mother died in giving birth to her, sees her father almost as a God.

It is notable that mother-daughter relationship is shown as difficult and uncordial in Shashi Deshpande's novels. Shashi Deshpande's *Small Remedies* explores the lives of two women, one obsessed with music, and the other a passionate believer in Communism. Both of them break away from their

families to seek fulfilment in public life. Savitribai Indorekar (Bai), born into an orthodox Hindu family, elopes with her Muslim lover, and accompanist, Ghulam Saab, to pursue a career in music. Gentle, strong-willed Leela, on the other hand, gives her life to the Party, and to work with the factory workers of Bombay. Fifty years after these events have been set in motion, Madhu, Leela's niece, travels to Bhavanipur, Savitribai's home in her last years, to write a biography of Bai. Caught in her own despair over the loss of her only son Aditya, Madhu tries to make sense of the lives of Bai, and those around her, and in doing so, seeks to find a way out of her own grief.

The novels of Shashi Deshpande usually dwell upon the emergence of women from marginality to centrality, and from role to individuality. The emerging new womanhood of Shashi Deshpande dismisses the submissive, shy, sweet, and sentimental women from the creative world, and intentionally invests in her women qualities like courage, independence, intellectual energy, rationality, and ambition. Thus she has created autonomous and self-determining women in her fictional world. The writer demonstrates in her novels that what women demand for their freedom, growth, and development is not necessarily very difficult conditions – some space to grow, chances to attain, and use knowledge, exposure to the society, freedom to express their desires, and demands. For the subversion of sexist ideologies, Shashi Deshpande invests her female protagonists with power, and ability, energy, and enthusiasm, courage, and commitment, and other qualities of womanhood.

These new women characters make the authorial voice of feminist reformism audible in her novels.

Shashi Deshpande presents a powerful female character Madhu in *Small Remedies* who has control over both production, and reproduction. In spite of her conscious delay in embracing motherhood, she believes that “a child’s birth is a rebirth for a woman. It is becoming part of the world once again” (88).

When she decides to become a mother, she postpones her creative, and productive endeavours for a few years, and gladly opts to stay with her son Adit in order to enjoy the thrill, and bliss of motherhood which is in fact a metamorphosis for her. She says: His dependence fills me with delight; my power over him awes me. I indulge him, enjoying my power to transform his tears into smiles. I flaunt my feelings; there is no need to hide them. It’s not just legitimate, it’s something to be proud of, this mother love... mother love is one of the great wonders of this world, and we tell one another. (183-184)

Marriage is a social institution in which an emotionally intelligent man and woman are working together in partnership. This partnership becomes highly productive, and fulfilling when there are higher degrees of intimacy, mutual respect, and admiration. In a sense it would be a win-win relationship, enriching the man, and woman alike.

Shashi Deshpande presents powerful female characters who not only intellectualise their experiences, but also give due importance to the emotional aspects of their experiences. Her protagonists Saru and Madhu are intelligent, educated, and emotionally mature women, and most of them are employed too.

By presenting them as empowered women, intellectually, and emotionally more empowered than their husbands, Shashi Deshpande seeks to change the unfair power relations existing between men, and women even in the most intimate circle of family. Shashi Deshpande convinces her readers that for the real liberation of women, they should find out a world of creative and fulfilling activity beyond the domestic walls.

Shashi Deshpande communicates a very relevant and important message that women's energy, creativity, and intelligence can be wisely tapped, and used not only for the welfare of the family but also for the betterment of the society. When they become significant contributors, they will become visible in the society, and will be respected, and appreciated by the society. It is interesting to note the different stages of the developments of the feminist consciousness, and female freedom in the women characters of Shashi Deshpande.

The reason behind choosing the novels under study of Shashi Deshpande is the exquisite portrayal of women in different eras. The first novel *The Dark Holds No Terror*, published in 1980 has the picaresque view of the struggles of the women during the 1980s. The story presents the female characters which struggle a lot and suffer under the gender discrimination. The second novel *Small Remedies* was published in 2000. This novel also deals with the struggles of women similar to the previous novel. But the character Sarita encounters the sufferings under the stereotypical gender discrimination. Amidst all the struggles Sarita manages to come out and faces the global

endeavours. The two decades in between the publication of the novels did not do many changes in the society. The second novel talks about the women struggle with the same milieu but with a strong will power of the women at the end.

The study finds that the strong minds of women overcome all the struggles they have in their life. In spite of the male-centred society with all the aggressive acts on women and the stereotypes on women, they overcome all the obstacles in their path and excel over them. The study also finds the struggles of the women in different eras with different milieu. The Indian society has always been a male centred society which constraints the women to have the basic rights in the society. The chosen novels also depict the same gender discrimination through different characters.

The right to equality has always been only in the papers and not practised in the reality. This is revealed through the selected novels and through several incidents. The woman is always considered as the weaker sex or the second sex. They are not given the mere recognition as the human beings. This must be neglected to build a healthy society without any stereotypes.

At the outset, the study suggests that despite all the struggles the women face, with all their will power and the strong determination they can become liberal and lead their own life without depending on others. All the struggles can make women stronger than before. No matter how and in what ways

women are constrained, all the obstacles become the stepping stones to their life.

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