



## **WOMAN IS HER OWN REFUGE AT PARENTAL HOME IN THE NOVELS OF SHASHI DESHPANDE'S THE DARK HOLDS AND NO TERRORS AND MOVING ON**

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### **Abstract**

**Shashi Deshpande's novels The Dark Holds No Terrors and Moving On, depict the real turmoil of the Indian middle class educated women who got marriage according to their will and experienced a great deal of troubles in the hands of their husbands, which were shown by the central characters Saritha and Manjari who underwent the same fate and they returned back to their parental home to survive and put check to the claws of blaming by the near and dears. They overcome all the hard knocks with the support of their parents and unshackle the stanch Indian marriage traditional rules which have been undergone for ages. Although they got success in life but they feel parental home is their refuge, which is shown in this research paper.**

**Key Words: Refuge, Loneliness, Self-assertive.**

This research article focus on how the women who experienced a great deal of turmoil in the hands of their husbands, in the name of marriage, after getting married against their parents' will and departed from the clutches of traditions of the marriage. Since they could not adjust with paramount, vagabond and lazy husbands, they leave the maternal home to find the quest for self and stand by their own by taking help of their parents at parental home. After they return back their parental home to survive and put check to the claws of blaming by the near and dears. They succeed to achieve their will. They unshackle the stanch traditional rules which have been undergone for ages. The clinches are disguised in the form of Traditions.

Literature is the great weapon to express ones experiences, feeling, ideas; this would be the embodiment of past and contemporary society. It deals the life as it is. Literature can alter the thought process of the human beings on the Earth. There are many forms and genres in literature like Drama, Poetry, Prose and prose fiction. It has been flourished for ages and bringing the societal transformation. In India, all Epics, myths and great work of arts were spun by men only. Male voice has been rising from the birth of the literature, moreover, Literature was written in their contest and their point of view. Woman has been treated inferior to man for ages. Women did not have educational and religious freedom, and were restricted to four walls at home. They had little freedom performing religious rites as well.

Woman did not take up writing because they had no right to study and had no freedom to express their feelings freely and being suppressed in the male dominated society. But woman has been described and presented in male perspective in their writings. Woman had been given less priority and therefore they could not present woman in all facets of her life. So, long suppressed woman sprang and ready to take the writing as their weapon to express their abundant sufferings undergoing for ages. Women writers have begun to gain recognition. The majority of these novels depict the psychological suffering of the frustrated common women, housewife, this subject matter often being considered superficial compared to the depiction of the controlled and oppressed lives of women of the middle and lower class in India.

In India, Toru Dutt (1856-77) was the first and foremost Indian woman writer and a poet who

wrote in English in India and her works depicts prototypes of Indian womanhood, such as Sita and Savitri, showing women in suffering, self-sacrificing roles, reinforcing conventional myths in a patriotic mane. Kamala Das originated a vigorous and poignant feminine confessional poetry, in which a common theme is the exploration of the man-woman relationship. Ruth Pravar Jhabvala's first novel *To Whom She Will* (1955).

Santha Rama Rau's *Remember the House* (1956),

In the dawn of the Indian Woman Wringing in English, Fiction was bloomed by Arundhati Roy who received the Man Booker Prize (1997) for her debut fiction novel *The God Of Small Things* (1997). Indian women writers like Meenakshi Mukharji, Anita Nair, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai, Manju Kapur, Shobha De, Shashi Deshpande and so on who bring the fame to Indian Writings in English. Shashi Deshpande is the one Among these women writers. Deshpande began her career writing short stories and wrote nine collections, 12 novels and four children's books. Three of her novels have received awards, including the Sahitya Akademi award in 1990, for "That Long Silence" (1988). She received Padma Shri award in 2009.

Deshpande writes the sufferings of women in marital life and whose controlling husband doesn't understand why a woman needs her own identity and an equal place at home and in society. So her protagonists raise the voice against male dominating society and questions the brutality nature of their husband and even ready to depart husband in order to live.

The feeling of Refuge and loneliness would be found at their parental home when they returned back from their husband's home. This disparity conditions would be shown in Deshpande's women characters in her novels Saritha (Saru) in *Dark Holds No Terrors*, Manjari (Manju) in *Moving ON*.

Shashi Deshpande's central characters understand that home and parents not the refuge but she is her won refuge. Therefore, they after renewing them-selves and start their life with new vigour. It is rightly said in Buddhist Marxism, "You are your won refuge; there is no

other refuge, this refuge is hard to achieve" (Dhammapada).

Saritha in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980) by Shashi Deshpande, is a central protagonist of the novel who seeks freedom within the boundaries of obligations and responsibilities, she also learn to conquer her fears and achieves harmony in life. She undergoes trauma, confront reality and, and at the end, realises that the dark no longer holds any terrors to her. She survives male-dominated world which offers no easy outs of women. She neither surrenders to nor escapes from the problem, but with great strength accepts the challenges of her own protégé.

Her visit is more out of an urge to escape from the hell of marital life she is passing through. She appear to be confused, hopeless, dull, almost thoughtless and recluses.

She was not apprehensive, though not eager either for the moment of confrontation. She glanced back at the rikshaw in which she had come. She hadn't paid the man as yet, as if keeping a route open for retreat (TDHNT :15).

Saru is alienated from her husband, she comes to her parental house to seek her sense of belonging to the world but the same eludes her. Initially, as Saru comes to her father's house, she feels like stranger, as Sudama standing at the gates of the Krishna and Rukmini. She is conscious that she is no Sudama in a rage, bare feet and filled with humility. But she gets a cold reception at her father's house. At time Saru even regrets her visit. "Why had it seemed too important to come here, and, at once?" (TDHNT: 17). As Saru stays at her parental house, she gets a chance to review her relationships with her husband, her dead mother, her dead brother, with her own children.

It is rightly quoted by Cheyya Malviya in article *The Female characters as career women in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande*; the last phase of Sarita's life brings her face to face with her own self. In feminist terms, Saru's return to her parental home could be interpreted as what Kristeva calls, "The refusal of the temporal order and the search for a land scape that would accommodate their need". The home coming helps her to sort out of her problem and analyse her life.

In *Moving On*, Deshpande gives us a complex character, Manjari, who tries to achieve her real self through her struggles. The novel *Moving On* also projects Manjari as a woman who resists the patriarchal ideology and tries to live on her own terms. Manjari is the daughter of an anatomist father, Badhri Narayan and a writer mother, Mai. Given up studying medicine to marry Shyam, a person much below the social status of Narayan family, shows Manjari's steadfastness.

Manjari's thoughtless and instinctual decision to marry Shyam, based on hormonal urges, proves disastrous for her in the long run followed by Shyam's suicide. Here novel reflects the inner struggle of the protagonist, Manjari, an educated one, a prematurely widowed, who lives alone for nineteen years without longing to get married again.

When Manjari return back her parental home after the death of Shyam, she finds Baba's diary. She recalls the past of her parental life. Manjari has a woman within her inner self. Her father; He acknowledges her identity as an independent individual. Manjari prefers to live on her own and refuses financial assistance from her father.

By denying the help her father offers, she refuses any sort of sympathy from her family members. Here Sashi Deshpande proclaims that woman has not taken as granted but be self-assertive in any hard knocks she faces. She prefers to live on her own and shows them that she has no regrets about her decision of marrying Shyam. Manjari decides;

I don't want to think of these things,

I don't want to bring up these memories.

I left them behind the day

I turned away from the sea, turned away from death back to life (*Moving On*: 90).

But despite there is strong urging to return home, to the security and warmth of the family. In these two novels *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *Moving On*, Saru and Manju return back to the cocooned existence of their families to import a new meaning to their existence. Here they realise

the inner self and eventually are at peace with themselves at parental home.

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