



PRE-MARITAL VERSUS POST-MARITAL RELATIONSHIP IN SHASHI DESHPANDE'S *THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS*

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ABSTRACT

Shashi Deshpande discusses several problems related with women, marriage and tradition. She makes it clear that patriarchal society does not encourage women to be independent and if women become more efficient, competent and do better than their husbands, the society tries to suppress them. Further the novelist through her women characters expose the harsh realities that the women have been subjected to in the world of masculine domination. Men have been inflicting sexual violence on women for ages to assert their manhood and supremacy. A career-minded woman always finds herself alone. There is no comfort in marriage or in going back to once parents. Deshpande realistically presents the dilemma of these educated women who are struggling between the age old traditional values, inflicted on them right from their childhood and the modern outlook they recently acquired from their education. Thus the novelist brings out powerfully the psychological problem of a career woman and discusses it artistically without crossing the barriers of art.

Key Words: *masculine domination, psychological problem, inflict*

INTRODUCTION

Shashi Deshpande, daughter of the renowned Kannada dramatist and Sanskrit scholar Shiranga, was born in Dharwad. At the age of fifteen she went to Mumbai, graduated in economics, then moved to Bangalore, where she gained a degree in law. Then she took a course in journalism and for a time worked on a magazine.

Her writing career begins in 1970, initially with short stories, of which several volumes have been published. She is the author of four children's book and a many precious novel, the best

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known of which are *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *That Long Silence*, which won the Sahitya Akademi award.

Pre-marital versus Post-marital Relationship

The Dark Holds No Terrors has been translated into German and Russian languages. Her novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* centers on family relationships. Particularly the relationship between husband and wife and the latter's dilemmas and conflicts. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* presents the story of Sarita who dares to resist the age-old traditions to marry a man outside of her caste. Hindu tradition plays big parts in Sarita's life. Hindus value a son over a daughter. "Why didn't you die? Why are you alive?" (p 34) Sarita's mother never accepts the fact that she lost her son by drawing, while her daughter was spared. Her mother holds her responsible for the accident. Saru's intense hatred for her mother drives her to leave home for Bombay to seek medicine as a career.

She was a girl of great determination and self-restraint. She was longing for love. She fell in love with Manohar at the first sight. Manohar was the man of her dreams, yet she never thought that he would respond to her emotion so quickly. She was naturally elated when the man of her dreams himself came to propose to her. Finally she marries him against her parent's wishes.

The initial years of marriage are sheer bliss for Saru and Manu. Manu is her saviour and the romantic hero. Her dingy one-room apartment with

"the corridors smelling of urine, the rooms with their dark sealed in odour is a heaven on earth for her."

But soon she realizes that happiness is illusory. Her success as a well-known and reputed Doctor becomes the cause of Manu's jealousy and his strained relation with her. Manu is uncomfortable with Saru's steady rise in status. Saru begins to hate this man-woman relationships, which is based on need and attraction but not love. When her social and financial status rises gradually, there is an inverse decline in her conjugal relationship. As Saru rises in her social and financial status, Manu remain and underpaid lecturer. This fact upset him entirely and made him a psychopath.

Her success leads to the breakup of her family life. Things take a horrible turn in Saru's relationship with Manu. Manu starts behaving in a beastly manner and begins to rape her. During the day time Manu remains normal but at night he turns into a wild lustful beast. Sarita was completely a broken woman, having none even to speak about her woes. She could not even cry because she didn't want the children to know about their afflictions. At this juncture Saru comes to know about her mother's death. Despite her vow never to return home, she does so.



One day she decided to remove all the barriers between her and her father, the barriers between a man and a woman, to discuss her private life with him. Her father agreed to discuss these things with her, she told him how she was subjected to a beauty treatment in the nights by her husband. And to add to this her husband would not apologies or explain or look guilty. He would simply act like a normal person in the morning. Her father could say nothing except that he needed treatment. Then Saru got a letter informing that Manu was coming to meet her. She had deserted him did not want to meet him. She told her father that she was scared of him not for what he has done to her, but for what she had done to him. “My brother died because I heedlessly turned my back on him. My mother died alone because I deserted her. My husband is a failure because I destroyed his manhood.” So she gave up the idea of leaning the house. Saru had come to feel that she should take pity on Manohar who was patient and deserved treatment.

Conclusion

Deshpande through her work shows women willing to take their share of blame of their sufferings and bravely face the situation. Through a process of introspection and self-analysis they find a positive solution in the end. Thus love, the marriage knot, sustains all relationships and provides the strength to survive.

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