



FATHER AND DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP IN SHASHI DESHPANDE AND SHOBHAA DE

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ABSTRACT

Father plays an essential role in their daughter's lives. A daughter relationship with her father is usually her first male-female relationship. But in Shashi Deshpande's novel The Dark Holds No Terrors from the beginning, we find there is no proper communication between the protagonist, Sarita and her father. She actually, returns being unable to bear the sexual sadism of her husband. But, she couldn't express her feelings or pains to her father. The father is indifferent and not supporting enough like an unwilling host entertaining an unwelcome guest, like a traditional Indian father, he enjoys the privilege of being the Master and head of the family. As we know from Sarita, he is not concerned with the problems of his own family members. He had always been the Master of the house.

INTRODUCTION

In Indian society, married women are not supposed to return to her parental house without her husband or having any quarrels or divorce. They are supposed to stay in the house of her husband till death. So, when Sarita's father finds her standing alone with the suitcase, he frown and knits his eyebrows like any other typical India father. Also, when Sarita, tells her father about her husband, who tortures her sexually, but it is something beyond the understanding of her father, who always maintained distance and reserve with his wife. Her father sounds strange while talking. The absence of affability in the house sets her pendulum rolling between two houses:

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As she drinks her tea... too sweet and strong...he (father) sat gingerly on the edge of his chair like an unwilling host entertaining an unwelcome guest. And that, I suppose, is what I really am. What gave me the idea I could come back? (TDHNT, 14)

She expects sympathy from her father but no avail. Rather, her father, after listening to all the failures in her life in adjusting with her husband, turns his back on her pretending to put rice on the stove. Under such circumstances, Saru feels that if it had been an arranged marriage, she would have got support from her parents. But now she suffers from both suffering as well as guilt consciousness.

In *That Long Silence* Jaya's father was a source of inspiration; his encouraging words were motivation in her life. She was full of queries, had no affection towards her mother. Her father pampered her, it is he who named her Jaya and often repeated Jaya for victory. It is after his death that Jaya's life gets shattered. Somehow she manages to complete her graduation and gets married to Mohan immediately as per the desire of her uncle. Jaya, who was dancing to the tune of her father later on, later stared to the tune of her husband.

Aasha Rani in *Starry Nights* holds her father responsible for every trouble in her family. Even she finds appa responsible for the unacceptable behaviour of amma, like her discriminating between her and Sudha her sister, and for her ruthless greed for money. Her feelings of hatred for appa are so overwhelming that appa becomes the symbol of male-domination.

Why would amma do that? Weren't they both her children? Or was amma really such an unfeeling, ruthless woman? Was she that greedy that she would use on daughter against the other just for money? What a horrible thought. And was it only because of the way appa behaved with her that amma had turned into such a monster? Whichever way one looked at it, there was always a man in the picture. A man using abusing and finally discarding a woman.(SN, 157)

Despite her indulgence in indiscriminate sex and professional opportunism, Aasha Rani has a critical eye for sanctity of relations which she unconsciously cherishes like a wish. The troubled relation between her parents due to infidelity of her father has created vacuum in her psyche which always tends to be filled in. She retorts in a moralizing tone when Kishenbhai, a married man, claims it his duty to take of her: "Then why don't you take care of your wife instead of warming my bed? Or isn't she a woman?" (SN, 8) Passing through the ordeal of exploitation and betrayals by her own people purges her of all selfish and lowly passions. She feels perfectly in tune with her inner world and visualizes that her dreams would come true in



her daughter Sasha. Her father also feels measure amelioration and attains his inner peace after being forgiven by her daughter, Aasha Rani, who has suffered much in life because of him.

In *Socialite Euenings* the picture of the family as experienced in the middle high and high societies has been portrayed truthfully. The picture of family is real and authentic, as the narrator who belongs to the rich strata of the society, has delineated it in person. The family breaks away and crumbles and the reasons for the family disintegration are various as the members of the family walk in different directions. The elements as sex, economic insecurity, and personal ambitions enter family so forcefully that it leads to the split of the very base of the family. In *Socialite Evenings* the parents of Karuna are traditional in their outlook and the idea of family and behaviour of the children. She admits that her father played a positive role in her life. Her father intends to rear up his daughters in disciplined and traditional manners. He is a man of literature who could quote from Twain, Shakespeare and the Bhagavad Gita. His favorite phrase is, 'improve the mind' He is strict in every possible way. He is heard giving his advice as, A person must have discipline and. regular habits. He forces them to listen to the parent's advice and follow social norms and moral behavior. He is a man who has been guided by the principle and social values in his life all the time under the influence of her mentor Anjali, Karuna revolts against the parental ethics and sticks to her own impulses and airy life-style. Her maiden association with modeling at a very young age, which appears flashed in the newspapers, creates storm in the family and her father calls her "Disgraceful! Cheap! Filthy!" He remarks, "No Brahmin girl has ever stooped so low. Tell me - how did this photograph get here?" Karuna, swati and Alka, the three daughters, have their own ways of life and attitudes at their disposals.

As the family undergoes financial crisis, Karuna runs back to the family to help them out and support them with financial assistance to a large extent better than a man could do. She realizes her responsibilities towards her parents. She takes care of her parents, loves, shows enough concern and lives happy life in their company. She enjoys the 'cultural affinities' she had with her family. The mother, out of her deep feeling for her daughter, encourages and forces Karuna to re-marry and settle down than to live an unhappy life. She advises her daughter in plain words a woman cannot live alone. It is not safe.

We are here today - but who knows about tomorrow? A woman needs a man's protection. Society can be very cruel. Today you are still young enough to get a good husband. A few years from now it might be too late. You will regret not having your own home and family. You must not feel that you have an obligation to look after us. This desire of the parents is an outcome of the Indian traditional concept of family and culture who want to see the well-being of their children.



Remarkably, in *Strange Obsession*, the typically distinct families have been portrayed with equal intensity we come across in other novels. Amrita has got a special position in the family as her father regards her as a special child, and her mother is proud possessing a beautiful daughter. The family centers on her character. She is the focus of attraction during her young age; her father tries to satisfy her by attending her needs and her two brothers Ashish & Amrish escort her wherever she goes. The family is fully aware of the girl's position in society. Her chastity and ethical values added grandeur to her person.

But her stunning beauty, which is the hallmark of attraction, bothers the family members. Amrita returns back to Delhi to stay with her parents, when she left modeling in Bombay. However, she realizes that better luck and position can be had in Bombay. But the image of Minx continues to disturb her serenity.

Amrita's reluctant attitude towards unrevealing of harrowing experiences in Bombay reflects her subdued interest in what Minx proposes, Amrita was reluctant to tell her family about the strange developments in her life. She was certain that they would prevent her from going back to Bombay or insist on one of the brothers accompanying her. Amrita did not want them to discover the ugly truth about Minx, Lola or even Sheila. This was something she wanted to sort out on her own. On the contrary the family in which Minx is brought up is a broken temple. Minx is the only child of her parents with a mixed background. Though financially sound, as her father was holding a powerful position in police, an I.G., her mother is institutionalized and psychologically sick. This makes Minx to get all love and care from her father. Minx longs for physical relationship with her father, she feels it a moral duty to satisfy her father and deludes herself to the belief that it is not she who wants the physical relationship but her father. It is shown that Minx feels an incestuous relationship when she is only thirteen years old. She thus becomes a sexual competitor of her own mother. Her mother complains,

I always knew you were a pervert. You and that father of yours,.. she loves him so much that her love turns into obsession. It is for the same reason that she knows, ...my mother had cut me out of her life forever. As for him, he never referred to this incident again. And he never came back to my bed. Overnight, I went from being the daughter, the only child, to a ghost or a shadow. A stranger. A non-entity. They became cold and impersonal and pretended that I didn't exist.

Though brought up in a fine family, the very foundation of the family is cracked and she develops hatred for her own father, mother and every man. The family life in the Metropolitan city, with the hustles and bustles finds presentation in *Sultry Days*. In the family, restlessness throws shadow on the members of the family.



In fact, because of the illegitimate relations of her father with another woman, Nisha's mother is subjected to mental harassment but she follows all the advices that he gives her to keep her head high and live up to the prestige in the family and the parties. The mother tolerates the brutal pressure of her husband and follows mutely his orders to maintain relations and prestige of the family intact. The moment she learns that her husband has developed illicit relationship with a Sindhi woman- a secretary working in his office, she slowly but steadily drifts away from him and her belief in him also ebbs.

From this time she goes closer to her daughter, Nisha and develops sincere interest in her activities' She starts enjoying parties with Nisha. I was frankly astonished and rather pleased by her reaction. I decided there and then to take her along with me to the next mad party. Mummy needed diversion. And you could always count on ad types to provide it. Nisha, with the help of Deb tries to dissuade the Sindhi woman from her father's life. The family is deprived of belongingness; unity and tranquility, which are often seen in rich families. Deb's father, a communist activist, pays least attention towards family, earns little to maintain the family sound and stable. Both the sons brought up under terribly poor conditions and living in a small room, develop apathy towards their parents. The parent-children relationship does not seem to be a genuine emotional attachment. The relationship of parent children is devoid of any love and warmth. Deb calls his mother 'washer.-woman', 'a brothel keeper', 'whore' and father, a 'hand-cart puller from Lohar Chawl'. This might be giving vent to his pent up emotions. Deb's calling his parents in these words reflects how poorly and less cultured the children have been brought up. They don't have respect towards their parents and observe no honour to the relationship. Without any affectionate bond in between, the children feel how utterly they have been neglected and impoverished all the time.

The superficiality and hollowness are the features of Deb's family whereas irresponsible behaviour of Nisha's parents creates restlessness in the family. The network of relationships between parents and children is broken and spoiled. But both the families are reconciled and brought together in the end. When Nisha's parents realize that Nisha has developed love affair with Deb, they threaten her to legally disown her claim from the property. However, when Deb is shot at by Yashwantbhai and his men, Nisha's parents display honest concern, visit the hospital where he is admitted and take enough care and nurse him. "It was my mother who held things together. Hers was a constant and reassuring presence,' Deb says. Here parental love towards the children is exhibited. Deb's father also realizes the brutal attack and decides to take the revenge of the inhuman act whereby his son is injured and loves his son as an affectionate father. His determination is revealed clearly when he says,



If anything should happen to my son, I will burn down Yashwantbhai's office and have him killed. He did this. Arrest him. I say, arrest that scoundrel. He ruined my son. Finished him.

Indifference and carelessness towards children is seen in both the families but at the end everybody accepts reality and resolves to reunite. Here Nisha observes, God's condition was still precarious and he was on the 'serious' list. I told my parents to go home, but my mother insisted on staying. I think Papa was relieved when he saw we didn't really need him. God's father had walked up and embraced him. I'd seen my father cringing.

In fact, the atmosphere in Barooha's family is beyond expectation as it displays hollowness and cruelty. The son and the daughter brought up in the family, devoid of love and affection; develop hatred and cruelty in their behaviour towards parents. Vicki Baba, the son, throws assorted objects at his mother and calls her by naming 'Nimpo' or 'Bitch'. The daughter, Sweetie has developed deep hatred towards her parents. It is horrible when she is seen busy adopting different ways to torture and kill them emotionally. It finds its way, as the children were brought up in a loveless atmosphere. The children's cruelty was terrifying them beyond expectations.

It is not that Baroohas do not desire to confront the shallowness that prevails in the family and the lives of inmates. It is the reality that demoralizes and the children actually act as mirrors where they can see their own images and the superficialities of their existence. What they have been avoiding so far, their children force them to confront. Absence of harmony and an inimicable relationship among the family members leads to the dissolution of family in *Sultry Days*.

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