



Gynocentric Approach in *The Binding Vine*

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Abstract: -

The Binding Vine novel is written by Shashi Deshpande. *Long Silence* and *The Dark Holds No Terror* are her famous novels. She creates *W.W* (Women's World) where we find the character like Urmi (Urmila), Kalpana, Mira, Vanna and Shakutai, who represent the current scenario of the society. Though Urmi is so educated or belongs to modern society, she could not able to forget her died daughter Anu. *To forget to destroy* is her mentality. Whereas Shakutai, who belongs to tradition mindset. For her to wear a good dress and polish a nail is sign of attraction. She thinks that girls should have not got good appearance. When Kalpana raped by someone, Shakutai refused to inform police, she thinks it will affect badly to their reputation and her daughter's life. It shows the present condition too. Where many families not allow girls to live their own self. Here we find the two types of rape in this novel. One Kalpana who raped by someone unknown person but later we come to know about her uncle Prabhakar who brutally raped her. Second those women, who raped in within marriage, like Mira. She did not like her husband though she got married forcefully by her family. She was educated or also good poet but all her poems are unpublished or unread. She kept it into her tank. Whereas we find a man well known poet. *Women are made for domestic work is the mentality of the society* is presented in this novel.

Key words: - (*Gynocentrism; Suppression; Patriarchy; Rape; Love; identity*)

Introduction: -

The Binding Vine is written by Shashi Deshpande. *Long silence* and *The dark holds no terror* is her famous novel. She creates the *Women's World* (W.W). This novel explores the

trauma of middleclass working women who becomes victim of violence. The vine of love, affection and fellow feelings binds us all to each other. A vine is delicate but it has the tendency to spread its tendril and hold fast to its support. We have character like Uemi, Mira, Kalpana, shakutai, Vanna, in this novel, who represent the current scenario of the society. Whole story centered on three characters Urmi, Mira and Kalpana and their suppression. Shashi Deshpande also gives glimpses of other woman's life along with these three characters of this novel. The picture of mother-daughter relationship, education, traditional mindset, love, rape and betrayal also can be seen in this novel.

Parameters of Study: -

❖ Gynocentric character: -

Shashi Deshpande allows all the characters to express their feelings and agony of life through their experience. She depicted the binaries like tradition v/s modernity, men v/s women, education v/s illiterate in this novel. She tries to explore the portrait of women in the society through these binaries. She presents the plight of women and portrait of women in the society in this novel. We have character like Urmi, Mira and Kalpana who played a major role in the novel. Mira's unpublished and hidden poems show the plight of her life and her place in the house, where as Kalpana not allowed to marry by her own choice. She was brutally raped. We have many deaths in the novel, like Mira, who died through childbirth, Kalpana died because of rape and Sullu, who committed suicide, because of her husband's crime to rape Kalpana. We have one man character who thinks positive for women that ***why marriage is inevitable for women?*** This was the big question is raised by him. He was Dr. Bhaskar. Later

become good friend of Urmi and Help Shakutai & her family to cope with this rape scandal.

❖ **Female suppression:-**

Since many years women are suppressed mentally or physically by men. Shashi Deshpande presents two types of rape in the novel. One is within marriage and second is out side the marriage. Here Mira, who is raped in within marriage and Kalpana, who is raped by her uncle. We have other characters who suffer from so many reasons like these two characters. Sullu was ashamed of her husband's crime and committed suicide without her fault. She thinks how will cope with society or her sister. Urmi's mother was never asked in any situation. She was minor in the family, which Urmi realized in the end of the novel that she has wrong opinion towards her mother. Not only between Urmi and her mother but Vanna and Mandira has some issues related to their relation. Like Urmi, Mandira thinks her mother does not love her. Here mother is suppressed by daughter. Later Urmi realizes same things, when she lost her daughter.

❖ **Search for identity: -**

What's there in my life apart from all of you? If I know all of you are well and happy, I'm happy too. (p.101) (Deshpande)

Its sows, there is no space for her in the family. She use to this situation. She becomes robot for all. Mira, she wants to be renowned poet, but there were no scope for women in this literary society. Some works are decided for women like to nurture the children, to look up the house and care & love for family are the some main works which she have to done in her whole life. There is no personal space in the family. She has to follow the rules and regulation, which are ordered to do by her family. Day begins with household works and end with same. There is no important of her identity. Mira, Kalpana, Sullu and Shakutai are the characters, whose life is same. Mira was forced marry by her family. Kalpana was forced to stay at Sullu's house, though she knows that Prabhakar was not good man. Even she not allows marrying a person whom she loved. Shakutai herself said her pathetic and loveless life to Urmi, how she lived in Bombay chaul. These characters become minor in the family.

❖ **Patriarchy: -**

Domestic violence can be seen from many years before and women are suppressed by men. Men become arrogant and selfish. Here we have character Prabhakar, Urmi's Father and Shakutai's husband, who never played their responsibility. They do whatever they wanted to do in their life without concerning of their wives. Prabhakar and Sullu are childless. According to him Sullu is the responsible of this barrenness. He decides to marry Kalapna because of child, though she is his niece and younger than him. Urmi's father was arrogant and he never asked Urmi's mother about any decision of family. Shukaitai's husband left her alone because of other woman; even he was not a good man. He always asks for money to Shakutai and ordered her to do labor work like to do household work in other's house. These three men never care and never take their responsibility towards their houses.

Main Body: -

In the beginning, the protagonist of the novel, Urmila called Urmi is grieving over the death of her one year old daughter Anu. Vanna, her childhood friend and her sister-in-law, tried to make out her in this grief. But Urmi does not want to forget her daughter. Vanna makes her nostalgic about her childhood. She talks about bicycle's injury. Urmi reply to vanna,

That was just a hurt, a small hurt, and this is my child, Vanna, it's my child. (p.8) (Shashi)

This pain is all that's left to me of Anu. Without it, there will be nothing left to me for her. I will lose her entirely (p.9) (Deshpande)

Urmi refuses to let go of her pain. She tells Vanna that when she fell off the cycle, it was a small hurt compared to the agony of losing daughter. She lost her child and she cannot forget it.

As we know, it does not follow a sequence of events. The story takes shape slowly and sometimes the reader fails to link who's who. Therefore we can call it as a stream-of-consciousness novel. Urmi has big concern for her daughter. She is very sensitive. Therefore she also feels the grief of other women too. When she remember her girlhood days, one incident make her to realize her mother's condition, while her father

takes decision to sent Urmi at Ranidurg, without informing her mother. At this point Urmi understand the sinister power of male dominance that rendered her mother a helpless victim.

In the second part of the novel, She deftly handle the juxtaposition of two situation – rape committed within marriage and outside marriage by such character like Mira and Kalpana, Who brutally raped by male. We found the Kalpana, who is hospitalized and later we come to know that she is raped by someone. But her mother blames her for this crime which is committed by some other man. Shakutai has old mindset. She thinks to get ready or well dressed is the sign of attraction. She thinks Kalpana is responsible for this crime. She has also a motherly concern for Kalpana. She told Urmi about Kalpana, that

She is very smart, that's how she got that job in the shop. Kalpana even learnt how to speak English. People in our chawl used to laugh at her, but she didn't care. (p.92) (Shashi)

It shows that kalpana is belongs to present scenario of the society. She lives in modern age. But society could not able to accept this modern trend in womanhood. She was very beautiful and smart. But her uncle Prabhakar has not that daughterly love but he want to marry Kalpana. Prabhakar and Shulochna(Sulu) are childless. Sulu loves very much to Kalpana. She wants to take Kalpana forever to her house. Kalpana love her too. She went their house. But when she realizes the mental condition of Prabhakar, she came back from that house. When Prabhakar gives proposal to marry Kalpana, Shakutai accept that proposal, because for her Prabhakar is very good gentleman compare to her husband. Therefore she thinks Prabhakar will keep Kalpana happy in his house. Sulu also was ready to accept Kalpana as her companion wife. But Kalpana was rejected that proposal, because she love a young boy in her age. She wants to marry with that boy. But suddenly she hospitalizes and doctor declared it as rape case.

When doctor said it is rape case. Shakutai could not able accept the reality. She tells doctor to make it accident case. Though Shakutai has thirteen year old daughter called Shandhya, she worried for her marriage. Who will marry her in future? Society will blame her without any crime.

It will badly affects the reputation of Shakutai and her another daughter's life. Even police also refuses to make it rape case, because it will be complicated to find the culprit of crime. Therefore police willing to make it accident case rather than rape case.

It shows the condition of our society, where culprit lives freely in the society and victim becomes the criminal and there is no justice for victim. Even authority refuses to take responsibilities. Society does not allow that a girl should marry by her own choice.

Another character who is victim of rape-within marriage rape is Mira. Not only Mira, but there are many women who suffered a lot but never say a word to their family and died in young age by any reason. Like Mira she died because of childbirth in very young age of 21 years old. She was forcefully married by her family. She love write poem and wants to publish. But as woman she could not able to publish or even not allow sharing her poem to others. We come across her this talent through her diaries. When Akka brings her tank to Urmi, later she knows the unhappy married life through poem. There were no love and happiness in her married life.

***As if born blind, I grope
Finding my way in a new world
Touching things feeling then
Oh, what is this, so strange and new?
The sun sets, the lamp unlit,
Wrapped in my cloak of darkness, I sit.
What is it that flutters there?
Is it the glowworm, is it the moth? (p100).***

(Shashi)

This poem shows how she is unhappy in her life. She wants to blind than to see the world by her own eyes. It is difficult for her to bear all this things. Mira has no faith in love. When Urmi reads this poem she realized the condition of Vanna, she also didn't expresses her grief. She said to Urmi that ***you'll know when you get married yourself.*** (Shashi) When Mira was in college, she was willing to be renowned poet as Venu. She was compared to him. But society doesn't give her even one chance to be a poet. Later through Urmi, her hidden poems come out and her unhappy married life too. Even they people change her name too.

*Nirmala, they call, I stand statue-still.
Do you build the new without razing the old?
A table of rice, a pencil of gold
Can they make me Nirmala? I am Mira. (p.101)*
(Shashi)

We have another character though she is not in main plot of the story, but she too present the big impact in the society. Here Akka, Urmi's mother-in-law, and Kishor's step mother and Vanna's biological mother. Actually, Mira is Kishor's real mother. She had died when Kishor was just one day old and Kishor's father was married to Akka so that the infant Kishor could get a mother. Thus, Akka is Urmi's step-mother-in-law. Urmi realizes that Akka was brought as a bride only to be a mother to Kishor. Not only Urmi we also can sympathize with Akka, she was welcome not as bride but as mother, is difficult for any girl who has her desires and love for her husband. But here all the desires are broken in Akka's life.

We have such woman in the society who suffered only and only because of man. Here we have Sulu, Shakutai's sister, who committed suicide not because of her fault but Prabhakar's crime. Prabhakar raped Kalpana. He doesn't feel shame on himself. Here Woman is who suffered because other's fault.

At the end of the novel Urmi said that whatever women do for society or for male. They never get appreciation or prize for her work. They seek for love and care but they never get reward for their sacrifice, except disrespect, carelessness and hatred from male dominated society.

There few men in the society who has some concern for women like Bhasakar Jain, when Shakutai worried about Shandhya's marriage, at that time Bhaskar said that,

Tell me, is getting married so important to a woman. (p.87) (Shashi)

At the end Urmi said that said about Mira,

Is this it, 'the spring of life' Mira was looking for? (Deshpande)

Whole novel set around these characters. These characters show the real society where everybody has different mindset. And therefore many women have to sacrifice through giving her life. Kalpana could not survive and died at the end of the novel. Not only Kalpana but Sulu also give up to his condition.

Conclusion: -

Shahi Deshpande tries to explore the portrait of women the society through the example of this characters like Urmi, Kalpana, Mira, Vanna and Shakutai. She presents the picture of 1980s; women were not allowed high education and free lifestyle. People have traditional mindset. She also gives example of modern lifestyle through character of Kalpana and Urmi. There are many women who suffered but never come to in front of the society and give her life to save their so-called male dominated reputation. Here, Shashi Deshpande depicted the real image of society through these women character.

Works Cited:

Shashi Deshpande. The Binding Vine.
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