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## Socio-cultural interface in shashi despande's the binding vine

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**Abstract**--Women writers gave new dimension to Indian Literature. It took several years and numerous notable individuals to elevate Indian English writing to its current stature and reputation. Many women authors created songs, short tales, and plays long before novels became popular. They are regarded as stewards of India's rich fable and story-telling legacy. In their writings, they incorporate the recurring female experiences, which soon affected the Cultural and Language patterns of Indian Literature. Shashi Despande is among the sensitive thinkers who perceive the numerous elements of human experiences in order to draw serious conclusions about the individual's predicament in the face of society's insurmountable norms. She conceives the plots of her novel speculating the position of woman in relation to social paradigms and established religious practices. Shashi Despande, encourages the cult of 'withdrawal' and 'complain' but develops the aesthetics of self assertiveness for self preservation. The Binding Vine is a novel with a complicated structure and several levels of recommendations, concentrating on the illusions of man-woman relationships, the horror of rape, society's indifference, and the emptiness of marriage as an institution. It controls the narrative seeking a balance of past and present revealing the predicament of the women representing their generations and three distinctive classes. This paper attempts to tear the veil of illusion related with the matters of the crime of sex, rape, physical torture and mental insecurity. Women's uniqueness and femininity are overlooked by conventional and socio-cultural systems.

**Keywords**--social paradigms, self assertiveness, self preservation, traditional, socio-cultural, individuality, femininity.

## Introduction

Literature is an expression of life through the medium of language. Women's writing in Indian English Literature begins with Toru Dutt's *Bianca or The Young Spanish Maiden* in 1877. Women writers gave new dimension to Indian Literature. It took years and years and numerous notable individuals to elevate Indian English writing to its current stature and reputation. Many women authors created songs, short tales, and plays long before novels became popular. They are regarded as stewards of India's rich fable and story-telling legacy. They contain reoccurring woman personal experience in their writings, which had an immediate impact on Indian Literature's cultural and linguistic patterns. The demise of Indian female writers throughout the 18th century was due to women's writing on women's views and experiences inside a confined domestic arena. Women, on the other hand, were more actively involved in India's reformist movement against British rule in the nineteenth century. From the beginning of the twentieth century, women's writing became a major vehicle for modernist and feminist statements.

Kamala Markandaya, Shashi Despande, Anita Desay, Bharati Mukherjee, DinaMehta, Ruth Jhabvala, Shobha De, Manju Kapur, Arundath Roy, Jhumpa Lakiri, and many more post-colonial women novelists have added new dimensions to Indian English fiction with their exquisite perception of men and matters. They have evaluated the socio-cultural practises and values that have given Indian women their role and image via their endeavour to investigate the location and position of women in Indian culture. Feminist is employed in Indian writing as a moderate attempt to assess the true social situation as it pertains to women. Feminists split feminism's development era into two periods. While the first phase feminist fought for the social and political rights of the women, the second phase feminists fight for their own self- independence and self-identity. Most of the Indian women novelists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century belong to the second phase.

Shashi Deshpande has been one of the sensitive minds who observes the numerous facets of human experiences in order to draw serious conclusions about the individual's predicament in the face of society's insurmountable conventions. She conceives the plots of her novel speculating the position of woman in relation to social paradigms and established religious practices. She encourages the cult of 'withdrawal' and 'complain' but develop the aesthetics of self assertiveness for self preservation. *The Binding Vine* is a novel with a complicated structure and several levels of ideas, focused on the illusion of man-woman relationships, the horror of rape, society's apathy, and the hollowness of marriage as an institution. It controls the narrative seeking a balance of past and present revealing the predicament of the women representing their generations and three distinctive classes. Shashi Deshpande's perception of Women's Liberation and autonomy are deeply stretched within the socio-cultural and economic spaces and paradigms of the country. Her works stress not only any join social efforts to safe guard the individuals, but also insists on every Woman's self-development for the betterment of her society. Women's uniqueness and feminity are both overlooked by the conventional social order. Shashi Deshpande thinks of the impact of culture on the life of women in India- both at the level of the family and that of the society at large. She has given a lot of emphasis on how

the girl child in India is culturally conditioned and nurtured to suit the needs and demands of patriarchal society.

Urmila, the protagonist is conscious of herself dignity and independent identity. The central plot of the novel revolves round the anguish of Urmila at the loss of Anu and the suffering of Kalpana as a rape victim. The presence of Kalpana becomes a replacement of Anu in the life of Urmila. Looking at Kalpana, Urmila feels an exceptional relief because death might have emancipated Anu from the turmoil which Kalpana and her mother was suffering. Vanna warns Urmila that the girl has suffered head trauma and may have been raped. Kalpana was the victim, and her mother Shakuntala, also known as Shakuntai, was present but lost in the constant wailing "my daughter, my Kalpana."

Shakuntala's worry, dread, and insecurity are manifestations of the terrible fact that under a male-dominated societal system, it is the woman who bears the brunt of social inequality. Kalpana was supposed to suffer in silence while she was subjected to physical torture and humiliation. The social prejudices left her not to reveal her pain in public. Kalpana is too innocent to realize the horrors of the situation and her mother instead of being a support to her tries to manipulate the situation to escape the subsequent social criticism. She asserts that the case must not be reported to the police, "No, to hold up my head again. Who'll marry the girl? We're decent people. Doctor don't tell the police" (58).

### **Analyzed**

In this episode, Vanna plays three unique roles as a doctor, all of which are related to the expectations of various persons involved in the tragedy. First and foremost, she is supposed to offer prompt medical assistance to Kalpana, the rape victim, as a medical professional. Second, she must connect herself with Kalpana's inner self as a woman. It's a catastrophe that's wreaking tremendous emotional turmoil in addition to physical pain. Shashi Deshpande ascertains that rape is an unlawful possession of male power on female physique that is more than the loss of virginity. Thirdly, Vanna, as a person, must approach the matter with love and respect. Guilt psychosis gets an hold over her mind and she seeks an outlet of this calamity only in the hasty marriage of Kalpana suppressing the facts about the tragedy that has already taken place.

If a girl's honour is lost, what's left? The girl doesn't have to do anything wrong, people will always point a finger at her. Doctor even if it is true, keep it yourself, don't let anyone know it, I have another daughter what will become of her.... (89)"

Urmila tries to find out common grounds of justification in the suffering of Mira, her mother-in-law and Kalpana, the rape victim. When physical violence occurs in the life of a young girl, it is treated as a shame but when the same thing is thrust upon a woman in the garb of bridal veil, it is acknowledged as the fulfillment of life. It becomes a 'sacrament'. She mentions:

In fact, a funeral solemnity hang over all of us during the ceremony, I couldn't see the girl's face, she looks steadily down throughout, but I could not see that her hands were trembling uncontrollable. And at the back of her neck, I can remember that looked like a lamb's waiting for the butchers knife to come down upon it (63).

In the later part of the novel, the need for the participation of police in the tragedy of Kalpana, is another dimension of social reality in which no consolation is possible for rape victims. It was compulsory for the doctor to inform the police about the suffering of Kalpana. Bhaskar present a dreadful account of Kalpana's physical pain after rape- the marks of his fingers on her arms, huge contusions on her thighs, lips bitten and chewed, teeth marks on her lips but police officer is ready to suppress all these evidences. Instead of legal protection, he contemplates the whole phenomenon in context of social expectations, "But publicizing it isn't going to be anyone any good. It is going to mean trouble for everyone - the girl, her family, your colleagues who first examined her, so I let it go" (89). This anomaly of society brings Urmi in a state of blankness.

The horrible reality of violence is either to be suppressed in perpetual silence or in romantic glamour of bridal veil but in both the conditions; nobody has courage and will to raise voice against the triumph of animal passion. The helplessness of Urmi is the reflection of the helplessness of novelist herself who finds things unbearable but certainly incurable. Shashi Deshpande establishes that rape is not a social crime but it is inherent in male ego to overpower the "self" and "identity" of woman. It is symbolic triumph of male ego over the femininity of woman. The child sexual abuse involves far greater social apathy. The novel *The Binding Vine* has a complex structure in which Deshpande represent the issue of sexual harassment and sexual violence not as a outsider but as a partaker of the whole phenomenon. The fine fusion of psychological suffering, physical pain and the exposition of social reality makes this text as a perfect voice of subaltern who pass through the stage of silence to self realization. Deshpande draws a universal conclusion that society may accuse the victims of child sexual abuse but can't unveil the beastly passion of those who are involved in them. Ultimately she has to surrender herself in the name of culture, tradition, religion and family. Man has to be ready to shed control of things and settle for equal position with women. The dichotomy of male and female is inevitable and the cover of familial relationship for their protection generates greater hostility and nothingness.

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