

Review

Limits, Protests, and Self-Discovery in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *Roots and Shadows*

V.Devi Kanchana

Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu 627012, India

Accepted 7th September

Shashi Deshpande is one of the most accomplished contemporary Indian women writers in English. Deshpande's novels are women-centred. Her women characters represent Indian middle-class society. Her novels are concerned with a woman's quest for self. This dissertation entitled "Limits, Protests and Self-Discovery" in Shashi Deshpande's "*The Dark Holds No Terrors*" and "*Roots and Shadows*" concentrates on Deshpande's sensitive portrayal of women and their mute, convoluted self-abnegation in her stories. "Shashi Deshpande's Espousal of Women's Rights deals with the writings of Deshpande. Deshpande has tried to show that the women, even after resisting the social taboos want to submit themselves to their conventional roles. "Restrictions and Sarita's Remonstrances" considers the age old customs imposed upon Saru by her mother and her outcries against it. "Traditional Impediments and Indu the non-conformist" presents the traditional norms and beliefs of the older generation and Indu's reactions against it. "Rectification through self-realization" compares the plight of Saru and Indu. It also deals with their self-realization. Finally, a summary of the study was done to enhance a quick understanding of the text.

Keywords: Limits, Protests, Self-Discovery, Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *Roots and Shadows*.

SHASHI DESHANDE'S ESPOUSAL OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

From Mulk Raj Anand to Manohar Malgonkar, from Kamala Markandaya to Anita Desai, an ever growing awareness of reality can be discovered. Their portrayals depict the philosophy and technique they represent. Most of them have concentrated on socio-cultural backgrounds. Anita Desai is the first to explore the modern Indian sensibility. "Her preoccupation is with the inner world of sensibility rather than the outer world of action".¹ Shashi Deshpande moves further and catches on the subtle psychological complexities of the individual mind. The identity question, she deals with, is as old as human nature.

Shashi Deshpande is one of the most accomplished Indian women writers in English. She is the daughter of the late Adya Rangacharya, known Kannada writer and Sanskrit scholar. She is born in Dharwad, Karnataka in 1938. At the age of fifteen, she went to Bombay, graduated in Economics, then moved to Bangalore, where she gained a degree in law.

She devoted her early years of marriage to the care of her two young sons. She took a course in journalism and for a time worked on a magazine. Her writing career began with short stories in 1970. She has written four children's books and six novels. She lives in Bangalore with her pathologist husband.

Shashi Deshpande has emerged as a great literary force. She portrays a realistic picture of the contemporary middle-class women in her writings. She sensitively portrays their mute, convoluted, self-abnegation in her stories.

The first collection of her short stories *The Legacy* is now prescribed for the graduate students in Columbia University. The other collections are: *It is Dark*, *The Miracle* and *It is the Nightingale*. Her first novel *Roots and Shadows* won the Thirumati Rangammal prize in 1984.

The novel *That Long Silence* is given the Sahitya Akademi award for 1990. Recently, the novel *The Dark*

Holds No Terrors received the Nanjangud Tirumalamba award for 1990. The three other novels are: *If I Die Today, Come Up and Be Dead* and *The Binding Vine*.

Shashi Deshpande's novels are concerned with a woman's exploration into the female psyche and an understanding of the mysteries of life and the protagonist's place in it. The women novelists like Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Ruth Parwar Jhabvala have portrayed the sufferings of traditional Indian women without having the first hand experience of it.

Unlike other women writers, Shashi Deshpande has portrayed this aspect with instinctive understanding for she is born and brought up in this soil. She presents a realistic picture of women's conflicts. The themes of Shashi Deshpande's novels are similar. The progress in the protagonists' life is portrayed in the novels.

Roots and Shadows published in 1983, deals with Indu's attempt to assert her individuality and realize her freedom; thus, bringing her into confrontation with not only her husband but also her family and society at large. Indu leaves the house of Akka and marries Jayant, a person of her own choice. But she soon realizes the futility of her decision. She is finally able to recognize her strengths and weaknesses which have been latent so far. This helps her to develop a better understanding of others.

Deshpande's novels usually begin with an unconventional marriage leading to the problems of alienation, accommodation and adjustment. Despite the impact of Western Culture, the women remain Indian in sensibility. The conflict is resolved through the heroines' submission to the traditional roles.

The Dark Holds No Terrors, (1980) tells the harrowing tale of Sarita, often referred to as Saru. Deprived of parental care and affection, she lives a loveless life. Her mother loves her brother but hates her.

Saru receives education in spite of her mother. Saru resents the role of a daughter and looks forward to the role of a wife with the hope that it will give her relief from the oppression of the mother. Saru marries Manu, a low caste man against her parent's wishes. She is soon disappointed with her husband, after, she sets herself up as a doctor. Manu's male ego is hurt by her superiority complex. He asserts his masculinity through nocturnal sexual assaults upon Saru. Saru thus becomes a trapped animal.

Throughout the novel, Deshpande probes the inner recesses of Saru's psyche in order to discover the roots of her silent suffering and passive resistance. When her mother dies, Saru leaves for her parent's home. There she feels like an unwelcome stranger and an unwanted guest. She receives a letter from Manu and she begs her father not to open the door when Manu comes. Finally, she realizes that *the dark holds no terrors*. She resolves to face her life.

Come up and be Dead published in 1983 by Vikas, is totally different from other novels of Shashi Deshpande. It presents a world of evil, squalor and vice,

dealing with death and tragedy, with mystery and mischief.

Miss Kshama Rao, the protagonist is the headmistress of a girl's school in the post-independent India. Soon after taking charge of the school, she is faced with the crisis of three deaths in quick succession in the school campus. All the three deaths are shrouded in mystery. It all starts with the death of the fifteen year old school girl Mridula who is rumoured to be pregnant at that time. Pratap, Kshama's brother who is suspected of the crime, dies tragically. The third death is by strangulation. Notes, scribbled messages and letters are found near the dead bodies. It is revealed at the end that the deaths are related to a racket of call girls. Mr. Verma, a rich man of the town and a member of the Board of Governors of the school has been deserted by his wife soon after his marriage and this has led him to take revenge on all girls that came his way. He is aided in this evil design by the seemingly good town doctor Girish.

That Long Silence published in 1988, looks at social history from the perspective of the family. While exploring man-woman relationship in Indian Society, Deshpande offers readers an intimate and domestic chronicle of the subtle tyrannies suffered by women and the pain of coming to self-knowledge. The heroine undergoes mental torture and suffering at the hands of her husband. The novel opens with Jaya and her husband shifting from a cosy, comfortable house to their unfashionable, old apartment at Dadar, Bombay as Mohan has been caught in some business malpractice. Jaya gets confined in a small, old flat and becomes an introvert. She broods over the situation and recalls her past. Jaya is essentially a modern woman rooted in tradition, whereas her husband, Mohan is a traditionalist rooted in age-old customs. They failed to understand each other and this greatly affects their marital life. There grows a silence between the husband and the wife. It creates tension between them. Mohan has left home without a word and his absence shatters Jaya. She feels utterly helpless and experiences a sense of vacuum in her life. Mohan's telegram "All Well" changes her situation.

She finds herself slipping in to the groves of her marital life again. By giving expression to her story, she has achieved articulation of her predicament and thereby broken her silence. Though Jaya makes a compromise with Mohan, she does assert her identity. The novel thus seeks to portray a woman who becomes aware of the biased attitude of her husband. Jaya, who stands for the modern emancipated women, has asserted her individuality by challenging the taboos and destructive social norms.

The Binding Vine published in 1993 is a novel with a difference. Unlike the other heroines, the heroine of this novel Urmila has a supportive family, loves her husband Kishore and is happy being married to him. Protest comes easily to her. She decides to fight another women's battle. She fights in favour of the young rape

victim Kalpana, though everyone wants to hush up the rape case. Deshpande also deals with the problem of rape in marriage. Mira, Urmila's mother in law died in child birth. She has four years of loveless marriage with her husband. Sex, to her, has become like "the sting of the scorpion". As she has no other option, she secretly expresses her desires through poems. Urmila wants to expose the evils of society and encourages women to express themselves strongly. Her desire to help a less fortunate woman, Kalpana and to get Mira's poems published is a positive development of a woman from the earlier novels of Shashi Deshpande.

In a matter of time published in 1966, she has made a man, Gopal, the protagonist unlike her other novels. *Small remedies* is her latest novel. As Meenakshi Mukherjee observes:

Of the four novels I have read in recent times, that deal with music Vikram Seth's *An Equal Music*, Salman Rushdie's *The Ground Beneath her Feet*, Bani Balu's Bangla novel *Goudhravi* and now *Small Remedies* Shashi Deshpande, I think faces the toughest challenge. This has to do with compatibility between the discourse of Hindustani music and the English Language.²

The Intrusion and other stories contain some of the most famous of Shashi Deshpande's stories. The focus here is on women who suffer silently. These women make sacrifices at various stages of their lives in order to avoid bitterness in life. The story *Why a Robin* focuses on the woman's need to have a fulfilling relationship with her daughter. *It is Dark* is the story about the trauma the parents undergo when their young daughter is kidnapped and raped.

Jaya in the story *It is the Nightingale* is a career woman like Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. She has got an opportunity to go abroad for two years. She does not want to betray that she is excited about her trip. She is conscious that her husband would be full of resentment and anger. But her desire to have a separate identity is stronger and she leaves her husband behind without any tears in her eyes.

The protagonist in *My Beloved Charioteer* is an old widow staying with her widowed daughter Aarti and her granddaughter Priti. The three women of the three generations live together. But Aarti is cold not only towards her mother but also towards her daughter Priti. The mother cannot make Aarti understand anything nor can she break the wall she has built around herself.

It hurts the mother to see that Aarti can find comfort from her dead father and not from her mother. The mother feels that her granddaughter is her "Beloved Charioteer". She reveals her relationship with her husband to the daughter who has great love for her father. In the twenty five years they lived together, she looked after each and every need of his. However, she received no credit for this and is dominated by her husband all her life.

The Cruelty Game is the story about the streak of cruelty in children and the problem of widowhood.

Deshpande's novels are thus, centred around women. She presents the problems and conflicts underwent by Indian Women, particularly the middle class Indian Women. Deshpande says: "Ultimately fiction is life in imagination. Imagination super imposing upon life, reshaping it, tidying it creating some kind of an order out of the chaos. But you start with life. Imagination comes later. Life is the spring board".³

Indian women have to perform many roles at a time. Education and economic conditions have changed the attitudes. Economic independence becomes a requirement. The working wife has to face the problems of marital adjustment. She experiences a conflict of values. She is unable to combine the two roles, those of the woman in the family and as a career woman.

The Indian Woman is always adjustable to the situation. Deshpande being the author of the 70s' and 80s' understands the women well, and has presented a realistic picture of the middle class educated woman who is financially independent.

Deshpande traces out the tensions in which the Indian woman is caught which arise in such a transitional world. We find that Shashi Deshpande has minutely dealt with the phenomenon, arriving at the conclusion that women, after attaining all types of rights, are now struggling to adjust rather than to get free from the traditional world.

Shashi Deshpande's chief concern is the human relations, not the rationalised but feels, perceived and real, not the traditional but redefined human relations, especially the relationship between man and woman.

Deshpande actualises the conflicts faced by career women. She states that financial independence has not given them freedom completely. They suffer a lot at the hands of their husbands.

Her psychological analysis is an acceptable phase. She strips open the masks of men. She emphasizes the fact that male ego expects submission from wife but on the other hand requires the money from their wives.

The ideal man-woman relationship in the Indian context is so prominent that even the most brilliant and so-called forward male is incapable of looking at woman in terms of equality. That is exactly what Deshpande has tried to show: the women, even after resisting the social taboos want to submit themselves to their conventional roles.

NOTES

¹K. R. Srinivas Iyengar, *Indian Writing in English* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1973) 464.

²Meenakshi Mukherjee, "On her own items", *The Hindu* 7 May 2000.

³R. K. Dhawan, ed. *Indian Woman Novelists*, Vol. V, P 34.

RESTRICTIONS AND SARITA'S REMONSTRANCES

Woman occupies a central place in Deshpande's novels. Deshpande presents a subtle analysis of conflicting phases, underlying reasons and to some extent, to suggest a way out of it. Woman, today, plays diverse roles both indoors and outdoors. Still there is something that provokes conflict in her mind and makes her restless.

Shashi Deshpande's novels deal with the image of woman and tries to explain how the change has taken place in woman through the centuries. The stress is more on the 20th century change.

Woman in Shashi Deshpande's novels is initially an unconventional one, but death is not the way out for her. Deshpande's novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* focuses on woman's awareness of her predicament, her longing to be recognised as a person rather than as a woman and her desire to have an independent social image.

Sarita, the protagonist in the novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is born into a middle class family which strictly adhered to accepted traditional norms. Sarita from the onsets is perpetually reminded of her limits as a woman. From her childhood she is made conscious of the fact by her mother that a female child can never vie for the first place. Dhruva her younger brother, on the other hand is loved and adored by her mother Kamala.

Sarita expresses her wish to stay in her parental home throughout her life. Her mother opposed the idea. When she questions whether Dhruva can? Her mother silenced her by saying his position being a boy is different. Her gender is conveniently used to target her on several occasions. This hiatus shown by her mother enrages her.

Unfortunately at the age of seven, Dhruva died of an accident. He is drowned. The grief stricken mother immediately blamed Saru saying, "You killed him. Why didn't you die? Why are you alive, When he's dead?" (191).

Her mother denies her parental care and affection. When Saru opts to do medicine, her mother scoffs at the idea saying, "Medicine! Five, six, seven... god knows how many years. Let her go for a B.Sc... You can get her married in two years and our responsibility will be over [P 144]".

Saru marries Manohar, a boy of lower caste. Her parents are naturally unhappy with the idea and opposed it. Manohar seems to be affectionate in the early phase of marriage. But with her rising importance as a doctor, he virtually turns out to be a sadist. Sarita cannot put an end to her husband's tortures. She is terrified by her nightmares and pondered over them wanting to articulate her problems to a lawyer. But again her feminine sensibility stood in the way of her doing so.

Manu's male ego is hurt by her rise in status. After the fire accident, Saru is for the first time taken cognizance of and reverentially referred to as a lady doctor. When they go out, the nods and smiles are for

Saru and he is relegated to the background. Thus the benevolent, cheerful husband by day turns a lecherous, libidinous rapist at night. Saru becomes a mute sufferer wallowing in self-pity and choked silence.

Manu is not in a position to afford money for her higher studies. Saru gets it from Boozie, her teacher. On the day of the formal opening of her consulting rooms, she turns her back on Boozie. When Boozie questions her, Saru replied that she is worried about her reputation. She uses Boozie to be a successful career woman. But she is afraid to throw to the winds the limits that are already established for women.

Saru tries to get away from Manu. She wants someone to help her in extricating herself. She cannot endure her husband's tortures. She wants to express her displeasure against her husband's sadistic attitude. But she is unable to bring herself to talk about it. She keeps herself silent, during the hours of sheer torture. Considering her children in the next room, she is conscious of the fact that she is a wife and mother. Her every move against her husband proves to be a failure. Vern Bullough observes:

"The very word woman... emphasized [a] passive anonymous position. It derives from the Anglo-woman separate from wifhood. As individuals, with few exceptions, women did not account. They are mothers, wives, daughters, sisters.¹

Madhav's mother is another totally submissive character. She is afraid to talk to her husband about her own son. When Madhav mentions about his mother to Saru, he explains that she is old fashioned and what is more Madhav's mother is blamed for the younger son Satish's disappearance. The father refused to eat anything that she cooked. To Madhav and his mother this is a form of cruel punishment. Saru immediately thinks of the woman in the Sanskrit story: "Now she thought... Who wrote that story? A man, of course. Telling all women for all time... Your duty to ME comes first. And women, poor fools, believed him" (207).

Saru's mother on the contrary seems to be a domineering woman. She never speaks to anyone after Dhruva's death. In fact Saru's father and mother rarely speak to each other. She never eats with them. She herself did all the chores at home and always sits alone in kitchen and eats her food. Devoted as she is to her son Dhruva, and so devastated is she with his death that she ceases performing pujas and functions in her house.

As a mother she proves to be an authoritarian figure. In her role as a wife and mother she proves to be good but her rejection of Saru, her own daughter portrays her as a feelingless woman, in short a tyrant. But Mai-kaki who knew both Saru and her mother Kamala told Saru of her mother's illness. She never tells anyone about what is happening to her. "The amount she ate... I tell you, a sparrow would have eaten more. Your father never noticed because she never ate with him" (108). Her mother refuses to forgive her on her death bed claiming she has no daughter and that her

son is dead. Her limitations as a woman centre around her own family with more affection for her son as women are inclined to. But after Dhruva's death, there seems to be no affection for anyone or anything.

Regarding her friends Smita and Nalu, they are poles apart. Smita, married, lost her identity and in fact surrendered completely. Her husband renamed and called her Geetanjali. As a typical married other hand, chooses to remain a spinster. She has attained an air of dignity. But not having entered matrimony she has a tough attitude to life. Smita envies both Saru and Nalu for their ability to earn, to be financially independent. Saru could have told everything to Smita, but Smita in spite of her children, is a child herself. To Nalu communication is impossible, for, to her Saru's problem is a part of women's problems.

So, Saru cannot disclose all to Smita and Nalu. Besides, limitation as a woman silences her into a form of submission. Saru's meeting with Padmakar Rao brings to focus another type of woman through Padmakar's wife. Padmakar says: She can't talk about anything but servants and the children and prices. I earn enough, but she's perpetually trying to economize. She never has her food until I go home and have mine, she cooks just what I like, and she never calls me by my name (132).

Nalu invites Saru to deliver a speech to her students. Saru at home carefully prepares the discourse. She plans to speak that women should always be inferior to their husbands and to insist upon this factor as a limitation for women. But instead she speaks about careers for women. She is thus forced by her sensibility and psyche to be silent on the matter. Saru's feminine psyche becomes the arena of several warring forces. She is torn between her obligation to her profession as a doctor and her duties to her family as a housewife.

Saru shows her contempt and resentment bravely against her mother. But after her marriage with Manu, she gives herself up fully and unconditionally to Manu to love him and to be loved. But then she realizes her mistake and scorns the very word love. Saru says, "It was so much easier for women in those days to accept, not to struggle, because they believed, they knew, there were nothing else for them. And they called that Fate" (P.70).

Saru loves her children so much that it is because of them she can do nothing against her husband, Manu. She tells Baba that Abhi refuses to go to bed until she covered him with his blanket. And Renu would not go to school unless she is at the door at the moment of her leaving. Saru showers her love and affection upon her children Renuka and Abhijit, which she fails to get from her mother as a child and as an adult.

Mavshi, a woman she likes much during her childhood seems to have changed after years. The old woman speaks to Saru but not with the same earlier care and affection. She lives in her own world with her complaints and indifference to everything. In their old

age, women are always anxious about everything. They become cantankerous and churlish. Deshpande portrays all the women characters in the novel in a realistic manner.

Limits for Indian women established earlier is in existence even today. Saru endeavours to be a successful one. She has won the battle of becoming a successful woman. But unfortunately, she is the cause for her husband's failure. Saru realizes her mistake only later when she reviews at her father's house the reason for her husband's sadistic attacks against her. Thereafter she understands that $a+b$ is not equal to $b+a$ in life.

Her endurance itself teaches her the limitations. The nightmares Saru is subject to, makes her distressed and induces her to think of women in the past. The feminine self as envisaged by Deshpande seems a fusion of the polarities of acceptance and rejection; flexibility and rigidity; fantasy and reality; rebellion and reconciliation.

Saru's revolt against her mother proves to be a successful one for her though temporarily. But when she hears about her mother's death, she feels that her mother has taken away victory for herself. And she slowly comprehends and comes to terms with conditions of women in Indian society. She finally submits herself, which shows her limits which in turn are the limits of every woman.

Saru's protests begin right from her childhood after Dhruva's birth. Dhruva always called her Sarutai. Saru protests Dhruva for calling her Sarutai. Saru cannot withstand the gender difference shown by her mother. After Dhruva's death she becomes fully aware of her mother's hatred against her. Saru's determination to excel others is always seen in her nature. This is also a reason for her dissent. Saru in spite of her mother's disapproval proceeds with her higher studies. She also marries a low caste man against her parent's wishes. Each act of rebellion she does is to oppose her mother who appears to her a very rigid woman with her own silences and anger nurtured against Saru. She accuses Saru of having caused Dhruva's death. Saru feels tormented by her accusation and experiences anguish and guilt.

Saru's marriage with Manu is a romantic dream come true. She thinks of Manu as the ideal romantic hero capable of loving her with an intense desire for her. But soon she gets disenchanted with their shabby way of living. All Saru can do is to demur against the fact. When she becomes a successful doctor, her husband turns out to be a sadist. Saru's guilty conscience also makes her a rebel. Saru slowly starts coming to terms with the guilt in her that she is responsible for her brother's drowning; her mother's death and for her husband's fiasco.

Every time when she decides to talk to Manu, she cannot because of the guilt in her. But as an educated, emancipated woman she cannot put up with her husband's torments. She thinks of her grandmother, - deserted by her husband. Her grandmother told her that it is her fate. And Saru feels, "If only I could say that. My

luck. My fate. Written on my forehead. Will that help me to accept, to passively endure?" (P. 70).

Saru cannot take everything lying down dismissing the disappointment and setbacks in her life to be fate-originated. May be she is partially responsible for what has gone wrong in her life. She says, "This wasn't something that had just happened to her! It was something she had helped to happen. If not for the children..." (P. 70).

In her father's house, Women come to meet her not as Saru but as a lady doctor. They list their complaints. She thinks of those women as stupid, silly martyrs and idiotic heroines. For, to her they are destroying themselves for a meaningless modesty without caring for their own ailments. This makes Saru angry, wanting her to break free of the traditional norms.

Saru had sworn that she will never make her husband a nobody as her mother did. But it happens in her life. She turns away from him regarding him to be a failure. This resentment impels him to act as a monster. When her mother protests against her education Saru retaliates, "I'm not talking to you. I'm not asking you for anything. I know what your answer will be. No, forever a 'no' to anything I want. You don't want me to do anything. You don't even want me to live" (P. 142).

Her strong dislike against her mother turns into a terrible disgust even after her death. When her father says he is fasting, she did not know the reason. She knew of the reason for fasting only from Madhav. And when her father tells her to have her dinner she says, "Just because it's Dhruva's birthday, and because he happened to die, must I punish myself all my life like you do?" (P. 180). Her doubts and guilty conscience determine her actions. After her mother's death which she comes to know from Prof. KulKarni, she never wears the earrings given by her mother during her pre-marriage days.

Saru prepares a harangue for Nalu's students. But she declaims the discourse, plans and rehearses. She has prepared a speech of acceptance for tradition bound beliefs and practices that women should be always inferior to men. But without being conscious of it she delivers a talk on the career woman. She discovers it after hearing a loud applause from the girls. She cannot bring herself to voice against the restrictions.

Saru's remonstrances are not directed against others but also against her own self. Her conscience reminds her that she is responsible for her brother's death. She is mortally worried of her daughter Renu, who resembles her mother in silences and withdrawals. She feels that Renu should also learn to disagree with the existing taboos as she has in the past.

Though she wins the battle of protest against her mother she fails to express her displeasure against Manu for his sadistic attacks. All her silences and withdrawals prove to be a failure. So, she is virtually trapped in a cage. Wanting to rebel and at the same time endure the insults meekly.

While Smita, Nalu and Saru exchange addresses, Saru notices that Smita has changed her name to Geetanjali. Nalu says that Smita has completely surrendered herself. Saru emphasizes that she has changed her name and lost her identity. Saru's objections are seen almost against all characters but in different forms.

Saru says, "Everything in a girl's life,... was shaped to that single purpose of pleasing a male" (163). Saru resents her husband who is Janus-faced. Saru cannot comprehend Manu's behaviour. She wonders how a man could be so polite during the daytime and a monster at nights. But she is unable to bring herself to discuss or even articulate her resentment openly. Saru even thinks of easing the situation by opting to give up her job. But Manu wants her to continue since he needs the money. He does not want to go back to the shabby way of existence they are used to in the past.

Saru's earlier protests end up in the utter destruction of Manu's male ego. Her dissent against her brother ends with his death. But it still existed in herself. Saru, on thinking of her mother feels that she should not be like her. She declares, "If you're a woman, I don't want to be one" (P. 63). Saru resents the idea of being a woman. She is against all the traditional beliefs and age old customs. She rather seems a radical.

Saru shows her disapproval against caste barriers too. While speaking to her, Madhav utters the word clean. Saru thinks that being a Brahmin he is talking in that fashion. Saru thinks, "I never was a Brahmin in that sense. I hated all of it, the meaningless rituals, the rites, the customs. They seemed to stifle me. Was that why I got out? Or was it because I met Manu?" (31).

As a new woman Saru challenges the age old traditions, customs and beliefs. Her refusal to conform on the one hand leads her on the path of success and glory. But at the same time, she is aware of her nightmares, which makes her realize that she is the root cause for her own sufferings. Saru shows her disapproval also through silences. When Saru sees the photograph in which Dhruva is sitting and she standing by his side, she notices the hurt look on Dhruva's face. She then remembers the day on which the photograph is taken. She remembers that she must have pinched him. That is why; his face has a look of hurt in it. With Manu too, after every sadistic attack she chose not to talk to him. She says, "I should have spoken about it the very first day. But I didn't. And each time it happens and I don't speak, I put another brick on the wall of silence between us" (96).

Saru raises an objection to her baba when they talk about Dhruva and her mother. Saru did not do it intentionally. She is aware of some sort of uncertainty within her. Her mother said: [...] Daughter? I don't have any daughter. I had a son and he died. Now I am childless" (196). Her mother's cruelty towards her is abominable. In spite of her illness, she silently cursed her. Her protest may be a form of hysteria for she has

lost her only son. She bursts out saying, "You killed him. Why are you alive, when he's dead?" (191). Again she shows her resentments by her silences. This silence is damaging to Saru. Her mother opposed her marriage to a low caste man. She says, "I know all these 'love marriages'. It's love for a few days, then quarrels all the time. Don't come crying to us then?" (69).

Her remarks of dissent finally turn out to be a prediction of Saru's future. Both Saru and Manu protest against each other though not verbally. Manu has his resentments against her but chooses not to reveal it for he needed the money. At the same time he cannot accept the glaring fact that he is a failure. So he chooses to assert his masculinity by physically assaulting Saru at nights. Saru, on the contrary, experiences humiliation with everyone of Manu's attacks. She cannot talk, for the children are in the next room and what is more he behaves in normal fashion during daytime. Saru also feels guilty for reducing him to a failure. Saru in her path of progress reduces Manu to a zero. She almost forgets his existence.

Saru's mother's protests are mostly directed against her rebellious daughter. It took the form of her refusal to equip her daughter with higher education. To Saru the recipient, her mother loves her son Dhruva only and that she the daughter is a nonentity. The need to be economically independent forces her to antagonize her mother. She finally wins the battle of wills and join the medical college. The same economic condition drives her to Boozie for financial assistance. She again wins and becomes a successful doctor with the help of Boozie. The gestures are not the result of service mindedness, but signs to prove her to be a successful woman. In a fit of rage, she protests against Manohar who cannot afford the money. All her dissents end up with her professional success.

She is perhaps unaware of Manu's resentment initially. She does not comprehend it perhaps basking in her new found recognition and success. With his first monstrous attack, she comprehends the rage in him. But she cannot quarrel with him and instead she shows her demur silence. Her anger cannot prompt her to reveal the reason. When the opportunity presents itself in the form of her mother's death, she grabs the opportunity to depart for her parental home.

Saru dislikes Dhruva since he is given more importance. Her resentment against Dhruva is so intense that she even pushes him from their Baba's lap. When she is asked to give the reason, she is cold in her reply. But she realizes later that she has a strong affection for Dhruva, that even after his death her tongue always slips when she calls her son Abhijit as Dhruva. Saru's protests however undergo a sea-change finally. For, she experiences guilty consciousness with her son's faults. She feels that she has made the children suffer by the inflated ego. Her brief departure from her husband and children and her consequent sojourn at her parental home helps her to do a bit of honest self-introspection.

NOTES

¹Vern Bullough. *The Subordinate Sex: A History of Attitudes towards Women* (New York: Penguin, 1973), P.3

TRADITIONAL IMPEDIMENTS AND INDU, THE NON-CONFORMIST

Shashi Deshpande's novels deal with the image of woman and try to explain how the change has taken place in woman through the centuries. The stress is more on the 20th century change. The woman in Shashi Deshpande's novels is initially an unconventional one, but death is not the way out for her.

Roots and Shadows is a novel which explores the inner struggles of Indu, the protagonist. The writer very artistically juxtaposes two sets of women in the Indian society, the conventional and the unconventional. The conventional set is represented by Akka, Narmada Atya, Sumitra Kaki, Kamala Kaki, Sunanda Atya and Padmini. Domestic life and the work patterns evince the concept that woman should be subordinate position to man:

Day and night woman must be kept in subordination to the males of the family: in childhood to the father, in youth to her husband, in old age to her sons.... Even though the husband be destitute of virtue and seeks pleasure elsewhere, he must be worshipped as God.¹

Against this age old setup of woman's life is placed the new one represented by Indu, an educated modern young woman. She views and reviews the concepts of self, sin, faith, love, etc. She has visions and revisions of her ideal of detachment and freedom and tries to achieve them. She tries to see and listen to the voice of her conscience and revolts. She demurs against the age old customs.

Indu, the protagonist has been told that as a girl she should be weak and submissive. The women who represent the older generation insisted on this submission and acceptance upon her. As a child, she is told the right method of serving food. When Indu refused to conform, Old Uncle says, "Why not, Indu? There have to be some rules so that life can have both dignity and grace. We can always find measures of freedom within these rules" (15).

Akka, the indomitable childless widow kept everyone under her control. Akka did not permit her to meet the boys and cultivate friendship with them. She is told that a woman's life has no choices. Indu, on seeing Mini her cousin, feels that she is not permitted to choose and that Mini simply bowed to the wishes of the elders in the family. Indu says, "To her, it was marriage that mattered, not the man" (4). When Indu refers to her husband by his name, Sunanda-Atya told her has akka been alive she would have got angry and also added that the gesture shortens a husband's life. Indu ridicules it and mocks at their prayer to Tulsi. But ironically, she loves her

husband Jayant very much and virtually wants to be with him always.

Her mocking and ridiculing is a facade and like every other woman she loves Jayant with intense desire for him. Except Indu, all the other women characters in the novel obey the older generation or at least conform to their dictates. "To get married, to bear children, to have sons and then grandchildren.... they were still for them the only successes a woman could have" (116).

Indu is projected against all the other women characters but she too is in chains. Indu confesses her love and need for Jayant. She confesses:

When I look in the mirror, I think of Jayant, when I dress I think of Jayant, when I undress I think of him. Always what he wants. What he would like. What would please him. And I can't blame him. It's not he who has pressurised me into this. It is the way I want it to be. [...]. Have I become fluid, with no shape, no form of my own? (49).

Indu's father, on one occasion talks of having met Jayant. When she asks about Jayant, he says, "Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful" (92). But Indu expects him to say that Jayant is pining for her. Similarly, when Naren tells her that he is going back to his work, Indu feels like a "deserted, abandoned child". Indu hates her womanhood, and tries to be a rebel, yet she has in herself abundant desires and thoughts like other women.

Indu tells, "Mini had always been very much of a girl, the way a girl was expected to be, helping the women with small odd chores from a very young age, waiting on her father and brothers and being generally docile" (122). When questioned, Mini says that she has to get married and she has no choice on that issue. Indu considers that it is the Indian way. A husband forever to be accepted.

Indu earlier laughed at those who imposed restrictions upon her. She has even sworn she would never pretend to do what she did not believe in. But her marriage with Jayant made her a meek submissive wife although she is careful to mask her dependence. And Jayant too wants her to submit. Unfortunately, Indu is aware of the fact that she cannot live alone away from Jayant.

Women writers writing in English present with understanding the dilemma which modern women are facing in a traditional society and how individualistic women are suffering because of broken relationships. Simone de Beauvoir aptly remarks: "The situation of woman is that she is free and autonomous being like all creatures – nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume status of the other".²

Indu cannot escape roots. For she knew that her career is nothing but a shadow. The roots are the limits inflicted upon her. She turns out to be a true version of what Akka remarked. Akka has scoffed at her marriage, "Such marriages never work. Different castes, different languages... it's all right for a while. Then they realise" (68).

Narmada Atya narrated Akka's marital life to Indu. Akka has been married to a man well past thirty and she was just twelve. Her mother-in-law made life hell for her. Indu understands Akka and the way she lived and it seems to be crucial to her. Knowing the real life of Akka might be a valid reason for Indu's change of attitude.

Even though she scorns the word 'love', she feels on one occasion that everything is same in the town. But the change is within her. This is because as Carl Jung says, "the mind of man or a creative writer is moulded by the racial memory inherited by all members of the family and thus connecting modern man with his primeval roots. This is exactly the same in Indu's subconscious mind. Vinayak-Kaka asks Indu whether his healthy girls are good advertisements for their father as a doctor. Kamala-Kaki, however, snorts loudly and says that they have to start looking for husbands for them in a few years. Indu knows that they are uttering in mock serious tones and blaming themselves for having only girls. Every woman in the family expresses her anxiety for having daughters and their responsibilities to get them married. Indu points out how, "Sumitra-Kaki's talk was another variation on the same theme" (62).

Indu feels that for a whole lifetime, the women patiently clear the mess with their bare hands and Kaki even ate off the same plate in which her husband has eaten earlier. For they are not allowed to raise their voice and that they have no choices. It is Akka, the only woman who dominates all others by her own likes and dislikes.

The whole family discusses Indu, being a heiress of Akka's money and jewels, happens to be the only woman sitting and conversing with all men of the family. Others speak among themselves. But they cannot speak in the gathering of men. Indu is aware of the limits. Indu states that Kaka resisted the idea of Narmada-Atya becoming a shaven widow. Indu perceives so: "She was a second class citizen in the kingdom of widows. The orthodox would not eat food cooked by her" (118).

When Kaki and Indu enter the puja room, Kaki hesitates at the door and asks her whether she is in a condition to enter the room. Indu knows what she meant and thinking of her childhood replies to the query. Indu tells that Sunanda-Atya's innocence has long since turned to guile. Indu remarks that as a child she has learnt that, being a female, she can neither assert, nor demand or proclaim.

Aristotle says that "the female is female by virtue of certain lack of qualities". While opening Akka's safe women of the family are in a state of excitement. On seeing the jewels of Akka, every woman indicates that it is for the daughters-in-law of the family. This reveals their greed for money and jewels. When Atya tells Indu that she has forgotten to put away the pearls, Indu retorts saying, "Let me wear them, Atya. Let me wear them until they tear them off me" (142).

Indu is aware of the traits of all women in the family. They are always keen about money and jewels. No one

has a true love and affection. Indu tells Naren that they told her to accept even defeat with grace because she is a girl. They say that it is the only way for a female to live. Indu declares: And I...I had watched them and found it to be true. There had to be, if not the substance, atleast the shadow of submission. But still, I had laughed at them, and sworn I would never pretend to be what I was not (158).

Indu also conveys that the girls in their family are left to their mothers and a daughter is exclusively the mother's business. Naren's mother Saroja is a good singer. But Akka, the dominant family tyrant forbids her from learning music. She says that a girl of a decent family cannot sing before a group of strangers and there is no need to learn it from an outsider. In fact all the women characters are put in a corner by Akka. But she fails in her venture with Indu. Being an educated modern woman, she learns later that Akka is a strong lady. And that she has understood very little about her life and attitudes.

It is true Indu despises the old house which seems to be a trap but the voices, the sounds, the smells, the members etc., have become a part and parcel of her existence. She hates Akka for her domineering nature. Later, she herself takes the place of Akka, for she has been made the heiress of all of Akka's money and trusts. Indu raises her protest from her childhood. As a child, she is told the right method of serving food. Indu, once changes the pattern in a contrary mood. As the results are catastrophic, Indu tells her Old Uncle and cried out, "Why can't we do it any other way? Why always the same way?" (14). Indu being a determined girl, she always wants to be free and independent.

Indu resents Akka, the aggressive family tyrant. Indu is the only family member who shows her disapproval for Akka directly. Everyone in the family is scared of Akka. But Indu tries to assert her individuality. When she studies in the college, Akka does not allow her to meet the boys and to talk with them. When Akka asks her about talking with the boy, Indu retorts her by saying, "And we were just talking. Is that wrong?" (74). Indu mocks at Atya's idea of not saying one's husband's name as it shortens life. She also ridicules that women's way of circumambulating Tulsi to increase his life span. Indu vehemently raises the banner of protest against Akka and she finds the whole family a hindrance for her progress. As a consequence, she leaves her parental home and marries Jayant a person of her own choice. Her resentments against Jayant however are in the form of silences.

Indu hates working in a women's magazine. She states, "Women, Women, Women...I got sick of it. There was nothing else. It was a kind of narcissism" (78). Indu declares that she resents her womanhood because it has closed so many doors to her. Indu wants to assert her individuality and at the same time, she resents being a woman.

Indu scorns the very word love. She feels, "It seems to me an overworked word, overburdened by the weight we put upon it. I love a book, a word, a sari, a curry, a dog, a child, a man" (88). She scorns it for love has no place in her life. There is only betrayal around her. Indu is against the older generation. Her protests are often reasonable. Indu's love for her husband is intense. And she knows that she too to a certain extent resembles the traditional women in her love for Jayant. The only discrepancy is that Indu has the capacity to reason out unemotionally. She herself is the root, for she cannot openly raise her protests against Jayant. Since she loves him much she expresses her dissatisfaction by being silent. She is conscious of the fact that she cannot live without Jayant.

When the old woman Kaku who helps their family in the kitchen work speaks contemptuously, Indu states that those women have their own standards of judging people. She says, "To her I was just a childless woman" (116). Indu has a strong sense of objection against those women riddled with ignorance, prejudice and superstition. Indu signifies: "And, even more amazing was their ignorance of their own darkness. It was almost superb" (116).

Indu dislikes the idea of marrying Padmini or Mini to an idiotic man who has no education. Her disapprovals are not taken into account since Padmini herself has agreed to the offer of marriage with a fool. Indu looks upon their old house as a trap and family as a large group of people with conflicting interests. She has evaded from it to achieve completeness and freedom. By marrying Jayant, she considers that she can achieve complete fulfilment. Earlier, happy but she later realizes that Jayant is in no way different from other men and demands her submission. She utters that silence is the gift which her marriage has given her.

On one occasion, Indu's father tells her that he has met Jayant and that he is wonderful. Indu disagrees in a silent manner. She feels that Jayant and herself have no true communication at all. Their love for each other is not complete.

As an emancipated woman Indu has no regard for caste and all the elaborate rituals. She feels that they are meaningless. While discussing Mini's marriage, Indu expresses the misgivings about her cousin being tied down to a stupid man. When Madhav-Kaka says that 2+2 makes 4, Indu says, "Oh, that equation is fine for Maths. But not for humans Madhav-Kaka. You're leaving out that great incalculable human emotions" (99).

When Kaki and Indu go into the small puja room, Kaki asks her whether she can enter the puja room. Indu said "yes", and she thinks of her girlhood. Indu has raged against the rules when she is a girl. She declared: "I won't be a girl then [...]" (). Indu has been a questioning girl right from her childhood. Indu's refusal to bow down to Akka perhaps has made her the heiress of all Akka's trust. It displays Akka's knowledge of

persons. She understands Indu and her nature who alone has inherited her power and courage. Indu learns about Akka's married life from her Atya. Ever since she hears the story she thinks of Akka's life and grasps the fact that she is not a woman she has always thinks of. Indu's hatred and oppositions against Akka has thus come to an end.

Indu tries to reason out each and every action. Indu does not believe in love. She feels, "It's a big fraud, a hoax, that's what it is" (157). She implies that self-interest, self-love are the basic truths. She mentions that she saw "Devdas" with some friends. She adds, "They sobbed when he died for love. But I could have puked. A grown man moaning and crying for love! God! How disgusting!" (158).

Indu's affair with Naren might be silent approval against Jayant. Earlier, Indu states that for her, it is one man, one man only. But the same loyal little rebels against it because of her inner psyche and emotions.

Indu is impatient with the women who patiently clear up the mess with their bare hands after each meal. Indu remarks, "And women like Kaki even ate off the same dirty plate their husbands had eaten in earlier. Martyrs, heroines, or just stupid fools?" (67). When Kaki mentions to Indu that she has become a woman and for four days she is unclean, Indu for the first time feels an immense hatred for herself. Thereafter, she resents her womanhood until she meets Jayant.

Indu has been protesting strongly against the "they" in all the conversations. Indu says, "They" refused jobs; 'they' refused us promotions; 'they' refused us admissions; and now 'they' are failing us in our exams" (137). She retorts angrily: "Can you disown your inheritance? We are burdened with the sins of our ancestors who, with their arrogant assumption of superiority, had made other less than human" (137). Her dissents always emerge from strong emotions and rationality. Indu being an educated woman desires to live heading her conscience. According to her, one should live obeying one's conscience. One should act what one speaks.

Indu's disagreement is mainly because of their conflicting interests. When Indu becomes the sole heiress of Akka's trust; She asserts, "I would dominate, as much as Akka had, but more discriminately, more judiciously. It would not be my likes and dislikes, but merit that would count" (144).

Indu's acts of rebellion has been partly successful and partly failures, but she has achieved some sort of individuation. Earlier, she has dissented the family and left home. Later, she silently displays her resentment and returns home. She never gives much importance to Jayant's letter and stays in her parental home to settle all matters regarding Akka's trust. Through her protests Indu asserts her individuality to a certain extent.

G. D. Barche has compared the plight of Indu to the role of Sisyphus. In the under world Sisyphus is compelled to roll a big stone up a steep hill, the stone

always rolled down and he has to begin all over again. The punishment is meted out to him for revealing the designs of gods. This legend is also symbolical of the vain struggle of man the pursuit of knowledge. G. D. Barche says:

Indu, a central character in *Roots and Shadows* shares the fate of Sisyphus. Her crime is to reveal the long hidden inner world of women in general and Indian women in particular. She is suffering in our world and her suffering is deeper and deadlier than Sisyphus' as he was to roll up only one stone, while she is rolling up many, viz., the ideal of independence and completeness, the concepts of self, sin, love, the ideal of detachment and freedom, and so on.³

NOTES

¹Sarabjit Sandhu, "Introduction". The Image of Woman in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande (New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1991) 7.

²Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, trans H.M.Parshley (London: Penguin, 1972).

³G. D. Barche, "Indu: Another Sisyphus in Shashi Deshpande's Novels," Indian Women Novelists, ed. R. K. Dhawan (New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1991).

RECTIFICATION THROUGH SELF-REALIZATION

The protagonists in the novels "*The Dark Holds No Terrors*" and "*Roots and Shadows*" have many similitudes. Sarita and Indu despise their parental homes. Both the heroines represent the ideal woman who sheds her 'I'. They show a strong disapproval for the established traditional norms.

The novels begin with their visit to the parental home. "Nostos", the Greek word meaning return home describes aptly the situation of Indu and Saru. Fearing that their continued stay would stifle their progress in their road to self-understanding, they come to their parental homes, the home which they dreaded as teenagers.

Sarita dislikes her mother. The deprivation of parental care and affection drives her to marry Manohar, a low caste man. She has seen a cleft in happy married life. She notices that Manohar cannot assert himself. She is conscious of her position as a lady-doctor, for it has an air of dignity about it. This individuation of Sarita makes Manohar a sadist. Sarita realizes that a+b is not equal to b+a. She comes to scorn the very word love. She declares: Love... how she scorned now. There was no such thing between man and woman. There was only a need which both fought against, futilely... turning into the thing they called love. It's only a word she thought. Take away the word, the idea and the concept will wither away (72).

P. Ramamoorthi notes:

The culture that created a Sita and a Gandhari has denied existence to woman except as a daughter/ sister, a wife/daughter-in-law, and a mother/mother-in-law. The Hindu society has denied woman the possibility of being a "SHE", a person capable of achieving individuation.¹

Indu, on the other hand marries Jayant, a man of different caste. Indu loves him intensely. But soon she perceives his desire for her submission. The truth is that there is no real communication between them. Indu too says that love is nothing but a big fraud.

Sarita and Indu resent being women. They look upon the biological functions an unpleasant one. The only contradiction is that Saru has two children and Indu has no children. They anticipate completeness, joy and happiness in their married life. But it turns out to be futile. Simone de Beauvoir has said that true equality does not exist even today. This is the actual occurrence in their life. This is a genuine fact regarding their life. Saru cannot openly retaliate against her husband because of her children. As a mother, she is devoted to her children Renu and Abhi. Indu is a traditional wife concerning her husband. She does only what she likes. Her love for her husband is so intense that she does not want to get away from him.

Saru recognizes that she is acting in the same manner like her mother. Indu too feels in the same way when she is made the heiress of all the money and jewels of Akka. They have a strong aversion for their family. Yet they cannot evade their inheritance. The women they dislike is living within unconsciously.

There are recurrent images of enclosure in *Roots and Shadows* as well as in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. Indu constantly speaks of the dark room where so many women have given birth and one of her recurring dreams is the subterranean passage through which she escapes and boards a bus to reach a deserted barren place. Saru is reminded of a room whose doors are closed whenever she looks at her daughter Renu. The image of the enclosed walls suggests the suffocation these women undergo not only in their parental homes but the homes they have chosen as their refuge. Sarita as well as Indu resent rituals. Sarita feels that she never thought of herself as a Brahmin. Indu ridicules the act of circumambulating Tulsi to increase the husband's life span. Sarita has affection for Madhav. And Indu helps Vithal because she nurtures goodwill for him.

The father figure in both the novels give the appearance of being a shadow. Sarita's father has no deep love and care for his daughter. He is a punctual man and has done his duties sincerely. But he has no special care for Saru. Indu's father on the other hand, is portrayed as an inconsiderate man. He has left Indu a six-month baby in their parental home and is leading a nomadic life. But both Sarita's father and Indu's father has given them a good education much against the family tradition and opposition from certain qualities. Unlike the mother figure in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and the mother-surrogate in *Roots and Shadows*, the

father figure in both these novels seems to be an understanding persona.

Indu's family consists of a 'large amorphous group of people'. From her childhood, Indu has looked at her Old Uncle as a refuge for her to take shelter. But Sarita has been feeling alone since her childhood. After Dhruva's death, the house is virtually silent and she has no one to talk about her worries. Sarita's mother Kamala even in her deathbed claim that she has no daughter. She has not forgiven Sarita. But Akka, the dominant left all her mother-surrogate of Indu left all her money and jewels to her. She has a perfect understanding of Indu's nature and in this manner drew her back to her roots. Indu has been shown as a determined girl from the early phase of life. In the case of Sarita, Deshpande portrays her with some kind of fear from her childhood. Sarita and Indu are afraid of the word 'fiasco'. All their endeavours are to present themselves as successful women. Their stay in their parental home is ephemeral. They come to terms with the existing conditions. Indu comes to know about Akka's life. And she understands not to judge others by her standards. Her psychological conflict provides her uprightness. This encourages her in accomplishing things. Saru, on the other hand accepts her predicament. Saru has undergone a sudden awareness that *the dark holds no terrors*. She realizes that the horrors and terrors are always within us. Prema Nandakumar writes: 'Sarita cannot forget her children, or the sick needing her expert attention; and so she decides to face her home again'.²

Schopenhaur says, "Woman is by nature meant to obey". In 'Hamlet' Shakespeare easily dismisses it as, "Frailty thy name is woman". The successful career woman Sarita and Indu cannot come to terms with their husbands, Manohar and Jayant. Sarita surrenders herself completely. But Indu, to some extent asserts her individuality. Indu has learnt to see the very meaning of life. She decides to go back to Jayant. Sarita learns that neither her home nor her husband is her refuge. She apprehends that he is her own refuge.

Saru's self-discovery emerges partly from her anguish and partly from her guilty conscience. As the novel focuses on both the past and present in equal terms, Saru's self-discovery is made clear. From the beginning of the novel, Saru broods over reminiscences of her past life. Saru's protests against her mother and husband prove to remain unsolved because she realizes and accepts the irrevocable fact that she is partly responsible for their sorrows.

Saru a 'successful doctor' in day time and is a 'trapped animal' at nights. Her husband is a sadist. As he is a mediocre lecturer, people ignore him. He cannot bear the fact and he asserts his male ego through his sadistic attacks on Saru. Saru in their early married life did not notice it. Then the truth dawns on her with her increasing self-importance. She states, "But perhaps, the same things that made me inches taller made him inches shorter. He had been the young and I his bride.

Now I was the lady doctor and he was my husband" (42).

Saru's love for her children is always within her. She hates her husband and went to her parental home. Even then, she has Renu and Abhi in her mind. But she desires to remove all emotional ties which will stand in the way of her self-discovery. This consciousness of her guilt keeps her mute. When Renu and Abhi fight against each other, Saru thinks of her own rebuff to Dhruva, her younger brother. This provokes her to disclose many facts regarding her life. Regarding her husband she feels that it is she who has helped him to behave cruelly. She now discovers: "a+b they told us in mathematics is equal to b+a. But here a+b was not, definitely not equal to b+a. It became a monstrously unbalanced equation, lopsided, unequal, and impossible" (42).

Saru finds herself as a two-in-one woman. She is torn by her inner psyche and her outward reality as a successful doctor. In her college days, on seeing Boozie, she thinks, "I had learnt it too, to create an image of myself for the world, to live within it, hiding my real self so resolutely that at times I forgot myself it was just a façade," (88). Saru observes herself as a house full of unclean things, never cleaned and never opened. She expresses in distress that she cannot tolerate herself.

She then ascertains that there is something in the male that is destroyed by female domination. Dhruva has become a creature full of terrors by the domination of his mother Kamala and his sister Saru. Yet again this influence made her father a cipher. Saru also has done this obviously. Her repudiation of Dhruva turns him to a 'vengeful ghost'. Saru feels that, had her mother shown her care and affection, she would not have married Manu. She says, "If you hadn't fought me so bitterly, if you hadn't been so against him, perhaps I would never married him" (96).

Saru learns later that he has done it, for since finding he has an aversion for himself. She knows that she has lost the external female dream of finding happiness through a man. She says, "It would never come alive for her again. Too soon, I lost it too soon, she thought. And it was like a silent mourning wail inside her" (124).

Saru on saying 'My Children' thinks that it is too possessive. She feels, "The act of birth can be cruelly deceiving, making you imagine you have some claim on the human you bring into the world" (164). May be, Saru visualises her mother whom she thinks as always trying to control her. She feels that she has wronged her mother and hence the suffering. In her relation to Dhruva, she knew why he came to her to escape from the darkness. She scorns the eternal relations. She realizes that she is the wrongdoer. Her cruelty to her brother, mother and her husband makes her feel guilty for what she has done to them.

She has to carry those ugly and unbearable burdens within herself until her death. She discovers herself to be an unsympathetic, unloving daughter, sister and wife.

Her earlier flights from reality gave her happiness, but it has not lasted for ever. Everything as she recognizes later is all done by her nonconformist nature. After her arrival at her father's home Saru did an honest self-appraisal. To certain extent she finds herself to be a reason for her frustrations. She understands herself and her mother, brother and husband. She knows she can confront reality. Her sense of guilt and defeat enables her to face reality later.

Saru says, Dhruva died before knowing dark has no terrors. She herself understands that the dark no longer holds any terror for her. For, the darkness and terrors are inside us which terrifies us. Saru realizes the meaning of her mother's words: "that's what all of us have to face at the end. That we are alone. We have to be alone" (194). Saru wonders, whether the eternal cry of 'my husband', 'my wife', 'my children', 'my parents' are all doomed to be a failure. She declares herself as the undutiful daughter, the unloving wife and the guilty sister. Her self-realization helps her in her decision in confront the actual situation.

Saru perceives all her faults against Manu only after her departure from him. Her conscience is too intense and so she says: "But there can never be any forgiveness. Never any atonement. 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" (217).

Her sufferings made her apprehend that if she has left it to them to arrange her life, her father may have helped her in solving her problem. Saru's rebellion against traditions ends up in her decision to accept the existing reality. She identifies herself finally when the sacred job of the medical profession dawns on her. She knew she cannot abscond for she has the terrors within herself. Saru's inner psyche torments her. She is torn between her obligation to her profession as a doctor and her duties to her family as a housewife. Saru's conflict is every woman's conflict between the desired and the imposed; the willed and the unwilled. Her education makes her recalcitrant and militant. It makes her reluctant to accept the unreasonable and the irrational.

Saru's arduous journey in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is an initiation into the mystery of human existence. She realizes that parental home is no refuge. Neither her father nor her mother can provide her shelter. She is her own refuge. The parental home prefaces the protagonist's comprehension of the intricacies of human life. Saru learns to accept reality. As she admits her faults and defeats, she decides to return to her husband Manu. She trusts her feminine self: "And oh yes, Baba, if Manu comes, tell him to wait. I'll be back as soon as I can?" (202). This is declaration and assertion which her profession gives strengthens her not to evade from the darks and terrors.

Indu leaves the family full of hatred for it and especially for Akka, the assertive family tyrant. She marries Jayant, a man of her own choice. She says that

she has rejected the family and has drawn a magic circle around Jayant and herself. But then she knew that alienation could not be the answer. She says, "I am alone"...they seem to be the most poignant words in any language" (10). Indu wants to be loved and to be happy. She finds for herself that such demands seemed to her an exercise in futility. Indu appraised of Akka's life of her mother-in-law's house and it is then she realises she has no right to judge others. Indu's marriage with Jayant has not given her happiness. She feels that marriage makes one so dependent. She says, "This is my real sorrow. That I can never be complete, in myself" (31).

She states that her marriage has taught her silence. Her marriage has also taught her deception. She reveals to Jayant only what he wants to see and she tells him only what he wants to hear. She has always hidden her responses and emotions as if they are bits of garbage. They have even avoided the thought of having their own children. Indu declares: "I will have no child that is not wholly welcome" (38).

Indu finds herself becoming an ideal woman. She feels, "A woman who sheds her 'I' who loses her identity in her husband's" (49). For she did what, Jayant likes. She thinks that she has become a fluid with no shape of her own. Jayant takes her submission for granted. Indu tells Atya there are only two types of people in the world. They are the givers and the takers. And Indu rightly refers to Atya as a giver.

Indu recognizes that she submits herself to Jayant only to avert conflicts and to exhibit to her family that she is a success. She declares:

The hideous ghost of my own cowardice confronted me as I thought of this... that I had clung tenaciously to Jayant, to my marriage, not for love alone, but because I was afraid of failure. I had to show them that my marriage, that I, was a success [...]. Which meant that I, who had despised Devdas for being a coward, was the same thing myself. I had killed myself as surely as he had done (159).

Indu observes the word 'love' to be an overworked and overburdened word by the weight put upon it. She marries Jayant to achieve completeness and joy. But to her shock and surprise she realizes it to be futile one. She mentions that Jayant and herself may achieve complete happiness and at the same time she cannot fantasise. Her desire to assert her 'I' dies out. Indu herself utters that she never had had a child so far and that to care for anyone too much is a pain and punishment for ever. Indu aspires for a life of detachment. This is because she likes Naren who has lead a life of detachment. She remarks, "Will I never reach that stage... no passions, no emoticons, an unruffled placidity?" (108).

Indu strives to hard to realize the cause that destroys their marriage life. She feels that it might be her self-abnegation. She is aware of the fact that her sense of assurance is crushed in the presence of Jayant. When she expresses it to Jayant, he calls it "nonsense". The

truth is that there is no real communication between them. Even the idea of love which she herself initiates makes her realize the actuality. She declares: I had for sometime loved Jayant. But between the idea and the reality there is an immeasurable distance. To see, to feel a real man was so far removed from the idea of love as it was to me then...a small crack in the perfection (83).

She looks down upon marriage as a trap: "A trap? or a cage? [...] a cage with two trapped animals glorying hatred at each other" (61). She is not happy with Jayant. She herself toyed with the idea of leaving Jayant and living by herself. But the irony is that she loves him passionately and that she cannot live away from him.

She wishes for detachment. But she claims involvement. When Naren tells her that he is going for his work, Indu experiences a sense of abandonment. Indu has a conflict within her inner psyche. Indu comes to realization about Akka after knowing her life. She recognized that Akka is a strong person and she shouldered the whole family. As she has proved to be indomitable like Akka, Akka has chosen Indu as the heiress for all her money and jewels. Indu too realized it and understands the strength lodged in her being. Indu realizes what her *roots and shadows* are. She knows that one cannot be away from inheritance. One cannot evade one's own responsibilities. According to Indu, one should listen to the dictates of one's own conscience and be true to one self in speech as well as action. Unfortunately she herself fails to do so. This made her see herself as a sinner – causing deep suffering and anguish.

Indu noticed that the house itself is a trap because it binds her to the past and so she has to move away from it. She says that she is clean as if she has cut away all the unnecessary, uneven edges of herself. She asserts that she is free. Indu learnt that she should not hanker after detachment. She tells, "Detachment... it was for the dead, not the living" (186).

The parental home which she resents once has now become a shelter or a refuge. And Indu gains her maturity there. Finally, Indu decides to return to her home, where she and Jayant lived. All her search for happiness earlier has ended in futility. Now she has learnt to see not only the possibilities of her own life but the very meaning of life itself. She comments, "I felt as if I was watching life itself... endless, limitless, formless and full of grace" (184). This realization helps her towards her reconciliation with her husband Jayant.

Indu tries to listen to the voice of her conscience and revolts. But, unfortunately, she fails in her efforts either due to tradition or because of fearfulness. Bhatnagar says, "In the end, comes realization that freedom lies in having the courage to do what one believes is the right thing to do and determination and the tenacity to adhere to it. That alone can bring harmony in life".³

Indu's new efforts also end in failure as they are rooted in adultery and dishonesty. She is always in a chaotic state and so she cannot arrive at a final solution.

She is tormented by her inner psyche and her feminine sensibility. She knows her roots as well as shadows. She finally decides to go to Jayant after all her deepest thoughts. Have been put aside, she goes to Jayant with the vain hope that things will change. Her mind says: “[...] go back to Jayant. What kind of a life can you build of a foundation of dishonesty[...]. Now I would go back and see that home could stand the scorching touch of honesty. Nevertheless I knew I would not tell Jayant about Naren and me” (187).

It is her parental home which makes her realize, what her roots are, what her freedom is, what her moral responsibility is, her relationship in complex situations and her different roles. She knows now that one can never exchange roots with another. She takes a firm decision regarding her job and life. It calls for compromise to tradition on her part. It is her awareness of the futility of her autonomy. Indu confronts her real self and she knows her roots. She is capable of taking decisions for herself and for others.

NOTES

- ¹P. Ramamoorthi, “My Life is my Own: A study of Shashi Deshpande Woman”. Indian Women Novelists. Ed. R. K. Dhawan, (New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1991).
- ² Prema Nandakumar, “The Seventies and After”. The Post-script chapter in K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar’s *Indian writings in English* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1983) P. 821
- ³O.P. Bhatnagar, “Indian Womanhood: Fight for Freedom in Shashi Deshpande’s *Roots and Shadows*”, *Indian Women Novelists*, ed. R. K. Dhawan (New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1991).

SUMMATION AND CONCLUSION

Shashi Deshpande maintains a unique position among the contemporary, upcoming Indian writers in English. As Meena Shrivadkar notes: “Writers appear not to have paid much attention to the recent phenomenon of the educated earning wife and her adjustment or maladjustment in the family”.¹ Deshpande’s novels deal with the Indian middle-class women’s turmoils, convulsions and frustrations and their response to them all through silence as a means of communication.

She has been somewhat influenced by English writers like Margaret Drabble, Doris Lessing, Erica Jong, Bronte Sisters and Jane Austen. Writers like Simon de Beauvoir and Germaine Greer have stimulated her writings and at the same time, she has also enjoyed reading Dickens and Tolstoy. She has delicately dealt with the problems of middle-class educated women who become the foci of her writings.

She is uniquely Indian and her use of Marathi words very evidently presents the customs and traditions of the people belonging to Maharashtra and Karnataka. For example words such as ‘Kaka’, ‘Kaki’, ‘Atya’, etc., are essentially Marathi words. Her language is noted for its transparency. She is basically Indian and writer for the Indians:

If you try to make everything easy for everyone, then, you end up belonging nowhere. So, I’ve left it at that – characters in their locales, without providing glasses for the western readers.[...] Also literature can be appreciated even without understanding every word of it – one can still respond to the core of it.²

Her contribution to the world of literature is the presentation of reality of the middle-class woman: “I realise that I write what I write because I have to. Because it is within me. It’s one point of view, a world from within the woman, and that I think is my contribution to Indian writing”.³

The projection of the women’s world in her novels is authentic, credible and realistic. She knows what Indian women feel. She does not want to be categorized with other writers of Indian Writing in English. Explaining her position, Deshpande says: I’m isolated – I’m not part of any movement and not conscious of readers to impress. [...] I’m an ordinary woman who writes sitting at home. [...] it has given me great freedom. I’m happy with this anonymity. Once you get publicity-conscious, your writing becomes affected. I’m truly happy with this freedom.⁴

Deshpande wants to portray the whole society in her writings; but somehow, as the characters take shape, the women characters turn out to be the protagonists. Her main concern is human beings. “I want to reach a stage where I can write about human beings and not about women or men”.⁵ The themes that find expression in Shashi Deshpande’s novels are: inner conflict and search for identity, parent – child relationship, and concept of marriage and sex. The theme of silence rooted in complex relationship between man and woman holds a great fascination for Shashi Deshpande. She deals with the inner working of the female psyche.

Shashi Deshpande’s protagonists are not very brave heroines but women struggling to find their own voice. The type of society that is picturized in the novels is patriarchal and male-dominated, where the wives are afraid of their husbands and cannot converse freely and frankly about the children going out of trace. Sons are given more preference compared to the daughters.

The Protagonists Sarita and Indu are portrayed as representatives of modern women. The limits, protests and self-discovery of the conventional and unconventional are viewed through the eyes of these heroines. Bala Kothandaraman makes it clear: The Unconventional are seen to suffer for their violation of accepted norms of society, or for questioning them death is the way out for them, unless their experience teaches them to subdue their individuality and rebelliousness and realize the wisdom of the traditional ways. The

conventional women suffer too, but their suffering is sanctified by the norms of Indian culture and particularly by that of a patriarchal culture.⁶

Except Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and Indu in *Roots and Shadows* all the other women characters are conventional. The conventional women have no say in the family and they are afraid of their husbands. They cannot even talk of their children to their husbands. They are appendages to men. These conventional women endure a different kind of suffering. Being educated women, both Saru and Indu reject even their caste and religious rituals. Their education and economic independence has not given them completeness and freedom. Their married life turn out to be a trap for them. Emotionally, they are dependent.

Shashi Deshpande's portrayals of these two roles, the orthodox and unconventional women are vivid and realistic. She presents the middle-class women in modern society in a lively manner. Deshpande deals with the conflicts and struggles of the modern women by penetrating through their inner psyche. The characters of Saru and Indu are scrutinized by their psyche.

By depicting the heroines as educated, career women Deshpande brings to light the rising importance accorded to education which moulds and helps them to reason out things. It is their education that transforms them into economically independent women and marriage that makes them 'a trapped animal'. Deshpande's point of view is pragmatic regarding this fact.

Deshpande has picturized the mother-daughter relationship in a matter of fact manner. Saru's hatred against her mother displays the generation gap between mother and daughter. In the case of Indu, she despises Akka, the Mother-Surrogate. Sarita and Indu demur against the older generation for their age-old social taboos. The rejection of parental home provoke them to marry a man of outside castes.

Deshpande exhibits the existing reality in man-woman relationship. They are not united spiritually. There is no love and affection. They are tied to relations. And it is not an eternal relation. Saru scorns love and states that it is only a need. Indu too scoffed at very word 'love' itself. For they are humiliated by their husbands. Manohar and Jayant need money and at the same time expect submission from their wives. Promilla Kapur thinks that the husband is mainly responsible for the tensions:

They like wives to take up jobs but dislike them to change at all as far as their attitude towards their roles and statuses at home is concerned and dislike their traditional responsibilities being neglected which results from their preoccupation with out-of-home vocation. Their attitude towards their wives being employed is found to be ambivalent⁷ (366).

Due to the frustrations of their second home, they return to their parental home. The home they despised earlier is a refuge for them. Indu learns about Akka from

Atya. She perceives the reason for Akka's domineering nature. The parental home also helps them to realize truths about themselves. They gear themselves to face reality finally. Promilla Kapur quotes Dr. Radha Krishnan while giving the reason for woman being submissive: "Centuries of tradition have made the Indian woman the most patient woman in the world, whose pride is suffering".⁸

Shashi Deshpande's novels are mainly concerned with the self-assertion and loneliness of women. Her chief concern is the human relations, not the rationalised but feels, perceived and real, not the traditional but redefined human relations, especially the relationship between man and woman. Saru comprehends her mother's deliberate talk of loneliness. This loneliness is a symptom of woman's condition and this awareness is the first milestone in one's journey into oneself. This enables her to come to terms with her mother's sayings.

They imagine that their mothers stifled their growth and so defy them. But when husbands began to stifle the very roots of their existence, they defy their husbands and find a way of their own, rejecting all overriding influences. Their fear of losing themselves in the dark mysterious universe is dispelled by their understanding that *The Dark Holds No Terrors* if one can believe in one's self and if one accepts the responsibility for one's life.

Shashi Deshpande thus brings out the existential predicament of women in India. These novels exhibits her observations of women in society. When interviewed, by Vanamala Viswanatha, Shashi Deshpande makes it clear by saying: "It all starts with people. For example, *The Dark Holds No Terrors*" came to me when I saw a couple".⁹

Deshpande's portrayal is realistic and she is objective in her depiction of the family, society and the protagonists' inner struggles. The dissents are step towards completeness. But, however, she is pragmatic and hence the heroines are moulded to be able to conform to the tradition and customs. Deshpande's heroines are educated women and are financially independent. Their financial freedom has not helped them to evade responsibilities. Their emotional dependence is stronger than their economic independence. They are also conscious of it. Shantha Krishnaswamy says:

Despite the changes in the norms, the variations in taste, in standards of judgement, the impact of western culture and alien mores, economic and emotional progress, she (woman) is essentially Indian in sensibility and likely to remain so¹⁰.

Women can reason out things. But they cannot evade the traditional trap. Even if they endeavour to free themselves, their own conscience does not leave them free. For, the roots are the same, they cannot build a fence around them.

Sarita and Indu are aware of the utter futility of their autonomy. Indu says, "I felt as if I was watching life

itself... endless, limitless, formless and full of grace" (184). This reveals her reconciliation. Saru tells her father: "And Oh yes, Baba, if Manu comes, tell him to wait. I'll be back as soon as I can" (221). Simone de Beauvoir observes, "the more women assert themselves as human beings, the more the marvellous quality of the 'other' will die in them".¹¹

Deshpande's portrayal of the unconventional proves to be a successful one to a certain extent. Yet there is some conflict in the minds of the protagonists. Maria Mies says:

The nonconforming conduct of the women is not the consequence of an external necessity but of changed consciousness. They are not satisfied with the rhetoric of equality between man and woman but want to see that the right to an individual life and the right to development of their individual capabilities are realized in their own lives.¹²

This is exactly the reason for their compromise with the reality. The awareness of their status, quest, identity and individuality provokes a psychological conflict within themselves. As long as they are ignorant about their capabilities, they submit themselves. But when they realize the fact, they scoff at the established norms. Ultimately, they do not want to destroy the peace of their family and eventually surrender themselves.

Shashi Deshpande's theory is not the theory of western feminism. In fact, she has no theories; She rejects them and she gives her own assessment of the predicament of Indian women caught between tradition and modernity, between family and profession, between family and profession, between culture and nature, between assertion and confrontation, between freedom and loneliness, between self-aggrandisement and self-realization.

The author has used the device of knocking both at the beginning and at the end of the novel. The first knock finds them enter into the inner journey, the protagonist takes up with the help of her father, in arriving at the resolution. The knock at the end opens the new world of fearlessness, confidence and determination when the protagonist asserts, *The Dark Holds No Terrors*.

Deshpande uses the first person narrative in both the novels. The protagonists present narrative in both the novels. The protagonists present the world as they see it. There is no linear progression as the story moves in a circular motion — the past and the present and merge to provide a total picture. From the traditional roles of daughter, sister, wife and mother, Deshpande's protagonists emerge as individuals in their own right. From a state of passive acceptance they move to one of active assertion.

The narration in both the novels, shifts from present to the past covering the whole life span of the protagonists. All the time they are brooding over their fate, questioning themselves and ultimately trying to adapt themselves to the surroundings. The novels end in

an optimistic note with hope of some positive action in the future.

The portrayal of women, characterized by their temperaments, positions, situations beyond and sometimes within their control is quite fascinating. Shashi Deshpande has proved herself an able champion of womanhood presenting the women as they are, not as they should or should not be. This is the strength of the novelist.

Shashi Deshpande's views ultimately seems to be regular and conventional. She brings to light that the women are born-losers. They have to accept the fate finally.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled "Limits, Protests And Self-Discovery In Shashi Deshpande's *The*

Dark Holds No Terrors And Roots And Shadows" Submitted To The Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I express my gratitude to the Almighty for his choicest blessings to complete the dissertation.

I thank my honourable guide Mrs. Savithri Subramaniam, Lecturer, Department of English, St. Mary's College, Thoothukudi. The unflinching encouragement and excellent guidance, I have received from her throughout the period of study has enabled me to complete this research. It's my duty to express my gratitude to her.

My deep sense of thankfulness to Mr. S. Ravindranathan, Head of the Department of English, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, for guidance and words of inspiration.

My sincere thanks are also due to my parents and sister for the help rendered in all my endeavours.

I am indebted to all my friends and well-wishers for their endearing words and the enthusiasm shown towards my dissertation.

I cannot fail to express my deep sense of thanks to Miss. T. Yogawathy Muthu and Mr. C. Thiruvazhmarban for their excellent typing and neat printout of this thesis.

REFERENCES

¹Meena Shrivadkar, Images of Woman in Indo-English Novel (New Delhi: Sterling, 1979).

- ²Sarabjit Sandhu, "Conclusion" The Image of Woman in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande (New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1991) 45.
- ³Sandhu 46.
- ⁴Sandhu 47.
- ⁵Vanamala Viswanatha, Interview. Literature Alive 1.3, Dec.1987. 14.
- ⁶Bala Kothandaraman, Betwixt the Devi and the Devil: The Feminist Dilemma in Indian Fiction in English (New Delhi, Sterling, 1995).
- ⁷Promilla Kapur, The Changing Status of the Working Woman in India (Delhi: Vikas, 1974) P.366.
- ⁸Ibid.
- ⁹Vanamala Viswanatha, Interview. Literature Alive 1.3, Dec. 1987.
- ¹⁰Sandhu.
- ¹¹Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, trans. H.M. Parshley (London: Penguin, 1972), P.74.
- ¹²Maria Mies, Indian Woman and Patriarchy (New Delhi: Concept, 1980).
- Mukherjee, Meenakshi, "On her Own Items". The Hindu 7 May, 2000.
- Nandakumar, Prema, "The Seventies and After, "The Post Script Chapter in K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar's Indian Writings in English. New Delhi: Sterling, 1983.
- Ramamoorthi, P. "My Life is my Own: A Study of Shashi Deshpande's Woman". Indian Women Novelists. Ed. R. K. Dhawan. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1991.
- Sandhu, Sarabjit. "The Image of Woman in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande". New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1991.
- Shriwadkar, Meena. Images of Woman in Indo-English Novel. New Delhi: Sterling, 1979.
- Viswanatha, Vanamala. Interview. Literature Alive, Vol. 1.3, Dec. 1987.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Deshpande, Shashi *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. Delhi: Vikas, 1980.
- . *Roots and Shadows*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1983.

Secondary Sources

- Barche, G.D. "Indu: Another Sisyphus in Shashi Deshpande's Novels". Indian Women Novelists Ed. R. K. Dhawan. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1995.
- Bhatnagar, O.P. "Indian Womanhood: Fight for freedom in Shashi Deshpande's *Roots and Shadows*". Indian Women Novelists. Ed. R. K. Dhawan, New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1991.
- Bullough, Vern "The Subordinate Sex: A History of Attitudes towards Women" New York: Penguin, 1973, P.3.
- Dhawan, R.K., ed. Indian Woman Novelists, Vol.V, P. 34.
- De Beauvoir, Simone. The Second Sex. Trans. H.M. Parshley. London: Penguin, 1972.
- Iyengar, Srinivas K. R. Indian Writing in English. Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1973.
- Kapur, Promilla. The Changing Status of Working Woman in India. Delhi: Vikas, 1973.
- Kothandaraman, Bala. Betwixt the Devi and the Devil: The Feminist Dilemma in Indian Fiction in English. New Delhi: Sterling, 1995.
- Mies, Maria Indian Woman and Patriarchy New Delhi:Concept, 1980.