

Women Empowerment in “The Dark Holds No Terror”

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Abstract

Shashi Deshpande is one of the eminent novelists of contemporary Indian Literature in English. Western readers align her with Anita Desai. Indeed, both writers' work centres on women's lives in modern Indian society. However, only Deshpande lives and writes in India, and she explicitly addresses Indian readers not the international market place. She is a champion of the weak, the lonely, the defeated, the forsaken the unhappy women in Indian society. Her best way of creating a central character not only describes her own experiences as a woman, but also makes a complete study of women in society. This novel can also be called a treatise on condition of women in middle class families. Her view is that women suffer mostly due to male chauvinism, but the best part of her outlook is that she does not go for confrontation; she also shows the light of hope.

KEYWORDS: Feminine, Feminist, Male chauvinism.

Sarita the heroine of the novel, suffered without any fault of hers. Her life began with the serious charge of killing her brother Dhruva. She was the victim of fate. She joined the medical college by means of grit and hardwork. She had the prospectus of becoming a doctor and lived a life of happiness. But fate played a cruel trick with her. Manokar appeared in the college canteen, but he had nothing to with medical college. But fate sent him there she meets Manokar who reawake the emotion in Sarita's heart which she had suppressed with great effort. The result was that she gave herself to him. Sarita married Manokar and her life began on a great note. She was extremely happy when she found that Manokar's true and innocent love for her. But her happiness was short lived. Manokar treated Sarita cruelly at times and considered his wife as a thing of possession and a mere show piece which hurt her ego but she did not leave him in the final court. She accepts the psychopath husband with the determination to cure him of his illness as she went to give treatment to Smita who was getting fits of hysteria or epilepsy, which nobody knows. Her husband had fits of signed Psyche. Sarita emerged as a woman of determination and positive attitude, though she had seen the whole women world suffering without any cause. Through Sarita, Deshpande has revealed the inherent strength that lies in women. She had rightly observed that Perhaps, there is something in the male that is whittled down and ultimately destroyed by female domination. It is not so with female she can be dominated. She can submit and yet holding something of her in reserve. It is the faith in women's power of endurance that is fully revealed through the character Sarita.

Deshpande's novel presents the Indian women resistance to socialization. The author seeks to expose the ideology by which woman is trained to play to play her

subservient role in society. The concept and image of women had undergone a positive charge. Deshpande points out that no society can ever progress without who are an integral part of human civilization in its overall development. As Simone- de- Beauvoir observes that one is not born but rather becomes a woman. It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature which is described as feminine. The main objective of feminist ideology is the need to keep women economically independent. Deshpande she struggles of woman through Sarita to redefine their rule and identity in the light of the feminist heroines. She constantly keeps stress on their economic independence.

In the novel “ The Dark Holds No Terror” Sarita, after distancing herself from her family . She realizes that one had to grow up to know that the dark holds know no terror that the terrors are inside as all the time. We carry them within us and like traitors they spring out, when we least expect them, scratch. The denouement of the novel tells that women should not only be independent but they should also believe in their strength.

Sarita is a successful lady doctor. The novel tells her conflict that she has to face as a doctor and as a wife .During the time, she is popular lady doctor and in night she is a trapped animal in the hands of her husband, Manokar. As she had a better understanding of herself and others, it gives her the coverage to confront reality. The initial experience in her girlhood days influence saree heavily that she wanted to become a powerful dominant person in her life.

In her Sarita was a victim of circumstances and conventions of an orthodox and reactionary society. When her friend Smita was asked to accompany her to see the film with her family, Sarita was not allowed by her friends. As she was eager to go with her friend, it made her angry with her parents. She also decided to go out of the home for sometime without telling her parents. Dhuruva her brother who insisted or going with her was drowned. She went near a pool to save him, but she could not save him inspite of her best efforts.

However, Sarita was a girl of firm determination. She got first class in Inter-science which was the passport to the medical college. In Indian context, the tulsi plant by women is meant to increase the life span of their husbands. Here Sarita rejects these rituals. This rejection indicates her freedom or individuals and her capability to see her life independent of her past. After her marriage Saru is hurt to hear the words of her mother that,” let her know more sorrow that she has given me”. She ever thought that she is unhappy because her mother has cursed her. She makes efforts to understand her and even identify herself with her mother.

Saru is proved to be marginalized in terms of resistance because she could not resist her husband brutal tortures. The way she is silenced by the dominant ideology of her husband is prompting her to speak on behalf of herself. The patriarchal structure of our society had given the man a discretionary power to use the women is doubly marginalized. First she is a woman and secondly, she is inferior to man. Saru decides to assert herself and to fight her own to prove that she is not subdued to any man. She becomes her own master and resolves to use her fond truths to make a better life for herself. The novel has a particular significance for today’s Indian society in which the girls have to put up not only with social discrimination but also with the victimization by

their dear ones. The problem faced by Sarita is the problem of hundreds of such learned and professional women who become the victim of the social institutions. To overcome from all these social events like Saru, one has to be empowered. She offers new insights into Indian women who are moving slowly but surely from subordination to autonomy from Dharma to personal goals, sexual purity to sexual emancipation and from silence to speech.

The freedom of a woman to choose her own life partner or life goals is a modern value which leads ultimately to women empowerment. They don't escape from reality but they decide to fight against the social injustice done to them. The novel projects Saru's dilemma resenting the one slaughter on her individuality and identity. Her quest for herself, her desire to serve people by offering them medical treatment and her invincible will to search her identity; this makes her a vulnerable being. When she walked out of her husband's place, she pursued her career. My life is my own is the motto of Sarita's life. Sarita has lost faith in words which urge women to be independent and have an identity of their own. She realizes that men cannot tolerate women who aspired to be successful individuals. She identified the fear within herself. If she had the courage to emerge out of her cultivated conventional attitude she would be able to face life boldly. Herself awareness as a person with an identity of her own becomes the light of knowledge for her that drives out the ignorance within her.

Thus, she empowers herself to face the social challenges because of which she had been suffering and her involvement would strengthen the process of women empowerment. The novel ends on a note of determination by its protagonist who resolves to take the reigns of her life into her hands as an empowered woman.

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