

## **Translating the Ideas of Women's Torment in Sashi Deshpande's Binding Vine**

K.Saravanan<sup>1</sup>, T.Manason<sup>2</sup>, K.A.Agalya<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Asst Prof, Dept of English, Erode Arts and Science College, Erode*

<sup>2</sup>*Asso Prof, Dept of English, C N College, Erode*

<sup>3</sup>*Asst Prof, Dept of English, Sri Vasavi College, Erode*

### **I. Introduction**

Sashi Deshpande is a writer who exhibits her ideas in a very usual and casual way. Her works deal with the problems and issues of contemporary middle class women. Her heroines are sensitive, intelligent and career-oriented. She poignantly expresses the frustration and disappointments of women and describes their bitter experience in the male-dominated society. This novel 'The Binding Vine' shows how a woman of good education and earning could react to the so-called issues against women in the male chauvinistic society, thereby inculcating the spirit of solidarity among women and ushering in an assured secure world to all women. While depicting the agony of a wife, who is the victim of marital rape, she portrays the plight of women raped outside marriage and those who would rather suffer in silence in the name of the family honour. In her view, "male supremacist ideology" projects women as valueless who obtain value only by relation to men. She attacks the male view that women are 'natural' enemies who 'cannot, should not, and do not bond with one another'. She exhorts women to learn 'to live and work in solidarity', to bond with one another and to counter male supremacy. For the solidarity of women, all they need is to share with one another the vast reservoir of women's experience, culture and ideas. The *Binding Vine* is a work to be read as a projection of such ideas as women solidarity, female bonding and value of sisterhood in a male-dominated culture. Oppression and victimization are the commonness they shared for their bonding.

The novel is an analysis of several tragedies in the lives of different women. As a female writer, she carries her authentic female experience in an effective manner and drives home the point what makes women become hysteric, escapist, sacrificial goats. She also discusses the compulsions forcing them to take extreme decisions or to become passive recipient and shows how often women become the cause of female subjugation and suffering. The novel is a stock of women characters having different perceptions, causing difference of opinions among themselves. Their different perceptions caused misery and unhappiness to several intimately related women in their families. By the time their misunderstandings are cleared up, they eventually either overcome their own misunderstandings or move beyond them and establish a kind of solidarity among themselves. The novel, "The Binding Vine" occupies a special place in all the works of Shashi Deshpande in the sense that it presents especially the world of women. Though men are not entirely absent in the novel, they could make their presence felt only by the power they exercise over women, especially their wives and daughters. Women outshine men in terms of their clear perception of things around them.

Their infinite courage to cope with their surroundings and their ability to come to terms with their losses and to forge an alliance among themselves and learn to live on in the most hostile situations are an evidence of their supremacy over the male characters. They are unique individuals in their respective domains, may it be an affluent household or a broken family front. They express their displeasure if needed, air their views at the right time or even fight against injustices inflicted upon them by an oppressive patriarchal system when time demands. All of Shashi Deshpande's heroines have antagonism towards their mother". (3) There are five pairs of mother-daughters, namely Inni-Urmi, Mira's mother-Mira, Shakutai, Kalpana, Akka, Vanna, and Vanna-Mandira. Their relationships between them are based on some sort of misapprehension or dissention. Urmi's displeasure with her mother is deep-rooted in her separation from the latter at an early age. Right from her childhood days, she was sent to her paternal grandmother, she had no experience of the kind of mothering a daughter desires. But, Urmi is neither in a position nor in a mood to find out the cause of her displacement or her mother's predicament. Inni had an early marriage leading to early motherhood, and being too young herself, she was unable to take care of her child properly while trying to vindicate herself she explains to her daughter:

I was frightened of you Urmi. I was too young. I was not prepared to have a child. And you were not easy, you used to cry all the time, I didn't know how to soothe you.... Then he (Papu) decided he would take you to his mother. He didn't say any thing to me, he just took you away... I begged him, Urmi, I cried. Nothing could make him change his mind (199-200). (4) Urmi's father is a dominant patriarch and a domineering husband. In fact, he was the decision-maker and instrumental in her displacement. But, Inni, Urmi's mother had to bear the burnt

of the anger and blame of her daughter. It is she who had to survive the rest of her life to make up for the loss of love for her daughter by being an over-caring mother, bestowing too much affection over her indifferent daughter, whereas Urmi is of the wrong perception that her mother had deliberately sent her to her mother-in-law for her own convenience in her childhood. Inni's disclosure dispels the darkness of Urmi's misunderstanding: "A sense of being vulnerable and naked, as if some armour I've been wearing all these years-against what?-Has been taken off (200). (5) Lately, she disillusioned herself and feels frightened to think of her father's unkindness to her mother, who was carrying the child in her womb. She feels extremely sorry to her mother who was deprived of the right to decide what would be the best for her baby.

Urmi, in the end, understands her mother, but Mira holds her mother responsible for her unhappy lot of her married life. Mira's mother being dead at last, many of her (Mira's) myriad questions remain unanswered. As a college-going girl, she was forced into a marriage she was scared from the beginning because of her nurturing. Her apprehensions about womanhood were not baseless. None in the family ever bothered about her emotions or resentment and her unwillingness was taken as mere childish resistance. She had thought that, at this time, her mother would support, who could have refused early marriage for her daughter or suggested delay, thereby intervening and forestalling the marriage. Her mother is more of a caretaker than the decision maker of her family with little stand on important issues. She is an unassertive woman and always says, "Nothing is in my hands". Her mother's silence and passivity pushed Mira to her marriage to a man whom she could not love and who hardly understood her feelings. Mira led an unhappy married life—in a way, a repetition of her mother life. Shakutai and Kalpana come from the lower order of the society and they represent the working-class women. However, their relationship as mother and daughter is as same as their counterparts from the middle class families. Shakutai is a typical, protective and affectionate mother, who had nurtured fear in her heart since her daughter grew up physically; she hates her daughter being dressed up in a fashionable manner or her using cosmetic. She feels that it would unnecessarily attract male attention, "If you paint and flaunt yourself, do you think they'll "leave you Alone."? (146).

But, Kalpana's ideas of life are different from those of her mother. She was on the threshold of her youth and had her own income. She loved to dress well and move around freely, feeling subservient to none. Her mother's fears come true when Kalpana becomes the victim of her uncle's lust, brutally beaten and raped by him. Shakutai's husband had left her for the love of another woman; at that time Shakutai had three children. When Kalpana grew up, she thinks, her father had gone away from them due to her mother's failure. Shakutai recalls her daughter's accusation; "...She was furious with me! "You drove him away," she said, "you're always angry, always quarrelling, that's why he's gone" (93). (8) To a certain extent, the mother, Shakutai, is unhappy with Kalpana because of her stubbornness and unfeeling towards her: She never tells any thing. Didn't even tell me how much her pay was, can you imagine that? Me, her own mother, as is I was going to take her money away from her! I don't want any thing ...can you believe it, she gives her father money more easily, than she gives me. She doesn't grumble at that, even though she knows he will use it for gambling" (92). (9) According to Shakutai, Kalpana is a "self-willed" person; she refuses to be guided by her (mother's) dictates. And when she is struggling between life and death, she holds her mother responsible for what has happened to her. Shakutai, being a deprived and disappointed woman, fails to understand her daughter's sense of freedom, who had dreamt of living an independent life of her own, different from the oppressive and suffocating life of her mother and aunt. She even resented becoming their shadow she never wanted any of her mother's dreams "To make myself in your image/was never the goal I sought" (124). (10)

## **II. Conclusion**

Sashi Deshpande suggests here how sometimes a marriage makes a woman extremely meek and submissive. The novelist here ventures into a completely untouched subject of marital rape in Indian Writing in English. Mira has aversion to physical intimacy with her husband and still has to put up with his obsession for her. Thus, Sashi Deshpande suggests her that forced violation of a woman's body even in marriage can be as traumatic as rape, even though it is not placed in the same bracket.

## **Work Cited**

- [1]. Deshpande, Sashi. *Binding Vine*, Feminist Press. CUNY.2002. Print