

FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN SHASHI DESHPANDE'S "DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS" AND "THAT LONG SILENCE"

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ABSTRACT

Shashi Deshpande emerged on the Indian fictional scene in 1970s. She is an award-winning Indian woman novelist. She published her first collection of short stories in 1978, and her first novel "The Dark Holds No Terrors" in 1980. The present paper entitled "Familial relationships in Shashi Deshpande's "Dark Holds No Terrors" and "That Long Silence" attempts to explore various aspects of Husband-Wife relationship, Parent-Children relationship and other relationships. Saru and Jaya, the two pivotal characters, constitute the author's projections of protagonistism in this study.

KEY WORDS:- Familial, Emotional, Relationships, protagonistism

INTRODUCTION:-

Shashi Deshpande was born in 1938 in Dharward, Karnataka, India. She is the second daughter of the famous Kannada dramatist and writer, Sriranga. She obtained education in Mumbai and Bangalore. She pursued a course in journalism at the Bharitya Vidya Bhavan and worked for a couple of months as a journalist for the magazine "Onlooker".

"The Dark Holds No Terrors" her first novel centers on gender inequality as Saru, the protagonist, is repeatedly made conscious of her gender even as a child. Her thoughtless relationships with her parents and strained relations with her husband lead to her agonizing search for herself.

"That Long Silence" is an expression of the modern Indian housewife. The narrator Jaya, an upper middle class housewife with two teenage children, Rahul and Rati is forced to take stock of her life when her husband is suspected of fraud. The novel "That Long Silence" revolves around the relationships which constitute the Focus of the novel. After her marriage, Jaya is given a new name Suhasini, by her husband. But for Jaya it does not mean that she should give up her own real identity.

HUSBAND –WIFE RELATIONSHIP IN "THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS:-

It is said that marriage is the most problematic of all relations. In general, at the time of marriage many couples promise undying love, affection and romance. However, after a few months or a few years all these romantic assurances never get affirmed and, instead, love very often turns sour. Saru, the protagonist, grows up in a traditional Brahmin family where parental Care and favours go to the boy children only as familial heir whereas girls are meant only to get married off. Saru is so blinded by her love and romantic ardour for Manu that she cannot notice his declining present position as a lecturer in a third grade college. To her, he is still Manu of the college days, the smart young man who was budding poet, the secretary of literary magazine. In the beginning of their married life, Saru's happiness cannot be disturbed by the meagre income of Manu, the corridors smelling of urine, the rooms with their dank sealed-in odours, unfriendly eyes, men with lascivious stares. Saru thinks that her marriage to Manu fulfils all her desires.

The equilibrium of their marital happiness marriage loses its balance when Saru Climbs up the ladder of success as a lady doctor while Manu lags behinds Sulking. The main cause of failure in their marriage are

Saru's career, the hectic Schedule in hospital, which makes her neglect her home and children and the Inferiority complex of Manu. But at the end of the novel, Saru realizes that running away from Manu cannot be the right decision.

HUSBAND-WIFE RELATIONSHIPS IN "THAT LONG SILENCE:-

The novel revolves around the central relationship of the narrator- protagonist Jaya and her husband Mohan. The ups and downs in their relationship constitute the focus of the novel. After marriage Jaya is given a new Suhasini by her husband. But, for Jaya, it does not mean that she should give up her own real Identity. The indifference shown by her husband to her was a recurring process. He never bothers to show interest in anything, which reflects the streak of male Chauvinism in his nature. Though they have been married for seventeen years, with two children Rahu and Rati, they have nothing to show for conjugal Compatibility and understanding.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP IN "THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS:-

Fathers play an essential role in their daughter's lives. A daughter's relationship with her father is usually her first male- female relationship. But in this novel, from the beginning, we find there is no harmonious communication between Saru, the protagonist, and her father. She actually returns home, being unable to bear the sexual sadism of her husband. But, she would not express her feelings or a pain to her father. The father is indifferent and not supporting like a traditional Indian father. He enjoys the privilege of being the head of the family. As we know from Saru, he is not concerned with the problems of his own family members. His general attitude is one of callous indifference.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP IN "THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS:-

The mother and daughter relationship in this novel is based on gender inequality.

Usually mothers serve as a role model for their daughters. They provide examples of how to be an individual, a mother and a wife. In this novel, Saru is deprived of the motherly love and affection. She is just treated as a playmate and caretaker for her brother Dhurva. She is always ignored and neglected in favour of her brother. She is not given due importance. There is no good relationship between mother and daughter. Saru is always made to feel ugly and unwanted.

FATHER- DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP IN "THAT LONG SILENCE:-

Jaya's father is a modern and broad- minded person. He is remarkably free of the dominant sexist, patriarchal ideology. His attitudes and values play an important role in shaping his daughter's personality and career. Jaya's father in "That Long Silence" displays a loving support towards his daughter which inspires her growth as an individual. He is quite unconventional for a man of his generation. He had married for love, out of his community and flouted custom by shifting out of the ancestral home with his bride. This had been a major step for him, especially since he was his mother's favourite and, in those days, it was not customary to set up a nuclear family. Jaya had been deeply attached to her father. Her father not only supported her but also demonstrated his affection towards her. Her father even encouraged her Short temper, a trait considered unbecoming in a girl. Her western education had given her an unconservative outlook. Jaya's father is the most "feminist" among the fathers in Deshpande's novels. He had never displayed any kind of gender inequality towards his daughter. On the contrary, he had nurtured her to become an independent and individualist person. His support and guidance are influential in developing Jaya's fundamental attitudes and principles. Although he appears as a minor character in the narrative, he is instrumental in moulding her basic values and character.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP IN “THAT LONG SILENCE:-

In most Indian families, the girl child is usually left to the care of her mother, with the father rarely interfering in her upbringing or displaying his love for her openly. Like most mothers, Jaya's mother had always shown a marked preference for her sons and Jaya had grown up resenting this attitude. Jaya is always forced to feel that to mother Dinkar and Ravi are always the preferred child. This favouritism is perceptible through various incidents. She often tends to misunderstand Jaya. From callousness this feeling grows to hostility. She unfairly discriminates between boys and girls. She hardly cares for developing Jaya's personality and career. This attitude grows from her gender-bias against her daughter. But her father, unlike most traditional fathers, always makes up for her mother's indifference. Not only would he support her but he would also actually demonstrate his affection towards her. Since her mother, like most mothers in India, showered a preference for her Sons Dinkar and Ravi, Jaya was naturally attached to her father, who had participated in the freedom movement and suffered. Unlike traditional fathers, Jaya's father openly showered his affection for Jaya to make up for her mother's indifference.

OTHER RELATIONSHIPS IN “THAT LONG SILENCE:-

Most novels of Deshpande deal with the middle class joint family. We have a host of minor characters who weave various kinds of familial relationships apart from the basic human relationships. A host of both male and female characters who revolve around the protagonist are mostly flat characters. They are socially recognized as “other relatives” of the protagonist, distinct from her parents, husband and children. These other relationships are grouped as under:-

1. Grandparents of the protagonist
2. Uncles of the protagonist
3. Friends of the protagonist

The relationship between grandparents and daughter presented in That Long Silence is projected by flashback. Jaya, the protagonist, has a few scattered memories of her Ajji (parental grandmother) and other Ajji (maternal grandmother). Jaya remembers her Ajji as a stern woman who single handedly kept the family together. She was orthodox and dominating. She did not allow her sons to do what they wanted to do. She had not allowed Jaya's father to join

Gandhi Ashram. She did not approve of his decision to send his daughter, Jaya, to English school. Jaya also remembers her Ajji as a difficult mother-in-law to Shantakshi and shamed her into taking care of her youngest child, a hydrocephalic boy. Jaya remembers her other Ajji also as a dominating woman. She had thrown Makarandmama out because he had defied his family to become an actor and join the bad world of films. Jaya, the protagonist, sums up her relationships with both of her grandmothers:- “My two Ajji, two entirely different women, had been alike in the power they had wielded over their families”.

OTHER RELATIONSHIPS IN “THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS:-

After marriage, Saru becomes a successful lady doctor. She begins to enjoy superior financial and social status with the help of an outsider, Boozie. This creates an inferiority complex in her husband Manu who becomes a sadist, getting pleasure by insulting his wife and hurting her sexually. Boozie, her mentor, takes personal interest in her, not leading to any physical relationship. She has never looked for love beyond marriage. Her affairs with Boozie and Padmakar Rao are temporary substitutes for her unfulfilled marital life. She is not ready to live in dingy two room flat in a suburb area all her life. She wants a comfortable life. So she uses Boozie as a support to elevate her career. To Saru, Boozie is a handsome masterful man, with Commendable skills

LITERATURE REVIEW:-

Dr. Vishwanath: A study consists of essays by distinguished academics and scholars on a variety of topics. The book introduces the contemporary debates comprising the various aspects of Shashi Deshpande's novels: Rahul Singh in his research paper "Husband –wife relationship in The Dark Hold's No Terrors" opines that Shashi Deshpande has given a true picture of the

Society .Now I have no doubts at all in saying that she is a feminist.

Usha asserts "Shashi Deshpande through her novels tries to put forth familiar, economic and social problems in which the modern middle class woman is groping" Siddharth Sharma worked on the theme of relationships in the Shashi Deshpande' novels. He reveals Deshpande's sincerity and ability in voicing the concern of the urban, educated middle class woman. Sabitha Ramchandra tried to study the familial relations in the Shashi Deshpande's novels.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:-

The study employs various methods of analyzing the familial relationships Treated by the novelist in "The Dark Holds No Terrors" and "That Long Silence". A Systematic and analytical observation approach is adopted for the purpose. It comprises various elements such as narrative method, analysis of the characters ,the setting and situation and the familial relationships in the two selected novels (The Dark Holds No Terror & That Long Silence).The study relies chiefly on the original text, and lectures etc of the novelist, which are primary source for the study. Books, articles and journals are secondary source for the study. The internet is also a valuable source of reference and citation for the purpose.

CONCLUSION:-

The main thematic plank in the plots of Shashi Deshpande's novels is a middle- class educated woman caught between the modern trends and the traditional practices .The novel "The Dark Holds No Terrors" analyzes the complex relationship between Saru, a successful doctor, and her professionally frustrated and perverted husband . On account of her better job profile, there is a very obvious tension between them that subsequently leads them to separate from each other. In the novel "That Long Silence", Jaya , the protagonist, is so much confused about the whole life and the happenings around that she finds no other way but silence as her means of communication..

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