

# ADUMBRATION OF WOMEN IN SHASHI DESPANDE'S THE BINDING VINE

**Dr. Berlina A. Lopes**

Assistant Professor, HOD-Department of English  
KES' Shri Jayantilal H. Patel Law College, Mumbai (W)-67

## Abstract

*The sorrows and pains, anguish and agony, suppression and oppression of an Indian woman who is born and destined to endure throughout her life due to gender discrimination and marriage in Indian patriarchy have all been topics covered by Indian women novelists writing in English. The purpose of creating this article is to draw attention to the theme of a woman's powerlessness. The expectation from society is that a woman should always be meek, obedient, and docile, regardless of her role as a wife, mother, daughter, or sister. Shashi Deshpande's "The Binding Vine" aims to draw attention to the changes that our society is undergoing, yet millions of kilometres must still pass before these changes become apparent. This study additionally endeavours to critically examine the feminist claims made in the works of contemporary Indian women novelists. In analysing the books' shift in general literary sensibility, the study focuses on women's emerging consciousness and their struggle against a tradition-driven, male-dominated society.*

**Keywords:** slavery, subjugation, assertion, submissive, women's conditions

## INTRODUCTION

One of the modern era's pioneering writers is Shashi Deshpande. She has made a significant contribution to Indian writing in English by illustrating the psychological issues encountered by Indian career women. She addresses the centuries-long abuses meted out to women, which resulted in their profound, silent, and docile pain. In her books, Deshpande depicts how the heroes fight against it and attempt to find their own identities in the harsh environment of male chauvinism. She favors uprising in the necessary sector and degree rather than revolt for the sake of revolt. Shashi Deshpande's specialty has always been the Indian woman—her struggles and struggles against the backdrop of modern India. Her works tackle topics and themes that stem from women's positions at the intersection of a society that is transitioning from traditional to modern. She depicts the predicament of the educated, middle-class Indian woman who is caught between her personal goals and the patriarchal constraints that limit her with an uncommon level of sympathy and depth.

The Binding Vine (1993), written by Shashi Deshpande, is remarkably similar to her previous works in that it depicts the problem of the middle-class female protagonist in a world controlled by men, where she has limited opportunities to express her concerns. If one looks closely, the plot of this specific book seems remarkably similar to that of her previous works, yet a closer examination reveals some interesting differences. Every other book we read emphasizes the importance of the protagonist, using every other character to highlight her emotions and worries.

The present paper holds the concept of the representation of women characters in The Binding Vine, From the beginning of time, women have been the objects of male dominance and submission. In the patriarchal world, women's complete subordination and self-effacement are always taken for granted. She lacks a distinct identity, and neither the family nor society honor or acknowledge the sacrifice made in order to support the family. She therefore finds it extremely difficult to survive in a household that never recognizes the tireless efforts made by women to ensure the welfare of the family. Shashi Deshpande examines the concerns and difficulties faced by Indian women in the middle class today in his books. Her main characters are intelligent, astute, and extremely sensitive. Tears from her novels show how the characters incredibly overcome their sadness and despair in the patriarchal environment. The Binding Vine, a 1993 novel, describes how a working woman with education fosters a sense of community within her community.

The suffering of a wife who is raped in marriage is shown in the novel. The situation of women who are raped outside of marriage is also depicted by her. These women would choose to suffer in quiet for the sake of honoring their families. Lifelike characters are created by Shashi Deshpande. We cannot assert that she produces extraordinary, enduring female heroes. No. Her characters are regular women who deal with the ups and downs of life, become frustrated and despondent, but eventually come to terms with it. They are strengthened by the ultimate reconciliation they are able to attain after realizing life. When Urmi declares, "I am not going to break," (The Binding Vine, p. 19), we can see how strong she is. At the end of the book, Urmi no

longer looks like the weeping, bereaved Urmil we met at the start. The protagonist is not idealized by Deshpande. Her women are regular people.

### **Women Characters of “The Binding Vine”**

Three generations of women populate The Binding Vine's world. Similar to Deshpande's previous books, the plot in this one does not stop at highlighting the problems that the one or two major characters encounter; instead, the author's focus is on the entire group of women, and she firmly believes that the plight of women has not changed across years. The mothers of Mira, Vanaa, and Urmila are all from the first generation of women, along with Inni. Sulu, Shakutai, Urmila, and Vanaa make up the second generation. Characters like Kalpana, Anu, Urmila's daughter, and Mandira belong to the third generation. The story revolves around each of these ladies. Since Urmila is the central figure who unites them all, it is possible to gain a profound comprehension of each of these individuals. The female heroine of The Binding Vine, Urmila, is at the centre of the narrative. She is a college lecturer and the spouse of Kishore, a merchant navy member. The author has alluded to the actual liberation of women through the character of Urmila.

### **Urmil**

Urmil serves as the primary narrator and uses the first-person singular pronoun "I" to tell the tale. She is the main character, and Shashi Deshpande allows her the flexibility to express her opinions and develop. The novel begins with us meeting a grieving and distressed Urmil, who by the book's end finds strength and a positive outlook on life. This is the development of her mind. Though they are not wooden, the other characters struggle and are not given the opportunity to develop. They progress the novel's conceptual framework. The main character of the book, Urmil, is responsible for weaving together the narratives of Mira, Kalpana, Shakutai, Sulu, Vanaa, Priti, and Inni. The grief Urmil feels at the loss of her one-year-old daughter is what unites all the themes and feelings. Urmil becomes more sensitive to other people's suffering because of Anu's passing. It is nearly impossible for Urmil to shake the memories of her dead baby girl. She also understands that she has a duty to her son, who worries about her and begs for her love and attention. Urmil's views on women's rights are well-defined. She doesn't show off her feminism, but she says that the world should know about Kalpana's situation; she provides the media with the information, and she also wants to publish Mira's poetry so that women are given a voice. Although she is correct in theory, such a resolution is not workable in society. Women, in her opinion, suffer because they are unable to express who they are. One can vent their anger verbally, in writing, or through the media. Although the author withholds information regarding Urmil's success or failure in her endeavour to publish Mira's poems, Urmil is adamant about doing so. Living in a family and a community requires consideration, and Urmil cannot treat Kishore and Vanaa with inconsideration. This demonstrates her ties to her family and society.

### **Mira**

Kishore's mother, Mira, is also Urmil's mother-in-law. She passed away during childbirth, leaving her infant son alone. Her journals, poetry, and other writings, along with Urmil's observations on them, are the only ways her personality is shown. Using this method, Mira is brought to life as a sophisticated, well-read young lady who was well ahead of her time. She was a lively and gorgeous young woman who was married to a young guy who became so enamoured of her that he was able to ask her family for permission to marry her. Had Mira agreed to the marriage on male terms, which she refused to do, it may have been a joyful one. She felt unhappy with her husband's compulsive love and had her own beliefs about life. Although Mira enjoyed writing, she was hesitant to share her poems with others for fear of being mocked. Mira's journal post amply demonstrates her need to write, her anxiety at being laughed at, and her doubting of her morality. Can I write like this again in the future? After listening to him today, I'm certain that this is what I want to be able to write like. But I don't think I ever will be able to. Thank heavens, I never say this out loud. They'll make fun of me "(pp. 65–66). Mira found Venu's poems to be fascinating. The poet did not respond in a positive way. The standard male reaction was that women are not required to write. "Birth to children" is the purpose of their poetry (p. 127). This masculine perception of women being breeders irritates Mira. She even finds her mother's modest demeanour to be annoying, and she is adamant that she does not want to have her traits. Even with all of her rage, hopelessness, and anxieties, Mira was a very feminine woman. She cherished life and aspired to lead a vibrant one. She wrote with a persistent concern that she may stop being herself. It appears to be a premonition of sorts. Mira's love of life began when she got pregnant. She felt content as the "spring of life" stirred inside her. It was the excitement of almost becoming a mother. Although Mira was never content as a wife, she was content as a mother. Nevertheless, the author denies us the opportunity to learn this since Akka takes Mira's place after she passes away during childbirth.

### Shakutai

Shakutai is the most unhappy of the group. Her husband abandons her in her father's home shortly after they get married, promising to provide a better life. However, she soon accepts reality and finds that he is a passive, unimportant man. She resolves to work for her children's welfare after giving birth to three children in the interim. Her spouse leaves her for another woman in spite of her best efforts to keep the marriage going. She is to blame for everything that goes wrong in the household since her spouse left her. The reason for this is because in our culture, the woman is usually blamed when a marriage scatters.

### Sulu

Sulu, Shakutai's sister, has a traumatic past of her own. She is incredibly kind, loving, supporting, and helpful in great deal about her wretched sister. She was even prepared to take on the duty of raising Kalpana, but given her husband Prabhakar's intense yearning for Kalpana, it seemed unfeasible. Under intense coercion from her spouse, Sulu suggested Shakutai Kalpana's marriage to Prabhakar. Shakutai and Sulu themselves desired that Kalpana wed her mousaji, since they both knew that she would suffer for the remainder of her life if they didn't. Similar to what these women believed, Kalpana made the decision not to marry him, and as a result, the man she dumped mercilessly assaulted her. Personifying both love and submission, Sulu ends her life after learning of her husband's tragic act.

### Kalpana

Only after Kalpana's disfigured body has been transported to the hospital do the readers get to meet her. There's no way I'll ever get to meet her. Shakutai, the author's mother, is tasked with portraying her daughter. Shakutai's eruptions gradually influence Kalpana's character. She is the only one who tells us that Kalpana was independent, stubborn, stylish, and self-possessed. People who portray her as a corrupt young woman include the police officer and the doctors. But Urmi has some encouraging things to say. It paints a picture of Kalpana as a lively, youthful girl who cherished life. Kalpana thus materialises as a tangible reality. Kalpana had her own goals and aspirations in life. She exhibited bravery by shooing away Prabhakar's overtures, turning down his proposal of marriage, and announcing her intention to wed the lad of her choosing. She is punished for exerting her free will, harbouring dreams, and going beyond what it means for a woman to exist. Even though Kalpana is still unconscious, she sends out two conflicting messages to young girls: she might be a warning to some and a role model for others.

## CONCLUSION

She does not portray her woman characters stronger than they actually are in real life. Woman as presented by her is an incomplete self, a particle being. Her woman character is in need of someone to shelter her, be it her father, brother or husband. Shashi Deshpande's women characters are tolerant, obedient and submissive. Certainly they are portrayed ordinary middle class women in Indian Society, but at the same time a feminist awakening and resistance is visible and notable in their feelings and conduct. They are not aggressive, rebellious but tolerant silent, modest assertive but not subdued in any sense. Even in silence Indian women, as presented by Shashi Deshpande, asserts the issues indispensable for the liberation of woman issues relating to her education, financial independence and that control over her sexuality and the moral choice. Woman in general and the educated new Indian woman in particular have been on paradoxical position. She has been the key person, the master figure in the family; and yet she has lived the life of slavery, subjugation, suffering, suppression. However, now she has started becoming conscious of her rights and responsibilities, her distress, and destination. Women are victims of male lust and unwilling to report the case only for the reason that there are other sisters in the family likely to be married, reflects the plight of Indian woman who can't even go for justice. The characters whether conformists, non-conformists, introverts or extroverts, they present dilemma of Indian woman and expose the social evils amply and draw attention towards the injustice and cruelties against women.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Deshpande, Shashi. *The Binding Vine*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1993.
- [2] Prasad, Amar Nath. *New Lights on Indian Women Novelists in English: Part 3*. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2005. Print
- [3] Jaidev "Problematizing Feminism", *Gender and Literature*, ed., Iqbal Kaur, Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1992.
- [4] Kapur, Manju. *Difficult Daughters*. London: Faber and Faber, 1998. Print.
- [5] Sree, P. Sudha. *Difficult Daughters: Treavils in self-identity*. Prasad, Amar Nath, *Indian Women Writing in English: New Perspective*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons. 2005. Print.