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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

## SOCIO-PSYCHOANALYTICAL STUDY OF A WOMAN IN SHASHI DESHPANDE'S THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS

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#### Abstract

The proposed research studies the Socio-psychoanalysis of a woman in the novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* by Shashi Deshpande. There are some points which have been discussed and will help us to understand, how a woman think? How she gets emotionally and psychological depressed and tortured due to social issues in the present Indian society, which have been presented by Shashi Deshpande through her fiction in a literary form. She depicted the main causes behind the woman's exploitation in her novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, and exposed the face of patriarchy which is responsible for both men and women's psychological trauma. In the novel Deshpande depicted the marital rape through her protagonist, Sarita who is brutally raped by her husband. Deshpande portrayed in this novel man's egoism and sense of inferiority due to the growing social status of his wife. She also pictured in the novel the ill mind-set of the society regarding gender discrimination, suffering of a woman, in spite of being an educated and working woman. In this paper the study also shows the remedy to get off from the psychological trauma.

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#### Introduction:-

Shashi Deshpande emerged as a writer possessing deep insight into the female psyche. Focusing on the marital relation she tries to expose the practice by which a woman is taught to play her submissive role in the family. Her novels disclose the man-made patriarchal conventions and uneasiness of the modern Indian women in being a part of them. Shashi Deshpande uses this point of view of current social reality as it is experienced by women. To present the world of mothers, daughters and wives is also to present indirectly the fathers, sons and husbands, the relation between men and woman, and between women themselves, which is the created psyche of society. Her young heroines rebel against the traditional way of life and patriarchal values. Shashi Deshpande's first novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), which is divided into four parts, each part is divided into chapters. First three parts consist of eight chapters and the last one contains six chapters. The novel tells us a story of a woman who came back to her father's house after fifteen years, when she was eloped with her boy friend. It tells the story from end to first. This research deals with the socio-psychoanalytical study of a woman in the selected novel. The Socio-Psychological Theory asserts that individual and society are interlinked. This means, an individual strives to meet the needs of the society and the society helps him/her to attain his/her goals. Through this interaction, the personality of an individual

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is determined. Socio-Psychological Theory is based on two elements, social and psychology. Social means family, religion, wealth and society; and Psychology means feelings, thoughts, processing of mind's actions and beliefs, these elements collectively develop the Socio-Psychological theory. In Indian society male is very much appreciated than women. Women have to get ready meal for family members. They usually eat after the male family members. The remaining food is inadequate but they maintain their dinner. The novel presents the story of protagonist, Sarita's search for identity and her claim for equal opportunity to her brother and her husband. It is the story of Saru who thinks like a captivated animal, enthralled by her need to succeed at any cost. She needs to find someone who can take care of her. The hopelessness of her search becomes noticeable to her when she hears what her mother had remarked on listening to the end of the war in Mahabharata.

#### **Socio- Psychological trauma of a Woman as Depicted in the Novel:-**

Indian women have always been socially and psychologically demoralized, sexually occupied and biologically subjugated beside a male-dominant social set-up. Any effort by a woman to rise higher than the oppressive forces rooted in the middle-class margins has either been restricted mercilessly or ignored in the name of social dignity. Shashi Deshpande's focal point is on new Indian woman and her Dilemma, which a woman is facing in present Indian scenario. Girls are a silent part of a family and a society as well. What they think or feel about their social eclipse does not interest most writers or social thinkers. The novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* deals with the problems of career of a woman and her marital constraints. The circumstance in which Sarita has kept herself is rather unwarranted. The lack of perfect thoughtful emotions between husband and wife causes disturbance in domestic life. There is a blend of acceptance and rejection, flexibility and rigidity and more than all revolt if the occasion demands and compromise for peaceful life.

In this novel the novelist brings out unusually the socio-psychological problem of a woman and discusses it innovatively without crossing the barriers of art. The novel courageously addresses the feminist issues of marital rape, the professional woman who earns more than her husband and a mother's preference for her sons over daughters. The novel focuses on woman's thoughtful condition, her desire to be recognized as a person than a woman. She wished to have an independent social image in the society. Deshpande's fiction deals with the marginalization and silence of women. It realizes that the dark holds no longer than any terror for her, which is the creation of socio-psychology.

Saru is the main character in the novel who is an educated, efficiently independent middle class house wife. She lacks fulfillment as a woman, as a person and as a human being. The novel opens with Saru's entry in her parent's house after fifteen years. She left her father's home with swear about never to return to the house. But unfortunately, her relations with her husband become dreadfully strained as she returns for some relief. In the father's house, she gets a chance to think over relationships with her husband, children, parents and her dead brother, Dhruva. Saru feels ignored when her parents shower their entire fondness on her brother. She was a burden to her parents which was deeply rooted in her mind as a child. The turning point in her life is the unintentional loss of her brother by drowning. In all her life she is troubled by the recollections of her mother's condemning her for purposely letting Dhruva die by drowning. Saru's feeling of being unwanted is so sensitive that she begins hate to her own existence as a girl or woman. During her menstruation, she was treated like untouchable and pariah. Her strong disgust for her mother drives her to depart home for Bombay to search a career. Where she falls in love with a college friend Manu and marries him against her parent's desires. Later when her relations become stressed with Manu she doubts for having hurried into marriage completely. The initial years of marriage were complete paradise for Saru and Manu. Manu was her savior and the romantic hero. She stayed in one room in the apartment with the dirty background. The rooms were with their sealed door. But soon she realized that happiness was deceptive. Her achievement as well known Doctor becomes the cause of Manu's envy and his strained relations with her. He is painful with Saru's constant rise status in the society. Saru begins to hate this man-woman relationship which is based on need and attraction and not love. While her social and financial status rises gradually, there is an inverse decline in her marital relationship.

Meanwhile Saru finds in her teacher Dr. Boozie is a person willing to help her in setting up her own private practice. As Saru rises in her social and financial status, Manu remains an underpaid letter. Things take a horrible turn in Saru's relationship with Manu when Manu starts behaving in a beastly manner and begins to rape her. During the day time Manu remains normal but at night he turns into a wild lustful beast. Saru comes to know about her mother's death at this moment. Despite her vow never to return home, she does so. It (novel) tells the story from end to first. The chapter first, in part one, of novel starts with the lines:

It was the Krishna Sudama story that suddenly came to her mind. That, and the illustration which had accompanied the story in one of her school texts, showing a poor, ragged Sudama standing at the palace gates. As she knocked at the door, softly at first, then harder she wondered why the story had come back to her now. (15)

In these lines becomes clear that the novel is a psychological novel which starts from Sarita's psyche in which she reminds the story that she had studied in school text. She has a fear in her mind of non-acceptance of her in father's home, that is why she didn't paid to rickshaw driver until she knocked at the door and get response of her acceptance, because it was blowing in mind, if she refused to enter in her father's home then she has to go back by the same rickshaw. But the rickshaw driver started yawning at her for payment, stretched his arms during vacations. She frightened, and in her mind started to relate the yawning of rickshaw man as a misfortune for herself and was thinking, he is a different breed man as mentioned ". . . was he a symbol of the changes she could expect?" (15).

Then Sarita saw inside the house, but there was no any change, everything was the same as earlier, again she reminds that there had been a tulsi tree the only spot of green. She thought about her mother that she had died before her husband, raising questions in her mind, "wasn't that what all women prayed to the Tulsi for? For a moment she saw her mother standing in front of the tulsi, eyes closed, hands folded, lips moving." (15) This memory was as violent as an assault on her but she angrily rejects it. Sarita saw toward the wall, tall and colorful Hollyhocks which are ridiculously incongruous in that place.

Again raised a question in her mind, who could have planted them? This question pointed toward her that state of mind in which she thought, her mother is no more then who could be the next who has planted them and also in this unfitting way. Hence, it is apparent by all these things which relates to the society, are blowing in her mind as the part of her socio-psyche.

When Sarita entered the house, inside the house, the silence was palpable, throbbing and heavy. She felt herself enclosed with an astonishing immediacy, in the old atmosphere of brooding stillness. "As if something would happen sometime: not now, no, nothing now, but in some unknown future." (16) in this statement seemed she was still going under the fear of mis-happening in future, which is deeply rooted in her psychological agony.

Another stream of consciousness in Sarita's mind, when she was sitting before her father after admission in the house was thinking about the coming question or discussion from her father's side, as mentioned in the text:

'You came by the mail, I suppose?'

How safe, how comforting, to talk about trains . . .

Was it on time?'

. . . and whether they are on time. He hasn't smiled at me as yet. But when have we ever smiled at each other?

'Ten-fifteen.'

Yes, it was on time. May be a few minutes late.'

A few minutes more or less. Does it matter?

The familiar irritation, the familiar exasperation. To meet after fifteen years and feel only that!

Sarita goes to take bath, as she soaped her face and hand, in the same Hamaam as in the childhood. The smell of soap reminds her childhood's picture more vividly anything else, so far. After that she sat down on the Diwan, feeling all that one weary. She thinks and questions to herself, why it seemed so important to come here, and, at once? Then she remembers her son, Abhi's tear and his words like "I want to go with you, mummy. I want to go."(17) And also come in her mind the picture and questions of her daughter, Renu, like "Grandfather? What grandfather, mummy? I thought 'my grandfather was dead?'" (17) Here observed, how much sorrow and painful thoughts were blowing in her mind. When, Sarita was talking about her children, with her father. She told him that she has one boy and one girl, a right size of family, the right kind. Like the ads. A happy family. Healthy, happy, smiling and in colour. Then suddenly she recalls her son Abhi and his pains which he was telling to her, as:

My tummy is paining me, mummy. Too much.

Now, Abhi, remember, mummy is a doctor. You shouldn't try to fool her. Just because you don't want to go to school . . .

No, mummy, it's really paining me. Terribly. I swear it is. (20-21)

Then she also reminds her discussion with her daughter on her silences. Which has took place in between them, as:  
'Renu, what is the matter?  
Nothing.  
Why don't you talk?  
I don't feel like it.' (21)

By such points, it becomes clear that she does not happy even at her father's home without her children and she worried and careful about children. On one hand she runed away from husband's home escaping his brutality to get some relax but on the other hand she is much bother about her children even they are with their father, at her husband's house.

Furthermore, when her children threw chips into the boiler and struck a match. As they leapt up a hollow, hungry sound of the flames. When she saw at the flame her first thought went on the moment when she had heard about her mother's death. When she was thinking: "Who lit the Pyre? She had no son to do that for her. Dhruva had been seven when he died. She never said his name after that. Except that once . . . when I woke up sobbing at night and she called out . . . Dhruva? Saru?" (21) Here Deshpande depicted socio-psychological trauma of a woman about her mother's childless or son-less death even she was not happy with her mother in her life.

At her father's house, after escaping from her husband's house Sarita memorizes her girlhood when she was growing up from girlhood to adulthood and remembers the changes come into her body parts, they torture and agonize her. How she met with her husband at first time and what was going on in her mind at that time, now what it is happening to her. All these thoughts badly undermine her psychologically, which are the result of social issues. As it is mentioned in the novel, "I was an ugly girl. At least, my mother told me so. I can remember her eyeing me dispassionately, saying . . . you will never be good looking. You are too dark for that." (61) Here the novelist depicted Saru's state of psyche, that how much she got hurt by her mother's words which she couldn't forget after passing a long time.

When Sarita was standing in front of mirror, she was murmuring the words to herself those have affected her deeply, they are "I am ugly", then her mother had come to her and said "How many times must I call you? Looking at yourself in the mirror! I'll give you a certificate to say that you're beautiful. Will that satisfy you?" (61) Such harsh words badly injured and demoralized Sarita, and compelled her to hate herself. Sarita had only hope that she would grow up and be beautiful, as she says: "That one day I would grow up and be beautiful. I would be like . . ." (61) Here the point is, how much she was demoralized and depressed by these words of her own mother about her natural look which is not in her own hand, but society has developed in her such type of socio-psychological depression.

After the death of her brother, Dhruva, Sarita suddenly began to change. As she had been a skinny girl, with large knees darkened by the scars of myriad falls, and prominent elbows, seemed nothing could soften. Now she began to put up wait. Her figure began to burgeon. There is a softness, a tenderness and all over a strangeness. On this she was badly treated by her mother. What Sarita felt and how she started to hate herself due to her socio-psychological depression, as depicted in this paragraph, when her mother says to her: 'You're growing up.' And there was something unpleasant in the way she looked at me, so that I longed to run away, to hide whatever part of me she was staring at. 'You should be careful now about how you behave. Don't come out in petticoat like that. Not even when it's only your father who's around.

And it became something shameful, this growing up, so that you had to be ashamed of yourself; even in presence of your own father.' (62)

Here the novelist pointed out how Sarita is forced to live in her own family like a prison and feels distraction physically as well as mentally.

Furthermore, when her periods began, it was too fantastic, too frightful to be revealed to anyone, specially her mother. But she had no option except her mother to tell about it. Her mother told her about it. Older girls causally dropped hints, and there were women who were covertly and curiously looking at her, and asked her mother. Has she begun? Then Sarita thought it is something bad which is going to happen with her. What she was thinking and how much she was frightful as remarked in this passage:

I knew it was something that happened to all girls. But not to me! It was like death. You knew it was there, you know it happened to others, but surely it couldn't happen to you! I can remember closing my eyes and praying . . . Oh god, let it not happen to me. Just this once and no more. Let there be a miracle and let me be the one female to whom it doesn't happen. (62)

This passage clears, how much she was under depression and hated it. There was no miracle happened to her, it was torture, because she couldn't enter the kitchen or the puja room. She was forced not only to sleep on straw mat covered with a thin sheet. But a special cup and plate were kept to give food, in which was served from distance. Even her touch was seemed to dirtiness. When her mother said to her "you're a woman now" then she started to hate herself, as portrayed in the quote: "If you're a woman, I don't want to be one, I thought resentfully watching her body." (62)

When Sarita entered in medical college, she studied about anatomy and physiology, then become aware about all her body parts and come out of her psychological prison of fears and shames, as she says:

It was only when I began to study anatomy and physiology in my first year of medicine, that I was suddenly released from a prison of fears and shames . . . I was a female. I was born that way, that was the way my body had to be, those were the things that happened to me. And that was that! (63)

Now Sarita began feel psychological pleasure and satisfaction after studying anatomy and physiology in medical college, mentioned:

My breasts which had caused me agonies of self-consciousness earlier, making me feel everyone was staring at them, so that I longed to wear some kind of armour that would hide them from the world . . . now they became something to be proud. . . . To take in male stares and admiration with outward equanimity and secret pride. (63)

Sarita recalls the day when she met with her husband first time, in canteen. She noticed him a few times earlier. He was with some senior students and interns, she had recognizes him but had not dare to go and speak to him. That day he was alone and waiting for his friends to arrive. She wanted to talk with him but had not dare to speak, the conflict of consciousness and unconsciousness were blowing in her mind, which is seen, here:

I had to speak to him, 'you go ahead', I told my friends, 'I'll catch up with you in a moment. There's someone I want to say hullo to.'

I walked briskly to him . . . if I didn't do it now I never would . . .

trying to ignore my accelerated heartbeats, my clammy hands and dry mouth. Just extra adrenalin, I told myself.

'Do you remember me? I am Sumita's friend.' (64)

At last, the present situation compels Sarita to think about her decision which she had taken at the time of marriage and falling in love. She memorizes her psychological thought process of past, that reveals her psychological conflicts which torturing her and not have a clear thoughtful picture in her mind, about the situation, she is undergoing. She recalls that her husband, Manu had written a poem to her. But she was confused at that time to accept his love, because she had a fear of his rejection or anything of mishappening with her in future. What was blowing in her mind at that time is obvious in text:

. . . should love me seemed me more incredible. The fisherman's daughter couldn't have been more surprised when the king asked her to marry him, than I was by Manu's love for me. But the fisherman's daughter was wiser. She sent the king to her father and it was father who bargained with him.

While I . . . I gave myself up unconditionally, unreservedly to him. To love him and to be loved.

And still, for long the fear was there; the secret fear that, behind each loving word, behind each kiss, lay the enemy, the snake, the monster of rejection. Some time, some day, I thought the truth will out and I will

know I was never loved. (66)

After all, Sarita accepted Manu's proposal of love and marriage. Now, when she is brutally assaulted by her husband in sexuality, and run away escaped to her father's house, she realized it and all these thought process was again gusting in her mind. She memorizes to that moment when she considered it as a dark thought and took any noticed that time.

The same things coming into Sarita's mind which directly or indirectly are the parts of socio-psyche, and she is questioning to herself under psychological depression as pictured in the lines, "But there were the dark thoughts of dismal moments and I could forget them most of the time. . . . And he told me he loved me and told him I loved him too. And no one, I thought, has felt this way before. Not with this intensity anyway. Surely we were unique?" (66). Therefore, she is confused due to the psychological depression by comparing her present married life to earlier life, during the love and marriage time. It seemed very difficult to her, for taking any further design.

This novel also deals with the cruelty of a mother. It is a strange that in today's male hypocrite society, the mother is full of close minded conventional and a moral bounded. She prefers a son and the daughter has secondary place/status in the family. Saru's mother never forgives to her for being vigorous after her brother had drowned. She could not forget the touching effect of her mother's hysterical outburst. "You did it, you did this, you killed him... you killed him. Why didn't you die? Why are you alive, when he's dead" (62). It remarks a great impact of having male gender in the mind of Indian motherhood. The unsympathetic and inflexible societal environment has molded the consciousness of a mother as a woman.

There were celebrations at home at the birthday of Dhruva whereas her own much expected birthday passes off in silence. Her mind is filled with deep scars for her dead brother. Mother discards the existence of her daughter. This rejection by her mother fills the teenager Saru's mind with feeling of hatred towards her mother.

Saru begins to enjoy greater financial and social status after marriage. Both enjoy pleasant relationship in the society. Saru was only his wife. She assumes the role of a lady doctor. She accepted as her husband. The wife enjoys better social prestige. But it destroys their marriage. She feels that the human personality has capacity for development. The same thing that made her inches taller and shorter. This expression indicates the injury and disheartens the male ego of Manohar, which is also a kind of social-psyche created by patriarchal society. It reflects the patriarchal milieu in Indian Society. Manohar's sense of inferiority changes him into a sadist who insults, harasses and hurts her wife sexually. Manohar did not accept the superior economic position of her wife as a reputed lady doctor in the society. It reflects the male ego in the mind of Manohar.

In an interview with Saru when the interviewing girl happens to ask Manu innocently: "How does it feel when your wife earns not only butter but most of the bread as well?" (200). Saru, Manu and girl laughed it off as if it were nothing. This incident was very humiliating to him. He feels powerless. To gain his masculinity, he gives escape to his feelings through beastly sexual physical attack on Saru. Although he is a cheerful normal human being and loving husband during day, he turns into rapist to emphasize his manhood. In the other incident she undergoes this nightmarish experience. Prior to going on a vacation to Ooty while shopping Manu and Saru happen to meet the former college friend and his wife. During the talk, Manu tells his colleague that they were going to Ooty. When his colleagues express his inability and bad luck in affording such a vacation, the colleague's wife replies that he also could have afforded it, if he had too marry a lady doctor. A humiliated Manu once again victimizes Saru.

At her father's house she thinks over the reason of her disastrous marriage. However as a woman her mind has been so strongly conditioned by the wicked male prejudiced thinking that she says: "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" At the end of the novel Saru is in great need of sympathy but her father who doesn't do anything to console her. A mature Saru now takes a sensible view of the circumstances.

Thus, Shashi Deshpande tries to present the age of old patriarchy with different images and dominance in the female section of the society. At the end of the novel the protagonist asserts herself by getting her professional success and does the compromise against her will keeping in mind her children, her own future life, reputation in the eyes of society and lack of her father's sympathy and help, all these issues compel to her to go with her husband at his house, which are the result of her socio-psychological perception as well as interpretation.

Hence, at last the present study concludes after knowing all the social evils that take place in the patriarchal society which creates socio-psychological depression for women, suggests us how we should treat females in the society. It suggests we must treat female child equally as male child. We must not only treat to women as mother, daughter and wife but as a human being. It also suggests to give concentration on the women's feelings, emotions, and problems which were ignored since a long back ago.

The last and most important point has emerged in this study is, how a psychological or socio-psychological depressed woman can rescue from this trauma. As we found in the novel, the female protagonist, Saru got much trauma and exploited at different stage and age of life, physically as well mentally. Due to psychological frustration she couldn't stay stable anywhere, then being a helpless and hopeless she returned to back her father's home in search of some reliefs, even earlier she had sworn not to return back. There she reminds all her pains and also discusses her problems and pains with her father. After discussing it with her father and staying some days with him, she again agreed to go back with her husband. Because by sharing and discussing her pains and problems, her psychological depression and trauma released and decreased. She became strong again to fight and face the problems, even her father had not consoled her.

Therefore, this research also suggests us that a psychologically frustrated woman as well as man must share her/his feelings, emotions, pains and problems with her/his friends, parents, brothers and sisters instead of to suppress them within one self. Because it cannot be decreased and solved, until you don't share and discuss it with others. Only by creating the awareness in the society and by discussing and sharing the pains and problems, socio-psychological depression and trauma can be released, decreased and solved.

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