

DISCOVERY OF THE AUTHENTIC SELF IN SHASHI DESHPANDE'S THE BINDING VINE.

Vijayalakshmi. R,

*PhD Research Scholar in English,
Sri Sarada College For women (Autonomous),
Salem-16.
Mail ID: Vijiluxme345@gmail.com*

Abstract:

The aim of writing this article is to highlight the importance of women in the Indian scenario. She could be a mother, sister, daughter, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law or a wife but she has to be a silent sufferer by adjusting and adhering to the rules which is followed for years together. Even an educated woman is not allowed to give voice. But Shashi Deshpande is one writer in whose novels; the women are breaking the bonds to discover the 'New Woman' that is inside them. The novel *The Binding Vine* narrates the vine of love, affection and fellow feelings that binds all together. Despite all the struggles the women face in their own space, they all help each other with understanding which is realistically portrayed. The novel deals with her effort to proclaim her uniqueness and to discover her freedom.

Keywords: Self, New woman, uniqueness.

Introduction:

In the recent decades the status of women has undergone a drastic change. The silent sufferers are now slowly transforming themselves into 'New Woman', and trying to bring out their hidden anguish. The Indian women unlike the western counterparts have always been subjugated, socially and psychologically. Shashi Deshpande's *The Binding Vine* is a novel, which attempts to portray two kinds of women. The first kind is, women who are curbed mercilessly and ignored in the name of social dignity and the second kind are those who rose to discover the new woman in them like a phoenix which is born out of its own ashes.

Self is a term which means an individual person, from his or her own perspective. Self in general, is viewed as a set or series of identities that can be invoked individually or simultaneously in situations. Self-discovery is a way to explore individual personalities, personal preferences, feelings, values and beliefs. The ultimate destination of this journey is finding out the uniqueness within one self. This article is on Shashi Deshpande's *The Binding Vine*, in which women engage themselves in complex and difficult, social and psychological problems in defining their authentic self.

Urmila, called as Urmi, is the central character in the novel *The Binding Vine*. She is an educated woman who longs to live up to her own image created by her. Urmi is grieving over the death of her baby daughter Anusha, when the novel opens. Although she tries to come out from the loss, she feels that this loss would be equal to betrayal. She says "I must reject these memories, I have to win if I am to go on living. And yet my victory will carry with it the taint of betrayal. To forget is to betray" (TBV 21). These lines express the sensitiveness of the mother towards her daughter. On the other hand, Urmi feels that she is responsible for her own life and she hates the image imposed by others. She is not radical but she tries to live on her own. Through her eyes one can see different types of Indian women around her.

Urmi is married to a naval officer, Kishore. She is capable of looking after her family with her job in the absence of her husband. But unfortunately her daughter dies and she is full of grief not only because she lost her child but also because her husband Kishore was not there to share her feelings. She decides to take up a change in her life to get relief from the pain of the loss. The absence of Kishore brought in frustration and loneliness in her life but she intelligently overcomes those

problems by discovering herself like any modern women do. She took stern decision to stand strong and live for her boy child, Karthik. She believes that she can manage everything. Her inner mind assures her that she is smart and she holds strong that inner courage to live on her own.

The agonies of Urmi have been minimized because she attempts to divert her problem by attending on others problem with a humanistic attitude. Urmi is drawn to her long dead mother-in-law, Mira who exists only in the notebooks. She has left behind her thoughts in a diary which is discovered by chance in a dusty storage trunk by Urmi. Urmi comes to know that Mira suffered from imprisonment inside a family and she dies during the child birth. The predicament of Mira is due to irresponsibility of her parents and their adherence to existing traditional norms of child marriage at that time.

She hated the word 'love' in marriage because she becomes a victim of rape with in marriage. Adrienne Rich says about rape in his work "Women Born or Burden" "It is not only rape of the body alone but also a rape of the mind as well"(61). Thus, the forced violation of women's body even in marriage can be traumatic as rape, even though it is not placed in the same bracket. Mira's diary also reveals the prejudice on women in the literary works.

One of the predicaments of women is the identity crisis that occurs at the time of marriage. Mira too underwent a change in her name from Mira to Nirmala, which she was not able to accept. Here, the character Mira, tries to discover herself, which is revealed through her poems. The protest that arises in Mira, at the loss of her identity is mentioned in her poems.

Mira resented the new name given to her at the time of marriage. She protested and busted out :

*A glittering ring gliding on the rice
Carefully traced a name 'Nirmala'.
Who is this? None but I,
My name hence, bestowed upon me.*

*Nirmala, they call, I stand statue-still.
Do you build the new without razing the old?
A tablet of rice, a pencil of gold
Can make me Nirmala? I am Mira. (TBV 101)*

Urmi understands through her writings that Mira showed courage and exposed her enthusiastic feel in writing poetry. From this, the reader realises, that Mira tried to discover herself before her death. Mira's diary and poems are not only a daily account of her routine life, but a communion with herself.

Through Mira's letters and poems, Urmi discovered an unhappy woman who questioned silently the relevance of her traditional role of wife and mother. The interpersonal context revealed through the interpolation of Mira's personal history in the main narrative structure of the novel *The Binding Vine* indicates how Urmi's life shapes and evolves through this relationship.

Conclusion:

The two characters Urmi and Mira in the novel *The Binding Vine*, explore their individual personalities, personal preferences, feelings, values and beliefs. Thus, they often engage themselves in a metaphorical role-reversal. It is in fact an attempt to turn the value system of male-domination upside down. In this paper the researcher has tried to analyse the transformational journey of a woman. The inner journey of self-discovery of the new woman is a journey into their psyche, which would result in psychological transformation from a woman to new woman. Urmi and Mira have undergone a long journey, and have tried to find routes from male-imitation to self-realization. The ultimate destination of this journey is in finding out the uniqueness with in one's self and attains liberty.

References:

Deshpande Shashi, *The Binding Vine*, New Delhi: penguin, 1992

Rich.Adirenne, in “Women Born or Burden” Of *Woman Born: Mother as Experience and Institution*
W.W. Norton and company 1995. p.61