

Longing for love in Shashi Dehpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*

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ABSTRACT:

The present paper entitled the theme 'Longing for Love in Shashi Dehpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* expresses the grief and pain of a character named 'Saritha' who is totally neglected by her parents and by her husband. She longs for love from her childhood life itself but she repeatedly gets rejection in her life. Love is the means of emotions and feelings but in this novel Shashi Deshpande clearly supports for a women who not get clear identity, hates by their own neighbours, dominated by men, and also by the society. The main character 'Saritha' is a doctor who feels like insane because there is no one to give love, care and affection to her. As a doctor she gives advice to her patience but no one to comfort her.

Key Words: Male domination, loss of freedom, sexual harassment, unhappy life.

Shashi Deshpande has given the themes like male domination, loss of freedom, sexual harassment and unhappiest lives of women in many of her novels and short stories. In this novel

the domination of 'Manohar's, Saru's husband is in esteem. As a great named doctor in the society Saru losses her freedom inside the home. Everyday Manu blame and ill treat Saru. He brutally harasses Saru at night but she cannot burst out her pain to anyone. From her childhood itself Saru hated by her mother and father too. After her brother Dhruva's dead her father and mother would not speak to her. They think that Saru only kills their son. Everyone hates and blame Saru that makes unhappy life to her.

In the beginning of the novel Saru gets back to her own home town to get relief from her painful past days. Her mother is died by stomach cancer and her father Baba gives a cold welcome to her. Saru thinks of her past life that after the birth of her brother Dhruva her parents would not take care of Saru. When she is very young she likes to play with her father and brother but her mother would not allow her to mingle with them. Her mother likes only her brother. After the drowned death of her brother her parents totally hates Saru. After the entrance of her higher studies Saru loves Manu. She gets a perfect love and care by Manu. At that time she thinks that her life is fulfilled. When she becomes a doctor she lost her paradise of love and happiness. She is forced to give importance to family than her profession which envies Manu. Little by little the bond of love between Saru and Manu becomes hated. Manu fills with inferiority complex. In order to show his anger he sexually harass Saru every night. To get back his lovable husband Saru decides to give up her profession.

Saru's mind search peace and comfort from the dejected life. When Boozi the middle class teacher shows affection to Saru, she feels very happy and spends most of her time with him. After she realizes her mistake and changes herself. One day she meets 'Padmakar' her classmate in medical college and feels comfort with him. Again and again her longing for love makes her

to take bad decisions. In her diary she writes that “ Nobody like me, nobody cares for me and nobody wants me” (DHNT 89).

When she returns back to home she seen her father’s love is shared to ‘Madhav’ a Brahmin boy. She thinks that Madhav is not a distant relative too but her father shows unconditional love to his daughter than the boy. She compares herself as a rootless boat in the sea. Saru thinks why she has not continue or not get the ending of road, no love, no destination because of fate only she comes back to her father’s home. Even she would not realize why she stays there without love and happiness. She says love died soon in love marriages. The remembrance of her past life takes away her peace.

Perfect understanding between Madhav and her father makes her angry. When she recalls her past life, joining to the medical college is a rebirth to her. She wants to forget her eighteen years life with her father and mother. This shows the unsatisfied childhood life of Saru. Saru is disliked by her mother because she is not physically attractive. Her mother always blames her for this reason and loves her brother much.

When Saru is happy some kind of fear gets into her mind that, whenever she feels happy it makes her to a unhappy situation. She felts it as a fate to her life. Many people from the village come to get treatment from Saru as a doctor. At that time they say about her mother that she is not willing to see Saru. She not informs about the disease to her husband too. In the final stage they brings her to hospital but it is incurable. Without any treatment love and care she died.

Once Saru’s classmate Nalu sends two girls were the president and secretary of girls association. Saru is asked to give a talk on medicine as a profession for women. She expresses her life situations as her talk. She says, after the marriage the women should always be a few feet

behind her husband that only leads a happiest life. There was a triple of applause when she sat down.

After Saru crosses many problems in her life, she wants to share her pain to anyone but no one is there. So she decides to turn God start to do poojas, read some books but she has not get peace. Finally decides to tell her father that: “Baba, am unhappy, help me, Baba am in trouble tell me what to do” (90). This shows her pain and longing for care and affection. Finally she thinks of her children. She feels that, she has longs to get love from her mother and father like that only, her children feels. So she decides to give her love and caring to her children.

This novel clearly expresses the painful life of Saru and her change of mind. Love, care and affection are like water to the plant. It should pour in an adequate time otherwise the plant would not grow fast.

Work Cited

Deshpande, Shashi. *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. New Delhi,1980.