



An Aspect of Psychological Study of Urmi in *The Binding Vine*

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Abstract

Shashi Deshpande is not a feminist, as the feminism of India is different from the feminism of other countries. She has clearly portrayed mental conflicts, mental stress and depression of a woman due to her unfulfilled dreams and deep sorrows and she ultimately gets shrunk within the traditions and cultures, for the sake of her survival, self-respect and security, which are the basic needs of a man, as mentioned by Abraham Maslow's The Theory of Motivation. The definition of dream expounded by Sigmund Freud also has been synchronised with Abraham Maslow 'The Theory of motivation –The hierarchy of human needs.' in this article.

Shashi Deshpande in the novel *The Binding Vine* sketches clearly the unpleasant and the embarrassing situations that are existing in the life of women through the women characters. They are suffering silently for the well-being of their personal and family life. The novelist has given a suitable title for the novel *The Binding Vine*. The title itself states that the women characters in the novel spread the vine of love and bind themselves in the society to seek liberation from their mental worries.

The protagonist Urmi in *The Binding Vine* struggles and fights for herself and for other women as a representation. The characters in the novel create a good relationship within their limits and also expect some space as individuals within their family. They want to be beside their husbands but not

under them as slaves. Though Urmila is educated she expects her husband should understand her feelings and emotions and share words of consolation. She wants to own her place in the male dominated society. She does not go for compromise for her self-respect.

Urmi is a lecturer in college and she is married to Kishore who is a merchant. In the beginning of the novel the novelist introduces the protagonist in the scene where Urmi is worried and mourned due to the loss of her daughter. The members of the family try to persuade her and make her to come out of the grief. None of their words fall in her ears. Being a mother she could not forget Anu as soon as others do. She thinks that forgetting her daughter is like betraying her. Urmila knows that she knows very well that her daughter is not going to come alive. In spite of knowing the reality she struggles to forget her. She recollects her experience with her daughter. Her memories haunt her. Therefore she wants to be left alone.

Keep quiet, then I'm not asking anyone for consolation. Am I?

I am trying to deal with my grief myself. I don't need anyone.

(The Binding Vine, 23)

Urmi strains much to forget the past and live in reality. With this mental struggle she comes to a conclusion that she has to navigate her life herself. She expresses sorrowfully that her victory will have stains of betrayal which is caused by the action of forgetting her dear daughter. As a mother she neither forgets her daughter nor keeps on repenting on her grief throughout her life. This state of mind brings her mental stress. When stress becomes incessant, it turns to be mental depression. This state of mind, in the depression may even instinct to commit suicide sometimes.

The psychological stress is clearly depicted by the novelists with the right choice of words. Urmi's statement that the presence of many people who are there to console will not help her in any way is a clear example. If she had not realized and accepted that reality, she should have committed suicide. That means Urmi by herself must come out of her sorrow. Being an educated woman she tries herself to console and keep the memories of her daughter aside. "Don't see it then, go away and leave me alone. Why don't you all leave me alone? Do you think it helps to have you watching me all the time?" *(The Binding Vine, 14)*

Urmi is very affirmative even in her loneliness. She has a strong will to lead a happy life. She makes up her mind for the sake of her son who expects her care and affection. He may be a driving factor for her life. If he hadn't expected her love and care for him, she would have been either a victim to her depression or got lost in the crowd. Urmi has married a man whom she loved. Yet she hates her married life. Though she is a well-educated person and bread winner, she doesn't want to go against the tradition.

The man-woman relationship gets into progress on the basis of mutual understanding, care, love, concern and timely communication but in the case of Urmi there is no understanding and

communication. Owing to this reason their relationship becomes fragile and disintegrated. Kishore is not bothered about the thinking of Urmi. Neither he tries to understand nor he gives solution. He is bothered only about the physical pleasure.

Real love does not exist between Kishore and Urmi. As Kishore fails to show the real love for her, she tries to alienate from Kishore. Urmi expects a lot from Kishore but his answer is only silence. The desire of Urmi is not completely fulfilled. Every woman has her dreams and desires. If they are not fulfilled and she faces failures, she will get mentally imbalanced. As per the *Theory of Dreams*, by Freud,

Dreams, are all forms of "wish fulfillment" — attempts by the unconscious to resolve a conflict of some sort, whether something recent or something from the recesses of the past. Because the information in the unconscious is in an unruly and often disturbing form, a "censor" in the preconscious will not allow it to pass unaltered into the conscious. (Freud, Sigmund *The Interpretation of Dreams, the Illustrated Edition*, 9)

Whenever she expects his love and care from him she gets only disappointments. After she has made many trials and attempts to change Kishore's attitude, she decides that Kishore cannot be changed. Unless he gives his heart to her truly and takes steps to understand the feelings of Urmi they cannot lead a happy and prosperous life.

Yes, here it is, the knowledge is spared myself then Kishore will never remove his armour, there is something in him. I will never reach. I have lived with the hope that someday I will. Each relationship, always imperfect, survives on hope. Am I to give up this hope?

(*The Binding Vine*, 141)

According to the Indian tradition whatever problems are being faced by a wife, she never gets a solution and conclusion without the support of her husband. Urmi, as an icon of a typical Indian traditional woman, cries maximum and later comes to a conclusion that she is helpless and for security purpose she accepts her defeat and surrenders herself for survival. In this way women are left to suffer silently, physically and mentally.

Due to the separation from Kishore, as a normal human being Urmi cannot control her erotic emotion. Though she finds many changes and occasions where she can satisfy her feelings with Dr. Bhaskar she does not cross her limit. This limit is circled by her real love towards Kishore. Despite a lack of real and unconditional love and care of Kishore for Urmi, she behaves as a loyal, lovable wife to him. Urmi, being free from her husband she adheres to the tradition and behaves in a proper way. She locks all her passion within herself and being isolated helplessly.

There was a time when I was frightened by the intensity of my bodily hungers for Kishore. It seemed to do nothing but complicate my life enormously. I often wished I could put my desires into a deep freezer and take them out, intact and whole, when he returned. (*The Binding Vine*, 164)

Urmil feels that she neither loves the past nor the future in her life because of their long separation they don't find a room to share, care and enjoy. So she is bothered only about the present life where Urmil expects a lot from Kishore but she gets only disappointment. Therefore Urmil finds conflicts in the past, future and present too.

Generally women in India in the male-dominated society are governed by Indian tradition. In all the relationships in the family circle women are submissive and they keep themselves away to have a good harmony in the family. The women who are working have to be under the thumb of men by suppressing their feelings. The ego of men never allows his wife to earn more than him.

By seeing the other women's sufferings, she can easily understand them because she too comes under the same category of suffering. She realises that the other women are also in the same state of mind because they all have been bound by the Indian traditions. She understands that women suffer due to men. Though the ways are different but sufferings are the same. In this novel Mira, Kalpana, Shakuthai, Urmil all are the representation of the real characters of India. Like Urmil there are a few persons who share others' problems and give a ray of hope.

Urmil, when she reads all the poems of her mother-in-law Mira, she can understand the absence of love in Mira's life, where Mira was raped in the name of marriage. All the talents of Mira were locked up in a room. Urmil is also in the same condition when her husband comes for vacation.

It is a man-made law that women are subject to rape by their husband. If she abides by the law she can survive in her life. If she acts against the law she will be subject to atrocities and finally she will be made to lose her identity. The society has framed in such a way that women have to be slaves in their family life.

Urmil continuously takes steps to bring out the rights of women. She wants women to realise their rights. In the case of Kalpana, Urmil renders her full support to Kalpana and Shakuthai. She helps in all the possible ways. Kalpana is a working woman. She dresses herself neatly and is not bothered about others' comments. She is raped by her maternal uncle.

Urmil's mother Vanna comes in a state of confusion when she is unable to guess the reason behind Urmil's involvement in Kalpana's matter. But Urmil is not bothered about the comments. Her motto is to help the poor ladies Shakuthai and Kalpana. Urmil has a lot of problems in her life yet she

helps other women and understands their sufferings. She considers others sufferings as her own and takes steps.

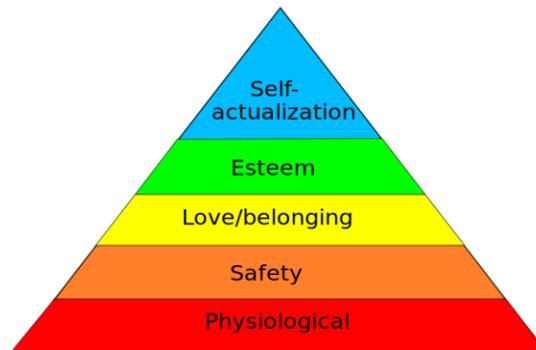
In the Indian society women are suffering due to the patriarchal laws. They are trying to complete and prove their identity as a mother, wife, daughter, mother-in-law, grandmothers and hence arises the need for Woman to balance all her positions and stand firmly in her life.

Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Binding Vine* is replete with the struggle and the conflict that are faced by women in general and how with their education, intellectual and individual efforts they create awareness within themselves and understand their importance to overcome them. For these women their mind is their own master. They are very confident in the matter that during this conflict they don't need to forsake their life. They have to prove their individuality within the life. Urmi is one such character who survives amidst many dilemmas and conflicts. She wants to search and prove her lost identity/ she doesn't want to remain and be known in the society only as the wife of Kishore. And to improve her situation, Urmi not only does takes concrete steps but also makes her women friends to do so.

In her fiction Shashi Deshpande seeks to explain the paradox of the new Indian woman who desires to carve a new autonomous identity for herself and yet is unable to loosen the bonds of tradition.

Deshpande's interest is that she depicts the situation of women in their real life and wanted to create an awareness among the women who are undergoing hardships and distress in the male dominated society. (Kotwal Deepsheekha, Gender and Sexual identity in Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*)

Urmila follows the Indian ethos and gets a refuge in the traditions of India. Shashi Deshpande is not a feminist, as the feminism of India is different from the feminism of other countries. She has clearly portrayed mental conflicts, mental stress and depression of a woman due to her unfulfilled dreams and deep sorrows and how she ultimately gets shrunk within the traditions and cultures, for the sake of her survival, self-respect and security, which are the basic needs of a man.



Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often portrayed in the shape of a pyramid with the largest, most fundamental levels of needs at the bottom and the need for [self-actualization](#) at the top. (**Motivation and personality.** 236). Since Urmi needs security more than her self-actualization, she compromises herself and seeks a refuge in the traditions rather than rebelling and getting lost. She identifies herself conveniently as a woman of Indian traditions.

Works Cited

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