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CHARACTER OF SARU IN THE NOVEL “THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS”

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ABSTRACT

The present paper aims at directing Saru the protagonist in the novel “The Dark Holds No Terrors”. The Novel tells us about her life from the very childhood to her self-realization. Shashi Deshpande has put effort to bring her protagonist to centre where she puts her to be self-reliant. The character of Saru is representation of Indian Middle class women, whose plight and predicament could be drawn from the Indian houses. The very story of Saru, is about how she is deprived of the love which, she is supposed to be given by her parents. A girl child is considered to be a delicate ,soft, lovable by foreign countries, but it is our Indian sensibility that, people remorse at the birth of girl, this could be due to dowry system, traditional thinking to burn the pyre of family members by a male or could be ascending generation of a family.

KEYWORDS: Sadism, Defiance, Entity, Gender discrimination, Masculinity,Self actualization

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INTRODUCTION

The Novel The Dark Holds No Terrors is about an literate, economically independent middle class woman ,who suffer as a girl, daughter, wife and very important as a self. She is made aware of being a female. Her loveless relationship with her parents and hollow relationship with her husband provoked her to search for her self - identity. The Novel opens with Saru’s return to her ancestral home and swore never to return. But we could find womanliness specially an Indian one who does everything to save her marital life. And same is done by Saru, she ponders again and again to rehabilitate her broken relationship with her husband Manu. Saru’s Character could be understood only if one go for her episodic life. Saru was avoided and given less importance than her sibling Dhruva. She suffers all the heaps of gender discriminations. The preference of boys over girls could be drawn in the novel. There is a color – consciousness inheriting in the novel. Saru’s mother frequently reminds her of her dark complexion and avoids her going out in sun. This is not due to the love but due to the responsibility of getting her married. Saru was blamed by her mother for her brother’s death:

“You did it, you did this, and you killed him.”(173).

On her part she holds herself to be responsible for being a helpless dumb spectator to her brother’s death by drowning.

Saru is highly elevated with the ambitious to become doctor. She boldly resists traditional parameters. Defiance is her second personality. She defies her mother, tradition, and caste. In her childhood she has witnessed the predicament of separation of her grandmother at the hands of harsh and savage husband, from there onwards she firmly decided to be an economically independent woman. This would provide her the protective shield against subordination and suppression. We get the partial attitude of her parents which has an adverse effect on Saru's life. She turns to be rebellious.

Her life has become worst after her brother's death; she grew more defiant and wild and had an intense hatred for her mother:

"For Saru the very word "mother" stands for old traditions and rituals, for her mother sets up a bad model, which distorts her growth as a woman, as being."(29).

Saru feels that her married life is destroyed and unhappy because of her mother's curse:

"Let her know more sorrow than she has given me."(197).

Saru falls in love with Manu. She is embarrassed for being evoking feelings of love to someone who is hard to convince. Marriage at the initial stage is a source of enjoyment for Saru. She has lacked love in her life and finds Manu a savior of her life:

"I was insatiable, not for the sex but for love.

Of my being loved, of my being wanted" (40).

Saru lived a blissful life with Manu, as long as she is a student, Manu has been the breadwinner and everything was calm. But a problem begins to mount slowly as she got recognition as a doctor. Manu felt insecure, and all the glowing colours of their marriage begin to fade:

"The esteem with which I was surrounded, made me inches taller, but made him inches shorter."(42).

Her role as a career oriented woman appeals to the standard life. She prefers to shift in a beautiful and decent apartment rather than living in a shabby and congested room. Manu feels a sense of jealousy with the success of her wife. He becomes a brutal rapist and proved his masculinity through sexual assault over her. Saru puts all her efforts to save her marital life, like an Indian woman she is ready to sacrifice her profession. She courageously tells Manu (Manohar):

"I want to stop working. I want to give it all up.

My practice, the hospital, everything." (79).

Manu disagrees to her idea of leaving a job. But has concealed ego proves to be a blunder for Saru to marry him. Then she turns to her father to disclose her pain but he fail to understand the word like sadism, love and cruelty, but to her misfortune he goes away leaving her alone. She insisted him:

"Baba, I'm unhappy. Help me Baba,
I'm in trouble.

Tell me what to do." (44).

She regrets her return to maternal home which she considers is an escape from unsuccessful marriage. The duplicity of her life has marked her real self. Her character could be better understood in terms of psychological parameters. She is burden with the effects of gender discrimination, an implanted mentality of an unwanted child, and traumatic tortures in sex. She overcomes all her frustrations and goals for her self - actualization. She gave up the idea of escape , in spite decided to firmly stand for her existence. She also understood that for being happy a woman does not require a father, a brother and a husband.

CONCLUSION

To sum up an analysis of Deshpande's protagonist Saru reveals the trajectory of the physical, intellectual and psychological growth through their constant resistance, struggle and success. The apparent failures at different phases of their lives don't weaken their inner strength, on contrary it gives them way to look forward for their new self. Ultimately she realizes her faults and miseries of her own self:

"My life is my own..... somehow she felt as if she had found it now, the connecting link. I have been

a puppet it is because I made myself one.”(220).

As a realist novelist Deshpande has exposed the patriarchal designs in subjugating women and their souls. In the present novel it is the sexual insane behavior of a husband who cannot resist himself to rape his wife at night is what is dealt the most. Deshpande has portrayed the brutal condition which the protagonist Saru has to gone through day and night and endeavours the objective to live.

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