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INDIAN MOTHERHOOD IN SHASHI DESHPANDE'S  
'THE BINDING VINE'

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**Abstract**

*All the human beings are bound together firmly by the emotional attachment. There is a sense of spiritual, intellectual and religious leanings. They may be parents and children, men and women and relatives and strangers. The woman has to play different roles in the domestic affairs. She speaks and acts within the bounds of reason. Emotional bondage as a part of maya is reflected throughout her life. 'The Binding Vine' by Shashi Deshpande is the best example human being's emotional attachment*

**Introduction**

Women in the Indian society are given secondary role in comparison with men. People look at them as an inferior to the men. But there should not be discrimination on the basis of gender. The feminist movement is supported by education, employment opportunities, and women's right. Western models regarding feminist ideology are meaningless because culture, history, ethos and social situations are different and not the same. Shashi Deshpande in 'The Binding Vine' presents various components of the woman's life who belongs to the middle-class section of the society. The novel is a wonderful account of the people who have been emotionally attached to each other. Through the women characters the novelist tries mainly to focus on the idea of Indian woman hood and Indian motherhood. One can underline an emotional attachment between Urmila and Anu, Shakutai and Kalpana as mother and daughter. In spite of relationship Urmila tenders moral support to Shakutai in bad patch of life on the humanitarian ground.

**Practical view of man woman existence**

When one thinks of feminism there comes a thought of male dominance and female subordination. The society teaches women in their course of life to learn that they are inferior to the men. It is what we call practical based view of life regarding man woman existence in their married life. As such there should not be discrimination between man and women. It is manmade affair which has been going on since a long time. According to Simon de Beauvoir history of humanity attempts to make a woman very silent about the thought of their inferior status. She rightly says:

One is not born but rather becomes a woman. It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature which is described as feminine." (1978:295)

**The ideology of feminism**

In great literature it happens that the role of women is presented very secondary as compare to the role of man. The ideology of feminism does not allow looking at woman as a secondary tool or minor segment of human life. It always takes into consideration woman's

point of view and outlook. The female creativity makes one to understand female differently from linguistic, biological and cultural point of view. Western feminist movement is the main reason of feminism in Indian English literature. The sources in our country like freedom movement, independence, education, employment chances, act of women's rights are responsible which play the roles behind the curtain to final development of feminist movement.

### **Western and Indian models**

But it is important to bear in the mind that the Western models in literature are useless and vain. It is because culture and other factors like history, ethos, and social milieu are not the same. Indian situation is contrasting in connection with Western stream of feminist ideology. Appreciation of Indian society cannot be possible without realization of caste, class, over population, superstitions and Hinduism. The theory of Western individualism in the country like India remains impractical because collective consciousness works on the doctrine of faith. The values of European which are based on culture are not applicable in India. There are mixed cultural values in India. In this regard Singh comments:

Application of Western critical models and paradigms for literature having root in different native tradition is neither judicious nor desirable' (Singh, 1993:5)

Different components of the middle-class woman life are presented by Shashi Deshpande in her novels. She does not tolerate people calling her feminist writer. Her point of view and a way of looking at woman is very much balanced. She doesnot want to fight directly against the male domination and the society by whom women are made to act according to their desire, controlled and exploited everywhere, in the domestic matters and in the public affairs. Her thoughts, attitudes, and philosophy regarding life are earnest, and based on truth.

### **'The Binding Vine' a novel of emotional bondage**

'*The Binding Vine*' is a beautiful account of the people who live harmoniously because of emotional bondage. They leave no stone to be unturned in attempt of enjoying life by removing obstacles which take place in their life. The people who have emotional seizure are parents and their children, relatives and strangers, men and women. We find emotional attachment among these persons, which is termed as 'maya'.

By presenting women characters like Urmila and Shakutai Shashi Deshpande focuses on frustrated motherhood. The author's feminist approach flashes in the portrayal of the characters like Urmila and Shakutai. The central concentrated character Urmila in '*The Binding Vine*' is educated and contented in her domestic life. The vacuum of unhappiness in her life takes place because of untimely death of her daughter, Anu. Urmila's memories with Anu make her uneasy. Her efforts of forgetting these memories reflect her bold nature. Urmila wants to fight against memory war and win because she wants to live on further. Determination what she thinks will prepare her to drop compartment of memories from the mind. By doing this she is sure to conquer over them. Urmila says,

'I must reject their memories, I have to conquer them. This is one battle I have to win if I am to go on living. (Deshpande, 1992:21)

According to her remaining life in the absence of her baby Anu is helpless, empty and full of sorrow. It shows Indian motherhood. The mother is the only person who can tender love and affection to her daughter or son without any external implications. Indian women mostly devote their major part of life for enriching their children. She creates the surrounding for present as well as future development of their children. They sacrifice even happy movements of life for the betterment of them. She feels it is motherless life even though she has another child Kartik. Emotional attachment with her baby Anu does not allow her to forget her experiences which are full of excitement and joy.

Shakutai's mind is horribly shaken by the news of her daughter being raped. She has no other option left except looking after her daughter Kalpana in the hospital. In order to save her daughter from the shame of rape Shakutai requests Dr. Jain not to inform the police about the rape. As an Indian mother Shakutai thinks of the future life of her daughter on the practical level of woman life. In India it is said that a woman is the only person who can realize other woman's plight. The truth is justified by the arrival of Urmila to console Shakutai. Her attempt of giving moral support in a bad patch of Shakutai's life is trustworthy for praise. There is no purpose or interest in their relationship. Shakutai fears of her respect and social disgraceful life. She says 'If girl's honour is lost, what's left? The girl does not have to do anything wrong, people will always point a finger at her'. (Deshpande, 1992:59) She is under the tension that if the news of rape spreads she will not be able to marry her daughter to a respectable man. Therefore she wants to hide the truth of rape.

One can underline man to man relationship in the emotional bondage of Urmila and Shakutai. They are not the relatives of each other still Urmila pours sympathy towards Shakutai by giving moral support repeatedly. The author portrays sublime and emotional nature of the mother. Shakutai tries to make her mind happy by giving her daughter good education, job, and respectable marriage. Shakutai's married life is a total failure because her husband is jobless. The family suffers from financial starvation. Shakutai does not understand what to do further when Kalpana will be discharged from the hospital. She fears that her daughter has to suffer from disrespect in the public. As Indian mother Shakutai desires to keep her daughter Kalpana safe from the scolds of people in the society. She realizes problems and difficulties which her daughter Kalpana will face in later life.

### Conclusion

Being an Indian feminist writer, Shashi Deshpande presents ideal Indian woman, as a mother who takes due care of children in present and future situation. The character of Urmila is a good mother. She knows how to bring into practice the woman's responsibility. Shakutai is another woman character who always thinks of woman's honour in the society. The third woman character is Sulu who wants to follow moral norms and codes of society. To her, respect in the life of every woman matters most and not money and comfort.

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