

Research Article

Emotional Peep in to the Intricacies of Maternal Bond in Shashi Deshpande's The Binding Vine

G. Saratha Lakshmi

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Sona college of technology

Salem-636005

sarathasasikumarsalem@gmail.com

Abstract:

Shashi Deshpande is one of India's most distinguished authors, and the winner of prestigious Sakithya academy award and Padmasri award. In her novels Shashi Deshpande tries to provide the reader with the 'quintessential' woman. She closely analyses the woman's psychological, emotional, and intellectual needs as well as their aspirations, cravings, desires conflicts and catastrophes that they inevitably bring in their work. This paper aims at depicting the intricacies in the mother daughter relationship through the multi-dimensional narrative, 'The binding vine'.

Keywords: Mother Hood, misunderstanding, predicament, grievance, complaints.

Introduction

Generally mother-daughter relationships are intricate and varied according to the mind-set of the individuals. The novel 'The binding vine' exposes the numerous misunderstanding amongst female characters chiefly among mothers and daughters, instigating, desolation and sadness, to many closely connected women in their families. When, the misapprehensions are elucidated; they finally either overcome their own misinterpretations or travel away from it, and institute a kind of harmony amongst themselves. As a multidimensional narrative one finds a connotation of love, empathy and optimism in 'The binding vine' which deals with domestic moralities, human relationships, females' right over their body and the necessity to voice out against the prejudice and even in the grey environ of agony and pain.

Lynn Z. Bloom, states that affection and compassionate bonds amongst daughters, and mothers Observe: 'The most significant dimensions of maternal heritages that offer some answers to these questions are the nurturing and conveyance a sense of self; the transmission of human value through mothers who serve directly or indirectly, as positive or negative role models; and the fostering of a group identity – national racial or cultural.'

Henceforth, the maternal bond and mutual bonding between women develops a progress nurturing medium with compassion as a significant nutrient. The novel is centred on the life of Urmi a sharp tongued and self-willed woman. Simone de Beauvoir rightly said in her essay, "one is not born rather becomes a woman" (Beauvoir, 1953). Urmi is one such woman who has her own say in every aspect of

her life. The unexpected death of her daughter, Anu has created a great void in her life due to which she is facing a great emotional crisis. The protagonist flops to accept the death of her daughter even after several years. The emptiness always seems to upsurge increasing her obstruction and hollowness. She has a son also but the servitude between mother daughters is excessively emotional to be cracked simply by the death of the child. S. Indira says: 'Instead of fighting her pain and sorrows she holds on to it as she believes that to let it become a thing of the past would be a betrayal and would make her lose Anu completely'. Like a masochist, she clings to bear pain and allows her memories of Anu. Every small incident floods her with longing and a great sense of loss (22).

There are more than five mother-daughter pairs. They are Inni-Urmi, Mira's mother -Mira, Shakkutai-Kalpana, and Akka-Vanna. The maternal bond between them is grounded on different type of misconception or dissension. A great kind compassion in woman -woman relationship is exposed in the novel. As demarcated by Joyti Singh who rightly explains the woman to woman compassion as, "an important expansion of nurturing and care giving is the woman-woman dyad, also called female bonding, which helps in female identity realization. It challenges the male-centred interpretation of female psychological development and offers new standards to contextualize female friendship".

Urmi senses a different kind of link connects herself, Mira and Kalpana. Mira is her dead mother in law who is not seen alive in the novel. But through her diaries and poems Mira conveys a message for all the women folk that women should never be a slave to the situation or to the tyranny of patriarchy. Urmila is shocked to see Kalpana in such a helpless condition. She is highly empathetic with Kalpana and Shakkutai. She decides to stand with Shakkutai and dares to become one with her and battle against the injustice inflicted upon Kalpana.

Urmi fostered a whinge against her mother from her young age. She was sent to her father's native to be in the care grandmother during her childhood days. Urmi is not in a mind to find out the reason of her displacement or her mother's difficulty. This was not her mother's fault. Urmi's mother Innis had an early marriage. This leads to early child birth. She was very young to take care of a child appropriately. When Urmi accuses her for sending her to her paternal grandmother she clarifies to her daughter-"I was frightened of you Urmi. I was not prepared to have a child. And you were not easy, you used to cry all the time, I didn't know how to soothe you.... Then he (papa) decided he would take you to his mother. He didn't say anything to me, he just took you away....I begged him Urmi, I cried, Nothing could make him change his mind."(199-200). Being an authoritarian head of family and a dominant husband, he takes all the decision in his family and influential his daughter's dislodgment. But Inni, Urmis' mother has to bares the cross and stands guilty in front of her daughter . She tries to compensate this throughout her life. She tries to equalise the absence affection towards her daughter. She behaves to a caring mother, bequeathing extraordinary affection over her, unresponsive daughter. Urmi believes that her mother had intentionally sent her child to her grandmother for her own convenience. Urmi's misunderstanding is cleared through this disclosure. "A sense of being vulnerable and naked, as if some armour. I've been wearing all these years-against what?-has been taken off"(200). She senses a kind of innocence in her mother's disposition. She was scared to think of her mother Inni as how she could have carried a child in her womb and suffered the pain of child birth. She never has the right to decide what would be good for her daughter. She bore it bravely over the years without being peevish about her plight. Urmi realises this lately and she worries for her mother. But this realisation comes on lately.

It is natural for women to feel empathetic with another woman's needs and feelings'. Urmi understands her mother in law Mira's emotional trauma through her poems with great empathetic attitude. From the letters and diaries of Mira we can understand the pain of Mira. She faces the trauma because of the fanatical love of her husband. His love for Mira is not for her sake. He is selfish in his love her. He yearns to fulfil his desire which is the primary importance for him. Mira registers all her clandestine feelings secretly in her diaries. She feels happy only when she is with her child. All her

sorrows and despair disappears as an expectant, mother and she cherish her life. Being too young she dies in child birth unfortunately. Mira could not get answers for all her questions as her mother is deceased. Mira thinks that her mother is solely accountable for her unhappy marital life. Her mother was never given the opportunity to take any decision in her family. She doesn't know anything except to take care of her family. She has only little stands or opinion in any important issues in the family. She was not an self-confident woman and says pathetically as " Nothing is in my hands". The inability of her mother thrusts Mira to her marriage to the marriage of compromise and compulsion without any love or excitement. Mira's husband could hardly understand her feelings. Mira was thrust in to an unhappy married life just like her mother. This pathetic condition of women is described by Banks as "The Radical Feminists allege that marriage is at the very root of women's subjection to the man because, through it, man controls both her reproduction and her person" (Banks, 1982)

Mira's mother is a traditional Indian woman who was just a spectator in her daughter's dreary marriage life. She was helpless regarding Mira's fate. As an outmoded woman Mira's mother, dreams of her daughter getting married and leading a happy married life. Her dreams are fulfilled to see her daughter married and pregnant. According to her a girl child is born to marry a man of prosperity. Joyce Carol Oates argues out this as: "A woman is like a dream. Her life is a dream of waiting. I mean, she lives in a dream waiting for a man. There is no way out of this, insulting as it is, no woman can escape it. Her life is a waiting for a man. That's all. There is certain door in this dream, and she has to walk through it. She has no choice". (Joyce Carol Oates' *Them*, P.367).

Generally women find solace in sharing their feelings with other women, predominantly to a mother, to relieve the emotion and overcome sorrow. From her early child hood she felt estranged from her mother. She never had any regrets that she couldn't share her emotional state with her . Mira always had hundreds of questions to be asked to her mother why all the mothers wanted their daughters to be destined by custom. And why did they expect their daughters play the traditional roles of and mother, wife, daughters-in-law whatever their position may be.

Shakkutai is another typical example of exasperated mother. Her daughter Kalpana is viciously raped and admitted to the hospital in a state of unconsciousness. This mother and daughter pair Shakkutai and Kalpana belongs to the poorer state of the society. They epitomise the lower middle class working women. Yet there is no much difference in the maternal bond they share as mother and daughter is counter parts in the higher middle class families. Shakkutai is a conventional, cautious and caring mother. As her daughter grew up physically she had developed a kind of fear in her heart. Being a conservative mother she never allows her daughter to be dressed up or to use lipstick or any other cosmetic. Because she believes that it would unnecessarily appeal to unwanted responsiveness. But Kalpana is a confident individual who has her own ideas of life. She completely differs from her mother in every aspect of life. She was on the verge of her youth earns her own bread. She thinks that she is inferior to none in the world and wants to dress up well. The innocent girl Kalpana becomes the prey for her uncle's voluptuous lust. She was viciously trampled and raped by the shameless criminal. Kalpana is a "self- motivated individual. She never accepts to dance to the tunes of her mother. Even when she was in her death bed in the hospital, she accuses her mother responsible for all that ensued to her. Shakkutai, flops to apprehend her daughter's sense of autonomy. Kalpana dreams to live an independent and respectable life. She never wants to become the shadow of her mother and aunt. She was never willing to fulfil her mother's dream of getting her married to her age old uncle -" To make myself in your image was never the goal I sought"(124)

The next mother and daughter pair is Vanna and Mandira. Vanna is a medical social worker. She has to halt out of her home very often as her job needs her presence. Her daughter Mandira misses her mother and often feels isolated. She feels disgusted for being left to the care of the governess. She often shouts at home as "I don't want Hirabai, I want my mother"(72). Mandira never understands her mother's care for her. She develops a sense of animosity towards her mother and yells "You are always

making fun of me. You are cruel. I'll never talk to you again... (31). Vanna too is a nagging mother. She feels guilty for leaving her daughter under the care of a servant-maid. She always discovers mistakes in her daughter Mandira's behaviour. Because of her guilt feeling she resorts to her daughter's sense of antipathy towards her. Mandira though being a child says to Urmi that she will never go to job and entrusting her children under the care of a governess if she becomes a mother in future. Mandira never tries to realise her Vanna's coercion in dancing as a pendulum between family and profession. Vanna too, fails to understand the tantrums of the young girl. Mandira is longing for her mother's care, affection, consideration and love. On the whole we have to accept the fact that mothers do force their daughters into the same den where they have been caught once. They all have the secret hope that their daughter's fate would be much better than that of their own life. Like Mother Nature they have learnt the art of being patient and tolerate all their daughter's complaints against them.

Works Cited

1. Deshpande, Shashi, *The Binding Vine*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1993:19.
2. Sivaraman, Shanthi. "Women in The Binding Vine" *The Fiction of Shashi Deshpande*. ed. R. S. Pathk. New Delhi: The Creative Books, 1998.
3. Shree, S. Prasanna. *Women in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande- A Study*. New Delhi
4. Indra, S. 'A Bond or Burden?: A Study of Shashi Deshpande's *The Binding Vine*' *Indian Women Novelists*. Ed. R. K. Dhawan. New Delhi: Prestige, 1995.
5. Banks, O. *Face Of Feminism* (p.230). New York: St. Martin's Press. 1982
6. Beauvoir, S. *The Second Sex*; New York: Knopf. 1953
7. Singh, Jyoti. *Indian Women Novelist: A Feminist Psychological Study*. Rawat Publication. 2007.
8. Bloom, Lynn Z. "Heritage: Dimensions of Mother-Daughter Relationship in Women's Autobiographies." In Cathy N. Davidson and EM Broner. 1991
9. Joyce, Carol Oates. *Them*. New York: The Vanguard Press. 1969