

WOMEN IN THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS

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Abstract : The author describes the prevalence of the sexual exploitation of women in *Dark Holds No Terror*. This dissertation intend to reveal the form of controls of sexuality and abuse of marriage, forced sexual activity of the men over the women. This paper also attempt to show the Freudian theory of Psychoanalysis, the sexual interest mature of final stage in Deshpande's *Dark Holds No Terror*. The protagonist of the novel Mr. Manu being the head of the family he wants to have control over his wife, unconsciously develops a strange behavior which leads to sexual sadism. The aim of this paper is to portray the psychological problems that a career oriented woman encounters in her life. Women lose their freedom when they depend. Here the character Jaya lost her identity due to subjugation of male. This researcher indent to show the patriarchal supremacy over the women and the tolerance of women due to the family coercion. The researcher also elaborates the writing style of Shashi Deshpande as women standpoint.

Index Terms – Domination, Women, Subjugation

I. INTRODUCTION

Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is about Saru an educated, frugally self-regulating, middle-class wife who is made sensible of her gender as a child and whose unkind relationship with her paternities and stressed relations with her husband lead to her painful search for herself. The novel opens with Saru's homecoming to her parents' house fifteen years after she left home with a vow never to coming back. Her relationships with her husband become intolerably distraught and she returns home for some consolation. Here she gets a chance to think over her relationships with her husband, her children, her parents and her dead brother, Dhruva.

Saru was ignored by her parents in help of her brother Dhruva, in her childhood. No parental love is sprinkled on her and she is not given any prominence. Sheevokesthe joyous anticipation in the house on the occurrence of her brother's naming ceremony. The idea that she was a obligation to her parents is deeply rooted in her mind as a child. Her mother's admiration of her son at her daughter's cost was a uniting point for the novelist to bring her feminist ideas together. The preference for boys over girls can be openly witnessed in most Indian homes, and is indistinguishably linked to the Indian psyche.

Sons bring in dowry could be one reason, but the Indian society, steeped in tradition and superstition, considers birth of a son as auspicious as he carries on the family lineage. Besides, there is colour-consciousness rooted in the Indian psyche. Saru's mother constantly retells her that she should not go out in the sun as it would worsen her already dark complexion. The revolving point in her life is the unintentional death of her brother by drowning. All her life she is haunted by the memories of her mother accusing her of intentionally letting Dhruva die by drowning: "You did it, you did this, you killed him" (173).

The Dark Hold No Terrors examines the fractured psyche of the protagonist, Sarita. The novel tells the story of a marriage on the rocks. Sarita is married to Manohar who is an English teacher in a small college. She is a successful doctor. She treats the patients in the daytime but, at night, lives as a terrified and trapped animal at the hands of her husband. In her novel. In the end, she learns that her life is her own which she will have to shape on her own. Terror is not enforced from outside rather it comes from within. The psychological problems that a career oriented woman encounters in her life.

The crisis of identity is because of the darkness that persists in one's mind. One must come out of this terror and face the problems boldly with courage. The purposes of this research is to show, sexual exploitation is defined as the exercise of power for the purpose of controlling, using, or abusing another person sexually in order to satisfy the conscious or unconscious needs of the person in power. Whether those needs be sexual, financial, emotional, or physical. Sexual abuse can range from having to live in a sexually coercive environment to unwanted touching to rape. It may trick as marriage to the lead practice, or it may come about as the overt seduction of vulnerable females (or males) by male. In India the husbands are given absolute control over their wives in the family, including a license for sexual activities without mutual consent.

Saru is the character who ascendancy and submissive by the power of her husband Manu. She is sexually abused because of her profession. She is Doctor in profession but Manu is a simple and teacher in profession. Though Saru married him out of love she was given soft love in the beginning, day by day Saru become a vital role due to her profession as Doctor and this was not been tolerated by her husband and made him to treat her brutally through the exploitation of sex.

Saru is a Doctor. She married a poet, Teacher in profession. Even the appearance of Manu is superior to her. It's the beginning of the ascendancy and submissiveness.

But when we got married it was like nothing I had ever imagined. After the first moment of apprehension... a purely physical response, or lack of it, rather... there was never any withholding in me. I became in an instant a physically aroused woman, with an infinite capacity for loving and giving, with a passionate desire to be absorbed by the man I loved. (40)

Saru marries Manu, she had an expectation that Manu will never treat her like her mother. She believes in the marriage with Manu, but the result of her marriage she felt nothing because nothing happened as she imagined in her life. She realises the physical arouse of woman after marriage

I was insatiable, not for sex, but for love. Each act of sex was a triumphant assertion of our love. Of my being loved. Of my being wanted. If I ever had any doubts, I had only to turn to him and ask him to prove his love for me. And he would...again and again and again. It was heaven, in spite of the corridors the rooms with their dank sealed-in inquisitive, unfriendly we were happy smelling of urine odours, women with inquisitive, unfriendly eyes, men with lascivious stares. And we were happy. (40)

She married him for the sake of love. She did not get the love from her mother where after her marriage, she expected the kindness and love from Manu. Her only expectancy from Manu is love. The happiness that she has anticipated from Manu. The next evening, I had scarcely got home when there was a knock at the door. Manu opened it. I heard him ask, 'Yes?' A Woman's voice replied, 'Is the doctor at home? There was a pause, and Manu called out, 'Saru, someone wants you.' It was a woman whose child had diarrhoea. I examined the child and wrote out a prescription. The next day it happened again. Is' the doctor at home?' And the day after. And the day after that.....And now, when, we walked out of our room, there were nods and smiles, murmured greetings and namastes. But they were all for me, only for me. There was nothing for him. He was almost totally ignored.(41)

The superiority of men never disappear in the Indian society. Once Saru was in the domestic work meanwhile a stranger knocked the door of Saru's house. Manu opened the first day and the person came with a patient to meet Saru and to get treatment but this continues in the forthcoming days. This incident affected Manu's normal behaviour. The reason is Saru got the respect from the people than Manu. Being a male he doesn't get the respect as Saru gets due to her medical practitioner. This irritates Manu.

"The human personality has an infinite capacity for growth. And so the esteem with which I was surrounded made me inches taller. But perhaps, the same thing that made me inches taller, made him inches shorter. He had been the young man and I his bride. Now I was the lady doctor and he was my husband." (42)

Saru become popular by being Doctor. She was respected by many due to her kindness towards patient. This made Manohar to feel inferior that he is a conventional professor in a modest college. Saru won the name prodigious women and the world looks ahead towards her this made her husband feel inferior about her reputation. He could not tolerate the growth of his wife. He wants to play a overriding role in his family rather than his wife.

Today everything has a sexual nuance, and when a girl says she loves another, it can mean only one thing, But Lesbianism was an unknown word and unknown concept to me then. And for long after. That love..... the feeling I had for her..... should lead on to something else was also an unknown idea. It was enough to love to gaze upon her face, to thrill in ecstasy at the sight of her. I wanted nothing more than that. To possess meant nothing.....And then suddenly, sometime after Dhruva died, I began to change. I had been a skinny girl, with large knees darkened by the scars of myriad falls. And prominent elbows that nothing. It seemed, could soften. Now I began to put on weight. My figure began to burgeon. A softness here, a tenderness there, a strangeness all over. (61)

Saru considers herself the luckiest woman on earth, as the initial years of her marriage are sheer bliss. She marries to secure the lost love in her parental home and her identity as an individual. As S.P. Swain writes: "Her marriage with Manu is an assertion on and affirmation of her feminine sensibility." Although, Saru refrains from any physical indulgence with Manu but, after marriage, she revels in it with wild abandon.

Thus, unloved and unwanted, she develops hatred towards the traditional practices during her impressionable years. Her hatred towards her mother is so acute that she becomes rebellious just to hurt her, "I hated her, I wanted to hurt her, wound her, make her suffer."(142)

This hatred drives her to leave home for Mumbai to seek medicine as a career. In the medical college she falls in love with a college mate Manu from a lower caste and marries him against her parents' wishes.

WAKE up and I am in my own room at home. I have to orient myself. Yes, I am at home, in my own room. The huge wooden wardrobe is in front of me. And the dressing table, with its mirror that sways too far back unless propped up by a piece of paper. I have to be more sure, more certain. I walk out of the house, out of the gate, and on to the road. Turn to the right now, and there it is, the cross road. And the signboard painted yellow, with words and figures in black. Here I hesitate. Somehow I feel, I know, that I have to turn right again and take the road leading to.. the road which will take me to..... that road....This time she truly woke up. It was only a dream. Such a senseless, pointless dream at that. But why the hell, she thought with a touch of petulance, couldn't the dream have gone on a little longer?. (69)

She dreamt about her individuality, she lives a dependent life where she cannot find her individuality. That happens only in dream, once she got a dream of being individual her own room, dressing table, mirror, piece of paper. She walk around freely. Freedom she got in her dream this never happens in real because woman are born to respect and tolerate the sufferings. I know all these 'love marriages'. It's love for a few days, then quarrels all the time. Don't come crying to us then. To you? God, that's the one thing I'll never do. Never! (69) Even though Saru got love marriage she has not happy with that marriage. She says love marriages are for few days and after some days its normal and it starts with normal quarrels when time passes. Saru's parents are advising her not to come back after marriage telling you have problem with Manu.

Dhruva and I..... Dhruva and I..... Did I push him? The question sprang at her out of nothing, again and again.....Did I? Did I? The ego of the male, she thought wryly, unwilling to believe that he had lost the art of pleasing, assuming that marriage, possession, gave him a lifelong right to affection, love and respect. Love .how she scorned the word now. There was no such thing between man and woman. There was only a need which both fought against, futilely, the very futility turning into the thing they called 'love.' It's only a word, she thought. Take away the word, the idea, and the concept will wither away. (72)

Saru is highly self-willed and her problems ensue because of her outsized ego and innate love for power over others. She defies traditional codes. In Saru's case, defiance is her second nature. Sarita defies her mother and becomes a doctor. She defies her caste and marries outside it, and defies social conventions by using Boozy to advance her career. As a child Saru had seen the predicament of the grandmother separated from the cruel husband and considered "an unwanted burden" by her own people. From then on, economic independence became a goal in life which Saru took to be an insurance against subordination or suppression. Every move in life is towards the realization of that goal.

It got her right in the stomach. She felt sick and started at the old women in stupefaction.

'Why am I alive when he is dead?' she, repeated the words and miraculously the woman caught at her meaning immediately.

Did your mother say that to you when Dhruva died?

'Yes.'

'Poor girl.'

There it was, the pity she thirsted for, the sympathy she craved for But the old woman's eyes were even then withdrawn and she knew she was already thinking of something else, Of her food probably. (77)

When we look at her childhood days we find that the partisan attitude of her parents has a devastating effect on Saru. She becomes rebellious in nature. She mutely watches her brother drown in the pond without rushing to his help. Since then, she is haunted by the thought that she is responsible for his death. Life becomes more desperate for Saru, after Dhruva's death. The mother constantly pines for her dead son and rejects even the presence of her daughter. This sense of rejection by her mother fills the adolescent Saru's mind with feelings of hatred towards her mother. Adesh Pal who uses psychological parameters to analyse her personality observes: 116 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 a being...thus the strange childhood experiences flare up her inflated ego and her thirst for power over others.

'I want to give up working.' Was it I who had said that? We started at each other in equal astonishment. And silence again. But now I knew my lines. They came to me, the words I had rehearsed to myself. Manu, I want to stop working. I want to stop working. I want to give it all up.... my practice, the hospital, everything. (79)

Saru thinks at one point that she is 'unhappy and destroyed' in her marital life because her mother has cursed her. But gradually her hostile attitude towards her mother changes to a positive one. She even begins to see her mother as a creative essence of the feminine. She makes efforts to understand her and even identifies herself with her mother.

Nobody likes me. Nobody cares for me. Nobody wants me....' she had written down these words in a notebook once. And she had written them, not in English, which she scarcely knew then, but in Marathi. So that it had come out as.... 'I am not liked by anyone. I am not cared for by anyone. I am not wanted by anyone.' With the stress on the 'I' But surely, it should be different now? (83)

We see the character of Saru representing the middle class working woman in modern India. She rebels against the traditions but ultimately tries to compromise with the existing reality at that time. This is largely due to the fact that she is passing through a transitional era. Thus the whole development of the novel can be observed in four phases i.e., flight from reality; frustration; submission; and ultimately an attempt to reconsolidate.

Perhaps there is something in the male, she now thought, that is whittled down and ultimately destroyed by female domination. It is not so with a female. She can be dominated, she can submit, and yet hold something of herself in reserve. As if there is something in her that prevents erosion and self-destruction (if not, she would have been destroyed too easily. But then, have I not been destroyed?) (85)

Her mother had successfully erased Saru from her household with the exception of a photograph only because Dhruva was in it too. The refusal to see the doctor daughter even while dying of cancer reiterates the idea of total rejection. Saru's obsessive remembrance of the mother is indicative of both her sense of guilt and her sense of defeat. Death seals off all possibilities of straightening things. Dead or alive, Saru sees the mother sapping her of all happiness and asks herself, "Why should she matter dead when she never mattered alive?" She sees her as "a vengeful ghost" and gives the dead so much power over herself.

I woke up to darkness and an awareness of fear Panic. Then pain. There it was, for the second time what I had just lulled myself into believing was just a nightmare. The hurting hands, the savage teeth, the monstrous assault of a horribly familiar body. And above me, a face I could not recognise. Total non-comprehension, complete bewilderment, paralysed me for a while. Then I began to struggle But my body, hurt and painful, could do nothing against the fearful strength which overwhelmed me. (112)

Shashi Deshpande is certainly aware of the woman's predicament in a male dominated society especially when the woman is not economically independent. There is a reference in the novel to a woman who, ill-treated by her in-laws, drowns herself in a well. There is reference to yet another woman victim who is tied to a peg by the in-laws in the cattle-shed and fed. Saru detests the merciless judgement of her mother who casually dismisses the topic saying, "she perhaps deserved it." The thrust here is not on man's cruelty to woman but woman's cruelty to woman. This underlines the fact that the novelist is not holding the normal feminist stance.

Something quickened in her at Virginia Woolf's mention of a woman's right to a 'room of her own.'. She immediately related the phrase to her own life and thought. my mother had no room of her own. She retreated into the kitchen to dress up, she sat in this dingy room to comb her hair and apply her *kumkum*, she slept in her bed like any overnight guest in a strange place. And I have so much my mother lacked. But neither she nor I have that thing 'a room of our own.' (135)

Saru come across a prose written by Virginia Woolf's *Room of Once Own*. The prose is about women freedom to write. During early days women are not allowed to write and they should not publish any work of art. Usually they write and burn it. This depict the freedom women to write through her writings she can voice out her struggle. In which Saru compare herself and her life where she was not free from her mother's torture in the same way she can't escape from the sexual sadist.

'Sometimes I used to think you took your mother seriously and blamed yourself for Dhruva's death. You know she was not herself when she said that. She was.....' he groped for the right word, '..... hysterical. But I thought you began to believe it yourself.' (181)

Through this narrative, Deshpande questions the assumption that the employment of the wife can serve as the means of her economic independence and self actualization. At the same time the profession of women does not entail the potential to reduce the gap between men and women.

I didn't. I didn't know. I never saw him.

And then it began. The hysteria, the screaming, the words that followed me for days, months, years, all my life. *You killed him. Why didn't you die? Why are you alive, when he's dead?* (191)

Saru was always blamed for her brother Duruva's death this give her a feeling of revenge

'Manu, did you? The pain of this betrayal was worse, far worse. 'Did you?'

'No, I didn't. Not really,' he protested. But I thought that you would be happier if you were reconciled to them.' I am not unhappy now, am I? you know I'm not. I know how it would be. I'd told you. You shouldn't have, 'It was for you, Saru'. (197)

However, the very thought of marriage unnerves Saru. Perhaps it is the fear of sex, of the unknown. Till they get married, Manu and Saru are quite innocent about their relationship. This may be because of their middle-class inhibitions. Marriage opens the sesame of all enjoyment for Saru. After the first moment of apprehensions, there is never anything withholding in her. Saru who has lacked love in her life finds a savior in Manu. Let her know more sorrow than she has given me.'(197) this the idea of Manu, he was humiliated in his profession so he wants the control over her through the name of man. 'Saru,' he asked her. What's wrong? Is it your husband?' (197). A real truthful husband the one who cares will never be a sadists towards his beloved.

She would recite them, she had thought, as if she was reading out a clinical history of an anonymous patient. Instead she blurted out, baldly, crudely, 'My husband is a sadist.' His face, even after she said the words, was devoid of all expression but the expectancy that was already there. Don't you understand, Baba?' she asked irritably. He shook his head. She noticed that thought he looked at her, his eyes were focused somewhere beyond her. 'Don't you know the meaning of the word? Was your generation luckier than ours? Perhaps such words didn't enter your vocabulary. Sadism...love of cruelty. How simple and clinical that sounds, doesn't it? And sex....' In-voluntarily he put out a hand as if he would stop her.

Shall I go on, Baba?

'Go on,' he said, withdrawing his hand, staring down at it.

Go on.

The mask had slipped only for a fragmentary moment. (199)

Her work keeps Saru away from Manu for longer hours and she reaches home late at night. His ego is hurt by her success, he feels inferior and becomes brutal in his behaviour and turns a treacherous rapist at night and asserts his masculinity through sexual assaults upon Saru. She scorns the word 'love' and feels it never exists between man and woman and changes her attitude towards Manu and her marital life. San' views sex as a dirty word. With her responsibilities increasing at home, she recoils from Manu's love-making and he takes her rejection of sex as rejection of himself. To save her marriage, San' is prepared to sacrifice her lucrative profession. She gathers up all her courage and tells Manu,

He's cruel to me in bed

The words came out with reluctance, like a child being forced to betray a friend.

The man waited for her to go on but she did not.

You'll have to tell me plainly, Saru, he said humbly, almost apologetically. 'I don't know much about these things. I don't understand, either.

Yes, my husband. Manohar. I call him Manu. And before we got married that man had once called him Shelley. Shelly! oh my god!'

It was not a mile. It was a specular lopsided grimace that took away nothing of the somber gravity of her face.

As her popularity increases, it starts to affect her happy married life. Her ascendance Renders Manohar less significant and impotent. This disparity deepens the rift in their relationship. The situation worsens when a reporter, from a woman's magazine, comes to interview Sarita and asks Manohar: "How does it feel when your wife earns not only the butter but most of the bread as well?" (200)

Manohar's dominance made him to behave badly towards his wife. He cannot revenge her directly for this reason, so he brutally rape her during the night. He take sex as a weapon to revenge her. His sense of lowliness turns him into a sadist who gets pleasure in insulting, harassing and hurting. She tells her father, "My husband is a sadist." (199). Manu feels that hold the strength and maleness by revolving into a rapist at night. "He attacked me like an animal that night. I was sleeping and I woke up and there was this... this man hurting me. With his hands, his teeth, his whole body." (201) His action scares Sarita. She finds herself mortified and a frightened animal at the hands of her husband. Saru feel the pain due the brutal attack of her husband she finds the reason why he behaves cruelly. She was treated like an animal not as a woman of beloved. She cannot revenge or stop him in this case and she was suppressed and depressed by her husband Manu.

This nightmarish incident is often repeated and every time with more brutality. Saru describes: "Panic. Then pain. There it was, for the second time, what I had just lulled myself into believing was just a nightmare. The hurting hands, the savage teeth, them on strous assault of a horribly familiar body.... Then I began to struggle. But my body, hurt and painful, could do nothing against the fearful strength which overwhelmed me." (112)

Sexual exploitation is a tool to revenge the weaker sex physically and mentally. Manu was psychologically affected and felt inferior because of the popularity of his wife as a Doctor. He was a mediocre man who lives a simple life also wanted

to control his wife, but Manu being educated she was respected and had a high opinion by the society. It psychologically affected Manu's love towards her and made him to exploit her through sexual harassment.

And I think it's true in his case. I can swear to that. I was dressing up one day and he said... "God, Saru! Have you hurt yourself? Look at that!" I can swear his surprise, his concern was genuine. And if he doesn't know, what's the use of talking to him?"

'All the more reason. You're a doctor, you should know. Maybe he needs treatment.....' 'He needs treatment....?' Her voice grew shrill. It's not so easy, Baba, They'll say.... I need treatment too. They'll go on and on about things that happened long ago.'

(203)

Manu disapproves of Saru's idea of leaving her job. Saru feels that it is 'sheer necessity' that holds them together. She has every reason to break away from her marriage of convenience, shorn of genuine love. Saru establishes herself as a career oriented woman and her profession satisfies her ego.

Her cruelty to Dhruva, to her mother, to Manu. .. she would never be rid of it. She would carry this ugly, unbearable burden until she died. The facade of deception had cracked so completely she should never put it together again. Shafts of the truth pierced her, causing her unbearable pain. Attainment ? It was never possible. What had she imagined? What had she thought?

'Saru tai,' she heard the boy's voice. 'What is it?' (212)

Her father fails to understand her vocabulary like sadism, love and cruelty. On listening to Sara, her father simply leaves her and goes away. Many times she wants to tell her father, "Baba, I'm unhappy. Help me, Baba, I'm in trouble. Tell me what to do." (44) At times she regrets for having come to her parents' house, as she is reminded of her children, her practice, and her patients. In all these memories her husband doesn't figure at all. Her visit to her father's house is a kind of escape from the sadist husband and her loveless marriage.

'Baba, I must go' she said picking up the suitcase, pulling her sari end out of her waist where she had tucked it in. He was standing in the door, blocking her way, so that she had to stop. poor, ineffectual Baba What was he trying to do? He couldn't stop her. He could only irritate her by delaying her. (215)

Shashi Deshpande does not glorify Saru's sufferings, she has sufficient amount of sympathy for her protagonist. Saru being a realist perceives the ultimate human reality and its process of decay. She finds loneliness as a painful but inescapable human condition.

'When your brother died'

That silenced her He went on impatiently as if he was fighting against time. But why was he in a hurry? It was she who had no time left. He would be here soon. (216)

Saru's character can be truly understood only in the light of psychological precepts. First, she carries within her the sad effects of gender discrimination. Social psychology deals with the stereotypes about the two genders. Saru's type of feminism springs out as a reaction to this discriminatory psychological set up of society at large and her parents in particular. Secondly Saru also has the deep rooted mentality of an unwanted child. Psychologists have dealt in detail with the mental makeup of an unwanted child. Thirdly and most tragically, Saru suffers the bruises of a terrible physical trauma on her psyche.

But let that go, That's all past and done with. I'm speaking of now. I a'm asking you, pleading with you. Have I ever said to you... do this or don't do that? I left it all to your mother.'

Baba you don't know. I'm tired, so very tired. I really don't know how I can go-on. If only I could end it all... She caught his alarmed look. 'No don't worry. I won't do that. I can't. If I could, I'd have done it long ago.' (217)

Saru does reach depths of self-actualization. She introspects philosophically and reaches to the conclusion that escape is a ridiculous idea. There is no escape. It is an individual's own life. One will have to shape as well as face the events of one's life. There is no refuge, other than one's own self. She realizes that she cannot attain happiness through anyone else be it a husband, a father or a child. She can attain peace of mind by her own efforts. Finally, confidently she waits for what used to be the greatest terror of her life, her husband. She is ready to face him. She is ready to face life.

My life is my own . . . somehow she felt as if she had found it now, the connecting link. It means you are not just a strutting, grimacing puppet, standing futilely on the stage for a brief while between areas of darkness. If I have been a puppet it is because I made myself one. I have been clinging to the tenuous shadow of a marriage whose substance has long disintegrated because I have been afraid of proving my mother right. (220)

These complex situations in Saru's life focus on the pathetic state of an Indian middle class working woman. Through this narrative, Deshpande questions the assumption that the employment of the wife can serve as the means of her economic independence and selfactualization. At the same time the profession of women does not entail the potential to reduce the gap between men and women. While Saru's income provides a higher living standard to her family, her contribution remains unnoticed.

She stepped out of the door, and then, moved to compassion for the old man, turned round and said over her shoulder, 'And, oh yes, Baba if Manu comes, tell him to wait. I'll be back as soon as I can.'

She hurried out of the house. The gate swung behind her with its usual protesting squeak. And now, there were no thoughts in its usual protesting squeak. And now, there were no thoughts in her, except those of the child she was going to help.

Convulsions...?

That could mean...?

Her mind ranged over all the possibilities. (221-222)

The Dark Holds No Terrors by Shashi Deshpande is a totally different novel in the sense that it explodes the myth of man's superiority and the myth of a woman being a paragon of all virtues. It is based on the problems faced by a career woman, a refreshingly new phenomenon in Indian English fiction. In an article, Shashi Deshpande states: "A woman who writes of women's experiences often brings in some aspects of those experiences that have angered her, roused her strong feelings.

She don't see why this has to be labeled feminist fiction." *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is certainly a protest novel especially in the Indian context in the sense that it reacts against the traditional concept that "everything in a girl's life... is shaped to that single purpose of pleasing a male." Saru, a professional woman dislocates the binary of husband as 'provider and protector; versus wife as 'recipient and protected. Sam's employment is acceptable only because it supplements her husband's income.

The story of Sam clearly depicts a duality deeply entrenched in the psyche of Indian society which sways societal definitions and expectations of women's public and private roles. Consequently, women are expected to be both traditional and modern in domestic and public jurisdictions. The pathetic state of an Indian middle-class working woman is revealed. Through this narrative, Deshpande questions the assumption that the employment of the wife can serve as the means of her economic independence and self-actualization. At the same time the profession of women does not entail the potential to reduce the gap between men and women.

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