

Female Body as a Site of Domination and Resistance in Deshpande's *Small*

Remedies

The present research explores the subjugation and bodily domination of females in Shashi Deshpande's novel *Small Remedies* in which the female characters are subjugated and victimized by the contemporary existing norms and values of the patriarchal Indian society. The female characters such as Madhu, Savitribai, Leela, Maya, Munni and others are treated as secondary human beings who do not have their own personal life and identity. The gender biased society creates different artificial rules and regulations that are imposed over them and construct the hierarchal relation between them. Not only that, some female characters are compelled to leave their home and other family members. The female characters are victimized mentally, sexually and physically by their male counterparts in particular and by the male dominated patriarchal society in general. The then existing Indian Hindu society has set some rules and compelled female to follow these discriminatory rules and regulations.

Though the female characters in the novel are subjugated and victimized by the artificial rules and regulations, they are able to raise their voice against such system. The novelist presents her female characters as a writer and a singer who try their best to express their inner feelings and thoughts by means of literature and music. Not only that the protagonist of the novel leaves her house to search for individual identity and meaning of life. She says that meaning of life only can be realized in free zone where there is no the traditional norm or value or any other social restriction.

Shashi Deshpande depicts her literary work on the contemporary social relation in Indian society. Her characters are from the grass root level of society and

Represent the then existing Indian society. In the novel *Small Remedies*, the characters are from Indian Hindu society; they represent the contemporary socio-economic situation of that society. In that society the females are not treated equally with the males. They are subjugated and victimized by the so called patriarchal society.

Madhu, the protagonist of the novel represents the realistic and pathetic condition of women in Hindu religion based Indian patriarchal society. In the society females like Madhu are victimized economically, socially, sexually, mentally as well as psychologically. Economically females are not allowed to do such task which their male relatives denied. It is considered that all the economic responsibility should remain upon the male and female must depend upon their husband or father for their basic needs. Even their daily task should not be measured with the monetary value. Females are also dominated in terms of physical harassment. Madhu, the major female character of Deshpandey's novel, are suffered sexually, mentally and physically. Once Madhu tells about her past experience with her husband Som how she was sexually abused. By hearing it, her husband immediately challenges her to leave his home. Here, the society creates a lot of artificial rules and regulations, which blindly imposed upon the female. Madhu is only sexually harassed by a male. If her husband sexually involves with other female in the society, the male dominated society takes it normally and considers it as the matter of bravery.

Not only Madhu other female characters of the novel are discriminated and treated as the second sex. They lose their dignity and freedom. They are not allowed to do all the things they want. For example, another major character of the novel *Small Remedies* is Savitribai who also suffered a lot. She wants to be a popular singer but her family does not allowed it and she leaves her birthplace and marries to a

Muslim man and changed her religion from Hindu to Muslim. Here she is not free to adopt the religion according to her wish. She is compelled to change the religion when she marries a man of other religion. It is the same society which does not compel male to change his religion after marriage with a partner with different religion.

Shashi Deshpande being herself a female writer not only raises the issues of male domination over female but also makes her characters bold and they raise the voice against the discriminative behaviors of the society. After being insulted by her husband, Madhu leaves her home. Symbolically, it represents her action against the male domination. After leaving her home, she is free to do what she desires. After leaving her home, Madhu involves in producing literary texts and doing many other things that she is now free from the four walls of male dominated patriarchal norms and values and expresses her feelings and thoughts.

Many critics and writers have expressed their views towards Shashi Deshpande's *Small Remedies* from different perspectives. Some consider it as the book of women suffering and some explain it as the book of communist thought. Many critics focus on the rebellion side of the novel where there is the resistance of the female characters against the then existing patriarchal society. According to Soma Chaudhary:

Small Remedies then is not what you might call a *tour de force*. But it's a good book. It's about rebellion creative dilemmas, sexual awakening, obsessive love, loss and healing" If only Deshpande would shed the primness of her prose as 'She might yet trawl the raw depths of her own fictive scope and come-more forcefully-into her own. (*Outlook* 20)

For Chaudhary, Deshpande's *Small Remedies* is a rebel of mixing sexual awakening, obsessive love, loss and healing. In this novel Madhu a protagonist carries all those issues. She leaves her home to come to terms with her identity and desire.

Another critic Mohit K. Ray, the author of *The Atlantic Companion to Literature in English* said that the novel *Small Remedies* "reaffirms Shashi Deshpande as "one of the leading fiction writers in India" (136). Shashi Deshpande is the Indian writer. She is the leading fiction writer in a sense that she basically writes about women. She raises the voices about Indian women who are always dominated in society. She depicts the mirror of social transition through writing of fiction.

Similarly, Yadav Kusuma Kumari in her essay entitled Women in Shashi Deshpande's *Small Remedies: A critical analysis* portrayed the real picture of the female characters and their position. She writes:

Her women are ordinary creatures in their first creation and they pass through the friction of circumstances, become half-awake to the realities of life and try grapple with the problems that lie close to their person and in this process, they are educated to understand where their problem originates. The struggle begins and uncoils slowly and surely. And this grappling with the problem is shown to be their uneasy struggle, wriggling out of the tight coils of tradition.

(9)

Here, in the above piece of writing critic Yadav Kusuma Kumari analyses the Deshpande's novel from the point of view of female resistance. According to her thought they are from the ground reality, her characters are educated and knows their reality and created their attitudes towards the society. For her, they are educated and able to know their position in the society. It evokes them to search their identity.

Yadav Kusuma Kumari further explains Deshpande trend of writing. According to her Deshpande's characters are swing around the tradition and modernity and slightly feels the crisis of their identity. She further writes in her essay; "Feminist perspective in her novels reveals her sincerity and ability in voicing the concerns of the urban educated middle class women trapped between tradition and modernity, her sensitive heroines are fully conscious of being victims of gross gender discrimination prevalent in a conservative male dominated society" (8). It indicates the nature of Deshpande 's novels where her characters suffer from the identity crisis and they also become the scapegoats of male dominated patriarchal society .

Another literary critic Kavita Sony Sharma writes the review of *Small Remedies* and presents this novel as who dare to live their dreams and fulfill their ambition. She states, "An array of human emotions with sensitivity and subtlety. Her style of writing is simple and see effectively explores identity, gender and violence in *Small Remedies*" (20).

Deshpande successfully captures in her writing the intricate emotions and the dilemmas and conflicts of the women. She through the character of Madhu presents the picture of an extremely courage woman who faced the problem of her life boldly and also manages to come out of them. In this connection, another critic Siddhartha Sharma writes in his article "Feminist and Literature" that:

The Present Book seeks to Study the Feminist perspective in Shashi Deshpande's novel. It reveals Deshpande's sincerity and ability in Voicing. The Concerns of the Urban Educated Middle-Class Woman trapped between tradition and modernity, her sensitive heroines are fully conscious of being victims of gross gender discrimination prevalent in a conservative male dominated society. (125)

Shashi Deshpande emphasizes that women's strength lies in their acknowledgement of their desires, not only sexual but creative as well. She gives an intimate insight into the psyche of the middle-class Indian women who feel oppressed and hemmed in by their patriarchal socialization. Madhu, a protagonist of this novel is the victim of gender discrimination in male dominated society. She shows how the patriarchal norms and values confine women, taking away their autonomy and freedom. They have to shape their lives according to the requirements of patriarchal constructs.

Deshpande's novel *Small Remedies* has been minutely analyzed by various critics from different point of views. Some raise the issues of female domination and some sees the awareness of the female community in the novel. In this way, critic Yaul Usha writes:

Deshpande's creative talent and accomplishment have established her credentials as a worthy writer. Her protagonists are modern, educated young women, crushed under the weight of a male-dominated and tradition-bound society. They are aware of oppression in society when they want to establish their own identity and suffer a lot. In *Small Remedies* Shashi Deshpande makes an honest and novel attempt to trace the position of women in the 21st century. The female protagonists move from feminine consciousness to the self-affirmation. (365)

According to her, the novel explores the lives of three women, one is obsessed with music, second one a passionate believer in communism and the third one with writing. These three women take up their fight alone. Savitribai Indorekar's rebellious act to break away from her family for her love of music is not an isolated, whimsical, individual decision.

As discussed by afore mentioned critics the female characters have found their self or identity by their own efforts. However, these women have to go through ultimate suffering in patriarchal social and cultural values. This novel analyzes issue of sexual, violence and gender discrimination. These, characters are traumatized in different modes of their lives. Thus, this research work tries to deal with the lives, struggles and suffering of these female characters under the perspective of gender trauma. *NCCD Centre for Girls and Women* mentions: "Several interventions have recently been developed, though on order for services to be effective, trauma needs to be viewed and understood through a gender lens. There are several types of trauma including interpersonal violence (sexual and physical abuse, and domestic violence) as well as interpersonal" (1).

The report of *NCCD Centre for Girls and Women* has marks that even a trauma could be observed through the gender lens. It is because of the suppression, exploitation and violence of women in patriarchal society. Women have to go through various tortures due to the gender discrimination and the suffering of the women could be studied form the perspectives of the gender trauma studies.

Furthermore, many other critics explain the present novel from the perspective of trauma theory. According to them this novel captures the pathetic condition of female in the patriarchal Hindu society. The major character or the protagonist of the novel suffers from the traumatic condition because of the death of her loveliest son. It is the seen reason that pushed her into the pathetic condition but there are a lot of unseen reasons that help her traumatic situation. In this connection Jeffrey Alexander says:

According to Alexander, the external events or factors that haunts the victim belongs to the cultural or historical trauma. It is the cultural or historical

trauma experienced by groups. While the trauma is caused by the external factors it is belong to the cultural or historical trauma. The gender trauma is also caused by the external factors like gender discrimination existed in society. That is why it is also a part of cultural or historical trauma. (19)

After the thorough study of the other articles related to this novel, the researcher feels lack of appropriate analysis of the novel from the perspective of the feminism. In the novel almost all female characters are seen to be dominated and marginalized because of the exploitative nature of the patriarchal society. The females are excluded from the socio- economic rights and compelled to be used merely as domestic helpers. There is another side of the novel where there are the rays of hope where the female characters are able to create their separate characters. At last, they break the traditional boundary of gender and sex and challenge the male oriented patriarchal society.

The present thesis is the analysis of *Small Remedies* which depicts the Hindu majority Indian society that creates the stereotypical images against women and treated them accordingly. The patriarchal male dominated society creates the boundary between male and that the females are not allowed to break that traditional boundary. Religion becomes the pretense of the society to dominate female. In the novel *Small Remedies*, the female characters like Madhu, Savitribai, Leela, Munni and Maya etc. are exploited by their husband and male relatives particularly and the male oriented patriarchal society in general.

The male dominated patriarchal society tries its best to confine the female within the four walls of the household. They are not allowed to do what they want. They are only the means of entertainment for their male counterparts. They are treated as the puppets who dance with the music of male.

The present thesis work tries to analyze Deshpande's novel from the point of view of feminist theory that keeps females at the centre and sees the literary piece of art from the glass of female's feelings, emotions and thoughts. Feminist theory which emerged from the feminist movement aims to understand the nature of gender inequality by examining women's social roles and life's experience; it has developed theories in a variety of disciplines in order to respond to issues such as the social construction of sex and gender. Some of the earlier forms of feminism have been criticized for taking into account only white, middle-class, educated perspectives. Third world Postcolonial feminist theory is primarily concerned with the representation of women in once colonized countries and in western locations. They struggles against the hegemonies colonial discourse that aims at misrepresenting him as inferior, notions of nation, identity, and tradition to show how Western and Third World scholars have misrepresented Third World cultures and feminist agendas. Whereas women are the most oppressed due to gender differences and traditions and beliefs that exists in society. Third world feminism is a brand of feminism that developed as a response to the fact that feminism seemed to focus solely on the experiences of women Western cultures. Certain post colonial feminists writers like Uma Narayan, Ketu Katrak and Gayatri Spivak who criticized the absence of women's question in the mainstream post colonial literature in particular and theory in general. Post Colonial feminists writer disclaims western feminists thought for universalizing women's experiences across the world together with the idea of "Universal Sisterhood" which fail to notice the distinctions of race, caste and nationality that exists among women. They point out to the negative impact of western colonialism and declare that the capitalist global economy ,environmental racism and huge development projects which result in ecological damage, food shortage, rising

costs make life miserable for women and children in the post colonial world for which women are expected to develop their literature in particular and education in general. Ketu Katrak and Spivak object to the way the west refers to women in the developing world as “third world women”. For them, third world women cannot be regarded as a homogenous category for the differences in their existence.

With her *Politics of the Female Body*, Ketu Katrak says, to observe critically how the female body is experienced as a site of both oppression and resistance in a variety of women's texts from India and the other third world. In many societies, Katrak perceptively notes, constructions of female sexuality are displaced on to other social categories, including those examined in her five wide-ranging chapters: linguistic practices, educational structures, local traditions of social-cultural resistance, institutions of wifehood, motherhood, widowhood, etc. Not surprisingly for a critic best known for her African literary criticism.

As its full title anticipates, *Politics of the Female Body* is concerned to deploy broadly familiar working definitions of "postcolonial" and "Third World," and as such its analysis makes no significant departures from established, at once comparative and feminist approaches in the field. Throughout, Gayatri Spivak's caution that comparative literary studies not be read as relativism, and her ethical commitment to social justice via collaborations between activism and theory, cited in the preface, remain guiding principles. This familiarity aside, the grounds for Katrak's Third World comparative methodology that develop from these opening critical maneuvers, based in shared colonial pasts and neocolonial presents, has significant potential for other feminist postcolonial critics concerned to build political and feminist alliances across geographic boundaries in the field (xviii).

Politics of the Female Body will be useful to literary critics for its committed attempts to reconcile international activist and postcolonial feminist agendas. The female body as a singularity capable of transference across cultural boundaries of course provokes challenging debates concerning essential femininity and the body-as-identity.

The protagonist of the novel Madhu even though is an educated woman. She suffers by a lot of problems and is compelled to leave her house. She lost her son Adit at the age of 17 in the bomb blast of Babari Masjid in the Hindu Muslim clash. Because of her son's death, she is suffered from the traumatic situation. At that condition, her husband warned her to leave his house. It is a great example of how the society treats female. They use female when she serves them and discard when she is not enough for them. Madhu, the major female character of the novel leaves the house and she determined to write a book and use literature as the means of healing power. Here, the title of the book *Small Remedies* is justified. Madhu takes writing as the means of healing power.

This paper makes an attempt to analyze the various conditions of women in the post colonial world for which they are expected to develop themselves. This article basically focuses the ideas of Post colonial. The task of a postcolonial feminist is far more complicated. She suffers from "double marginalize" as she simultaneously experiences the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy. She has to resist the control of colonial power not only as a colonized subject, but also as a woman. In this oppression, her colonized brother is no longer her accomplice, but her oppressor. In his struggle against the colonizer, he even exploits her by misrepresenting her in the nationalist discourses. Not only that, she also suffers at the hand of Western feminists from the colonizer countries who misrepresent their colonized counterparts by

imposing silence on their racial, cultural, social, and political specificities, and in so doing, act as potential oppressors of their “sisters”. In this article, I explore these struggles of a postcolonial feminist, for it is in her struggle against the “postcolonial” and “feminist” theorists that she can assert her identity as a “postcolonial feminist.”

Spivak's essay “Feminism and Critical Theory” is dissected in four parts: a scripted version of a speech given, a reflection of that speech, an “intermediate moment” and “something like the present”, and each part gives insight on her beliefs about strategically theory. While the essay isn't very lengthy, it is textually hefty; the concepts introduced and way in which Spivak contends to describe meaning switches throughout essay. In part one she acknowledges the importance of definition and its relation to women. She introduces a triad of descriptors of women “use, exchange, and surplus” and connects it to the Marxist theory of “externalization alienation”. Part two incorporates the importance of race in critical theory and relates it to the feminist argument of identification. Spivak continues to analyze race and studies Margaret Drabble's *The Waterfall*. The final section of the essay is also the shortest and summarizes the essay as a deciphering of women's fiction in various ways. While Spivak's essay was very difficult to analyze, we did enjoy her incorporation of what seemed like random additions. For example, she uses possession of children as a way to explain sexism. She offers the stereotype that women are nurturing and men are aggressive and on trolling. The Marxist ideal of externalization-alienation is interesting when put in this perspective. By offering the binary of mother-father, man-woman, and offering the child as a special interest complicates who it is being externalized or alienated. The sentence in which Spivak claimed men hold legal rights over the woman's body was unnerving to me and caused me to question whether she was being sarcastic, stating a truth, or speaking hypothetically. In comparison to her

introduction of the triad (use, exchange, and surplus) this example of childbirth and human/parental rights seems to imply that since the woman is the object on which the triad works, she has no power. Studying this in terms of Spivak's feminist argument, it seems she wants to warrant more power to the woman by challenging this triad of masculine power. Part two of the essay introduces the dimension of race in feminist criticism. She didn't exactly go in-depth about the problems of African-American (or other racial groups) as critical analysts.

Instead, she elaborated on Freud, Marxism, and “the discourse of the clitoris”. Where does the racial dimension interfere? While this essay was a challenge and gained by interest at some points, sections such as this that switch topics without question make it difficult to understand the point she is trying to make.

The patriarchal society considers female as things not having their own separate identity. They are recognized with their male relatives like father, husband, and others. They do all the things for male but their identity is not identified without relating a male in their life. The male oriented patriarchal society need not to give a separate identity to female. In this context in the novel *Small Remedies* Shashi Deshpande writes:

The young woman, nameless still to me, for Bai calls her that girl is the one who conducts these classes. It is her voice I hear instructing the students, singing with them, and sometimes it is her voice alone, as if she is doing her riaz. Who is she? A paid companion, s student, or one of the family? Whoever she is the one who looks after all of Bai's needs moving swiftly in and out of the room, doing things without being told. Which does not prevent the old woman from grumbling? Where's that girl, why is she never here when she's needed. (25)

The above mentioned extract from the novel reveal the pathetic condition of female. There is a woman whose name is not given. She is nameless. The term nameless indicates the identity crisis of the woman who is worked Savitribai as the music instructor. The novelist clearly raises the question and tells who she is. In this way she raises the issues of female identity in the male dominated patriarchal society of India.

Our patriarchal society has created a distinction between male and female and behaves females as if they are secondary human being having not their own separate identity. They are only confined within the four wall of household and do all the domestic chores. They are not free to choose their work and field of work in the male oriented society. According to her, patriarchal society misinterprets the biological difference of women and present as weak and emotional than male. All the positive features are given to the male and females are excluded from many opportunities in the society. For her, sex is natural whereas gender is constructed later to discriminate female considering them as secondary things.

Uma Narayan, post-colonial feminist writer in her book "Dislocating Cultures; Identities, Tradition & Third world feminism (1997), she establishes assumption of third world feminism is not foreign. It should be viewed through the own domestic perspectives, based on own nation's identities, cultures & tradition. She charges of what constitutes Westernization need to be radically examined. Third world women are not dominated only politically but culturally too. The deep rooted cultures such as naming, refusal of marriage to fight the dowry system, a widow's decision to defy social custom and to remarry, patriarchal censures on female dress code ,level of education & choice of life partner . This is so because Narayan is primarily concerned with the continuing effects that colonialist discourses of cultural difference have upon our understanding of Third World feminist issues in the present. These

effects are variously produced from different locations in the postcolonial present: from within Third World national spaces and from First World writings about Third World feminist issues. It is this preoccupation with postcolonial culture that lends coherence to this collection of five discrete essays; written with clarity, and interspersed with personal narrative, this is engaging and illuminating work.

Chandra Mohanty has already articulated the problems with certain Western feminist approaches to Third World women's issues, such as the universalizing tendencies in their theoretical work. Uma Narayan's work is a welcome addition to Mohanty's as it extends the latter's critique in significant and new ways that are enabling for both First and Third World feminists. The first chapter deals with the notion of "Westernization": the debilitating accusation against Third World feminists (one meant to silence them) leveled by various interlocutors, not restricted to fundamentalist groups, that feminism is a western intrusion, inauthentic to national "non-Western" culture, making it worthy of dismissal. Narayan points out how, in a postcolonial reality, it is no longer easy to separate a Western component from the non-Western. Further, the accusation of "Western" to Third World feminism acquires meaning because historically, in the nationalist imaginary, women came to figure a non-Western cultural essence against Western culture. So, when contemporary fundamentalists recall this binary opposition, itself carefully constructed by the colonizers, they are re-invoking a nationalist rhetoric once usefully deployed against colonialists. Narayan exposes this strategy by noting "the selective, self-serving, and shifting ways in which certain social changes in Third-World contexts (notably, but not exclusively, those involving gender roles) are castigated as symptoms of 'Westernization,' while other changes are regarded as innocuous . . ." Narayan 1997, ix). For those who would dismiss Third World feminism as an imported discourse,

Narayan locates her own early development as a feminist in the witnessing of her mother's suffering under patriarchal codes within the familial/cultural context. This maternal pain was instructive and "earlier than school and "westernization," a call to rebellion that has a different and more primary root, that was not conceptual or English, but in the mother-tongue" (1997, 8). Recognizing the ethical vision and work involved in the feminist effort of contesting culture and building a political movement within the nation, Narayan resolutely returns Third World feminism to its own "national political landscape".

Dislocating Cultures takes aim at the related notions of nation, identity, and tradition to show how Western and Third World scholars have misrepresented Third World cultures and feminist agendas. Drawing attention to the political forces that have spawned, shaped, and perpetuated these misrepresentations since colonial times, Uma Narayan inspects the underlying problems which "culture" poses for the respect of difference and cross-cultural understanding. Questioning the problematic roles assigned to Third World subjects within multiculturalism, Narayan examines ways in which the flow of information across national contexts affects our understanding of issues. *Dislocating Cultures* contributes a philosophical perspective on areas of ongoing interest such as nationalism, post-colonial studies, and the cultural politics of debates over tradition and "westernization" in Third World contexts.

The society creates a broad line between male and female from the very root of the society. In the novel, Deshpande write: "I was my parents first child, a very pampered child. My father was the eldest of three brothers. So I was the first grand child in the family. There were the daughter's children of course, but they didn't count" (27). It is clear that the female characters in the society are not in the respective level. They are always considering as the secondary human being. The

above given abstract is the statement of Shabtribai, the second major characters of the novel. In her house there were the children of father and his sister. But the children of her father are not counted as their children. In this way, the society starts discriminate among male and female.

Traditionally, the male dominated patriarchal society sets some rules that keep women within the four wall of kitchen. The patriarchal society, restricted female inside the rooms and it's their own world. But unlike women man are free to do what they want. Women are at the Kitchen when male are walking around the community. In this context, Shashi Deshpandey writes in her novel *Small Remedies*:

The illusion soon fades. It is not only the language which I hear that is different; it is the kind of people who go past. Here it is retired men going for walks, women to get milk. Students are rushing to school, to collage. And there is the sound, even if it is muted at this time of the morning, of rickshaw, scooters and buses- something that was not part of Neemgaon when I lived there. (37)

The above mentioned statement presented how the women are treated in the male dominated patriarchal society. According to the Deshpande retired man goes to morning walk where female are busy in the Kitchen. The term retired man also indicates that men go outside getting engage and earn money but female remain within the four wall of kitchen. Never get chance to go out and earn money. Their work in house never considered as work. She further writes: "he is a lawyer, she tells me, a very famous lawyer. He earns a lot of money, thousands and thousands of rupees" (33).

The patriarchal society creates several stereotypical images that indicated the negative aspect of women. There is not the value of science of logic but the female

have been carried such negative images since many a years. Such as the emergent field of postcolonial feminist theory, Sara Mills remarks, "perhaps the most important area in which post-colonial feminism can develop is in the theorizing of difference, whereby women can speak across national and cultural barriers, not to assume that their contexts or concerns are the same, but rather to develop a set of theoretical principles of 'translation', so that alliances can be formed in spite of, and perhaps (paradoxically) because of, differences in power and differences in culture" (Mills, 109). While we may disagree about this being "the most important area," it is this area that is admirably covered by the book under review. An insightful and competent translator, Uma Narayan writes about the "barriers" of culture, tradition, and national identity by pointing out how each of these needs to be scrupulously historicized, especially so when the referents in question are Third World and the writers are of the First. Although Narayan's examples are specific to the national cultural context of India, the cautionary principles are applicable to First World feminist attempts to understand Third World feminist issues.

In the patriarchal society, females are used only as the means of entertainment and to fulfill the desire of their male relatives. The emotions, feelings and desire of females are never valued in front of the male's forceful behaviors.

In the male oriented patriarchal society, females are considered inferior in front of their husband. The society makes artificial rules and regulations to be followed by women and discriminate them on the name of rituals. Women are deprived of getting equal rights and opportunities in the patriarchal society. The patriarchal society creates different codes of conducts and myths that explain women as inferior and secondary human being. In this context, it talks about the role of myth in the domination of female.

In the novel Savitribai is a Hindu girl. She born and rear up in a Hindu family following Hindu religion on her mind set. Religion is such a things that determine many things of individuals. Savitribai got married with a Muslim boy and she is compelled to change the religion from Hindu to Muslim. It is the patriarchal norms and values that enforce her to change her inborn religion. In this context, Deshpande further writes:

I think of it now, I imagine her, a young woman who had lived the sheltered life of the daughter-in-law of an affluent Brahmin family, living this kind of life. A women who'd been both as a child and as a married girl, part of a large family, living in a strange town among total strangers. With the added burden of being a Hindu woman, a married Hindu woman, living with a Muslim partner, and of course, the greater alienation that not knowing a language brings (38)

The above mentioned statement shows the pathetic condition of a woman in the patriarchal society. In the eastern society, especially in the Muslim culture there is the vast different between being a woman and man. Female are not allowed to go outside and even talking to other people is not allowed.

Sabitribai endures such difficulties in her husband's house. Being from the different religion and culture, she does not regulate the different way of life in her married life. Language is the most powerful means of expression, but she faced the unknown language and struggle to learn such difficulties. The patriarchal society never forces a husband to learn his wife language. It is only the female who is compelled to adopt the culture, languages, lifestyle and many more. In this way Deshpande further writes:

She speaks to everyone in Marathi, uncaring of whether the other person understands the language or not. The cook does not hear the young woman repeating the instructions to her after Bai has spoken. The twins do not speak it, either though perhaps they do understand the language. I have seen them nodding when Bai speaks to them in Marathi, smiling uttering small interjections in their bad Hindi. (38)

When Savitribai went to her newly married home, she not only leave the birth place but also her culture and language. It is her compulsion that she must not use her own language because she is a woman in husband house. The male dominated patriarchal society never allowed her to use her own language and culture. For them woman should adopt her with new culture and life style.

In the male dominated patriarchal society, women are used only as the means of fulfilling sexual desire. Their emotions, feelings and experiences are ignored by the male in the family as well as in the society. Females are deprived of minimal requirements for their life. So, they are even compelled to apply the prostitution as their profession for the survival in the capitalist society. But their obligation to be prostitute is defined as the sin and they are excluded from the society.

All most al the female character sin the novel go through the stage of victimization physiologically, sexually, and physically. The protagonist of the novel also endures such several harassment by the demon like male in the society even in her own family. The patriarchal society presents women as the means of entertainment and play thing. Madhu the protagonist and the narrator of the novel reveals her pathetic condition. From her childhood, she endures a lot of problem during her life created the male dominated society. She says as narrator: "I was fifteen when I met Tony. Cocooded in the shock of my father's death, I scarcely noticed him

at first. until the day he came upon me in Paula's room when I was changing into my nightdress. He stood and stared at me for a moment, then lunged at me, his hands grabbing at my body, trying perhaps to touch my breasts" (48).

Here the major female character Madhu is sexually harassed time and again. Once she is misbehaved by her own friend Tony who touched her breast even she is in her grief at the death of her father. In the patriarchal society, female are presented as the plaything. One can play with them when he want and use them sexually. The emotion feelings and sentiments of female are not the major things there. On the other hand the biased society blames them as prostitute. In this way the protagonist of the novel victimized by sexually, mentally, and physically.

Likewise, women too should go through the domestic violence even by their own nearest relatives like fathers, brothers and husband. The nearest relatives torture the women basically raising the issues of sexuality. In Indian and Pakistani societies, the women's violence related with family honor or pride is in existence. It is existed in social and cultural practice. In this connection Ammu Joshep says, "Discussions on culture and violence against women (VAW) generally focus on forms of gender-based violence linked to what are known as harmful cultural and traditional practices, such as infanticide/sex selection, honour killing and dowry-related murder" (19). Madhu faces the similar domestic violence and mental tortures from her husband Som while she has revealed her past to him. In Indian society, patriarchy determines the gender roles and way of life of women. In this connection, Dr. Bibhuti Patil says:

The lifecycle of a woman is governed by a patriarchal value system, which promotes preferential treatment for men and neglect of women. Antenatal sex-determination tests, female infanticide and neglect of daughter in terms of food, health care and education result in stunted growth of women. Nearly

40% of marriages in India are child marriages (NFHS 2006). Teenage pregnancy takes place both within marriage and among unmarried girls due to rape, seduction, incest and child prostitution. Discrimination and violence make women suffer from low self-esteem and psychological dependence. (21)

The patriarchal ideology determines the women's criteria of women's purity and chastity. If there is some sort of mistake is committed by a woman knowingly or unknowingly, that woman should go through a lot of gender tortures. The notion of patriarchy makes them suffered and traumatized.

Madhu, the central character from *Small Remedies* is one of the trauma victims due to the discriminatory gender relation between male and female. She becomes trauma victim while her husband tortures her questioning upon her chastity and purity. Following narration of Madhu clarifies her as trauma victim:

After all these days, after so many months, suddenly it's time for me to confront the chaos, to make sense of it, to speak of it, to convert the fractured images, the vague shapes and sounds into the coherent word pattern. Certain images still escape me, they whirl around in a dark, chaotic maelstrom. The final moments of madness between Som and me, when I driven to desperation by the wildness of a man I could no longer recognize, cried out loudly. The pain ad darkness in my head, the thudding sound-was it Som banging my head against the wall, or was I doing it myself. (298)

The above lines picture the domestic gender violence faced by Madhu. While she reveals her simple past, she has to face the gender discrimination. It tortures her mentally and physically. "Som bagging my head against the wall, or was I doing it myself" presupposes that there is extreme suffering has been faced by protagonist Madhu. She further narrates, "I can only remember the sudden silence, the cessation

of all sound, the emptiness in my head that only moments ago had been full of pain and darkness” marks that Madhu has been gone through extreme gender traumatic experience. Madhu is not tortured only by the domestic violence but also by the loss of her son. Likewise, the death of her son too is rooted within the domestic violence occurred in home.

Madhu the protagonist and the narrator of the novel *Small Remedies* suffered from the traumatic situation created by the gender discrimination. The society creates several gender role that a female must play accordingly. When she tries to violate such artificial rules she must become dominated mentally. Males are always superior to females in the society so that females are compelled to suffer from trauma and that too due to gender. In the novel the female characters are suffered from the multi-dimensional factor whether these are historical or cultural factor that are linked with gender relation:

They got married as soon as she was eighteen. There was, of course enormous opposition to the marriage from her family. Not only was my father much older- nearly fifteen years older than her –he was not a Brahmin. Nevertheless, they got married. A year later she had a child and in a few months she was dead. It was TB, galloping TB as they called it then, which killed her within six months. This is the brief story of my parent’s marriage of their relationship. Or rather, this is all that I know of it. (171)

The present extract from the novel shows the pathetic part of female where their interest or emotion has not any value. Marriage is the most influential factor of a female. But in the patriarchal society they are not asked about it. They are compelled to follow what their parents said. In the above statement, the narrator of the novel presents her mother condition when she got marriage with her father and how she

died. Physical and mental health is another part of the female in patriarchal society.

The female are suffered from different health problem.

The protagonist of the novel also suffered from the gender trauma. The gender trauma is rooted from the childhood of Madhu. She feels helpless and vulnerable from her childhood. Her childhood experience like the death of her mother is the fact that she has to be traumatized from the very beginning of her life. Death of her mother is the memory of her past. Surely, a mother's death is a momentous event in a child's life. She always wants to get the love from her mother. But her mother died when she was only of few months. So Madhu is haunted by her past memory. Trauma is not the result of a group experiencing pain. It is the result of an acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity's sense of its own identity.

In this novel, Madhu was once involved in a physical relation with someone and when she reveals it to her husband Som, the tension begins in their marital relation. Actually, Madhu is only the victim but not a participant. If the male would have been in a relation with a female then it won't be serious matter because a man's act of adultery is not at all a crime. If the same act is performed by a woman then it is violation of the "sacramental" (12) union called marriage. In India women are still expected to be a mother goddess like Sita or Savitri (13).

The present thesis work also digs out the novel of famous Indian novelist Shashi Deshpande in which the female characters are not only victimize but also ignore and search their separate by challenging the contemporary male dominated norms and values. Though they are to much suffer from the patriarchal society, they not only endure it silence but resist it actively. The protagonist of the novel Madhu is not illiterate as the some traditional characters but she is well educated and conscious for her rights and duties. She is a writer and journalist who writes her emotion and

feelings in articles. The novelist writes in her novel as: "This is the writers from Bombay' the woman tells them. She is going to write the book on Baiji'. In perfect unison they smile, nod; fold their hands together in a respectful Namaste. The writers from Bombay. It is an identity so new, so strange, it feels like a disguise" (16).

The above mentioned extract from the novel indicates that Madhu is a famous writer. The traditional feminists argue those females are not able to express their feelings and thoughts because they are deprived of proper language and opportunity. But here the position of Madhu redraws the traditional role of female in the society. She is not only literate but she is a writer who is able to express her feelings and thought through literature.

Naturally women are not inferior and unintelligent than the male in the society. But the male dominated patriarchal society the artificial rules and regulations that prevent them to perform their natural quality. Females are confined within the four wall of patriarchy which imposes strong rules that compel female to suppress their personal desire and the sense of self-esteem. In this regards, in his Book *Feminist Literary Studies: An Introduction*, K.K Ruthven states:

Women are not inferior by nature but inferior by culture. They are acculturated into inferiority. If woman is simply a female sexual essence in the domain of nature, she would also be able to speak her own meanings and experiences, provided she is able to communicate in a language free from patriarchal interference. But woman is not an essence rather a construct in the domain of patriarchal culture as dispersed subject. (9)

Here according to Ruthven, biological difference between male and female is natural which is based on reproductive system. But gender is society constructed, it is cultural

rather natural. So, the patriarchal society creates the gender difference interiorizing females to dominate them.

The protagonist of the novel *Small Remedies* endures a lot of suffering during her life time by male oriented society. She is once insulted and harassed by her husband. And she realizes that it's her silence that encourages him to beat her and dominated her. So she strongly opposes him and decides to leave his house to search her separate identity. According to her after leaving her house, she realizes her past difficulties. And she tries her best to become a writer. Desshpande writes: 'I haven't written anything,' I argue with Chandru when he suggests I take on the work of writing Savitribai's biography. You were working with Cit Views, weren't you? As assistant editor? He pronounces the title as if nail down my writers status" (16). In this way, the protagonist of the novel becomes a famous writers and resists against the patriarchal norms and values. She challenges the female's traditional role and become the leading women of the society.

In the history of human development, female have suffered a lot. They are abused sexually, mentally, and physically by the male in the patriarchal society. But now, they are more conscious. They truly know their past and present status in the society. So, female do not want to repeat the pathetic past at present. They want to save their children from such inhuman practices. In this context, in the book *Black Feminist Politics From Kennedy to Clinton*, Duchess Harris argues:

One thing that I think we all had in common was again, we were all, it seemed like almost all of us were women who never quite fit any sort of stereotype about wherever we were. We weren't appropriate little girls, necessarily. And if we were appropriate little girls, we weren't very appropriate teenagers. We were girls who were rebellious and if we weren't rebellious in act, we were

definitely rebellious in thought. We were girls who early on either had been sexually abused or physically assaulted and never wanted that to happen to us again. So we were bringing a sort of reality politics, like you know I don't want this to happen to me or my children. There must be a way to walk about this. (24)

In this way, in the given extract, Duchess Harris analyzes the women's conditions in the past and present. She argues that though the patriarchal society attributes the different negative stereotypes to women, they never fit any sort of images, because the patriarchal mindset never realizes the black women reality. She also argues that women are more rebellious in acts or even in thought for their freedom or liberty. So, they don't want to repeat the history when they were assaulted physically, mentally and sexually. They want the bright future for their betterment.

Not only the protagonist of the novel, but other female characters are also challenges their traditional roles and question the then existing discriminative norms and values. Savitribai is other major characters of the novel who also ignore the contemporary norms and values of the patriarchal society. So she married with a Muslim boy for her career as singer. She challenges the traditional values of the society and searches her identity as Muslim woman though she is a pure Hindu girl by birth. In this context, the narrator of the novel says about the Savitribai personality:

I remember Savitribai as a small sized woman. Even from my child's perspectives she had seeded petite. Age and illness have so shrunk her that she's a doll sized woman now. She was also , in my syes a very beautiful woman, but my standards had not been very high. How may attractive women had there been in Neemgaon? The only women I'd known were the drab, badly dressed mothers of my friends. Naturally, Savitribai with her fair complexion,

her gold bordered saris and pearls had stood out among the tired, shabby women I saw around me. (14)

The given statement is the expression of Madhu, the narrator of the novel who explains the personality of the Savitribai. Unlike the traditional images of the women, she is bold enough and popular singers. She is able to do what the male member of the society can. She has her own house and she is capable in terms of economic point of view to. She is popular singer whose personality attracts our narrator. So she is decided to write the biography of Savitribai.

Feminist theory helps us to understand the female's condition in the society. It also studies the cause of female's sufferings and encourages females to be bold and resist against male oppression upon females. In this context, in her book *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*, bell hooks argues:

Feminism is the struggle to end sexist oppression. Its aim is not to benefit solely any specific group of women. It does not privilege women over men. It has the power to transformation in a meaningful way all over lives. Most importantly, feminism is neither a lifestyle nor a readymade identity or role one can into. (28)

Here, bell hooks put forwards a broad definition of feminism. Her definition of feminism covers not only a particular group, race or class of women but also the entire women themselves. Here, for her feminism is not only the victory over male but it also demands the equal opportunities of male and female in the society. The male dominated society always marginalizes and treats women as inferior to men from time immemorial and considers that women should serve them, obey them and stay within their home circle. Women can't voice their disapproval and even if they voice, nobody cares or listen to them. Their voice is suppressed so that it will not be heard.

In the book *Small Remedies*, the three major characters are conscious and well known about their duties in spite of their domination on of their life period. One of them is Leela who is strong and trained by the communist ideology. According to her society especially the capitalist society creates a lot of artificial taboos and that are imposed upon the marginalized group like women. For her it is the capitalist society that compelled female to be secondary entities of male in the society. In this way talking about the Leela's role in the mobilization of people, the writers of the novel writes:

It was Leela's role during the Emergency that caught his attention, he tells me. Her involvement with the striking railway workers, with their families. Of course, all this came out only after the emergency had been lifted. But even in the Emergency days, there was the grapevine on which Leela's name travelled . I heard about her and suddenly realized who she was. 'I felt good about it. Having someone in the family who was part of the resistance to the Emergency, I thought it was wonderful.(46)

Here the present extract from the novel exposes the Leela's role clearly. She is the political activist who fought against the all kind of social domination especially female domination. To become a political activist for a woman is very great achievement. She is conscious for her rights and duties. For the hierarchy between male and female is not natural it is social construct. So it can be blurred by the massive invasion of female awareness.

Thus, in *Small Remedies*, Shashi Deshpande defines cultural domination of the major women characters in postcolonial society. We have glimpses of their shattered lives but they fight their own battles in different arena of the society. In their own way, they tried to establish their individuality instead of getting compromised to the

patriarchal societies. Savitribai, Madhu and Leela are the victims of the existing cultural norms and value but their self-realization helps them in discovering their inner ability. They have their own dreams and they learn how to realize those dreams despite social barriers. They suffer a lot in their desire for the “unfeminine” right to freedom. Women, though talented, gifted with courage, are sidelined as they are women. We have found a number of women related issues along with various reasons of women's exploitations in the third world.

Works Cited

Chaudhary, Soma. *Outlook 20* (March 2000): 20.

Deshpande, Shashi. *Small Remedies*. Penguin Books, 2000.

Kartak, Ketu. *Politics of the Female Body*. 100 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Rutgers University Press, 2006.

Mills, Sara. "Post-feminist text analysis." *Sage Journals* (1998): 109.

Narayan, Uma. *Dislocating Cultures; Identities, Tradition and Third World Feminism*. Routledge, 1997.

Ray, Mohit K. *The Atlantic Companion to Literature in English*. Atlantic Publishers & Dist, September 2007.

Sharma, Kavita Sony. "Review of Small Remedies." *Sodhganga* (2017): 20.

Sharma, Siddhartha. *Shashi Deshpandey's novel; A Feminist Study*. Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2005.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *In Other Worlds*. Routledge Classics, 1998.

Yadav, Kusuma Kumari. "A Critical Analysis." *International Journal of English Research* (2017): 9.

"Women in Sashi Deshpande's Small Remedies: A Critical Analysis." *International Journal of English Research* (2017): 8.