

## Introduction

Shashi Deshpande was born in Dharward, Karnataka. She is the daughter of the renowned Kannada writer (dramatist) and Sanskrit scholar, Shriranga. At the age of fifteen she went to Bombay. Having graduated in Economics, she then moved to Bangalore where she gained a degree in Law. She has post-graduate degree in English and a diploma in Journalism as well. The early years of her marriage were largely given over to the care of her two young sons, but she took a course in journalism and for a time worked on a magazine. Her writing career began after the birth of her two sons in 1970, initially with short stories of which several volumes have been published. She wrote many novels such as: *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *Narayanpur Incident*, *The Binding Vine*, *That Long Silence*, *A Matter of Time*, *Small Remedies*, *Come up and Be Dead*, *Roots and Shadows*, *Moving On* etc. Her other works are *The Instruction and Other stories* and *Writing from the Margin and Other stories*. Among them, *Moving On* is her latest novel.

She is the author of four children's books. The best known of which are *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *Roots and Shadows* which received major awards *That Long Silence* and *The Binding Vine* received the Sahitya Akademi Award. Her novels are deeply rooted in India: the characters, settings and the conflicts, inherently Indian. Above all, she is a storyteller. Her short stories have been widely anthologized. Her short stories have been translated into a number of Indian and foreign languages. Now, she lives in Bangalore with her pathologist husband.

However, the other 19<sup>th</sup> century novelists were following the prevailing literature of romance, gothic or conventional patterns, Deshpande partly deviated herself from it and adopted more realistic Indian characters, Hindu culture, rules and regulations of conventional society where males always get victory over females.

They are guided by misconception of superiority. Mostly, Deshpande's female characters are life-like whose condition is very much pathetic and deserted. In Indian society, males dominate their wives and treat them as puppets and domestic slaves. They take them as a child breeding machine who should sacrifice themselves during the giving birth of their children. So, her novels are centered on female characters who play a vital role to establish social harmony and prosperity.

*The Binding Vine* deals with the middle class educated Indian woman. The story recounts her childhood and marriage including the death of her infant daughter. She becomes caught up in the discovery of her long-dead mother-in-law, a poet who was the victim of an unfortunate arranged marriage, and of a poor woman whose daughter, Kalpana is raped by her relative and hanging between life and death in a hospital ward. There are recurring things all of which are connected to each other and which are about the life of Indian women who are victimized by the male dominated society where males are always getting success and females are suppressing their desire and losing their identity but they cannot protest their victimizers. They have always traditional bondage from where they cannot come out. They are compelled to follow the rules and regulations.

Every female thinks that they have to walk every step of the way however difficult or painful it is. They can avoid nothing. Every male thinks that female should be silent even if they are talented. So, in this novel also, Mira Urmi's mother-in-law is a poet but nobody knows her ability because she can never show her capacity in front of the family members and society. She writes at night after all of the family members have gone to bed. She does not have her personal room. During the lifetime nobody knows her as a poet but long after her death, Urmi finds all poems in a dusty storage trunk. Her journals and poetry reveal the pain of a vibrant young woman trapped in an

unhappy arranged marriage. Kalpana, the survivor of a brutal rape and a young woman has also been silent.

In this novel, males are exploiting the females physically as well as mentally. Whole novel is strictly based on conventional male dominated Indian society, Hindu culture and daily life activities of especially females who are only inside the boundary of man-made society. Even Urmil, an educated woman is not happy with her husband after the death of her daughter. She is haunted by that incident frequently. She cannot go beyond her grief. She finds her path difficult to tolerate. She is drawn into the lives of three very different women. The first woman, Urmil, is drawn to her long-dead mother-in-law Mira who exists only on the notebooks. Second, woman is drawn to Kalpana who is raped by her own relatives and left brain-damaged in a hospital. Third woman is drawn to Shakuntal, Kalpana's mother, who blames her own daughter for the cause of that incident. She is very afraid of the society and its culture where everybody gives a space only for the virginal young girls and there is no space for the impure girls. They can never exist in the society and are always thrown away from the people. It not only hampers those girls but also affects the remaining sisters. Because of that incident their sisters cannot get married.

In addition, Shashi Deshpande has presented the Indian Hindu society as conventional one. Most of her novels deal with the similar subject matter. Like many American and European women, Deshpande's characters find it difficult to be accepted as intellectual equals of men.

*The Binding Vine* presents the patriarchal exemplifying the spirit of hierarchy and assumption of male supremacy over female characters. For instance Mira, Kalpana, and Urmil are dominated by the males. Deshpande presents the courageous male characters who are getting more chance of freedom despite being criminals. One

of the male victimizers named Pravakar rapes his own relative Kalpana who loses her memory power and goes into a coma. In order to get severe punishment from the society he gets scot-free. Due to this incident, his wife Sulu commits a suicide because she cannot face her shameful condition in the society. On the other hand, Mira, mother –in-law of the narrator dies during the delivery .It proves that males like Pravakar and Mira’s husband are living happily and getting more advantage from the innocent women like Kalpana,Sulu and Mira. The researcher has used a word ‘Waltz’ as a metaphor.

Females are doubly suppressed physically as well as mentally by their own life partners and their own relatives. They are living in pathetic condition. One of the victims Mira dies during the child birth , Kishor (son). Due to the forceful relationship she becomes a victim. But her husband does not regret. There is not good relationship between husband and wife. But she is compelled to do things unwillingly. In the conventional society, males get victory over the females. Instead of giving severe punishment they are getting chance of freedom.

Hence, Deshpande has presented the deep rooted conventional Hindu society where female’s condition is very much pathetic. She has focused on male’s power that has always marginalized women since long. In the name of culture and society females are always suppressing their desire and keeping themselves silent.

### **Review of Literature:**

*The Binding Vine* is one of the best novels of Shashi Deshpande. It is the story of Urmi, an educated lady, who has just lost her baby daughter ‘Anu’. It focuses on the females’ condition in Indian Hindu society. Various critics have explored the range and diversity of the novels in different ways following different perceptions and ideologies. The analysis of the text and comments made by various critics prove that

*The Binding Vine* is about the Hindu culture, society and rules and regulations made by males.

Prasanaa Sree Sathupati, a female critic is of the opinion that most of Deshpande's novels are based on realistic picture of the middle class educated women and their daily lives. A tradition-bound woman may sacrifice her happiness for the sake of the well-being of the family as a unit, but at the same time retains her individuality. Indian woman usually does not bother about her personal happiness and comfort as much as she addresses herself to the task of making others happy and upholding traditions and conventions. A woman may be seen and understood by her father in one way, her husband in another way, her son and daughter in some other ways and by herself in yet another way. Keeping all these views in mind, she reflects the same in her novels:

In her novels she has tried to project a realistic picture of the middle class educated women who are financially independent, who represent a larger part of the contemporary Indian society. Her novels deal with the problems of the adjustments and conflicts into minds of female protagonists who ultimately submit to the traditional rules, in the transitional society.(15)

Centuries of Indian tradition and age-old cultural beliefs have made the Indian woman as the most patient, obedient and loving woman in the world. Her suffering silent screams, disappointments and frustrations are not heard even in this modern world. S.Indira says that Deshpande presents realistic view of Indian women's lives through her vivid characterization that touches her readers and critics with the sense of feminist perspective. She says:

Pain, joy and fear are inextricably intertwined. The pain of childbirth results in the joy of seeing one's own child and no one, not even Mira with all her husband and discord with him/his family could turn away from the anticipatory joy of giving birth to her child, her creation, just like her favorite poem.(24)

Man's relationship with woman is most often the bond that exists between a master and a slave. Woman is an object and she is essential to man because it is in seeking to be made whole through her that man hopes to attain self-realization.

Amitav Roy comments in this way:

The heroines of Shashi Deshpande strive for self-realization and self-assertion and they succeed in it. Equality between sexes is the dream they cherish. But they seek their solution always within the range of family. This phenomenon seems to be rooted in the very nature of feminism in India which respects the institution of family. (29)

Commenting upon the novel *The Binding Vine*, Indira Mohan asserts:

The heroines of Deshpande's novel are assertive and have the courage to revolt and refuse being puppets in the hands of men in the name of tradition and society. It is a painful fact that men first place women on a pedestal and lavishly praise her, and then ask her to step down from that pedestal and dust it. Such slavery must end. Women must develop confidence in themselves and take the responsibility to wage a war against the injustices done to them. (20)

Although, women are educated and aware of patriarchy and want to revolt against it they cannot fully escape from it. Traditionally, they are bound and compelled to live in private sphere. The woman, in order to achieve her freedom,

seeks marriage as an alternative to the bondage created by the parental family. But after marriage, she resents the role of a daughter and looks forward to the role of a wife with the hope that her new role will help her in winning her freedom.

Referring to the Hindu myth J.Bhavani talks about 'Sita' and her 'Pavitrata':

The Hindu female persona is a nexus of mutually contradictory and self-defeating ideas. The archetypal image of Sita perpetuated by "patriarchy is that of the footsteps following shadow-wife. "Pavitrata Mahabhaga Chayeva anugamasada" (Ramayana). The persona ideal in Deshpande's fiction is succinctly represented in the oft-repeated image of the ad woman: "A mother in an ad, in a movie dressed in a crisply starched, ironed sari: wife and mother, loving and beloved. A picture of grace, harmony and happiness." (23)

Bhavani, here emphasizes on Hindu wives and their "Pavitrata". She gives an example of Hindu myth Ramayana and compares and contrasts Sita with the modern women who play in an ad and movies as a loving mother or as a beloved and their happiness. But still women are dominated by their fathers, husbands, masters (film makers) etc. Physically as well as mentally they are exploiting the actresses. They are compelled to wear short dresses. They are sexually harassed by them. The construction of masculinity in our society makes males strong.

Focusing on female protagonist Mira, Indira Nityanandam remarks, "It is against such patriarchal norms that Deshpande's protagonists have to fight. Mira managed to write without a room of her own and in secret because she could never expect any recognition or acceptance of her poetry" (65).

During Deshpande's period, mostly women did not have their separate rooms. They did not have separate space for writing. Mira, the mother-in-law of the narrator

also did not have her own room for writing the poems so she used to write specially at night. According to Virginia Woolf "women had always faced social and economic obstacles to their literary ambitions. Due to the lack of money and common sitting room women are always left behind the men." Therefore, she states that 'libraries can be locked but freedom of woman's mind cannot be locked.'

Depending upon these above mentioned criticisms and many others, we can understand that Shashi Deshpande is a novelist who presents the real picture of Indian Hindu society, culture, norms and values, lives of female, social environment etc. Moreover, Deshpande is highly influenced by patriarchal society and boundaries made by males and tries to prove her novel as a true mirror of social environment. *The Binding Vine* is one of her representative novels of Indian Hindu culture that shows the pathetic lives of females and victory of males.



## **The Feminist Literary Theory**

The feminist movement as a specific kind of political discourse emerged in the late 1960s. It is the voice against patriarchal society and cultural boundaries, rules and regulations made by males who are regarded as active dominating, adventurous, rational, strong, rigid and creative whereas females are identified as passive, timid, emotional, flexible, conventional, dull who can only live inside a sphere drawn by the males. All man-made systems are based on the interests of males. Even language is the man-made thing which has to be followed by female. Therefore, it is the movement for the rights for the women's freedom, gender equality, and equal citizenship with men, independence of all social structures and struggle against patriarchal norms and values.

'Feminist' is defined by various critics in different ways. As it originated from the political movement of women, Toril Moi, the British feminist critic of 1980s has used the term 'feminist' or 'feminism' in political sense. With regard to feminist criticism, she classifies the word 'feminist', 'female' and 'feminine' differently:

I will suggest that we distinguish between 'feminism' as political position, 'femaleness' as a matter of biology and 'femininity' as a set of culturally defined characteristics [...]. The word 'feminist' or 'feminism' are political levels indicating support for the aims of the new women's movement which emerged in late 1960s. (204)

Since Moi is motivated from the feminist political movements and weighs feminism with the machine of politics, her feminist concept has come into existence as a reaction to the patriarchy and male misogyny. She further defines the feminist criticism and says: "Feminist criticism, then is specific kind of political discourse, a

critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism, not simply its concern for gender in literature" (204).

Cixous represents a distinctively French brand of radical feminism which centers on the concept of feminine writing. She emphasizes on the difference in language and text. She thinks that the source of feminine writing lies with the mother in the imaginary stage. It is vividly summarized in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* as:

. . . feminine writing which has its source in the mother, in that stage of the mother-child relation before the child acquires the male-centered verbal language...this prelinguistic potentiality in the unconscious manifests itself in those written texts which, abolishing all repressions, undermine and subvert the fixed signification, the logic and the "closure" of our phallogentric language and open out into a joyous free play of meanings. (93)

The 'feminist' concept, which refers to the 'supporter' of the feminism, and that is relevant to the women's sensibility originates from the women's awareness. This concept has been popularized since the women's Liberation Movement of 1960s in America. Analyzing the participation of the women and their commitment to this movement Jane Sherrom De Hart says, "The feminist revolution of the 1960s [...] was begun largely by educated, middle class women whose diverse experience had sharpened their sensibility to the fundamental inequality between the sexes[...] stepped in a commitment to equality and the techniques of protest" (349).

Actually this movement was launched by two active feminist groups of women in America: (a) women's rights advocates consisting of experienced professional women demanding for women's equal rights outside the home. (b) Women liberations consisting of less-experienced young women motivated by politics

and violence. Though both of these feminist groups were organized with two different purposes, their main objective was to protect women from the male domination and provide them equal social, political, and legal rights.

But the 'feminist' got worldwide popularity only after the international women's year 1975. In the historical development of feminist theories, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970), Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) and Toril Moi's *Sexual/Textual Politics* (1985) have heralded a new era in women's literature raising their voices for women.

These feminist critics' views on women are different, but the aim of each critic is to awaken women and support them by attacking men. Literary critical theories propounded by men focus only on men, without giving any space to women. Even Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) is based on Sartre's existentialist philosophy. Here main argument is that women have always been thought of and treated as an object for man- as man's other relegated to secondary roles and denied individuality and responsibility. These assumptions dominate social, political and cultural life to such extent that women have come to believe in them, accept them and enact them in real life.

Literary criticism and literary theory have traditionally been guarded-male dominated areas. It was taken for granted that representative reader, writer or critic of literature was male. The memminist critics protested against these exclusions of women, this misogyny and the movement provided the impetus. This type of radical feminism appeared in Elaine Showalter's reinterpretation of gender study. She in her text, writes:

It was through the women's liberation movement that we began to draw connections between our own work and our own lives to note the

disparities between the identifications and ambitions that had attracted us along with thousands of other women, to study and teaching of literature, and limited secondary roles granted to fictional heroines, women writers, or female scholars. Feminism spoke to you lived and our literary experience with the fierce urgency of a revelation of *Great Awakening*. (5)

Elaine Showalter one of the prominent feminist critics says that feminism is male oriented. It studies in general, how men have depicted women in their literary works and how men have evaluated women writers. From this what women have felt and experienced cannot be learnt since it concentrates on the writing of men. Therefore, she divides the female phase into three phases.

1. Feminine Phase (1840-1880):

It is the first phase which indicates the primitive concept of the women. The writers of this phase only imitated the male's writing. Their works deal with the domestic and social background. But they could not express their works. They wrote the novels within the criteria of males because there was no place for female in the literary tradition. This phase exposes the literary practice reflected in distorted and stereotyped image of women in literary works. Women are rarely presented as women realistically. Traditionally women are portrayed as a selfless, self-denying and sacrificing creature, as a symbol of purity and beauty; or she is presented as a monster, the villain, victimizer, devourer, predator like Eve who ultimately ruins man. Thus women characters are given no positive role in traditional literary works. Such misrepresentation, literary and textual harassment of women literature is exposed by feminist critics.

## 2. Feminist Phase (1880-1920):

This is the second phase in which women writers show their awareness. They started to revolt against male domination, winning of the vote. They did not hesitate to disclose the pathetic condition of women. They raised the voice of gender equality to protest the male domination.

## 3. Female Phase (1920-present time):

This is the third phase which extends from the 19<sup>th</sup> century till now. This phase developed the idea of female writing and female experience. It was the time of evolution of women writing. They started celebrating and there was consciousness. In this phase, women rejected both imitation and protest. They were conscious about their autonomy.

Kate Millet nicknames such male-centered theories as patriarchal theologies for providing extreme power to men and attacks such theologies for their dominating attitude towards women and demanding more purity and femininity from them. Femininity can be contrasted with feminism because the former is a cultural word sought by anti-feminist men whereas 'feminism' is a political connotation acknowledged by the feminist women.

Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* was a landmark in feminist thinking. She was a founding member of the national organization of women. Her book provided a powerful critique of patriarchal culture. She used the term "Patriarchy" to describe the cause of women's oppression. Patriarchy subordinates the female to the male or treats the female as an inferior male. She attacks the male bias in Freud's psychoanalytic theory and those writers who degrade women as submissive sexual objects.

Virginia Woolf is an important precursor in feminist criticism. In *A Room of One's Own* and numerous other essays, she pointed out cultural, economic and educational disabilities of women for their creative work under patriarchal society. She believed that women had always faced social and economic obstacles. Room is the metaphor which indicates a space in society which is an area and where they can get freedom and survive there. She attacks that a patriarchal society has prevented women from realizing their creative possibilities. Women write poems and novels to express their true experiences of family, domesticity and restriction of society to them. According to her, the writing of women should be studied in relation to the social, economic and political facts around women which dictate her condition. Women's economic independence was an essential prerequisite for autonomy in women's writing and art. The organization of publishing houses by women from the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a major step forward in overcoming the inhibiting monopoly held by men over the publishing business. Simone de Beauvoir too in *The Second Sex* emphasizes the importance of the social, political and economic situation of woman in determining her character and action. She argues that there is no essential or absolute feminine 'nature' but only a feminine 'situation' which determines the character and action of its victims. Feminist critics accept that women exhibit group character ties but deny that these are due to biological factors alone. They trace them to sociological and historical causes, to the fact that women are treated almost like a lower caste, subject to special restrictive and limiting social influence.

Even every religion and mythology of the world believes that women are inferior and created for the assistance of men. According to *The Old Testament*, "Women are created out of man's rib". But feminist critic Simon de Beauvoir opposes it saying:

One is not born, but rather become a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine.(301)

The critic tries to highlight the difference between male and female by showing how males receive the central position whereas the female are thrown at the outskirts periphery. So the primary aim of this movement is to set free women from oppressive restraints, especially from cultural restraints of society, taboos and various types of inhibitions. All these constrict women's identity within a narrow boundary. Therefore, women feminist critics want to deconstruct this male-made definition in search of their own identity, freedom, equality. To sum up, they are in search of 'Humanism' rather than 'Womanism'. So 'Feminism' may be a perspective focus, a view, a political theory, a spiritual focus, or a kind of activism.

In this regard, Mary Wollstonecraft and Sarah Stickney Ellis are the frontline feminists. They have advocated the problems of women in the society and appealed for considerations from males to allow equal status to them. Although there were many other writers who had also tried to deal with that issue before them, Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) is generally considered a milestone in the development of feminism. She says, political, social, educational, economic and cultural circumstances make women backward. Men are the main responsible agents for the suffering of women. In her opinion, a woman or girl is affected by the misinterpretation of the life style of the society. Their learning is mere repetition of the some conventional ideas, but not creative one. Wollstonecraft makes

distinction between private space and public both but female holds only private space, which she dislikes.

Ellis had also tried to raise the concern of women's nobility through her essay entitled *The Women of England* (1889), with demand of access of education and asking to reduce the existing social evils for nation building.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* puts a new dimension to see the nineteenth century women writers in terms of twentieth century feminism. Their book stresses especially the psychodynamics of women writers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, they carry out a feminist revision of the essential psychoanalytic definition of the women artists and woman-woman relation in which personal and affectional issues are the primary interest. Moreover, literary history of female tradition expressed by a sub community of women writers. It also tries to show the distinctive feminine mode of experience in thinking, feeling, valuing and perceiving. So it attempts, according to M.H. Abrams; ". . . to specify the traits of a "woman's language" or distinctively feminine style of speech and writing, in sentence structure, types of relations between the elements of a discourse, and characteristic figures and imaginary" (91).

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar concentrated on the suppressed female with a kind of realization of female identity. According to them, patriarchal aesthetic always wants a girl to be an in-animate object. But they argued that the nineteenth century women writers choose to express their own female anger in services of duplicitous textual strategies whereby both the angel and the monster, the sweet heroine and the saying madwoman, are aspects of the author's self image, as well as elements of treacherous antipatriarchal strategies.



They present a dilemma of women writer in a male-centric authorship and make a clear position of the women writer who is squandering without fixity. The women poet has an anxiety of authorship a radical fear that she cannot create the fear that she cannot fight a male precursor on his terms and win. As they write "the woman writer is victimized by the interiorized and alternative psychology of woman under patriarchy" (1237). They observe the psycho-sexual problems of female writers who feel disturbed, distrusted and insecure since they have derived the literacy genus from the stern literacy 'fathers' of patriarchy in comparison to the male tradition of strong, father-son combat described by Bloom as Anxiety of influence. Their focal thesis lies in creating a space for women literature or creating a subculture unaffected by males and attacking male ego and in struggling against the effects of socialization.

Feminist ideology can take many different forms. In the 1970's women started developing a theory which helped to explain their challenge against patriarchy. Up to 1970, there was somewhat singularity of purpose among feminist; it was a revolt against patriarchal restraints, deprivations. However, in course of time there were diversions and even splits among them as regards strategies, slogans and even the objectives. Consequently, feminism emerged in different parts of the world with their own strategic programmes and identities such as American, British, liberal, militant etc.

Helen Vendler's criticisms of feminism's political biases caused a storm of protests from feminist critics, particularly Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. The debate centers on formalism versus political meaning. Vendler seems to have little to complain in feminist political theory in general, but in feminist literary criticism she finds more that is lacking. She criticizes early feminist critics for looking at women in male novels in a native fashion, treating the characters as real people and predictable

not finding them portrayed correctly. She also finds fruitless attempt of later feminist critics to discover a distinctively female way of writing or a women language.

. . . feminism's unacknowledged problem, visible from its inception, has been its ascription of special virtue to women. In its most sentimental form, feminism assumes that men, as a class, are base and women are moral; in its angry version, that men are oppressors and women the oppressed. (214)

Tillie Olsen demands to hear women's voices in her 1978 work, *Silences: A Study of the Impediments to Creativity Encountered by Women*, citing those: . . . mute inglorious Milton: those whose working hours are all struggle for existence; the barely educated; the illiterate; women. Their silence is the silence of the centuries as to how life was, is, for most of humanity (197).

Cultural feminism has also had great influence upon the theoretical works of feminists. The more important manifestation of cultural feminism is the conceptual distinction between 'gender' and 'sex'. It was first developed by Anne Oakley. According to her, sex is connected with biology, is considered to be based on hormones, gonads, genitalia, whereas the gender identity of men and women in any given society is considered as psychologically and socially, and that means historically and culturally determined. In order to avoid the confusion about sex as being biologically determined, the concept gender was introduced to denote the socially and culturally determined differences between men and women.

The hidden reality of women's private lives became a public issue and many women realized their 'unique' problem with their men, their child, their boss etc. Their enemies were not only the state, the church, the law, the male doctors, but that each woman also had the 'enemy' in her bed. Violence and coercion seemed to be the

main mechanisms by which the unequal power relation in the area of body politics was maintained. Women discovered more and more that their own bodies had been alienated from them and had been turned into objects for others, had become 'occupied territory' Many began to understand that male dominance, or patriarchy as it then began to be called, had its origin not in the realm of public politics only but in men's control over women's bodies, particularly their sexuality and their generative capacities.

From this followed a 'discovery' of and a struggle against other manifestation of male violence. The next issues around which women were mobilized were wife and women beating. Large numbers of groups in many countries launched a movement against wife beating, and the physical and psychological cruelty of men towards women. Shelters for battered women were set up in most Western countries by autonomous women's groups as a first self-help measure. Meanwhile such shelters were also set up in underdeveloped countries like India.

The movements around the issue of male violence focused on women as the victims whom the feminists tried to help by a number of self-help initiatives like rape crisis centers, houses for battered women, feminist health collectives, etc. Rape cannot become a punishable offence as long as it takes place within marriage. Raped women in all countries have realized that all the laws pertaining to rape are biased against women, that rape is blamed on the victim herself that a raped woman, if she accuses a man, is often 'raped' a second time in court by the lawyers who take all liberty to make inquiries about the sexual life of the victim, whereas the man's aggression is often played down as a cavalier act.

The stark fact that all women are potential victims of such male violence, and that modern democratic states with all their might and sophistication are not capable

of implementing these basic rights for women raised serious doubts in the minds of many feminists about the state as an ally in their struggle for women's liberation. In the German peace movement the feminists coined the slogan: 'Peace in patriarchy is war against women'. Men everywhere and at all times have tried to build their own power on the subordination of women.

The British model of feminism can be called Marxist and social feminism or liberal feminism. It was most popular in the 1950s and 60s when movements for many levels rights; right to vote, property ownership, job holding etc. were taking place. The main view of liberal feminism is that all people are created equal by the God and deserve equal status in the society. It bases on the concept that the text is a part of process of the social construction of meaning and subjectivity, and literature in one of the ways in which gender relations and gender ideology are produced and reproduced. Susie Tharu and K. Lalita write in introduction part of women writing in India:

Though the early work of the "Marxist Feminist Literature collective" and the critic Cora Kalpana are exceptions, British feminist criticism which is broadly speaking, more Marxist and more theoretical in inclination than its American with women's writing possibility because it was difficult to reconcile the prevailing of women's 'voices', which underwrote the early initiatives, with the idea, which several British theories have explored, of female subjectivity or selfhood as also ideologically constructed. (12)

This approach is politically productive and theoretically sound. This concept of feminism argues that women are also human beings equal to men and it is only when both stand, their hands joined together can the foundation of natural law and

custom be evolved promptly and it is a voice against the inadequacy the distortion as well as ideologies of the males.

Kate Millett and Michale Barrett are the pioneer British feminist critics who raised the voice against women's suppression. Millett developed the idea of sexual politics (1969) out of the ideas of unequal power relation of domination and subordination of women by patriarchal culture. According to Millett:

The essence of politics is power, and the task of feminist critics and theorists is to expose the way in which male dominance over females constitute perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides the most fundamental concept of power. (205)

It means women are ruled and dominated by the male rulers who have been enjoying the power of authority in conventional way. Michale Barrett defines ideology in "Women's Oppression Today" (1980) as the process by which meaning produced, challenged reproduced and transformed. She also identifies literature as an exemplary instance of it. Millett and Barrett express their dissatisfaction against women's suppression and argue that writers in literary text should be free from such kinds of false notion. Barrett further adds that the measurement of text on the basis of gender is absolutely false because, "Texts have no fixed meanings: interpretations depend upon the situation and ideology of the reader." (140)

Another liberal male feminist critic K.K.Ruthven in his *Feminist Literary Studies* (1984) explicitly rejects the idea of that kind of feminist criticism and says, it should have anything at all to do with feminist politics (208). He talks about the need of the social harmony between men and women. In his view feminist concept upon literary criticism is not totally a political one but only one part of feminism, and men

not being totally disqualified for the feminist criticism can go along with the women critics hand in hand.

Gayatri Spivak has made an admirable effort to develop a materialistic anti imperialistic feminism which draws on the sight of recent post structuralistic and post modern theory.

R.K. Dhawan writes that feminism is greatly followed in Indian English fiction. Feminists in India are pleading that discrimination against women must be stopped. It is a question of asserting one's identity, arousing public opinion of canalizing will and motivation to influence the conscience of society. If a woman is capable of making a mark in her profession, she should be recognized and treated as an equal, "The contemporary woman does not want to conform to the traditional image anymore. She wants her due-her rightful place along side her male counterpart in the Indian society" (*Indian Woman Novelist* 12). He focuses on male-dominated Indian society where the woman is still regarded as second person.

Similarly, Chanman Nahal writes for different form of feminism in fiction. She examines the replacement model in feminine fiction. According to her it is very difficult to construct a replacement model. One cannot escape the conditioning myths with which one can grow up. She further writes that "Unless we cannot construct new myth, we can construct new model." (*Indian Women* 31) The heroic role played by Indian women in their own capacity definitely provides an alternative replacement model. But this rich resource had been completely left out before the independence in India. Only after the independence this replacement model of feminism is used by many novelists.

Some critics like K. Meera Bai tries to differentiate two forms of women in Indian literature. Women of the oriental tradition are in general gentle adjustable

accommodative, pliable and service minded. The Indian woman is particularly conditioned by traditions and conventions and willingly accepts the responsibility of being the custodian of family honor and prestige. Indian women usually does not bother about her own personal happiness and comfort as much as she addresses herself to the task of making others happy and upholding tradition and conventions. In another side modern woman does not find any sense in being acquiescent. It does not appeal to her imagination to individual. As she feels the need for self expression and individual fulfillment. She begins to question the conventions and defies the tradition which tends to undermine her importance and individuality. Such women become non-conformists, in that they rebel against the accepted and existing moral codes and social norms, which either in theory or in practice tends to, relegate women to a secondary place. However, conformity and non-conformity are purely relative terms. The set of values meant for particular people at a particular time may be questioned as to heir validity in changed times and circumstances. Modern women challenge the injustice and demands re-dress. In the formed and tradition-bound societies like India the repression has to put up which is usually very severe and the resultant suffering often assumes pathetic proportions for sensitive individuals. In this circumstance M. Rajeshwar observes that, "Among Indian again women happen to be the worst suffering as the social norms and moral codes have been so framed as to be particularly disadvantageous to them" (*Indian Women* 40). This is perhaps why the Indian English novelists, encouraged to a certain extent by their historical and cultural context, consistently treated the neurotic phenomena or in their fictional works. This is a way to protest against the establishment.

Shyam Asmani tries to differentiate Indian feminism from western perspectives because historical and social conditions are key factors for any literary

works. He writes that the characters of the Indo-English novel conform the signs un-Indian. Similarly branding the Indo-English novelists, who strive to bring in the current of new morality into their works, as propagandists of evil influences of the western ideas or condemning them as a moralist, is nothing but obscurantism. He writes that "The modern Indo-English novelist explores and examines the relationship of man with his fellowmen vis-a-vis the social forces at work around him in all their bewildering complexity. Thus it covers the entire gamut of human experience" (105). So, Indian writers show Indian history and tradition in their writings. Hence, feminist critics believe that women have some mental capacity as their male counterparts and should be given the same opportunities in political, economic and social spheres. So they want to bring change by counteracting conventional or traditional ideology to empower women. They reject the idea that biology predetermines one gender. Social roles are not inherent and women's status must change in both the public and private sphere.

This overall view is that feminist literature in particular patriarchal society is to empower and free women. Feminist's critics believe that only a feminist struggle will significantly change relations between men and women that concerns issues such as sexuality, violence, control of women's bodies by women, the cultural politics of dress, and other representation of gender and so on. They claim with their men folk to grant the similar rights that they have been enjoying for a long time. In these terms revolutionary men too have spoken of the need for equality of women in the history. Still half of the population in world has yet to be developed in the sense of humanity. So it is necessary to pave equal effort to safeguard the human rights.

Since Shashi Deshpande's novels are women centered and show reaction against male dominated society to establish women's world, she is also close with the



liberal feminist thought. Her characters and subject matter are based on patriarchal Indian Hindu society to especially female protagonists have been focused.

Hence, it would be more pleasant and appropriate to evaluate Deshpande's *The Binding Vine* within the concept of different feministic approaches including psychoanalysis, radical feminism, liberal feminism that has successfully established social harmony and prosperity in the Hindu society by giving high priority of family environment and self-righteousness.

### III. Resisting the Male Walz Over Female Cemetery

This chapter is oriented towards analysing. *The Binding Vine* from the feminist perspective. In order to do so focus is laid upon the female characters who are dominated by their males especially by their husbands, relatives and other male characters. Although female character like Mira mother-in-law of the narrator, Urmi, is hiding her capacity in front of male dominated family she does not have her own room to write poems. She expresses her suppressed desire at night by writing poetry. She is compelled to walk or do according to his desire. Urmi, argues with her friend Priti about a judgement in a case filed by a husband against his wife for conjugal rights, she says "The wife could not be forced into a sexual relationship with the husband against her will" (37). She has to live in private sphere drawn by patriarchal society. She can never cross the boundary.

A classic feminist work on rape is Susan Brownmiller's book, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (1975). Brown Miller argues:

. . . it is sexual violence, and specifically rape and the threat of rape, which gives men control over women. . . all women suffer from this, even if they are not the victims of actual rape-because they are all victims of the threat of rape. It is this fear generated by the threat of rape that keeps women subordinated. Conversely, all men benefit from the fact of rape, even if they are not perpetrators of rape themselves because the system of rape keeps all women fearful and subordinated to men. (66)

In order to fulfill her husband's will, Mira, kills her desire and, as a result she becomes pregnant and she dies while giving birth to her son at the age of twenty-two. All the family members are happy because she gives birth to a son not to a daughter.

Instead of feeling sad, her husband gets remarried with 'Akka' who gives birth to Vanaa. It proves that male dominated society always gets victory over innocent female who never gives priority to their own will. Rather, they give more priority to their husbands, family and society. In order to keep their family reputation, they never go against the rules and regulations made by males.

Before marriage, Mira's husband loves her very much. He follows her and finally gets married. After marriage, he starts to observe her. He takes her as an object. He keeps her in illusion by keeping as domestic. His love towards her is not true because after the death of Mira he gets remarried. During life time she never utters a word 'no'. She is very much faithful, honest and always pays respect towards the family members especially towards her husband. Whatever her husband desires she is ready to fulfill because she wants to keep her family reputation good. She never tries to go beyond the family rules and regulation. As a result she gets a death reward. "He brought the day-old baby away with him the day after the funeral. . . nobody could stop him. What , he really wants how is a mother for that motherless child" (47).

Nobody can stop him while he remarries 'Akka' because he is a male from male dominated society. Everybody becomes silent. The family members are worried about the motherless baby but fortunately she is not cruel mother as they think. But she becomes another victim of her husband who is compelled to live within a private sphere.

Kishor, Mira's son gets life through his mother's body but he never talks about his mother, with his wife Urmi because he is also a male from male dominated society. Whenever Urmi talks about her mother-in-law Mira, his face changes as

'closed room look'. It's like Mira's warning on the first page of all her diaries:

"Strictly private and confidential" (51).

Mira writes poems but wants to keep them secret. She does not want to expose her reality because all of her poems are the reflexion of her life and feelings. Her poems were kept inside the old trunk which was thrown under the bed and covered with dust since long:

. . . we saw the books. The weight of the trunk should have prepared us for them but we were surprised when Akka brought them out. A variety of books. Text books, with a student's comments scribbled all over. Note books of an earlier era, the cardboard covers severely simple. A few novels, both in Kannada and English, looking used and much-read. Untidy bundles of paper, scraps really, torn from notebooks. Scribbling pads, old diaries scribbled all over, not a page left blank. Then a file, and, finally, at the bottom of the trunk, an envelope. Photographs cascaded out of it. (42)

This clearly shows that Mira kept her precious things (personal) in that trunk and she seems to be fond of reading novels and books. She knows both English and Kannada language and reads the book. It also clarifies that she writes her feelings in her diaries where no blank pages can be found. She keeps her photograph which is her last pose with her friends before getting a new life. It is a parting of ways for a group of friends or the end of a chapter. After marriage she cannot do whatever she likes. Her life becomes totally changed.

On her books she has written, "This book is mine as all can tell, if you steal it you will go to hell." 'Strictly private and confidential'. It means that she wants to keep her secrecy forever. When 'Akka' and Urmi find Mira's poetry Akka starts to read,

"The eastern light lifts the veil of darkness the sparrow chirps on the swinging bough, the calf cries for its mother in the barn the world stretches, opens its eyes " (45).

This poem indicates that Mira has an optimistic view towards her life because she thinks she can establish herself in the society. She tries to present the environment after the sunshine which gives brightness and pushes the dark night. The sun gives happiness to all the creatures like sparrow starts to chirp and makes the environment happy. The calf also wants to get company of its mother and the earth opens its eyes. The poem gives the lesson that after sorrow there is happiness, after dark there is light. So, she hopes that one day she will fulfill her wish but unfortunately she loses her life in male dominated society because of her husband's wish.

In this conventional society females' will is dominated by their male partners. By killing their own desire they obey males' voices. They are like puppets so they give first priority to their husbands from the day when they get married, "It runs through all her writing a strong, clear thread of an intense dislike of the sexual act with her husband, a physical repulsion from the man she married" (63).

By thinking about family and society wives can never disagree with their husbands. To keep their good relationships they always live inside the social sphere, "Love ! I can hear Mira's voice, scornful and angry. She never wrote any poems about love. Yes, that is odd, most women poets do . But Mira didn't. There's not a single one about love. Didn't she believe in love ?" (82).

During Mira's lifetime she was never happy because she has never mentioned about love in her poetry. Mostly, her poems deal with feeling of anger. She was unhappy with her married life because she can never feel love with her husband. Finally, she sacrifices herself in order to keep family reputation, ". . . a man who tried

to possess another human being against her will. Was it her mother who told her 'never to say no'?" (83).

Don't tread paths barred to you  
obey, never utter a 'no',  
submit and your life will be  
a paradise, she said and blessed me. (83)

According to Hindu culture, females should never utter the word 'no' if they really want to live in paradise-like home happily. They have to keep themselves quiet repressing their desire. Males always want to possess the females who never think about their will. Same thing happened in Mira's life. Unwillingly her husband forces her for sexual relationship which ends her life. Most of the time Mira remains a silent observer in the story.

. . . loneliness was, perhaps a part of Mira's being. There's that family photograph in which she stands a little aloof from the rest of them. The youngest brother's hand is on his mother's lap as if for reassurance, the other boy stands close behind his mother but Mira is distant and not just physically. (101)

Even in family photograph, males and females are separated by their family members. Mira seems alone, standing a little far from others. Her brother is sitting closely to her mother's lap which clearly shows that sons are liked by their parents but not daughters. Physically as well as mentally females are dominated by their own parents before marriage and after marriage by their husbands. Most of the time, Mira remains silent. According to Lionel Trilling, silence in women has been viewed as the place of oppression, the mark of women's exclusion from representation as speakers in the text. In certain times and places women are unable to speak openly

and presented themselves as a silent listener or observer in conventional frame work in life and text. Laurence remarks, "The silences represent women's different ways of feeling and knowing-perhaps silence hiding fears, anger, taboo, thoughts-as well as representing the available means of expression among particular, historical and cultural circumstances" (157).

For centuries, biological difference has been the starting point and justification for the creation of different social roles for women and men. Not only was women's biological capacity for childbirth and breast feeding and their generally lesser physical strength seen as determining their social role in the home, occupying themselves with domestic chores and bringing up children, but it was also claimed that these biological differences made them unfit to participate in the public sphere. Women were judged to be less reasonable than men, more ruled by emotion, and thus incapable of political decision-making. Men can do whatever they like, can choose and leave the family:

He won't speak to me. I asked Prabhakar to talk to him,I had to, I have no man at home, whom do I turn to ? He was impertinent and Prabhakar gave one or two slaps - what's wrong with that ? He's like his father. But Kalpana went mad. How dare he lay his hands on Prakash, she screamed. My children have become a burden to me, Urmila, they have become a burden.' She stops, exhausted, 'And now, Prakash. . ." You should have controlled her", 'he says, "You let her get out of hand." I don't blame him, he listens to others. I know what they're saying (147).

In conventional society, wives are so much devoted to their husbands. Although they have so many problems they have to live in domestic lives. But, their husbands never think of their wives. Rather they can choose another life partners if

they want. Similarly, Kalpana's father also chooses another life partner and leave them.

In order to punish him her family members are quarrelling and blaming each other. Children become burden to the mother who does not have source of income and cannot feed them. Kalpana becomes victim of her own relatives Prabhakar who gives suggestion to Kalpana's family while her father leaves home. Shakutai is compelled to take care of her children, but her son Prakash does not try to understand her problem Rather, he blames her:

What can you except, they say of a girl where mother has left her husband ? Imagine ! he left me for another woman, left me with these children to bring up. And I have to listen to such words because of this girl. She's shamed us. We can never wipe off this blot. And Prakash blames me. What could I do ? She was so self willed. Cover yourself decently, I kept telling her, men are like animals. But she went her way. You should have seen her fault, Urmila, all her fault . . . (147)

Since the existing social structure is totally dominated by the conservative patriarchal Hindu system, female world is suppressed, misjudged and misunderstood by the conventional prejudiced mind. Kalpana's condition is very much pathetic:

She is so slight that her body scarcely raises the coarse hospital blanket that covers her. Her face is discoloured in patches, the lips, dark and swollen, parted as she breathes. Her arms, symmetrically arranged outside the covers, one strapped down for the IV tube, are pathetically thin, the wrists as small as a child's. There are little nicks on her forearms - healing scars of the cuts her glass bangles must have made.



A kind of smile emerges occasionally through her lips, and then there is a slight flutter about her face, as if a breeze has passed over it. (89)

Kalpana, a victim's body is lying on the bed of hospital ward covered with blanket. She is unconscious, face is damaged, lips are swollen, wrists are thin as child's, wounds are all over the body, scattered everywhere, cut by her own glass, bangles. Her face is dark and discoloured. Everything is disordered. Shakutai, has still hope that her daughter will be alright. So, once, her breath comes out almost like a word, immediately she bends over her daughter and asks what she wants to take. She waits for a response but all goes in vain.

Instead of giving report and punishment to the rapist of Kalpana, her mother is getting away from that case and wants to prove it as an accident case. She blames her own daughter for that incident and says, "It's her fault, she was stubborn, she was self-willed. She dressed up, she painted her lips and nails and so this happened to her. You should have seen her walking out, caring for nobody" (148).

Every youngster wants to be attractive, Kalpana is also young at an age when her existence is still a miracle to her. And therefore, she walked out of that ramshackle building with gaily painted nails and lips, brightly coloured clothes and sleek, shining hair, loudly proclaiming the miracle of that existence. But her mother says it happened because she flaunted herself:

Here boys are like . . . they're like dogs panting after bitches, and if you paint and flaunt yourself, do you think they'll leave you alone ? Ever since Kalpana grew up, I have had to live with this fear. But Kalpana does not understand. Once she started earning, she thought she could do what she wanted (146).

Urmila clarifies that there is no difference between man and woman and their goal. Only one important factor in human being's life is 'love'. All of us are struggling for getting it and everybody wants to live freely and happily. Therefore, nobody should be dominated. But, it is not applied in practical life in patriarchal society, "Do women want to be dominated?" Amrut asked me. "No, Amrut no, human being wants to be dominated. The most important need is to love. From the moment of our births, we struggle to find something with which we can anchor ourselves to this strange world we find ourselves in" (137).

People distinguish between male and female. This type of difference is created by different societies. Having inferior feeling, females cannot go beyond their periphery. According to them, they have to keep their sphere from where they can never come out. People are always ready to point them. So, Shakutai always warns her not to cross the social bondage but she never listens to her voice so she is blaming Kalpana who is living on the hospital ward, in half dead and half alive condition. So, she says woman must have fear:

We have to keep to our places, we can never step out. These are always people waiting to throw stones at us, our own people first of all. I warned Kalpana but she would never listen to me. "I'm not afraid of anyone," she used to say. That's why this happened to her . . . women must know fear". (148)

In conventional society, girls are taken as a mirror which can never join if it has broken. Similarly, Kalpana's mother is worried about her two daughters whether they will get married or not. But, only getting married is not the problem solving way. Rather, it is another phase where females are strictly inside the periphery, breeding children, caring them and family too.

Due to the fear of society, mother is not ready to accept this incident as a rape case and says: "It was an accident, a car knocked her down." She does not want to give report in police station and says. "No, no. Tell him, tai, it's not true, don't tell anyone, I'll never be able to hold up my head again" (59).

Shankutai feels worried about her remaining two daughters and says, "Who'll marry the girls, we're decent people." In conventional society once girl's honour is lost, they can never regain and people always point at them. Even a police person claims Kalpana is a prostitute. One headline screams 'Ek Kalpanechi Katha ?' A headline in Marathi says, punning on Kalpana's name. But one paper brings out the fact that there are fewer beds for women in the hospital and makes that an issue. Kalpana becomes an issue in media. Because of public fear Shankutai seems nervous, sweating, utters a few words repeating, while they appear on T.V., Sandhya and Prakash standing by her, until they are pushed out of the frame by others who push, stretch their necks, even jump to get into the range of camera. It shows that they do not know about their mother's fear because they are innocent children, enjoying themselves. They do not understand their mother's shameful condition. Shankutai is getting mental torture due to Kalpana's case but the criminal (rapist) Pravakar is getting chance of freedom because he is a male. Every male gets victory over the innocent female.

Mothers do not like their daughters because their family reputation depends upon their daughters' behaviours and their luck. Mothers say, "why does God give us daughters . . . ?" (150)

They named her Nirmala on marriage.

That's the name. I knew her by at

First. Kishore's mother, Nirmala.

A glittering ring gliding on the rice  
 Carefully traced a name 'Nirmala'.  
 Who is this ? None but I,  
 My name hence, bestowed upon me.  
  
 Nirmala, they call, I stand statue-still.  
 Do you build the new without razing the old ?  
 A tablet of rice, a pencil of gold  
 Can they make me Nirmala ? I am Mira. (101)

After marriage, women's identity is lost. They get a new one which might not be acceptable by them but they must be silent. Similarly, Mira gets a new identity as Nirmala after marriage. Although she does not like her new name she cannot refuse it. After it, she gets another identity, mother of Kishore. She is raising questions herself about her new identity. She is unable to avoid it. She knows that she is looking for her real identity but compelled to be silent. A woman must wear ornaments, mangalsutra, bangles, sindur for the sake of husband and his family reputation. She is bound to wear a sari and cover her head with it and should respect all of the family members and look after the household work. She can never decide by herself and she is compelled to live in a sphere made by the men and patriarchal society. The work of both women and men is in the house but they live in different worlds: there is a sphere for men and a sphere for women. Even today there is a woman's world recognized by almost everyone and thoroughly exploited by the males. Women become forced to change their hobby as well after marriage by their own family members. "My mother loved music, she'd been learning it as a girl. After her marriage, it stopped I imagine it was my grand mother who did that. And so my mother turned her ambitions on us, on my sister rather" (118).

Bhaskar's (Urmi's friend) mother loves music so much. Before marriage she learns music but after marriage she is forced to leave it by her mother-in-law. So, she is unable to fulfill her desire. She wants to see her son as a singer. But she does not think about her daughter for their sons rather than daughters. They want to give them the world they dreamt for themselves. In this way, women's identity, ambition, hobby all vanish after marriage.

Males in the conventional society feel proud due to their superiority concept and always take themselves a step further than females and always think that they can do anything and only they are the decision makers. In the case of marriage also they can refuse the girls if they don't like but girls can never do so because they can never give self decision. So, one of the male characters Bhaskar who is the doctor and friend of Urmi says, "I'm the only son of rich parents, a highly qualified man how can any girl refuse me ? No, no it can't happen, it's impossible" (160).

Bhaskar is one of the proud male characters who always tries to go a step further than the females. His mother chooses so many girls for him but he always refuses them by pointing only negative sides, for instance, appearance, education, economic status etc. Although he is a well-educated person he has deep rooted feeling of maleness who can do whatever he likes.

Urmi seems quite different among the lady characters because she never talks about her husband with other people and she seems to be unsatisfied with him although they have love marriage. They are living separately. Although she is more confident and stronger than other females, somewhere she has also fear of Kishor never returning home, the fear of turning away from her and the fear of his not wanting to come back to her. "Don't leave me and go. Each time you leave me, the parting is like death." It is like a fantasy. She sees herself crying out to him by

stretching out her arms to him, putting them around his neck – the classic, clinging female. But she never expresses her feelings with others.

Bhaskar says, "You never speak of your husband ? It's like an accusation. You love him." She has just lost her daughter Anu so she is haunted by that incident. Although she has her son she loves more her dead daughter than him. She is always eager to help the victim of society like Kalpana.

Instead of giving support to victim of society, Kalpana is chasing away from the hospital. That is why her helpless mother is worried about her. She has been there for four months already but there is not any sign of improvement so all of the doctors get fed up with her situation and want to send her to another hospital. Due to economic problem her mother is suffering so much and cannot do anything, "What am I to do, Urmila ? I can't go there, it's too far, even to come here is everyday, and how will I be able to find the time ? When I said this, they told me, take her home then. How can I, Urmila ? She'll die, she'll just die" (166).

Urmi is consoling Shakutai, Kalpana's mother who is saying, "How can I not worry ? I have to live with people, I have to live among them. I think I made a mistake, I should have kept quiet. I thought I was helping Kalpana. But sometimes, I think the only thing that can help Kalpana now is death" (178). Being a helpless mother Shakutai has fear of society where only males can exist, not females. She has to live in the same society where males are getting victory over innocent females and getting more chance of freedom. So she thinks death is the only one way from where victims can exist.

After reading an article of one of the so-called sociologists, Urmi becomes so furious and she blames "I think men's minds are like public lavatories—full of dirty pictures." In that article there was written, "saying that there can be no rape, because

it can't be done unless the woman is willing. Rape happens because women go about exposing themselves" (182).

In conventional Hindu society wives are taken as puppets of their husbands. They must follow the rules and regulations of the society but husbands are always getting advantage whereas wives are living in pathetic condition. According to traditional rules if the husband dies the wife should sacrifice her life, which was called 'Sati'. In Hindu society, still there is a huge discrimination between male and female whether they are educated or not.

Sulu, Kalpana's aunt is always frightened with her husband because she does not have any child. So, she kept Kalpana as her own daughter. She says, "What if he doesn't like this, what if he wants that, what if he is angry with me, what if he throws me out . . . ?" (195) Her husband Prabhakar, was always mad about Kalpana. "He tried to . . . he wanted . . . That's why she ran away and refused to go back" (190). But she does not tell her mother anything. Prabhakar looked at her and said "My beauty". He praised her looks. Finally, he fulfills his desire. After the rape of Kalpana, Sulu could not come out of her house. She hesitates to talk with others. So, she is looking after Shakutai's house. She cooks, gets things from the shops. She does everything. Instead of giving severe punishment, Prabhakar is getting free but his wife Sulu is living in wretched condition. She is unable to show her face in the society. Therefore, she pours a whole bottle of kerosene over her body and kills herself.

Despite the huge social changes that have taken place in the past century, the concept of difference between men and women still prevails in society. It is almost impossible to escape the formation of social hierarchies based on these perceptions and representations of difference. Males like Mira's husband, Kalpana's rapist Prabhakar, so-called doctors, sociologists are still dominating the females in the

society where innocent females like Mira, Kalpana, Sulu, Shakutai and even an educated lady Urmi is suffering and unable to live freely. They must walk on the path created by the males in the male dominated society. Criminals are getting chance of freedom whereas innocent females are living in pathetic condition from where they can never go away.



#### IV. Conclusion

Inspired by Deshpande's angle of looking at society and at women, the researcher has analyzed one of her best known novels *The Binding Vine* from the feminist perspective. Deshpande is a very recent Indian writer who writes novels through feminist point of view. Most of her novels reflect her female consciousness, which is one of the main characteristics of feminism. She sincerely writes about the ordinary middle class Hindu women, their daily activities, their responsibilities towards family members and society too. Her novels reflect the culture, social rules and regulations females' condition, their duties towards family and their sacrifice. Her novels also portray the Hindu culture, tradition, Pavitrata of wives towards their husbands etc.

In *The Binding Vine*, Deshpande has revealed her inner thoughts about women's emancipation and individual freedom through the voice of the narrator, Urmi. Since Deshpande is known as a realistic novelist, she has tried to give a perfect picture of her contemporary patriarchal society and its domination over women. Even an educated lady Urmi is unsatisfied in the patriarchal society where only males can get freedom, where there is no space for women's freedom and individual rights. Instead of giving proper rights females are living in poor condition and they are compelled to do whatever males like. They are victims of the males and living like domestic slaves.

It is an artistic quality and craftsmanship of Deshpande who has successfully shown the realistic picture of Indian Hindu society females' condition, conventional thought of looking at female as an inferior, subordinate and submissive subject of patriarchy that must be grateful to male authority and remain within its boundary. In conventional society, females like Mira, Kalpana, Shakutai, Sulu, even educated lady

Urmi are suffering and compelled to follow the rules and regulations made by males. Still they are living in private sphere as domestic slaves. Kalpana, a young girl tries to cross the boundary but she becomes victim of the society and is thrown into the unconscious condition. She is suffering physically as well as mentally. Mira, mother-in-law of Urmi is suffering a lot in her lifetime who sacrifices her will to give happiness and prosperity for her family and dies in the process of delivery. She cannot express her feeling so she writes many poems, and diaries are filled up with her inner feelings. Through the writing she satisfies herself. Although, she is talented she cannot show her talent in the family and society too.

Shakutai, poor and innocent mother of Kalpana is always worried about her daughters and frightened with the society due to the rape incident of society. She does not want to expose the case in public. In order to keep her family reputation she remains silent. She is the wife of the person who left them for another woman but still Shakutai is keeping her 'Pavitrata' and giving care to the daughters holding family and doing household work. Even in the case of her daughter also, her husband does not pay attention to them and he is enjoying with his another wife. In Hindu society, wives must walk on the path created by the family and society. They are keeping silence although their path is so painful. Although their husbands are exploiting them physically as well as mentally, they can never avoid it. They are always sexually harassed by the males. Mira is exploited by her own husband. As a result, she dies. Kalpana is raped by her own uncle Pravakar but instead of giving him severe punishment he is living freely. But Kalpana is chasing away and blamed by the society. She is chasing away from one hospital to another. Even there is not a single space for her to live in. Shakutai is also exploited by her husband and suffering a lot in the society. She is doing her responsibilities even in her wretched condition. She

has to face many problems due to that incident. Her husband is living freely with his second wife. Sulu, wife of Pravakar is getting victory after the rape. He does not feel odd in the society but his wife Sulu becomes very ashamed. She cannot hold up her head and cannot come out of the house. Due to that condition she commits a suicide. Urmi, an educated lady, is also not happy with her husband although they have had love marriage. They do not live together and she is haunted by the death of her baby Anu. She is unable to forget that incident and always feels unhappy in the society. All of the females are living in their private sphere like domestic slaves but still they are suffering more.

In this novel, females are suffering in the name of culture, tradition and living in boundary made by males. They want to cross that but it becomes useless. Their thoughts, desires, will, happiness all vanish. But males are the masters of the society who commit crime and still live in public sphere. They can do anything whatever they like. They are always getting victory over the innocent female. It is the real power of Shahi Deshpande to present real picture of her society through this novel. The novel represents the condition of women and focuses on the real life-situation of men and women living in that society. So, women's real life problems come out of male domination and their circumstances and bring them out before the eyes of readers. Ultimately, the novelist intends to find out the solution to these women's problems by winning her readers' heart and sympathy towards them and raising their anti-feeling against the corrupt male supremacy.

The hidden capacity of Mira gives the influence to other female characters like Urmi, the narrator. It encourages her to raise the voice and develops boldness. She raises common voice of women's freedom, equality, liberty. Poetry is the hidden phenomenon which is the means of expressing feelings of one's own towards others.

This novel is Deshpande's feminist movement where she tries to project the realistic picture of Indian Hindu society, culture, tradition and daily activities of women.

Through the voice of the female characters, Deshpande tries to search for humanism rather than the only idea of womanism to maintain social harmony and prosperity.

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