

# NARRATIVE OF VIOLENCE IN SHASHI DESHPANDE'S THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS

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**Abstract:** Post-1990s Indian English Novels is known for the exploration of a new dimension in the field of Indian English literature. It has achieved the glorious landmarks to captivate the overseas readers through its portrayal of contemporary issues concerned with nation and society. They reconstruct and deconstruct the orthodox social norms and reformulated the social structure relies on new perspectives. They handle postcolonial new issues through their writings. They depicted the issues such as violence, decolonization, women voices of suppression, the predicament of psychological turmoil of the contemporary man; the quest of displacement within the nation, the issue of regional insurgency, another new issues such as rape, loss of human relationship, dominance of capitalism, gender hatred, homosexuality, issues of transgender, the quest of self-existence of individual, the obstacles in the nation building, Furthermore, They also explores the new approaches in the Indian English novels, such as revisiting the Indian mythological world and generating the tales of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Upanishad in the social perspectives, matrimonial issues, separation, subaltern, marginal position of downtrodden society, anxiety of multicultural worlds, Absurdity of human life, and new modify structure of caste. These novelists introduce the new transition in the society that is a new woman, the glorification of new India through the discourse of narrative. This novelist also talks about the narrative of violence.

Violence happens in the society due to the biological and oppressive norms of civilizations where the person lost his consciousness of own behaviors. The violence against women is nothing but the dominating act of the superiority complex of the male-centric perspective. Women are the victims of violence in the society. Thus, they can't access the world through their ability and to make the self, family, society, nation, and universe prosperous with the help of constructive outlook. Women need freedom from all sorts of domestic violence against them. Violence is a kind of stigma on the society which ruins the individual world of women.

The present paper will explore the discourse of narrative of violence against women in Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980) the novel depicted the painful life of the protagonist Sarita, she is being trapped in the patriarchal world, seems introvert and passive. Deshpande depicted Sarita journey from the childhood to adulthood so pathetic and struggling. Sarita envisaged the various kinds of violence, domestic, verbal, professional, and physical. She also faces the gender violence and abusive hatred from the family and society. Deshpande raises the voice of Indian women through this novel.

This narrative will explore the discourse of narrative violence from the perspective of the feminist theoretical framework.

**Keywords:** Narrative, Violence, Patriarchy, Body, Trauma.

**Introduction:** What is feminism? Friedan's noted phrase, "the problem that has no name" the estimate reflects the critical circumstances of the women in any existing society. Women have the several problems but nobody comprehends them as issues of the women's suffering and suppression (Hooks 1). The feminist assertion is that "all women are oppressed" (Hooks 6). Feminism concentrates on the oppression of the women on the basis of class, race, and religion. French Feminist Christine Delphy applied the word oppression in concerned to women struggle under the political regime of male-dominant perspective. Delphy in her collected essay *Close to Home* mentioned that:

The rebirth of feminism coincided with the use of the term "oppression" the ruling ideology, i.e. common sense, daily speech, does not speak about oppression but about a

“feminine condition” It refers back to a naturalist explanation: to a constraint of nature, exterior reality out of reach and not modifiable by human action. The term “oppression” on the contrary, refers back to a choice, an explanation, and a situation that is political. “Oppression” and “social oppression is redundancy: the notion of a political origin, i.e. social, is an integral part of the concept of oppression (qtd in Hooks 6).

The main purpose of the feminism is to look at the position of women. Feminism also Claim for the rights of women in the society. Furthermore, feminism stands for the political, economic, equal status of women. At larger extent, women are marginalized, oppressed, discriminated, and subjugated by their position in the social world. Henceforth, feminism asks for the justice of women and equal position in the society. They denied the orthodox system of patriarchy or male-dominance over women sovereignty (Disch and Hawkesworth 3).

In Shashi Deshpande’s novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980) depicted the marital violence against the protagonist of the novel, Sarita. The novels also depicted the physical, gender, and psychological violence against Sarita. The novel also explores the myth of patriarchal dominance over women. Deshpande depicted the chaos between the husband-wife relationships (Sawant 44-45). The word ‘Dark’ denotes in the novel such as “a metaphor of psychic knots formed around id-fantasies and ego-defenses” (qtd in Singh 57). The novel deals with the struggle for the self- existence of Sarita in the family as well as society. Her disputes with her husband Manohar or Manu and mother. It makes her depressing at night or dark and every night she suffered from the mental trauma. The dark night reveals her the clashes between ethics and sovereignty of her individual world. Sarita comprehends the circumstances and convinces to herself “Understand the essential nature of the terrific darkness that gets seated in the mind of the individual and blurs the perception” (qtd in Singh 57). Prabhat K. Singh’s essay “Beyond Gender Consciousness” explores the notion of the novel as such, “*The Dark Holds No Terrors* thus presents an honest probing into a human condition. It begins in an atmosphere of despair and disappointed but ends on a strong note of hope. It portrays a life’s journey from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge, from blockades to open outs. The narrative has been woven with the hurt of pain and agony, the terror of silence, the fear of isolation, the burden of guilt, the repetitive patterns of life, the aches of ignorance and the joy of discovery” (qtd in Paulraj 81-82).

Her brother’s Dhruva’s all of the sudden demise by drowning causes the violence to the life of Sarita her mother spoke to her such violent verbal words, “Why didn’t you die? Why are you alive and he dead” (Deshpande 34-35) the words strike to her mind as her insult and hatred by her mother. “...Daughter? I don’t have any daughter. I had a son and he died. Now I am childless” (qtd in 6 Bopaiah). Here Deshpande reveals that how the women become the victims of family incidents. It seems that the woman is responsible for any bad circumstances and faces the abusive verbal violence as Sarita faces. Moreover, Sarita as student faces the professional violence created by the public rebuke when she executes surgical practices, “I don’t want incompetent, clumsy, uninterested females cluttering up this place. Go home and play with your rolling pins and knitting needles even a moron could have done this simple thing” (Deshpande 89). Here Sarita seems too bothered and she gets affected by the verbal speech it looks like the physical assault on her body and mind. Sarita takes it as the violation of endowment of the inner world. Similarly, in Shashi Deshpande’s *The Binding Vine*, Urmi suffered from the loss of own sovereignty, soreness, anguish, vulnerable, and trepidation of the society (Singh 58). According to Freud Violence is, “to prevent the crudest excesses of brutal violence by itself assuming the right to use violence against criminals, but the law is not able to lay hold of the more cautious and refined manifestations of human aggressiveness” (qtd in Pawlett N.p).

Moreover, Manu feel jealous of his wife being a professional doctor, she has respect in the society so this thing bothers to Manu. He suffers to maintain his honor in society. He was a jobless person so in frustration he tortured her badly (Shekhar 32). Sarita extremely suffered from the husband Manu’s assault on the body and raped her, physical, mental torture makes her psyche and abnormal by thoughts or silence. She suffers from the marital rape by her husband. She left her husband because of the

torturing nature, violence against her body parts, and treating her like a wild animal. Sarita does not believe in the love of persuasion:

Love...how she scored the word now. There was no such thing between man and woman. There was only a need which both fought against' futilely...turning into the thing they called love. It's only a word she thought. Take away the word, the idea, and the concept will wither away (Deshpande 65).

Deshpande focuses on the gender violence and marital rape from the perspective of genocide. In the novel, Sarita's narrative of violence gives the horrible scenario of the Indian women who suffer from the marital rape of violence and gender discrimination. Deshpande remarks that both marginalize and elite women are suppressed and victimized by the supreme power of man (Stilz 29-30). According to Nicholas Groth, the violence of rape is, "Rape is always a symptom of some psychological dysfunction, either temporary and transient or chronic and repetitive" (qtd in Renzetti and Bergen 15).

Sarita feels alienated in her life; she makes the close affinities to Padma who is already married. He takes the benefits of her innocence and exploited her body and created a sort of violence in her life. He also makes her submissive and resistless woman. Her lives become so critical. She wants to commit suicide (Shekhar 32). Likewise, in Anita Nair's *Mistress*, Radha had a linked up with Christ apart from her married life, because her first husband Shyam also created physical violence in her life (Rajini and Kundhavi 86).

Sarita becomes fatigue of the patriarchal dominance which oppresses her life and demoralized her individual world. Sarita narrates the painful moment of violence raises by the male-centric society:

The hurting hands, the savage teeth, the monstrous assault of a horribly familiar body. And above me, a face I could not recognize. Total non-comprehension, completely; bewilderment, paralyzed me for a while. Then I began to struggle. But my body, hurt and painful, could do nothing against the fearful strength which overwhelmed me (Deshpande 112).

Here Sarita narrates the bitter experiences of her life; as she envisaged the violence being a woman. She is disabling to revolt against the patriarchic structure of the society. Deshpande meticulously talks about the violence moving around the Indian women's in the society. They did not take any provocative act against them; thus, they become not only subordinated but also marginalized by their position in the society. Sarita narrates her grievance of violence against her "I couldn't fight back; I couldn't shout or cry...I could do nothing. I can never do anything. I just endure" (Deshpande 204). Here Sarita's own surrender seems how she is overwhelmed by the dominance of the male supremacy. The darkness in the novel is nothing but the terror of her husband Manohar. Who makes her feels disgusting every night by torturing and harassing her. So the torture, harassment, rape and her gender discrimination is nothing but the darkness which makes her feel terrors. The violence of her feminine body is a terror of darkness of Manohar's superiority complex where he feels disrespectful of him because of her profession of Doctor, thus, she undergoes the tenderness of violence every night. According to Michael Dowd, Violence is such as:

There remains the problem of denial. Even the community of decent people finds society's inability to quell the tide of violence against women too horrific to accept. The reality of the average person, and while denying the truth of the battered woman's story can be easier than confronting it, the enlightened must aim to recognize the truth in order to foster society's acceptance of responsibility for the violence among us" (qtd in French et al. 4).

At end of the novel, Sarita understands the meaning of darkness. The darkness is not horror but the thoughts that we possessed; negative outlook towards present and future. Sarita recalls her own reflection of words, "I cannot spoil my life because of that boy his brother Satish. It is my life after all"

(qtd in Agarwal 94). She decided to go back to Manu, it's not because she is alienated but being a new woman who has a strong desire to envisage the new challenges of the life. She doesn't have any terror of dark night of any violence. She could devastate any sort of violence against her. Here Deshpande represents the powerful woman Sarita. Sarita stands for the new spirit for the Indian women. Who does not have any sacredness of darkness? According to Fanon violence is such as, "Violence alone, violence committed by the people, violence organized and educated its leaders, makes it possible for the masses to understand social truths and gives the key to them" (qtd in Bulhan 140).

**Conclusion:** Deshpande's perspective is nothing but to provide the voice to those women who undergo the family violence, marital, physical, mental, sexual violence imposed by the male-centric world. She opposes the norms of patriarchal violence through the narrative by Sarita in the novel. Deshpande's novel explores the melancholic life of Indian women. They have a sort of stereotype image. Women do not articulate themselves and seem voiceless. They have an impact on traditions that's why women feel inferior to expose them. Deshpande gives them a power through portraying the character Sarit who possessed morality and boldness. The novel is a journey of self-discovery of the inner endowment of Sarita.

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