



## International Journal of Arts & Education Research

### STAB FOR IDENTITY IN ROOTS AND SHADOWS

Dr. Yameen Khan\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Asst Prof, Department of English, SRM University, NCR Campus Modinagar, Ghaziabad (UP), India.

#### ABSTRACT

*Roots and Shadows* has won *Thirumathi Rangammal Prize* for being the best Indian novel in English of 1982-83. Shashi Deshpande tries to define Indian marriage and married life in her famous novel *Roots and Shadows*. Wedding plays a fundamental role in the existence of a female. It is still the final aim of a girl's life in India. Shashi Deshpande through her works criticizes the society that creates suffocation and removes female of her characteristics. Indu, a central character, brought up in a traditional Brahmin family governed by Akka the mother picture in the novel. The story begins with the heroine's revisit to her inherited residence. The parental home commence her into an understanding of the meaning of individual existence. She tries discovering what her heredity are - as a self-governing lady and an author, and what her shades are - a daughter and money-making writer. She rises up against Akka, her conservative humanity, and her inflexible values and marries Jayant. To conquer liberty, she tries to find marriage as a substitute to the bondage inevitable in the parental family. After marriage she thinks by fitting herself in a new responsibility of a wife to achieve her freedom. She was wrong. In Indian culture freedom is limited for female even after marriage. But she tries to achieve her goal continue.

#### SUMMARY

Akka, a substitute mother and Indu is subjugated as a kid and young lady by her. As a motherless child Indu grabbed the love and care from other members of the family particularly from her aged uncle Kaka and Atya. Akka, matriarchal figure represents traditional, blind superstitions in our culture and society. She was so infatuated with that, she refused to go to the spinal even when she was on her deathbed. Nobody in the family could rule out the words of Akka. Indu remembers how "Kaka even after becoming a grandfather, could be reduced to a red-faced, stuttering school boy by Akka's venomous tongue". (Shashi Deshpande - 24)

From ancient time and even today female is forced to do this one or this one not. According to tradition, Akka enforced inflexible limits on girls and warned Indu strictly in the context of conversation with a boy in the library. They had told to Indu as a child that you should be modest and meek. When Indu tried to know about the strict instructions, she was told, "Because you are a female. You must accept everything, even defeat, with grace, because you are a girl. It is the only way for a female to live and survive." (Shashi Deshpande - 158). Sex is biological whereas gender is culturally determined. "Gender identity starts with the knowledge and awareness, whether conscious or unconscious, that one belongs to one sex and not the other, though as one

develops, gender identity becomes much more complicated, so that, for example, one may sense himself as not only a male but a masculine man or an effeminate man or even as a man who fantasies being a woman.” (Stollers -53).

There are other instructions strictly given to Indu after becoming natural changes in her body. For four days now you are unclean. You can't touch anyone or anything. You're a woman now, you can have babies yourself. She had the entire child's ignorance about her body, had for the first time, felt an immense hatred for it. The beginning to the beautiful world of being a lady made feel her dirty. Indu dislike the natural function of woman and longs to escape from the burden and responsibilities of adulthood. “For an adolescent girl, her first menstruation reveals this meaning and her feeling of shame appears. If they were already present and are strengthened and exaggerated from this time on.”(Simone De Beauvoir-335).

In the beginning of the childhood, it has been tried to fix in her thoughts by female members of the family unit that she is a female. As a child, they had told her that you must be obedient and unquestioning. As a Girl, they had told her that you must be meek and submissive, you must accept everything, even defeat, with grace, because you are a girl, It is the only way for a female to live and survive. She starts to think about the existence of herself, about the life of the women in society. She thinks that females are treated like slaves not only by the male but also by the female. Rules are different for male and female. Her soul became wounded and think about to escape from the restrictions of the society. Akka was one of the wounded of child marriage who underwent cruel treatment under the shackles of marriage. Indu's observation towards Akka changes after inquiry Akka's story from Narmada Atya: She was married with a man of 30 years old. He was tall, bulky man with large, rude features. In starting time she was also cruelly treated by her aged life partner, she was forced much time to enter in her husband's room by her mother-in law because she was just 12 years old at that time.

Akka's husband sexually harassed her as a child. The society says that a husband has all the liberty to take pleasure in his marital rights, when he wants make a lot of marriages. It turns out to be a torment for the female, but she cannot talk about her intimate particulars to even her loved ones. So where does the woman go, what she have to do. But Akka was able to take revenge on him when he was bed ridden for two years as an effect of a hit. Though Akka looked after him well as a devoted wife she didn't permit his mistress to meet him. Akka's dominant nature and the plight of child marriage could be witnessed here. In this case author not only throws radiance on the sufferings of victims of child marriage but also the freedom of a male who can have one more female if he is not completely satisfied with his wife.

Man thinks it as usual activity to satisfy his desires at both the levels emotional and the physical outside marriage, while it is cruelly condemned as adultery in case a woman indulges in it even though unintentionally the least clue of any variation on her part which may not even engage in sex, man turns aggressive towards his wife and starts prosecuting her. This blame is dictated by man's notice in preserving his property rather than by any ethical consideration. That is the

thinking of a man. Indu marries Jayant, a man of different social group but of her personal choice and leaves her parental residence. Jayant gives her a feeling of solidity and confidence. She imagines that her married life with Jayant would allow her to realize the need as she much loved the liberty to articulate her true self to the world and humanity. Akka's warning is not noticed by Indu because Akka had no fine attitude of inter caste marriages. Her warning applies in society even today. Indu leaves her family house and enters into self-regulating and entirely free zone, but very soon, she realizes the result of her choice. Both wanted to achieve complete pleasure, but her marriage with Jayant restrains her femininity and her individual demands.

A very critical situation emerges between both of them because there is no end of demands in life whether they are physically or mentally. She is dissatisfied with her husband physically and spiritually both. A husband regards none of his wife's excellent qualities as mostly meritorious; they are implied via the organization of marriage itself. He fails to understand that his spouse is no character from some moral and conventional treatise, but an actual character of flesh and blood, he takes her for granted her loyalty to strict treatment she assumes not taking into account that he has excitement to conquer that she may surrender to them, that in any case her tolerance, her assistance, her modesty, are hard captures, he is still more deeply innocent of her dreams, her imagines, her wistful yearnings of the exciting environment in which she spends her days. Her marriage deteriorates into a simple psychological matter and feels that she has ill-treated her body's holiness, rejection of full practice, satisfaction or pleasure. The conclusion of the conditions is that Indu is not entirely cheerful with Jayant, but at the same time, she cannot survive without him—she converse about her incompleteness—"This is my real sorrow, that I can never be complete in myself and until I had met Jayant. I had not known it...that there was, somewhere outside me a Part of me without which I remained incomplete. Then I met Jayant ... and lost the ability to be alone". (Shashi Deshpande - 31)

Indu surprises how she in all the way is trying to satisfy her husband, feeling of having lost her free identity. Her aunts and other women had surrendered themselves to the concept of the model women, without any self-governing personality performing all the time self-effacing ideas and customs. But in path of her own introspection of herself, she realizes that she is not extremely dissimilar from her conservative womanly counterparts. She was unconsciously and consciously trying to mould and modify and shapes herself according to his requirements and desires. But Jayant, in spite of his apparently western fashion of life, performs like a normal Indian male. He feeds like an average Indian man. He became shocked to find passion in a woman. She thinks that her marriage was something shocking in total commitment.

She is stunned to observe, that, she is revolving into an ultimate Indian wife, following her husband's needs and desires. She realizes that she over whelming love for Jayant is quite upsetting and her entirety surrender to him is frightening. Even at a serious moment, she thinks of departure her husband, hoping to become free again in this society, but she knows the result of her unwillingness. Her love and marriage became totally failure. Indu search for fulfillment in

education and profession, works as a member of the press for a woman's magazine. She gives it up very soon because she was not satisfied also here. "Women, women, women... I got sick of it. These were nothing else. It was a kind of narcissism. And as if we had locked ourselves in a cage and thrown away the key. I couldn't go on". (Shashi Deshpande - 78).

The supreme sacrifice is her desire of being an author, on her individual. She loses her attention in writing and enforced to suppress facts and present a silky picture to the booklovers. She irritated, when her husband asks her to compromise and directions her not to leave her career. He tells her about the life in the society - "That's life! What can one person do against the whole system! No point making a spectacle of yourself with futile gestures. We need the money, don't we? Don't forget, we have a long way to go". (Shashi Deshpande -17).

But Indu had dreamt of a cheerful married existence, being self-governing, independent from the control of her conventional Akka. Unfortunately her calculation about married life go wrong after wedding with Jayant, she vanished her individualism. Now Indu had thought she had established the other part of her independent life but she was quite worried by an unusual feeling of total confusion. She remains safe and sound and a sense of not belonging to others.

Indian women constantly have to adhere to Manu's ethics of gladness, her planet rotates surrounding her husband over all in the principles of the traditional cultures, and the excellent woman is a Pativrata, subordinating her existence to the husband's happiness and needs. The Pativrata behavior is not a mere matter of sexual loyalty, an issue of great importance in all patriarchal societies in the whole world. Indu being educated, inexpensively self-determining realizes that she is no different from the women like the female members of her old family. In their eyes Indu was just a barren woman. For a female, to get married to bear children, to have sons and then grand children is looked upon as a victorious lady. While Indu unloved the traditions followed in her house. This shows a clear representation of the society where they have only single face but can wear different faces for their own profit. Indu feels herself: "Am I on my way to becoming an ideal wife, a woman who sheds her I who loses her identity in her husband's"? (Shashi Deshpande -118).

In customary Indian culture, marriage means merely fear, misery and irritation on the girl's surface. Indu hears from Mini that only cooperation is the solution of marriage, and she has to learn to be satisfied with it. Though she is punished for her sin of being a female she has to accept him with his flaws and habits. But male won't stop discovering flaws in her as he could control her thoroughly. Indu feels it very much during her married life with her husband. Her family unit symbolizes like an aged banyan tree, a typical joint family, where the houses are protecting lots of lives? She is puzzled if should she sell the home, the house where she had been brought motherless kid of fifteen days and spend approximately eighteen years of her years or pay for the marriage of weak looking Mini? Or should she assistance herself as per Jayanth's need or should she purchase the residence and make Kaka and Atya glad? When she was engage in these feelings swiftly she found resolution for her crisis. She realized that she had surrendered

to Jayanth as she wanted to keep away from disagreement in order to show the family that she had an unbeaten marriage. When this reality sparks in her brainpower, she acquires superior understanding about herself and the whole things. She knew the reality that Akka was a pillar of power who acted according to her attitude. Now she felt that the old residence is a trap and she have to come out of it at any cost. She decided to sell the house to Shankarappa, who wanted to demolish it and have a big hotel built on the site.

She is fairly impressed by Naren's thought of detachment, and experiences logic of freedom, and extremely frank talks about herself and her disappointments. The recently acquired common sense of independence makes her attentive of her normal desires. Initial she rejects his love philosophy, but soon quite happily offers herself. She surrendered herself twice for sex. Indu seems to achieve liberty in sex because she wants freedom sexually also as well as physically. So, she attracted her cousin Naren. She says: "Nevertheless I knew I would not tell Jayant about Naren and me. For that was not important. That had nothing to do with two of us and our life together." (Shashi Deshpande -187) Indu wants to conceal her sexual relation with her cousin and she would go back to Jayant and lead a sincere life. She thinks that, sleeping two times with Naren is not wrong. "This sheds a brilliant light on Indu's awareness of her autonomy and her realization that she is a being and not a dependent on Jayant. The novel gains its feminist stance in Indu's exploration into herself but it also moves beyond the boundaries of feminism into a perception of the very predicament of the human existence." (P. Ramamoorthy-124).

Indu has dominated her trepidation and is prepared to emphasize herself. As a result, she doesn't the shadow of her spouse and is asserting herself by enthralling her personal resolution. Now she wants to come back to her residence and Jayant. Freedom lies in having the guts to do what one believes is the exact thing to do. That only can bring peace in life. Indu experiences only disappointment in sex and suffers a silent sexual disgrace with her husband. Her extra—marital link with her cousin, brings no blunder to her, and makes a decision not to inform Jayant about it. The extremely truth that now she is conscious of her body, independence and that she doesn't depend on Jayant gives her guts to survive as a human being. Indu understands her situation in her inherited home; the responsibilities, worries and frustrations do not tap her. She is now a self-confident lady with rising new self.

Progressively, she thinks that there was nothing disgraceful in her way of thinking for Jayant. She wants to increase her true self to Jayant instead of the pompous one. Indu also realizes that the house she had fled from to avoid being mysterious includes the roots which continue her violation to conquer self-identity. While her marriage which she had believed would take her to self consciousness had altered her into a gloom. Indu realizes that, Akka knew her unconquerable audacity and power while satisfying her responsibilities. Akka's judgment of making Indu protector to her home leads much notorious conversation among her family. Their love is hypocritical, and their affection is filled with jealousy, hatred and greed. She has been a revolt



against the conventional position of a female. It is the fear of suppression by the patriarchal society that makes her fight, turn violent and emphasizes her.

Unless and until the roots, the cause of her worries are not uprooted, Indu cannot achieve accomplishment, she consequently destroys the roots, remove her fears, tackle her problems with courage and what she feels is accurate. Thus she extends support to essential, an orphan existing with the family unit. Indu seems to be grown up with improved understanding of the circumstances than that existed previous in the family. Akka decides and made Indu her successor, because, she knows that among all her relatives, Indu is muscular to tolerate the weight of the responsibility that goes with the prosperity. Indu decides to take up Akka's responsibilities and survive up to her hope. With the simple will made to her, she decides to fulfill all the obligations she has towards the family and towards herself.

She even ignores the letter from Jayant, advising her to leave out the members of the family who did not ever nuisance about her for the last ten years. He asks her also to come back home so that they both can make plans for the future with Akka's money. But Indu decides to fund Mini's marriage instead of buying the old house. It truly pains her to keep in mind about her stay in the house for 18 years, would be demolished without a trace of their life spent in it. "One era ends so that the other might begin. But life will continue endless, limitless, formless and full of grace" (Shashi Deshpande -65).

She desires now to return to her husband, for she loves and needs him, and wants to resume her time built on the base of truthfulness and decides to be her true self in relations with Jayant. Now onwards she is not going to suppress her feelings only to satisfy Jayant. She actually achieves freedom and decides to do what she thinks she should be doing. She also decides not to share her situation with her cousin. The central point which has to be noted is that she is making free decision. The author of the novel has very neatly pin pointed the internal struggle and sufferings of the new category of Indian women through the temperament and nature of Indu who has raise numerous basic questions regarding modern women who are rooted and shaped by the Indian customs but influenced by the technological awareness of the west. Indu's recognition of western values and her exploration for freedom with a requirement of unfettered growth and adulthood of individuality, despite the dangerous disagreement between tradition and modernity, eventually results in her appearance as a human being growing basically as a woman of determination not yielding to the dictates of the patriarchal society.

Men are aggressive and dominant by nature it is also a reality. Whereas women by nature passive and submissive. A man wants women to keep under control. But an awareness of women's domination and exploitation within the family, at work and in society and conscious action by women and men can change this situation. The detailed analysis of the novel *Roots And shadows* has given an understanding of an Indian women's self thoughts. Freedom of selfhood of a woman in the patriarchal society is challenging. Patriarchal values are so grounded internalized that one cannot lead a life outer the border drawn by patriarchy. Individual independence in its

extreme sense implies that it is free from all bonds. It is moving away from identifying oneself merely as somebody's sister, daughter, wife or mother, but rather to have their own identity. The notion of gender as separate from the biological fact of sex includes a complex of cultural, psychological sociological, associations with it. It is the reality of this society and the universe regarding women.

#### REFERENCES

Deshpande S. Roots and shadows ISBN 086311315X, Orient Longman Pvt, New Delhi, 1992.  
Stoller, Robert J. Sex and Gender: On the Development of Masculinity and Femininity, Hogarth Press London, 1968.

Beauvoir de Simone. The Second Sex, Picador classic edition, Carry Books Pen Books Ltd. London, 1988.

Ramamoorthy. My life is my own: A study of Shashi Deshpande's Women, Feminism and Recent fiction in English, Shushila Singh, Prestige New Delhi, 1991.