Chapter – 5

Virtues and Vices in Human Life and Relationships
5.1 Introduction :-

Shashi Deshpande’s women protagonists feelings of love, tenderness, warmth and happiness as well as their feelings of anger, bitterness and hatred are woven through these three basic concepts – house, death and past-present. At the same time the prime concern of her novels in “human relationships” within the existing framework of family set-up. Virtues and vices impacts of these three concepts that house, death and past-present is observes in human life and in between their relationship is surely experienced through the fictional work of Shashi Deshpande. So the impact of these indomitable concepts on human life and relationships are analyzed as follows:

5.2 House: Impact on Human Life and Relationships :-

According to Shashi Deshpande, the multidimensional relationship evolves predominantly within a space of ‘house’ because ‘the house’ this phenomenon provides a basic infrastructure to the lives of human beings and relationships. Therefore she explores the depths of human relationships in the periphery of these familial houses. The ancestral home occupies a pivotal place in her novel and these are mainly- The Dark Holds No Terrors, Roots and Shadows and A Matter of Time. Through the novels se delineates a well descriptive concept of ‘House’, providing minute details and weaving the emotions of the people staying there with the passages, corners, corridors and other various spaces of the house. The residents and their activities with the backdrop of house are inseparable; this aspect generates a strong sense of
belongingness. The important phenomenon - house is not just a place where the residents stay. But it happens to be an embodiment of their past and also a citadel to protect them from the pressures exerted by the social set-up. Deshpande reflects the likes and dislikes of her characters through the delineation of things and arrangements in the house. She uses house as a metaphor and linked it with the people who live there.

5.2.1 House: Impact in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* :-

The house plays an indomitable role for the protagonist’s Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. The house represents the past, harshness and bitterness where Saru had experienced rejection, discrimination, hatred and the accusation of Dhruva, her brother’s death. So Saru’s house reminds her the way she was rejected as an individual person.

*The Dark Hold No Terrors* this novel open up with the returning of Saru to her paternal house after duration of sixteen years even though each and every thing remains unchanged in spite of this long duration. Saru depicts that-

*Nothing has changed. The same sagging easy chair, shaped to his body. The curtain of the inner door…. The pictures on the wall were unchanged too. A faded photograph of her grandfather whom she had never seen. One of a smiling Gandhi and Nehru, put up sometime, perhaps, in a burst of patriotism. And a framed picture of Krishna as a crawling infant….*(1)*

Saru’s paternal house reminds her about her mother, a memory she rejects. She is back due to her failure to confront the sadistic and neutral behavior of her husband, Manohar. She returns to her father’s house ostensibly to take care of her father, but in reality to escape the nightmarish brutality which her husband inflicts on her every night. Now the house for Saru’s sake happens
to be a place where she could seek refuge to avoid everyone who teases her directly or indirectly.

Saru’s paternal house has its own significance too. Here it represents as a place where she could get a word of consultation from her father. Till now the place which she has rejected, turns out to be a place where she could come to the terms with the reasons of the problems which she is confronting in her married life.

Jasbir Jain strikes the right note about Saru’s thinking related with her parental house after returning-

*Saru has to return to her parental home to come to terms with life, to let go the ghosts of the past, to get rid of the terrors that inhabit her sleeping and waking hours. It is this house that has been hostile to her and where she has to recover the innocence of a childhood home, to work out her anger and bitterness, to get rid of her silence.*(2)

Saru’s stay at her parental house along with her father and Madhav helps her to come out of her predicaments and disturbed state of mind. Under the strict vigilance of Saru’s mother, the house which was barren with no change is now changed. The order and control that Saru’s mother exercised with the absence of her is found nowhere. The parental house seems to be growing where now Saru could share her grief, her consequences with her father and Madhav. The change in the parental house is brought through the flowers, which Saru notices in a corner- Hollyhocks, tall and colorful. The bareness and sadness of the house is transformed into liveliness, it becomes rejuvenated by the friendliness and an understanding shared by her father and Madhav. The parental house has now become a place not to stay but to live. The exactness of this situation is pointed out by Jasbir Jain-
The house was no longer a sanitized habitation, but a living, growing home where order and control were no longer the dominant factors; it becomes a house where confidences can be shared, fears expressed, guilt condoned, questions asked and answered.\(^{(3)}\)

Saru’s returning and stays at her parental house boosts her energy and courage to confront the consequences boldly. The house now opened up the door for the needy. Due to Saru’s stay in that house because at the beginning it was a place of seclusion for Saru’s father, Madhav and Saru herself. Deshpande depicted two contradictory situations related with the concept house. Firstly the opening of the novels happens with the doors of the home making *a loud, groaning, protesting, squeak showing the reluctance of disuse.* (The Dark Holds No Terrors: p.no. 16), welcoming a depressed and disturbed Saru. On the contrary, the novel ends up with Saru’s stepping out of the door courageously, confidently and ready to confront Manohar, her husband from whom she had run away. It means now the parental house turns out to be a store house of strength, confidence that is necessary for one to survive.

Thus, the concept ‘house’ played a pivotal role of virtues and vices in the life of Saru and developing and maintaining her relationships with her husband, father and Madhav. Shashi Deshpande very properly used such a non-living thing as a source of virtues and vices impact on human life and relationships.

5.2.2 House: Impact in * Roots and Shadows* :-

The house is always an important entity in Deshpande’s fiction. her another novel- *Roots and Shadows* opens up with the depiction of the various activities of early morning time that every human being come across in any Indian house. It delineates minutely the turmoil of various activities inside
house and that is after such a long duration of ten years. The protagonist Indu when she was away missed the surrounding and the hub of the day-to-day routine. All these various aspects bring back Indu to the reality that she returns to the house. The feelings of Indu, which she expressed, are as follows-

*Slowly the fragments came together….. the sparrows, with their noisy chirping, sounding like school children let out for the break; someone coughing and gargling loudly as he performed his morning ablutions; the tinkle of teacups and the hiss of the primus stove; a child crying; water running into a bucket…. all of these forming a whole. This is our house. I am home.* (4)

Indu’s returning to the ‘house’ is similarly with coming to the terms with herself. The house provides her time and space to confront her own predicaments and conflicts with her husband Jayant, with Akka and also with herself including her own body. Through the eyes of Indu one type of aliveness comes in house. This house is not just a place to stay but a place which helps and guides her to rejuvenate herself. The house is always a place where many generations have spend their whole lives, encompassing in it an open space and capturing in it the dark and dingy walls, which representing the joys and sorrows; the gay and bright as well as grey and black shades of emotions experienced by those who lives there. The ancestral house has unmistakable stamps of the age of old tradition. This house also face the changes, which every generation made in it as per their need arises. Indu describes the house in details –

*It was my grandfather who had first lived in the house. His father had built it, but he had died before he could live in it. My grandfather had made extensions and renovations, but his garish*
taste and love of solidity had made the house into an odd combination, like a good looking woman dressed in execrable, bad taste.(5)

Through the ornamental words, Deshpande gives each and every minute detail of the interiors which shows a living picture of the whole house. The aliveness comes in house with the help of her appropriate delineation-

While the doors were massive and heavily carved, there was a generosity and imaginations about the floor length windows with their gracefully arched frames and delicates lattice work. The staircase, however, was merely functional, just wooden stairs hollowed out in the center by countless fact going up and down, and enclosed by dark and dingy walls.(6)

It is not only non living things like the walls and the interior that makes the house alive but also filling of the colors of the day- to – days various activities in the picture of a house make it real and attractive. The picture of the house acquaints a harmonious fulfillment with the description of the various activities that Deshpande places in front of the readers. In the morning time the enchantment of waking up through various sounds that formed a harmonious whole, the sounds of birds chirping in the windows, a small child crying, the primus hissing, the tinkling of cups and saucers and the singing sound of Akka.

While in the evening times the aliveness comes with all the sanctity and rituals that usually are followed in every household. At the evening time the first lamp lit for the God. Then the lights gently twinkling in the rooms, women sitting relax by stretching out their aching legs in front of them. It is the story telling time when children lying with heads pillowed on warm laps and listening the story with drowsy intentness at that time the whole didn’t matter, but still
each words was significant and meaningful. Men also come back to their house and take washing and sitting down with large contended sigh. It means in the evening time the feeling of ease, contentment and indolence embracing the whole house. It is an aura of warmth that didn’t have to be expressed in words, smiles, dinners and drinks. This is the abrupt delineation of house where one lived and not stayed.

This house provides the tenderness and warmth to Indu that she was missing with Jayant. She tries to resolve whatever that went wrong, it is in the same house through love, hatred, warmth and affection. This peculiar house had developed a strange sense of belongingness in the mind of Indu. This house Indu inherits from Akka. Indu’s preoccupation will not give consent to her to stay there permanently and so the idea of demolishing the house comes up. This very idea makes Indu emotionally weak. The portrayal of demolishing house is as follows-

The wall would crumble, the roof would crash down. The woodwork would be neatly piled up in lorries and carried away. But what of the feelings, the emotions, the passions the house had sheltered? Would they not linger here, where they had been born and nurtured? If not, where would they go? (7)

Indu takes a hard decision to demolish the house in spite of all her emotional bindings with the house. Shashi Deshpande places another darker side of the house that is resulted into the demolition of house. The house is mostly known as the sheltering house but its extreme has now ended up as a shelter for inactive parasites like Sunanda Atya and her children and the younger generation of the family. All these members of the family now carry on surviving without earning anything and just being within the existing infrastructure of house. In a way, by demolishing the house, Indu paves a new
way for the coming generation to be active and to do something and earn on their own. It means she expects that the next coming generation should be independent. Indu relates that monotonous things have to change and this realization helps Indu to take this decision.

According to Indu this house feels like a trap- which binding her to past and she had to move away from this trap. It means destroying the house for her sake is not destroying the past but it is the acceptance of the future with a change. This decision helps Indu to liberate herself from all the dark corners of life. She expresses her feelings-

\[
\text{Now, I felt clean, as if I had cut away all the unnecessary uneven edges off myself. And free.}^{(8)}
\]

Thus the house impacts on both the dimensions that is virtues and vices on Indu’s life and her relationships with other family members. The house that Indu had left in anger ten years before turns out to be a place which provides her strength for her bright future.

### 5.2.3 House: Impact in A Matter of Time:

Shashi Deshpande’s another novel- *A Matter of Time* is divided into three sections- the house, the family and the River. The first section opens up with the description of the house “Vishwas”. This house predominantly occupies a large space in *A Matter of Time*. It sets the background and the tone of the novel. The portrayal of the dilapidated house makes us aware of what we are going to come across in the novel. The name of the house “Vishwas” has been inherited not from on ancestor, who came along with the “quality of belief and trust” but from an ancestor, who came along with the Peshwa’s army and settled there. This ancestor built up this house not just for himself but for his inheritors also. But unfortunately this house “Vishwas” has remained devoid of a son. Naturally
only the bareness rules in “Vishwas”. The entire aura of ‘Vishwas” expresses an alienation, isolation, aloofness of the family, who is staying and living there. The aloofness of house is as follows-

*Signs of wear and neglect lie elsewhere: in the wide gaps in the stonework of the compound wall, the large gate that looks as if it would fall to pieces if touched, the smaller one that sags on a single hinge.*

Nothing beautiful and attractive exists in the vicinity of “Vishwas” because not only the human existence but also the nature seems to be hostile and wild rather than being enchanting. The wildness and nothingness of the house depicted as follows –

*Everything goes wild here, nothing is scaled down to a cultivated prettiness. The bougainvillaea has become a monster parasite clinging passionately to its neighbor, the Akash Mallige, cutting deep grooves in its trunk.... The champak seems to have no relation to the graceful tree that grows in other people’s yards.... Its flowers can neither be plucked nor seen.... strangely enough, no birds nest in these trees; in the daytime, there is absolute silence, though at night there are ominous rustlings, sounds of unknown creatures of the night.*

The ‘Vishwas” is divided into two parts, the description of this house makes aware to the readers about the divided family. The upper floor occupied by Shripati and the lower floor occupied by Kalyani. Shripati was brought back by Manoroma after the death of Vithalrao. Manorama had constructed a room upstairs for him. Shripati stays there aloof and isolated perched on top and
controlling everything from there. The same thing is echoed by the portrayal of the house.

*The staircase raises expectations of an entire floor above, but there is in fact only one room, obviously added on later. Looked at from the outside, it looks like an excrescence perched on top of the house, detracting from its main quality of integrity.*

Shripati brings back Sumi, his daughter to this ancestral house after the desertion of Gopal. In the consequences of Sumi’s life it is this house only which provides her the space, time and support. The house protects her from the social problems and all the family relationships provides her the strength to stand up against all odds. Along with Sumi’s daughters, initially she live like transients but as time passes they are mingled with the household. Kalyani provides strength and support to Sumi and especially to her grand daughters with her intricate, thick, beautiful and warm web of relationships. This house performs the role of a teacher to both Sumi and her daughters, it teaches them to take life in their stride with growing confidence. It is only in “Vishwas” Sumi and her daughters aware about their weaknesses as well as their strengths as an individual. It is here in this peculiar house Aru faced the predicaments about life, love, marriage, relationship and ultimately comes out of it with her own understanding of all these things.

At the end of the novel after the sudden and untimely death of Sumi and Shripati, Aru stands there at the door in an erect position and putting her and bidding farewell to her father confidently. It is this house which has witnessed about the transformation of a confused, angry and grief-stricken eighteen years old Aru after the desertion of her father now turns to a quiet cool, confident and responsible young woman. Aru inherited this warmth and strength from her grandmother Kalyani. Thus in the novel *A Matter of Time*, Deshpande portrayed
both virtues and vices impacts of the house “Vishwas” on Shripati, Kalyani, Sumi and her daughters life and of course leads to the development of their relationship.

As per the above all analysis it is concluded that “The house”, thus never comes as a non-living entity in Deshpande’s fiction. It is always performs the role of a human being. Who aware and understands the problems of protagonists and support them to come out of it successfully and tries to live independently. In Deshpande’s fiction ‘the house’ contributes and influences as an elder person in the family. While going through the novel, a reader of her fiction almost feels the heart throbs of the house. The house represents for total unconditional support for her protagonists in their needy time. Whenever the female protagonists trapped in the bad plight, feels deserted and helpless, it is only the house becomes their refuge where they got solace and relaxation. The family comes forward to guide and support them. It means ‘the house’ becomes one of the major characters in her novels. The house is treated as one of the important themes handled by Deshpande through her fiction.

5.3 Death : Impact on Human Life and Relationships :-

Death is also a recurrent theme in the fictional work of Shashi Deshpande. According to her concern, death is treated rather than an end, a bit more of a new beginning. As per Deshpande’s opinion the natural death gives an opportunity to shoulder the duties and responsibilities to the next generation. With the death of Akka in Roots and Shadows the authority goes to Indu with the death of Vithalrao in A Matter of Time his wife, Manorama hands over the mantle to Shripati. An untimely death is always shrouded with mystery in the novels of Shashi Deshpande. This factor also results into the deterioration of relationship. The entire novel is overshadowed by this untimely death. In the novel The Dark Holds No Terrors- the Dhruva’s death haunts Saru throughout in her life. The Naren’s death in Roots and shadows creates the circumstances
of a mystery about his death. Was it a suicide or was it an accident? Surprisingly both Dhruva and Naren’s life end up similarly and that is both die drowned in stagnant water in a pond. It clears that death is one of the indomitable factor that impacts on both virtues and vices on human life and relationship. The discussion related with this issue is as follows-

5.3.1 Death : Impact in The Dark Holds No Terrors :-

Death is an aspect which shows its impact in this peculiar novel. Dhruva’s death is a blessing turns out to be extremely tyrannical for the protagonist’s Saru in the novel- The Dark Holds No Terrors. Saru come back to her parental house after a span of twelve years. She is unable to bear Manohar, her husband’s nocturnal and sadistic assault and so she is back to the house of her father. Saru is well aware that though her returning will help her to escape from the assault of her husband, but here to the paternal house she will have to confront her dead brother, Dhruva. Saru is charged by her mother, Manorama that due to Saru only Dhruva is face to the death. Saru killed Dhruva. Readers can not deny the fact that Saru hated her brother as he was close to the mother and had an upper hand in the house. As she was older by three years, always tried to dictate terms with him in order to establish her supremacy. The presence of Dhruva had spoilt everything for the sake of Saru, so due to that Saru hated him so much.

This hatred for Saru’s brother took her to such an extreme that she craved to blot him out when Saru heard the mythical story of Dhruva from her mother. She had made attempt for making him the “north star” by pushing him away from the lap of her father.

I had with a cold and calculated determination, pushed Dhruva off Baba’s lap. He had fallen down, his head making a sickening thud as it hit the ground… He must be dead. Is he dead?.........
But soon, with Dhruva quieted and lying peacefully on Aai’s lap, the question had come, Why did you do it?.....
‘Because you named him Dhruva’
‘What do you mean?’
‘I wanted to see if he would become the North star if I pushed him off Baba’s lap’. (12)

Manorama, the mother of Saru accuses her for the death of her brother. Saru is provided to deny this charge levied against her by Manorama. A guilty consciousness is generated by the continuous accusation of Saru’s mother in her mind which creates the problem to mars her every relation. Saru is held responsible for the death of her brother. When that bad incident took place Dhruva was with her. Saru express her guilt related with that stark reality.

I turned round to call him, to say, ‘Come on, Dhruva, quick, or else I’m really going, ‘when I saw him fall into the water. Oh no! I cursed him, more annoyed than frightened. We could get dirty and wet now and he would start howling and Ai would blame me for everything. I began to climb down hoping he would have got out of the water. I looked down once and there was no one Just blankness. (13)

Related with the death of Dhruva, Premila Paul pointed out a very thin demarcation between the expectation of Saru and its fulfillment.

Dhruva’s demise had always been her subconscious desire and there is a very thin demarcation between her wish and its fulfillment. (14)
Thus, confronting a new incident and that is Dhruva’s death becomes conscious understanding of the subconscious desire of Saru. The factor ‘death’ impacts on the life of saru as well as her mother both virtues and vices and also on their relationship with each other and of course with other family members.

5.3.2 Death: Impact in *Roots and Shadows* :-

Deshpande depicted the impact of death very abruptly in the novel *Roots and Shadows*. In the opening of the novel the returning of Indu and death of Akka is mentioned. Akka’s death metaphorically stands as the end of a convention, culture, paving way for the new to hold on the mantle. The novel opens up with the Akka’s natural death and ends with the Naren’s mysterious death. Naren was a man in his thirties is bachelor, untraceable, looming large on the canvas of the whole novel like a shadow. Initially his presence is felt through music.

*That is Naren’s The music. The voice. And it was as if he was as if he was there with us, silent, aloof with his restless hands, sardonic mouth, and when he spoke a vitriolic tongue*[(15)](15)

The only close ones to Naren were Indu and old uncle. They both are well aware that Naren belongs to no one and he can never be ‘any one’s beloved or husband’. Naren is striving to be an exception to the old uncle’s “world is made of interdependent parts” ideology. Naren prefers to live an independent life. He has his own style of living life like ‘a rolling stone’.

*Happily rolling ............ I don’t have any trouble getting jobs. But I don’t have any trouble loosing them either ........*
I get as much of it as I want...... so when I’m out of a job, I live on my saving. That’s my present role. (16)

Naren as one of the most restless person in the whole world is considers by Indu; while according to the opinion of old uncle, Naren is an ‘enigma’ who takes up nothing seriously.

But in spite of all these controversies, Naren is very much concerned and attached with his grandfather. Naren is well aware of the style with which he lives his life. He has an intense desire to take old uncle with him. According to the whole family members, Naren is ‘an outcast’ and obviously always kept away from themselves. Naren’s father and mother faced death due to the drowning so at an very early age Naren is become an orphan child. This early death of Naren’s mother and father had created a void in his life. He expects and longed for belonging to someone. This intense desire of “belongingness” was never fulfilled by the other family members. Naturally it had deeply affected Naren’s mental state. Thus death is an issue which impacts on Naren negatively. To be ‘an outcast’ by the family members is one type of punishment for the sake of Naren.

It seemed terrible then to be an outsider. Not to belong...... it was a crime, a punishment. (17)

The outside treatment and behavior on the part of the family forced Naren to withdraw himself and live an isolated life from the worldly attachments. He comes to know that now he was free from all the bondages. In spite of all this, somehow, the void of ‘love’ and craving for love remained stable always within his subconscious mind. Naren is intensely craved for “touch”, an affectionate touch, a “contact”. But unfortunately all the pessimistic circumstances and consequences forced Naren to live life devoid of any such type of contact. As
per Naren’s thinking touch and contact these two aspects are most inevitable for the manifestation of love. He has his own theory related with touch and contact. He express his opinion about it-

*I have a theory about contact, Indu. I mean literal contact. People touching each other. We always need it. Babbles crave to be touched by the mother, a parent. Then we move away from the family to generalized contact.......Later the craving gets a focal point. You want to be touched by, to touch, one person of the other sex. It gets magnified and exaggerated beyond proportion.* (18)

This intense desire and expectation for touch and contact is never fulfilled in Naren by those family members who live in the big house. Naren strives to fulfill this intense desire and craving through the natural elements like water; coincidently which also happens to be the embodiment of the death of his mother and father. Naren regularly likes to dip in the water. This dipping in water by Naren is symbolizes his attempts to reunite himself to the lost contact of his father and mother which he had lost at a very early age. The void that was prepared by the rejection of the family members is fulfilled by the contact and acceptance of water. There are two controversies related with water that happens in the life of Naren. Those are when he was in his childhood he was very much scared of water; but in his later period of life the same factor that is water helps him to liberate himself from the enforcement of “life of rejection” by his family members and other various things. Water becomes in a metaphorical sense a significance of the means of liberation for the sake of Naren and so reader’s finds that Naren going to search the solace in water at the time of bath.

*Everyday in the tank near the Shiva temple……*(19)
Naren is attempting to drive out the ‘private devils’ by dipping himself into the water continuously. At that particular moment Indu hears that some person has drowned in the tank near the temple of Shiva and she immediately recognizes that surely it is only Naren.

*What made me so certain? I don’t know. I only know that in that instant, even as I heard the women murmur and exclaim over the news, I knew who it was.* (20)

Thus death performs the role positively for the sake of Naren. It comes as a blessing for Naren. Death helps Naren to achieve that ‘contact’ which he had been craving for. We cannot consider Naren’s accidental death as a suicide but indeed it must be an unresisting acceptance on the part of Naren, for which he aspiring and intensely desiring for it in whole of his life.
5.3.3 Death: Impact in *A Matter of Time* :-

Deshpande’s another creation *A Matter of Time* revolves around the concrete “absence” instead of revolving around the abstract “death”. The whole novel is overshadowed by the replacement of death marked the absence of a character; the ‘lost child’ of Kalyani and Shripati.

The tense and strained relationship between Kalyani and Shripati, the way he stays and lives upstairs and the way she stays and lives downstairs controlled by Shripati, scared, afraid clearly indicates the tension and strain of the lost child in their married life. The absence of the male child is marked in throughout the novel. Apart from that even the male characters mark their presence through their absence in the whole novel. These male characters placed backstage and still the novel revolves round this absence. The missing child, the assumed invisible but controlled presence of Shripati at upstairs. Gopal, who deserted his wife Sumi and the whole family everything culminates to make an aura of “absence” or “missing” in the whole novel? The desertion of Gopal places the whole family in front of various consequences. After his desertion the plight of family members are as follows-

> Congregate like mourners after a death in the family but a death in a distant land, a death without a body. There is a blank space where the body should have been ..... There is an awkwardness about the whole thing and discomfort and uneasiness pervades more than grief and anger. (21)

One type of blankness is developed in the whole novel and it is against the backdrop of this, ‘death without a body’.

On the other part Vithalrao, the father of Kalyani, whose natural death comes as a blessing for him. He is detecting to preparing himself for to greet
and welcome to the death. In his last moments he requests his family members to put him down on the floor for preparing himself to confront with death.

*It was as if he knew that death was coming and he had to prepare himself for it.* (22)

After placing Vithalrao down on the floor, he died within a short time. According to Vithalrao, death was an escape from the ongoing conflict between mother and daughter. He tried to achieve solace through the mean of death. Another reason to escape himself from his failure to find his daughter Sumi happily reunited with her husband Gopal.

Shripati is strikes by the factor death, when he shares the pain and agony of his lost child with his daughter, Sumi. Therefore Vithalrao’s life ends with the word ‘Madhav’, the name of his lost child. Who had haunted him in throughout of his life? Vithalrao’s life obsessed with the search of his lost child, Madhav. In this searching, his failure led him towards an aloof and isolated life fuming at his failure. His last utterance of the name “Madhav” comes as an acceptance of his failure in the search of his son. Vithalrao’s sharing of his pain and agony of his lost son, Madhav with his daughter Sumi is a specific moment where meets with death. This is the first time ever Vithalrao has uttered this name, Madhav to somebody which has remained an obsession in whole of his life, and at this very specific moment he confronts with death.

Thus, Shashi Deshpande’s novels usually end with a glimpse of a new beginning. The novel *Roots and Shadows* ends with Indu’s settings of priorities and order in the matters of the house, family and her life. In the another novel- *The Dark Holds No Terrors* the protagonist Saru decides to confront all her life’s consequences boldly; while Urmi in the novel *The Binding Vine* only thinks over what ‘spring of life’ for which Mira was searching for. The novel- *That Long silence* ends with the confronting life by its protagonist Jaya but not
with a muted silence; on the contrary with a new awareness and understanding. The most unusual thing in the novel- *A Matter of Time* is the death of father and daughter that is Shripati and Sumi in an accident. Sumi dies at a specific moment, when she is on the verge of beginning a new life for herself. So the death of Sumi is an unfortunate death. It impacts very harshly on the life of Sumi and obviously in the lives of Sumi’s daughters too. Even the novelist Shashi Deshpande also regrets on the death of Sumi. In her own words Deshpande expressed that-

So was I unhappy over Sumi’s death, but it just happened, it was not deliberate.\(^{(23)}\)

In a way the death of Sumi in the novel *A Matter of Time* represents for the social rejection of an individual woman’s independent beginning. Thus in the fictional work of Shashi Deshpande death is an indomitable factor which effects and affect both on human life and relationships with each other.

### 5.4 Past and Present : Impact on Human Life and Relationships

The novels of Shashi Desphande are essentially the novels that are mostly divided into three generations. Obviously in spite of the reality that the novel opens in the present situation, but predominantly the past overshadows the present. Metaphorically we may say that in her fiction past is a skeleton in the cupboard of family to which all the characters confront in the present situation. Deshpande’s prime concern is this confrontation which helps the characters to assess her deeply rooted in the periphery of the whole family set-up. She juxtaposed both type of characters in front of the readers, firstly the characters who acknowledge the past and deeply related with the family set-up; while
secondly the characters who are try to disown the past by ending up themselves in a state of rootless.

Deshpande’s novels mostly deal with the recurrent metaphor of the past. It helps the characters to get a firm footing and a better understanding of the existing relationship. Especially this past is represented by the first generation in the novel- *The Dark Holds No Terror.*, For the sake of Saru, past revokes itself through the haunting and unpleasant memories of the mother and the dead brother, Dhruva. While Akka in *Roots and Shadows*, the characters like Shripati, Kalyani and Manorama in the novel- *A Matter of Time*. In the novel *The Binding Vine* the past is evokes through the diaries and poems written by Mira that the entire past is recreated.

While the present comes on the canvas with the characters either ignoring or disowning the skeleton or bravely confronting and relating themselves with the past as Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Sumi and Gopal in *A Matter of Time*. In the novels of Shashi Deshpande this very complex relationship with the past of a human being which reshapes life has always remained vital. This aspect is revealed through many of her important novels. The protagonists of this novels in their present times are trying to come to the terms with their past by reliving it, resisting it or by neglecting it. In a way they are engage in trying to reshape it. Shashi Deshpande describes in her own words in the novel- *A Matter of Time* that:-

*The truth, perhaps is that whatever we do, we are always giving the past a place in our lives.*

The truth is that human being cannot disclaim the past. This specific aspect that is past is directly or indirectly enters into each and everyone’s lives. The past from the present separates from a very thin line, but even though on understanding of this demarcation helps the characters to understand the future
properly. The third generation is an independent generation, which takes the duties and responsibilities and carries out the mantle successfully with a perfect fusion with the past Deshpande projected it by the characters Indu and Naren in the novel *Roots and Shadows* and Aru in the novel *A Matter of Time*. Thus, the impact of past and present on human life and relationship is discussed as follows-

5.4.1 Past and Present : Impact in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* :-

Deshpande’s novel – *The Dark Holds No Terrors* depicts the past, which comes in appeared in the form of haunting memories. The prescribed novel projects the futile attempt which is made by the protagonist, Saru in disowning the past. For the sake of Saru, the past represents the death of her brother, Dhruva. The past also memorizes her about the accusation of Manorama, the mother of Saru. She held Saru responsible for the death of Dhruva. By ignoring and rejecting the past, Saru wants to avoid all these unpleasant memories, which makes her disturbed. All the efforts of Saru aimed towards disowning the past, which impacts on her life negatively.

The protagonist of this novel is trapped and torn between the haunting past and tormenting present. The only single option remained in front of Saru and that is to confront the past boldly and resolve the present and a ray of hope; which is helpful for the enlightenment of her better future. Saru rather than disowning and run away from the past confronts it boldly and well aware that the dark means the past memories holds no terrors.

The basic difference between the male characters and the female characters lies herein by Shashi Deshpande. The female characters are courageously likes to confront with the past and present as compare to the male characters. The female character gives preference for searching to the solution by living within the periphery. It means they like to bound with their womanhood and which gives them courage for the confrontation of
consequences those occurs in their lives. While the male characters like Naren rather than attempting to find out the solution prefers to escape from the consequences and predicaments by accepting the dangerous way like death. On the contrary rather than gives preference to the embracing death by Saru, she hardly strives for to search out the freedom by living within the rules and goes ahead near towards the life with dignity and grace. Considering this approach as a “compromise” will be like underestimating the presence of mind and wisdom of Deshpande’s female characters and doing injustice to them.

Shashi Deshpande’s female characters decision to admit and accept the life as it is by remaining within the peripheries of society comes through the profound understanding of the familial relationships and society. To forsake we may say that life is never an option for the female characters of her fiction. This shows the collectiveness and volumes about the inherent strength which they have used for the survival by overcoming on each and every consequences and they used their profound wisdom for finding the solution for their conflicts and predicaments.

5.4.2 Past and present : Impact in Roots and Shadows :-

Indu, the protagonist of the novel Roots and Shadows delineated by Shashi Deshpande represents for the impression of the crisis and conflicts between past and present rather than trapped being in the conflict between old and new generation. But it is the outer grasping, if we reach to its root then we comes to know that is the reunion of the old and new generation, in the other words the reunion of past and present, which is helpful for the third generation to move forward for the welcoming of bright future. After a long span, Indu returns to meet the ailing Akka. This meeting of Indu and Akka represents the past and the inheritor of the future. In spite of some bitter memories in between Indu and Akka, the past represented by Akka hands over the mantle of the family to Indu, who represents the present to leads towards bright future. As the
novel develops, Indu tries to observe and imitate Akka as it is means learns to place her foot in the foot steps of Akka. In her own words Indu express her opinion-

*There ! I can do it too. It isn’t very difficult, it is? See Akka, I can play your game as well, Domination…. It comes easy once you know the way.*

Indu learns to tread a head; it is only by following and understanding Akka. The wisdom gifts that are imparted by the past guides Indu to solve all the crisis and conflicts that future has in store. The name of the novel- *Roots and Shadows* itself effectively projects the prime concern of the novelist Shashi Deshpande; to join and link the deep rooted intricate web of the various familial relationships along with the extended overgrowing shadows of relations. The deep rooted of Indu in this intricate web of familial relationships guides and supports her to stand firmly and lead forwards. Thus the past and present these factors impacts on Indu’s life and her relationships with others very much optimistically.

While on the contrary, Naren, who appears pessimistic and rootless due to the rejection of family and treated him as “an outsider”. The past of Naren clouded with the death of his parents and the present with only few attachments. Through the means of death Naren merges into the past. Thus in this novel past comes embodied in the abstract concept of authority. It highlightens that on the life of Naren past impacts negatively means this factor that is past and present performs both virtues and vices roles in the lives of human beings as well as their relationships with each other.

**5.4.3 Past and Present : Impact in A Matter of Time :-**
Shashi Deshpande’s novel- *A Matter of Time* deals with the theme of fusion of the past and present, the mingling of the both and strengthening of it is emphasized many times by Deshpande. In this peculiar novel the non-living thing like the big house “Vishwas” stands for the glorious past of the family and the residents. The present is represented by the strong and appealing personalities of Sumi and Aru. While it is impossible to judge Manorama, Kalyani, Goda by distancing them from the big house “Vishwas” that is the past. Aru means the present too cannot be looked upon as an individual or judge aloof without Kalyani and her past. All these various characters are intermingled and linked with each other. It justifies that the fusion of the past and present is very effective and an indomitable. In this intricate web of relationship Kalyani and Shripati represents past, Sumi and Gopal represents the present while Aru symbolizes for the future. It clears the culmination of all three facets.

When Kalyani was with her elders that are Manorama and Vithalrao means the past, she gains the essential strength for the survival from them. This acquisition of strength supports and guides her to admit and accept everything that happens in the present. Kalyani has the courage to admit and accept all types of situations of the present without a ting of bitterness. Through all Kalyani’s ups and downs her past is like “Vishwas” staunch and firm with her close ones around her. This courage and strength imparts a profound understanding and support to Kalyani, who in spite of her own crisis and conflicts provides solace to her daughter and grand daughters who are in distress. Kalyani stays and lives in the house “Vishwas” knowing every niche and corner of the house; which for her sake represents as an embodiment of the glorious past.

On the other hand, the other female character Sumi represents the present. Similar with Indu and Urmi she is deeply rooted and it is this confirmity of relationship that comes to her for guidance and support when Gopal abandons
the whole family. Sumi accepts Gopal’s desertion with serene silence, calmness and quietness. Here Gopal, this male character is the developed version of Naren, who had a disturbed past. While Kishore in The Binding Vine prefers to live only in present detached from the past. Gopal is a victim of the troubled past but unlike Naren, rather than resigning and run away from life he prefers to resign from the societal obligations. He gives preference to live inside the periphery of society and yet keeps himself away from the compulsions and obligations of society. The past of Gopal is shrouded with controversy regarding his lineage, which he neither can ignore nor can hide. The society never pardons Gopal. Gopal suffers the negative impact of the past. Deshpande for the very first time displays an understanding to search of solution by staying inside the social boundaries through the male character like Gopal. He accepts this approach because he has comes to know that-

_Thus does your past come back to confront you, thus does it claim you. It’s a fool’s game trying to escape._ (26)

Sumi represents deeply rooted woman with a serene silence in all her predicaments similarly with Indu, Urmi, Kishore, Saru and Gopal emerges as an elusive shadow like figure.

In A Matter of Time, Aru projects the future. Aru’s attachment with her grandmother, Kalyani and the profound understanding of the past provides her a strong scaffold to accept the challenges, which poses by the future. Thus the novel ends up with an excellent fusion of the past and the future.

_Gopal looks back once and sees them standing side by side, two women, the two faces, one old and the other so young, linked by a curious resemblance._ (27)
Aru derives courage and strength to assure her father to tread the path Gopal has preferred, it is through the perfect amalgamation. She suggests her father at last very courageously that-

Yes papa, you go, we’ll be all right, we’ll be quiet all right, don’t worry about us.(28)

Thus the issue past and present impacts both virtues and vices in human life and relationships of the novel A Matter of Time by Shashi Deshpande. Mostly it impacts positively on women characters due to their bonding with their womanhood, on the contrary the past and present impacts adversely on the life and relationships of male characters.

5.4.4 Past and Present : Impact in The Binding Vine:--

Through the novel The Binding Vine past is recollected through the poems and diaries of Mira. Urmi realizes about the stark realism about the pain and agony of Mira, who was subjected to marital rape through the poems and diaries written by her. It is this confrontation of the past that guides and support Urmi to stand firmly with Kaplana, a victim of rape. Urmi to a certain extent forgets the grief of her daughter’s death by knowing the pain and agony of Mira, who represents a submissive woman exploited within the boundaries of marriage. Here very similar with Saru, Indu and Naren, the protagonist, Urmi of the novel The Binding Vine emerges as a deep rooted character; who is absorbed in solving the mysteries of past. On the contrary Kishore, the husband of Urmi represents as an elusive figure that prefers to live in present. Therefore rather than Kishore’s presence his absence is marked to a large extent. Even though a strange bonding is there in this couple. Kishore looks detached from everything like Naren and when he arrives he insisted Urmi to live and believes only in the present.
Thus there are much more controversies related with the aspect past and present that impacts both virtues and vices on the lives of Urmi and Kishore along with on their relationship with each other.

Both of us behave at least, he’s always done, and I’ve learnt to do so- as of there is only this present. Neither the past nor the future have any place in our life together; we reject both. (29)

5.5 Conclusion :-
Predominantly Deshpande projects the entire paraphernalia of relations and their bonding with each other inside the house and to a certain extent outside the four walls too. This is the process of emancipation, love and hatred, birth and death. But in spite of all these various controversies the family set-up gains the gift of togetherness. She furnished this variety through her fiction. The relationship performs the tasks of a store house of strength. Naturally it gives confidence and courage to each and every character to confront the challenges that occurs in their lives. Through the recurrent metaphor of house, death, past and present projects the necessary and inevitable factors those are responsible for making of the beautiful portfolio of life. In this process Deshpande present that how the female characters accompanied by bonding with their womanhood confronts all the challenges and conflicts very courageously as compares to the male character which impacts both virtues and vices on their lives and of course on their relationships.
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