Meaning has emerged as an important aspect of Shashi Deshpande's novels. Therefore, moving plays a serious role in the life of characters who take it as a challenge of life. In our society marriage is the ultimate goal of a girl's life where they can not enjoy the some freedom is her male counterpart art. So Society itself is responsible for depriving woman from freedom in their married life.

The tradition oriented Indian society has experienced various changes in the last few decades. The process of industrialisation, urbanisation and secularisation have brought about economic, cultural and Psychological changes in the life patterns and attitudes of the people of this country, specially among the urban people. One of the most fundamental and far-reaching social changes brought about after India's Independence has been the emancipation of women from their tradition ridden ethos, which has resulted in the entering of women of the middle and upper classes into remunerative vocations that were largely the preserves of men. The socio-economic emancipation of women in India has brought in its train changes in their status and outlook. The
widely affected area of this change has been the vital relationship between man and women. The concepts of Love, marriage and Sex have undergone a lot of change. Woman who was dissatisfied with the inhibiting cultural and sexual rules assigned to her from the unconscious dawn of the Patriarchal India, is now gaining strength to rebel against the cultural social oppressions. But at the same time, she fails to reject totally her social and cultural background. She stands therefore at crossroads caught between tradition and modernity.

Shashi Deshpande, in all her novels, has dealt with the problems of New women. Specially she has concentrated on the theme of meaninglessness and sexual confusion suffered by women in tradition oriented institutions. The reality of modern Indian women is that even to the basic needs of life like love, marriage and Sex, She is in a state of utter confusion coming out of home. She has seen and experienced the world on her own and therefore has developed different attitudes towards this aspect of life. These attitudes sometimes rebel against the tradition and sometimes against them. That is why she feels a kind of imbalance between the traditional expectations and her new sexual demands. In this process she suffers, questions and looks for answers. Most of the Indian women novelists, do not find and only Shashi Deshpande is capable of giving complete answers. She not only shows the path but the right path which is necessary to live a happy life,
for modern, emancipated educated and intelligent middle-class working women.

Jaya of *That Long Silence* journey begins from ignorance to knowledge through suffering. Jaya, to being with a conservative educated, middle-class smiling Placid, motherly woman (15,16)¹ Who learns to suppress her own wished and act according to her husbands she who cannot does to Protest. "I had learnt it at last no questions, no retorts. Only silence"(143) has finally unlearned her silence, refuses to be led by nose and affirms with confidence, "I'm not afraid any more" (191)

Jaya's husband, Mohan, is an engineer who cares for money, status and material comforts working in the Purchase section of his office. He Prospers well loves arrogant and unfortunately is caught taking commission and an enquiry is on. He has to leave his church gate bungalow to Jaya's humble Dadas flat. He takes father so much for granted that she is not consulted about shifting. Yet she acquiesces to his decision and follows him. However Jaya seems to have gained confidence as he begins to lose it being in trouble when Mohan demands the key. Jaya refuses to hand it over to him She opens the door herself symbolising her refusal to be servile, She is aware that "It was not he who had relinquished his authority it was I who no longer conceded any authority to him" (2).
Her Dadas flat is in no way comparable to her elegant well-furnished Church gate home. Yet, She is perfectly at case here relating herself easily to her neighbours and servants. Away from the routine, She is now prepared to look at herself with utmost objectivity and examine her relationship with her husband. Adele king observes, "Jaya finds her normal routine so disrupted that for the first time She can look at her life and attempt to decide who she really is. Emulating Mohan's mother and sister, She tries to adjust and compromise with her lot though every compromise Shatters her individuality. She surrenders herself so totally that she is afraid of expressing her likes and dislikes. Now she is a stereotyped housewife who is "nervous, incompetent, needing male help and support" (76)

Outwardly she is a satisfied house wife married to an apparently caring man, with a comfortable home, with no death of material comfort. But on scrutiny, it is revealed that to achieve this stage of fulfillment as a wife, Jaya has systematically suppressed every aspect of her personality that refuses to fit in with her image as a wife and mother besides a failed writer. As Suman Ahuja observes:

Jaya caught in an emotional, eddy, endeavors, to come to learns with her Protean roles, whole trying, albeit in vain, to rediscover her true self which is but an ephemera...........an unfulfilled wife, a disappointed mother and failed writer³ (Ahuja :2)
Ruminating on the past, Jaya sees how her marriage has reduced her to a mere automation. She realizes how she wasted away the most valuable time of her life in arranging and re-arranging things, dusting, polishing washing, ironing, cleaning the fridge and changing the sheets. She is bewildered to find in her diaries that she had spent her life engrossed in such trivialities as what she bought, how much she paid for it, the dates the children’s schools had begun, the servants absence, the advance they had taken, etc.

Jaya as a girl was taught by her father to have confidence in herself. He named her Jaya which stands her victory and has encouraged her to be resilient and courageous. He has made her feel that she is someone special, and someone different from the other girls who would normally end up becoming house wifes. He would dream that Jaya either bags an international award or goes to oxford. However, his untimely death shatters her dreams and makes her to face the reality that she is after all like any other middle class girl destined to be a wife and a mother. As a child, she was chided by her grand mother for asking two many questions and was told that no husband could be comfortable with a woman who asked questions and retorts. It is ironical that although Jaya now has no question or retorts for Mohan, their is no comfortable relationship. Her early training at home has made her obedient and submissive towards her husband. Her relatives taught her the impotence of being a husband.
"A husband is like a sheltering tree—and it was as if she had said ‘mau’ to me. I ignored her. After so many years, the words came back to me. A sheltering tree. Without the tree, you're dangerously unprotected and vulnerable (32)".

And Jaya Proceeds to "keep the tree alive and flourishing even if you have to water it with deceit and lees". (32) Jaya, since her childhood, has designed her life in accordance to her family members desires. She marries Mohan not out of choice but out of convenience. He is from same caste decent good looking and has a good job. Jaya has no reason to reject him. She says: "And, if there had been no reason why I should have married Mohan, there had been no reason not to marry him either" (93) As a girl Jaya is not very Practical and she romantics Love. But where she grows up into a young woman circumstances make her look at marriage Practically not romantically.

Generally a woman's identity is defined in terms of her relationship with man as a daughter, a wife and a mother. It means virtually a woman doesn't have an identity of her own. In keeping with the titular of re-naming the bride on the wedding day as in some Brahmin communities, Jaya also has been renamed as 'Suhasini' by Mohan "Suhasini" means a soft, smiling, placid, northerly woman, who makes herself loving and also lovingly nurtures her family. With this new name, it appears, that the light spirited and courageous. Jaya has been reduced to a mere Proud housewife and mother.
Jaya wants to retain her own name given by her father meaning victory. Her refusal to adopt the name. "Suhasini" becomes manifestation of resistance to the stereotyping that is inflicted on every women in Indian society. However Jaya's rejection of the name "Suhasini" now remains as a token of victory as she cannot afford to insist on for long as she has been taught to regard her husband as a tree of Projection and so represses her anger and resentment.

Jaya has abundant resources within to become a good writers. In the words of Vimala Rama Rao:

"Jaya is one of the rare narrative voices in Indian English fiction who poses and displays a literary sensibility common surate with her fictional role as a writer telling her own story, one whose college education and reading habits are in evidence in her speaking voice, this indeed is an achievement" (Rao : 76-77)

In the early years of her marriage, Jaya has been on the threshold of acquiring name as a creative writer of some merit. It is Mohan who has been encouraging her to write. In fact, he introduces her to editors of various paper and magazines on Mohan's advice, She beings writing middles, "light humorous pieces about the travails of a middle class house wife". (148-149) these were skinnings over life do not give her any satisfaction. She is an intense thinking woman longing to confront life through her fiction. She has made a good beginning with a story about a man"..........who could not
reach out to his wife except through her body" (144). This story has won a Prize for its realistic portrayal of life. Yet Mohan assumes that the story portrays their own personal life. He is very apprehensive that people of his acquaintance may assume that he is a kind of person portrayed in the story. But Jaya knows that there is not truth in his accusation, still she does not try to reason with Mohan, as she does not like to risk her relation with him. Jaya says:

"Perhaps, if Mohan had been angry if he had shouted and raged at me, if he had forbidden me to write, perhaps I would have fought him and gone on. But he had only shown me his hurt. And I had not been able to counter that. I had relinquished them instead, all those stories had been taking shape in me because I had been scared—scared of hurting Mohan, scared of jeopardizing the only careers I had my marriage (144).

Yet her writing lacks the intensity of expression which troubles Jaya. Kamat, her neighbour on the first floor comes to her rescue. He analyses her stories objectively and tells her how she could make them "more forceful and hitting: (148) Kamat also tells her that she has been feeding on wrong sentimental notion, women are the victims:"............. (148). He rebuilds her morale and suggests her to send her writings to women’s magazines. Kamat who is a hard critic knows well that Jaya is capable of giving greater credence to the roles as wives, mothers and aunts and says:
"I never can imagine you writing this. This you, I mean. I can see the woman who writes this.................he'd narrowed his eyes as if focusing on some vision,' She's plump, good humoured Pea brained but shrewd, devious; skimming over life......(149)"

Jaya is unhappy that the writer in her could not come to light in the estimation of Mohan to whom She.............had been no writer, only an exhibitionist (144). She however does not stop writing. But she writes the kind of stuff which pleased the published and made her husband feel proud of her as a writer but she herself has fallen like an imposter. She writes a column for a woman's magazine where a character called 'Seetha' says and does things in which Jaya does not believe herself:

"That column, yes, it had made me known. My profile silhouetted in stark black that accompanied each article frightened me each time I saw it. It was like seeing some one masquerading as myself or as of I was masquerading as the woman who wrote that column (119)"

Jaya suppressed, at every stage of her life, compromises to conform to the role of an Ideal woman. In order to become an ideal wife, she has to snip off the bits of her that had refused to be Mohan's wife. As a result she has been masquerading not only as the writer of 'Seetha' but also as 'Suhasini'.
Jaya's mother her despair at being forced to live a life of deception. She feels that she will 'break down', that she can't goon, and can't cope but does not give expression to these feelings because of her fear of destroying the veneer of the happy family. In the Indian context, marriage is absolutely a sacrosanct contract and the images of the devoted wife and husband conforming to the concept of 'ardhanarishwara' have been held up as the imminent reality of the relation between the Sexes. Discussing gender, Catherine Stimpson says:

Cultural laws of gender demand that feminine and masculine most play off against each other in the great drama of binary opposition. They must struggle against each other, or complement each other or collapse into each other in the momentary, illusory relief of the androgynous embrace. In Patriarchal cultures, the struggle must and in the victor of the masculine, complementarily must arrange itself hierarchically androgyne must be a mythic fiction (Stimpson : 15)

Jaya more on less, feels in the same way when she says, "Man and woman—it was then that I realised the deep chasm between the two. They are separated for ever, never more than at the moment of total Physical togetherness (98).

Marriages in India ".......... never end, they cannot—they are a state of being" (127) . Thus is mainly because of the necessity of conforming to cultural edicts. As a result, marriage seldom corresponds to the personal experience or aspirators of the individuals involved so that the relationship
is of ten like Jaya's description of her own marriage. "Ours has been a delicately balanced relationship, so much so that we have even snipped off bits of ourselves to keep the scales on an even kneel"(7)

The relationship between a wife and husband is expected to be not only cordial but intimate and enduring. But this relation between Jaya and Mohan is an epitome of failure and an emblem of disgust, disappointment and depression. This is so because there was no live between them. This disgust of living with a man who does not live the woman the way she expects him to, is a burning problem the educated woman has to face in the contemporary society. The Psychological and social realities in which women live have remained virtually unchanged.

Like Saru The Dark Holds No Terrors, who scorns the word 'Love' and days, " there was no such thing between man and woman" (TDHNT : 65) Jaya two thinks that real emotional involvement is unlikely between a man and a woman. Her blunt confession is "love? No, I know nothing of it (153) like Saru, Jaya also is a romantic to begin with, but later she is so disenchanted that she gives up her efforts to please Mohan and look attractive for him. She is so disgusted with their mechanical relationship that she describes it as "a man and a woman married for seventeen years without mutual love or understanding."
Woman are the unquestioning victims of generations of conditioning in which a girl/woman is unchangeably slotted. The husband is traditionally given the role of mentor and guide to serve one's husband is to serve God! Feminine incapacity is exaggerated to increase the authority of the husband writing in the 1950's Simone de Beauvoir had said that marriage "incites monto a capricious imperialism," Among human beings the temptation to dominate is universally irresistible and the traditional marriage provides this opportunity to men. In orthodox India, marriages is not enough for the husband to be approved and admired, he wants immediate unquestioned obedience to his commands. "All the resentments accumulated daily among other men whose existence that he is beaten and injured all this is Purged from him at home as he lets loose his authority upon his wife, he enacts violence, power unyielding resolution; he issues commands in tones of serenity..................this farce is a daily reality for his wife. He is so firm In his rights That the slightest sign of Independence on her part seems to him a rebellion, he would fain stop her breathing without his permission." 

That Long Silence sensitively presents this aspect of feminine life before its readers. It depicts how a woman's existence is confined within domesticity and how all forms of oppression perpetuated on her are convincingly rationalized generating a closed-minds syndrome. The figures of Mohan's.
mother and sister can be quoted as examples. In Jaya's narrative, the silent wait of Mohan's mother takes on diabolic features, "the woman crowding in front of the dying fire, sitting blanks and motionless, the huddled bundles of sleeping children on the floor, the utter silence, the loud knock at the door-" (35) Mohan's mother had to wait for her husband late into the right, cooking the rice again and keeping it hot as 'he' wanted it fresh not and from an untouched verse, declining to eat what her called." your children's disgusting leaning" (35). The wife's long vigil Patient wait becomes futile when angry at not having fresh chutney to eat, he picks up the heavy brass plate, throws it at the wall and leaves the house. Silently, picking up the plate. She cleanes the wall and the floor of the spattered food and sends her son next door to borrow some chilies. Patiently and silently she prepares fresh chutney, lights the fire cookes the meal again and sits down to wait when her children, who had cooken up by the clanging sound of the plate, finally drift off to sleep again, "She was still sitting there in front of the fire, silent motionless: (36) what hunts a reader is not only the cruelty of a husband, but also the insensitivity of a son, which displays the continued discrimination against women. Her son Mohan, who has been a witness to this incident, never condemns his father. He eulogizes his mother the 'virtuous woman, instead,"- She was tough women in those days were tough" (36)
The chains of traditional marriage are heavy. In the absence of any escape routes, wires after seek consolations in obsession, masochism or mental slavery leading to Physical decay disease and death. The social ethos, which has seen to the continuity of women suppression, sees to it that unacknowledged martyrdom becomes a part of a housewife's existence. She is expected to subordinate her own needs to those of her family. She is supposed to bear her exploitation and suffering with willing fortitude. "The orthodox Indian view interprets and resistance to its andocentric codes as being the influence of western decadence. We continue to cling to forms of female oppression, exalting and glorifying them with practiced rhetoric" the continued exaltation of self-effacing norms creates an environment which pressurizes a woman to accept on at least not to resist them after silence is the only option to women in such situations. They suffer and die without uttering a single word in protest. Mohan's sister Vimla dies in silent agony without getting any help from her is laws, reliving her mother's fate. Her mother's Photograph reminded Jay of "floury hands dealing out a macabre punishment to (her) face" (38) Jaya can sense red bruises showing though the white clowns mask. Vimla wanted and claimed to be different from her mother, but their suffering binds them together in a common fate. Jaya realized it when she remarks, yet I can see something in common between them, something that links the destinies of the two the silence in which they died" (39)
Shashi Deshpande has also written about the Love, Marriage and Sex in The Binding Vine the narrator, urmi, in this novel is love calculated woman working as a Lecture in a college. Against the wishes of her Parents she has married a man of her own choice but is desperate of her married life. Her problem is that being financially emancipated and having confidence in herself as she works outside the home, she has developed a kind of super ego in herself which denies her to submit before her husband, Kishore even she cannot bear the submission of Vanna, her friend and sister in law and her mother before their spouses she says;

But her submissiveness, her willingness to go along with him in whatever he wants makes me angry.

You Let him get away with too much’ i tell her. What do you want me to do?

'Assert yourself you don't have to crawl before him Do you I don't crawl I do what I want’ 'No, you don't you're scared of him yes, you seen you do not even dare to call your daughter any thing but Mandira and Pallavi, no not even when you pet them because Harish does not like Baby talk........."(80)

The denial of Submission lies in the fact that Urmii want to assert herself she has to reject Kishore and this can be done by escaping from the tailored roles of women. Though she succeeds in escaping her culture bound role by not using the money Kishore sends her to run the family yet she cannot go
away from her nature bound role, specially the role of the Sex Partner. Ultimately, their relationship rumbles on account of lack of communicating between the husband and the wife.

Since the beginning of married life Urmi finds that the bond between her and her husband is not that of Love, though. She believes that the anchor to attach oneself to this strange world is love to each other. From the very first night of their wedding she feels the distance from Kishore. She realised that "he looked trapped" (137) Marriage which has a Spirit eat bond is the olden times, has become now a days only a sexual, legal bond. Each time when she tries to reveal her emotional insecurity when ever Kishore goes away from her he asserts himself sexually Kishore, the archetypal Indian husband never uncles lands the depth of her feeling "each time you leave me the parting is like death", she tries to tell him two times, and both the times, he finds solution in the physical relationship. But to her,

"................... Sex is only a temporary answer. I came out of it to find that the lights had come back........'go to sleep', he said He was kneeling by me his face dose to mine, but the closeness was only physical. His voice was cold. I could see the goose bumps on his shoulders his chest I not look in to his face I was afraid of what I would see I turned round and fell asleep" (140). This in compatibility to understand each other ends in alienation . She thinks "yes, here it is, the knowledge I spared myself then. Kishore will never remove his armour.
There is something in him I will never reach. I have lived with the hope that some day I will each relationships, always imperfect, Survives on hope. Am I to give up this hope"(141).

Thus, a marriage that Suppresses Urmil’s human demands, a marriage that denies her fullness of experience, forces her to take refuge in Dr. Bhaskar Jain friendship. She tries to find herself in her relation with Bhaskar because he is a patient hearer to her talks, gives her right response, cares for her emotions and makes her feel complete. Extra-material love, though not a true solution to the problems of such couples, finds a prominent place in Deshpande novels. It shows the craving of the new woman to assert herself whether it is inside marriage or outside it.

The married life of these women, whether working or nor working, ends in discontentment. Shakutai tells about her sister Sulu’s life: “After marriage she changed. She was frightened, always frightened what if he doesn’t like this, what if he wants that, what if he is angry with me, what if he throws him out? What kind of life it is, “(195). The marriage in male oriented societies turns out to be for the female partner both physically and spiritually dissatisfying. It creates confusion in her whether to take up the bathe of submission or rejection because both end in discontentment. If viewed critically marriage is found to be degenerating in which there is no involvement except in sex and everything goes on mechanically
to carry on life. As a result marriage becomes meaningless and Sex alone seems to sustain the man-woman relationship.

Urm is leading an economically and socially secure life even without her husband. He is serving in a Merchant Navy one month to visit his home. Like a normal human being. She feels at other times growing erotic feelings within her, whenever she comes across any object of desire. Something she finds it hard to control and wishes: "I could put my desires into a deep freeze and take them out intact and whole when he returned" (1647-65) The realization of this demand of sex by the new women has been effectively suggested by Deshpande. When Urm develops the friendship with Dr. Bhaskar: the conflict between her mind and heart becomes apparent when her mother objects and Vanna tries to check her she repliers to them. "I'm safe" The Predicament of the new woman can be seen in her character when she rejects Kishore just to show that she can live without him. She says:

"And yet is seems to me that this responding to Bhaskar is the only way of realizing the mushy adolescent with dreams of living happily ever after with Kishore, who's trapped inside me of finding out what's left when she's gone" (165-66).

This feeling of having sex as an adventure has started threatening the age old institution of marriage, which is based on fidelity and mutual love. Though some people would doubt the acceptance of the new heroine of Shashi Deshpande in the society, but the fact cannot be ignored "It is this working of an
individual dialectic of the sexual dilemma in her novel”, observes R. Mala, "that makes Shashi Deshpande a modernist feminist”⁹

The second angle of Sex can be seen in the case of her mother-in-law Mira. Mira’s story raises the question of rape within marriage. Mira was married at the age of eighteen to a man who loves her personality, but did not find solace in sexual relationship. Urmila finds in the writings of her mother-in-laws clear thread of an intense dislike of the sexual act with her husband. She writes: "I have learnt to say 'no' at last, but it makes no difference, no difference at all what is it he wants from me? I look at myself in the mirror and wonder what is there in me? why does it have to be me? why can't he leave me alone?" (67). This age old cry of woman suppressed under the veneer of marriage has begun to find our outlet recently. Indrani Jaisingh, an eminent lawyer for women, writes:

"It is assumed that by marrying a man a woman has given her consent to sexual intercourse with her husband at any time. Thus even, if he forces himself on her, he is not committing an offence [of rape] as her consent is assumed. In this respect, the woman movement has consistently demanded that the law of rape has changed. A recent "Judgement of court in England indicated that rape within marriage can be an offence. Several states in the U.S. have specially amended their original law to make it an offence"¹⁰
In India however, woman is still suffering from this enforced act of man upon her. Even Shakutai, a woman from the lower strata of society, did not find her painful experiences acceptable. She says to Urmī: “I, a woman, had to sleep there in public with strange men walking up and down. And my husband……..’ the voice, drops low, ‘you know what men are he, he wanted to……………’ we are not animals. I told him. As if he cared. And I got Pregnant. It was the worst thing that could happen to us then” (110-11)

While reading Mīra’s life history Urmī compares her to Kalpana, a victim of rape hanging between life and deaths in a hospital ward and concludes: “what has happened to Kalpana happened to Mīra too” (63) Sex as a ‘male feeling’ has been the Prominent theme in literature for a long time but the suffering, the desperation of woman because of sex has not been projected forcefully. Deshpande novels realistically present the decline of spiritual element in sex and a growing confusion regarding sex in marriage.

Chesser in cost of Living has divided into three types. These are: "ego instincts such as self preservation, sex instinct including the maternal instinct and social instinct which in human being includes altruism" 11 All the three instincts contribute to make The Binding Vine.

Mīra’s husband represents the passionate love of men. His one-sided affair with Mīra is the love at first sight. He first saw Mīra at a wedding and feel in Love with her, after which
his single-minded object was to marry Mira. His Love for her is dual in its nature, bending towards sex instinct because he never succeeds in developing an emotional band of Love between them, through the passion continues even after her death when he brings back a day.................old child and came after him.

Urmila and Kishore present the velvety texture and silky smoothness of adolescent love between them, which is based on infatuation and which they are unable to continue. This adolescent joyous feeling of Love becomes stale after turning into sex instinct, and Urmī, wrapping herself around the hard shell of ego, starts loosing the strength of Love. She realised that she never asks Kishore anything Even “when he goes a way from me even in our few days together I never reveal my hurt, my longing to keep him by my side-

   .Fixed forever in our places,
    .face to face the two of us,
    .Like Siva and his nodding Bull”(82)

She tries to search the feeling of Love again in her relations with Dr. Bhaskar. But this also turns out to be in the end a transitory relation.

Ego instinct and Sex instinct in Love work for short time in the life of a man and they turn to be painful and confusing if love is not based on mutual understanding. The last type of love as a social instincts has also been presented in The Binding Vine. Man, being a social animal, comes across many
people in his life and **The Binding Vine** amongst them is the instinct of social Love. It binds different human relations, keep them intact and carries forward the life of human being. In the end of the novel Urmila remembers:

"And yet I think of Vanna heavily Pregnant Sitting by me holding my hand during the pains before Kartik was born, I remember Kishores face when he first saw Anu, I think of Akka carrying for Mira, of Inni's grief when papa told her about his illness, if Papa's anguished face watching her, of the touch of grace there was in Shakutai's hand when she covered me gently at night while I slept, of the love with which she sepals of her sister, of Sandhya..........Is this it, 'the spring of life', Mira was looking for?" (203)

Mira, desperate of her sexual relations with her husband, dies in the Prime of her youth having certain unanswered questions in her heart. The answer we get in the end is the realization of altruistic quality of social instinct of Love. It is this love which has been the main source of teachings in almost all the spiritual scrip lines of India since the Vedic Age down to our times. In our religious Preaching we are taught to believe in the omnipotent power of Love. Loving our fellows equally and unselfishly we can reach above the petty problems of our individual life, and ultimately a glorious way for salvation comes to us. This is the message of sublime love embedded in **The Binding Vine** adopting in which their life people can find even today a way to peace in their disturbed, unemotional and chaotic life.

Shashi Deshpande's novel, **A Matter of Time**, presents the bonds that behind human individuals in continuing their
lives despite the betrayals and cruelties associated with human survival. Everybody have life of one’s own to live. Sumi is different from Indu, Saru, Jaya and Urmila the women protagonists of Shashi Deshpande’s earlier novels. Sumi evolves herself from the utter desolation and bitterness linked up with invisible chains of partrachal pressure and other family responsibilities. She is seen gradually emancipating herself as a new and independent woman. They have their own values and mindsets and “a finally individualized unconventional relationship” with each other. The novels beings with Gopals walking away from house, which Meenakshi Mukherjee finds “inexplicable”, and a major part of its devoted to “the attempts of the relatives to find out why Gopal deserted his family so irresponsibly.” This incident serves as the pivot in the novel. It evokes different reactions from the three important women in the novel-Kalyani (Grand mother), sumi (mother) and Aru (daughter), which reveal their personality.

Kalyani is one of the most important characters delineated by the novelist. She is presented as “a weak feeble creature” who returned to her parents home as “a deserted wife” and “a disgrace to the family” (P.154). Kalyani herself admits to have been “a great disappointment” to her parents not only because she “was a girl” but also because she was “none of those things” which her mother “would have liked
her daughter to be” (P.226). Kalyani’s marriage with Shripati, her maternal uncle, was arranged purely on account of an expediency-to prevent the property from going away after their marriage, Manorama, Kalyani’s mother, “felt secure. The Property would remain in the family. Her family (P.129). Shripati’s reluctance was softened by Manorama’s appeal to his gratitude. Discerning “both intelligence and ambition” in him when he was a boy, Kalyani’s parents had brought him up and educated to be a lawyer Kalyani was coerced by her dreaded mother to “accept a feared uncle as a husband”. All this was responsible for “the hopelessness that lay within the relationship, that doomed it from the start” (P.143).

While going to Bangalore to her Parental home Kalyani lost her four-year old mentally retarded son. This happened at the railway station. Shripati had gone to check for reservations. Shripati in search of the lost son “went about the city like a madam” (p.140.) but to no avail. This brought Kalyani marital life to an end. Shripati stopped speaking to his wife: and “he has not spoken to her since the day it happened “for about thirty five years.(p.140) even this oppressive silence could not kill Kalyani’s affection to the other members of the family. She is the anchor in an ill-starred family. Her daughter Sumi recognizes the great contribution of this “Self –punishing woman”.

In fact, noticing the complex net on relationships that Kalyani has it so many people, she (Sumi) is reminded of the spider she had seen one morning, scuttling from point
Kalyani is visibly upset when she comes to know about Gopal walking away on his wife and children. She will never like the tragedy of her life to resurface in the case of her daughter. “No.....no, my god, not again” She cries pathetically “Sounding so much like an animal in pain” (P.12).

When she goes to meet Gopal she pleads him not let it happen to Sumi what had happened to her. She takes the entire responsibility of Sumi’s “Carelessness” on herself. She says: “But ..........how could she have known what being a good wife means when she never saw her mother being one ? I taught her nothing , its my fault, Gopal, forgive me and don’t punish her for it” (P.47) Kalyani’s character is a faithful representation of self sacrificing Indian women of the older generation. To them marriage in the most important happening in a woman’s life. It is both a problem and a solution to life problems. Kalyani is keen on getting a good match for her grand daughter. Aru though they are “amazed” by her unusual interest in marriage, which was responsible for her own in fortunes : “How can she, of all people, think of marriage with enthusiasm?” (P.124.) Kalyani’s character is characterised by “superb authenticity” and typifies an “Unusual relationship” found only in India. Both Sumi and her husband, Gopal are called “Unusual people”.
appears to be an epitome of silent suffering and passive resistance. But, the novelist feels, she is made of different stuff. "she blocks out the unpleasantness. She has a good opinion of herself, she is more concerned with getting on with life. She does not want pity, she would do anything for pride. She distances even her husband" she does not ask any explanation from Gopal as to why he left them without any apparent reason. Even the one question she wanted to ask him remains unsaid.

----------if I meet Gopal I will ask him one question---------the question no one has thought of. What is it, Gopal, I will ask him, that makes a man in this age of acquisition and possession walk out on his family and all that he owns? Because...it was you who said that we are shaped by the age we live in by the society we are part of. How can then you, in this age a part of this society, turn your back on everything in your life? Will you be able to give me an answer to this (P.27)

Sumi's character has been conceived without a trace of sentimentality. Right from her childhood she has been "Beautiful, gracefully effortlessly, almost without wanting to, gathering friends around her" (P.104). Even in crisis, she can leave the impression of her "Grace and courage" and her "Old vivacity" (P.172). Gopal remembers when they meet later that her "body blocked out everything else" about her (P.223). what is even more beautiful in her is a series of rare qualities which she possesses. She has "no trace of vanity" through she is proud of her quickness and her memory (P.212).
After desertion by her husband she shows boundless patience. She accepts sympathy, loyalty bewilderment after her tragedy with the same sense of equanimity, and her stoicism makes her “an enigma” (P.20). She is “tantalized by a Sense of déjà vu” (P.23) but remarkably maintains her cool and matter-of-fact attitude. Gopal was amazed and awed by her “ease with strangers” (P.107). Her sister Premi speaks eloquently about Sumi’s superiority over her: “She was ahead of me and I was forever trailing behind never able to catch up with her” (P.17). Such is Sumi’s nature that she cannot hate a person for long. She herself tells her daughter that she is “not a good hater” and that she cannot retain her anger or hatred for long (P.194). She is so self controlled that she would not even talk about Gopals act of desertion. She tells Devaki:

“I’ve never been able to cry easily, you know that And what do I say. Devi? That my husband has left me and I don’t known why and maybe he doesn’t known, either? And that I am anger and humiliated and confused........? hit that be. we won’t go into it now” (P.107).

Not that Sumi does not feel the wrench. Infact, sensitive and self-respecting persons like her feel their inform tune kneely. Even in her parental house she “has the air of being lost (and) of having no Place” Thè “Purposeless extravagance about her movements” and her “stylized manner” of walking are indicative of her agony. But she fully realises that tying a
lacerated heart to one's wrist as it were and showing it to the world is meaningless what she cannot help is to bear silently the absence of Gopal's reassuring presence "the familiar rustling by my side at night" and "feel cold without the presence of Gopal is my life" (P.168). Her silent suffering assumes at times a heroic proportion. She is not unaware of the bliss of human relationships but she accepts the harsh facts of life bodily maintaining that Gopal in "going his way and I have to go mine" (P.161). She wants her daughter's life to be "easy and comfortable", unchequered by unhappiness: "I want her to enjoy the good things in life, I want her to taste life. I want her to relish it and not spit it out because she finds bitter" (P.220). Life, she knows, is not a bed of roses; and what pays in life is a sance and balanced attitude to it.

Another important thing about Sumi is her ability to relate herself to the world. After Gopal's walking away, her creativity gets revived she write a play entitled "The Gardener's Son" and proposes to write another. It feels so good" She admits, "and now suddenly I want to do so many things" (P.231). She wants to rewrite the story of Surpanakha from an Original point of view:

The above revision of the Surpanakha episode speaks of Sumi's eagerness to place man woman relationship on a sound, non-partisan footing and also of her modernity in thought. It is a pity that Sumi dies of an accident suddenly,
just before her taking a Job to support herself and her
daughters. The last section of the novel, as a reviewer points
out, “Seems to be last finished, with many lose threads having
almost like a first draft and certainly untouched by a
publisher’s editor” 16: The novelist says that Sumi;s unhappy
death “Just happened” and that “it was not deliberate”17.by
removing Sumi Prematurely from the fictional scene. The
novelist has denied herself the opportunity of bringing in the
important issue of women’s economic empowerment.
Interestingly she herself is not unaware of this fact “ Sumi
without husband” She said to Vimala Rama Rao, “the
economic part would be most important. Money is very
important to me like Jane Austen”18. The novel seems to have
been wound in a hurry, which has deprived the novelist of an
opportunity of delineating Sumi’s character in a more
comprehensive way.

Aru (or Arundhati) I she novelist “the focal point” in the
novel. An “observer” of the drama affecting the entire family19.
She is endowed with “her innate sense of order “ (P.12) and
given to with drawl from others (P.122), she is ready to go
ahead with “a Purely impersonal search” (p.122). She seems to
be holding a moral scale against which she would measure
everyone including herself (p.227). “ Aru is the heroine of this
story, the novelist declares, basing her evaluation on the
norms prescribed in the Natya Sastra. She has youth and
beauty and has the potential of having nobility and stead
fastness. Above all, she is "trying to make sense of what is happening, her consciousness moving outside herself and reaching out to the others as well, embracing, in fact, the whole of what is happening" (p. 185). It is hoped that true "understanding" would come to her in due course and her "ambivalence" would disappear (pp. 185, 144). Aru's empathy makes her the most sensitive characters in the novel who silently reaches out to others and feels their predicament keenly.

Another distinguishing quality of Aru is her rebelliousness. The "desire to rebel" is deeply ingrained in her (p. 11). Gopal walking away on his family is, according to her "not just a tragedy it is both a shame and a disgrace" (p. 13). Her reaction to her mother stoic acceptance of it is "violent and sharp" (21). Aru's "hostility" is like "a weapon" of "an adversary" (p. 49). She is no longer interested in Gopal's answer; but she will not let him "get away Scot-free" (p. 137). She says: "He can't get away like this, he has to give us maintenance" (p. 61). She is pained by the disintegration of the family, but her self respect would not let her stoop to self-pity, even after the death of her mother and grand father. She is not prepared to seek any help from Gopal. She "moves away from her father's arms" and says to him: "yes. Papa, you go we'll be all right, we'll be quite all right, don't worry about us" (p. 246). She consoles Kalyani saying that she will be with the latter as her 'son' (p. 233), who is regarded as the 'protector' in the
Indian context after the father’s death, the very reason of their existence (p. 71)

Marriage, in Indian is considered to be the most coveted relationship in Aru’s thinks “I’m never going to get married” she declares (p. 76). Her reading of Erica Jong has convinced her further of the futility of such human relationships. She is quick enough to perceive “new dimensions of betrayal and cruelty in the woman-man relationship” (P. 145) she express her point of view to premi thus:

“I’ve been thinking about marriage a great deal......what’s there is it? I mean, look at Amma and now Sumi......what do you get out of it?......” And look as Goda ....aiji and Bhauiji-kaka...they are always scrapping. At their age and after so many years of marriage!” (P. 138).

Aru, as the novelist suggests, fails to appreciate “The interplay of feelings” in marriage maturity and her vicarious experience of marriages like those of Kalyani and Shripati, Sumi and Gopal and others.

Probably, the most important point about Aru is her finely individualised unconventional relationship with her grand mother, Kalyani. The focus, says the novelist, is on “two human being, [and] not on the relationship being defined” 20. Aru is said to have had originally “a troubled relationship” with Kalyani (p.122). However, she changes and comes to have an “altered relationship” with Kalyani: “It has suddenly
become evident to all of them that Aru and Kalyani have, at sometime, without their having noticed it, forged a partnership (p.197). Towards the end of the novel, Gopal notices “a curious resemblance” between Aru and Kalyani; they both have “the steady watchful look in their faces, [and] the smile of encouragement” for him (p.246). The novel thus portrays the network of human bonds and affiliations obtaining between several persons in general and Kalyani, Sumi, Aru is particular. Other relationship between Kalyani and Shripati (p.60) and the one between Hrish and charu, in which there is “nothing of the male-female in their relationship” (p.125) there is also “a queer of disharmony…. A discord, a sense of something missing” between Kalyani’s parents (P.120) But the relationship that has been reiteratively emphasized in between Kalyani and Aru. Through Kalyani’s account Aru relates herself to their ancestors, realizing that the “People Kalyani speaks about are a part” of Aru’s life (P.116). The novelist has tried to show that human relationships tend to have a continuity and human beings, despite inter-generational shifts, have Potential of corresponding with each other in certain significant respects. It is their continuity of relationship that ultimately gives meaning to life in the long run.

Most of the Indian novels that deal with woman’s issues offer a peripheral treatment of the subject or end up glorifying the stereotypes typical virtues of Indian Woman, like
patience, devotion and object acceptance of whatever is meeted out to her. The Dark Holds No Terrors tells the story of a marriage on the rocks. Sarita is a “two in-one woman” who is the day time is a Successful doctor and at night “a terrified trapped animal” in the hands of her husband Manohar called manu), who is an English teacher in a third -rate college. The novel opens with Saru returning after 15 years to her fathers house a place she had once sworn never to return to unable to bear the sexual sadism of her husband. The rest of the novel is remembrance of things past and brief confession to the father with whom she had hardly communicated before. So the narrative meanders from parent to past and vice versa. The stay in her father house gives Sarita chance to review her relationship with the husband, her dead mother, dead brother Dhruva and children, Renu and Abhi through which she remains uncharged till the date she has a better understanding of herself and others. This gives her the courage to confront reality. The dark no longer holds any terror to her.

The novel is remarkable for its exploration of the inner landscape, presented through study of male psychology by a woman, which in turn becomes an expositor of the female psyche too. Saru is highly self-willed and her problems ensure because of her octsized ego and innate love for power over others. She defies traditional codes at the slightest threat to her importance as that is what she missed and craved for in
her mother house. As a child, Saru had seen the predicament of the grandmother separated from her husband and considered “an unwanted burden” by her own people. Even in childhood Saru had realized that economic independence alone could be insurance against subordination or suppression from then every move in life is towards the realization of that goal of economic independence. The Simple need to be independent eventually becomes as demand of the inflated ego and takes shape as the love for power over others. When Saru wins Manu’s love she sees it as her victory over the glamorous Padminies.

The dream of total submission to a superior, superhuman male, working with him, for him and bring o subordinate is only a transcendent stage in the emotional growth of Saru’s personality. “There was no ‘I’ then, not as yet, craving for recognitions, satisfaction. The craving, which when it came, was always accompanied by a feeling of guilty if the ‘I’ dared to over reach a male as if I was doing something that took away shreds of my femininity”15. But later the disparity of achievement between Saru and Manu leaves him thoroughly insecure and Saru is happily aware of the fact:

..... when we walked out of our room, there were node and smiles, murmured greetings and namsters. But they were all for me, only for me There was nothing for him. He was almost totally ignored .... And so the esteem with which I was surrounded made me inches latter, made him inches shorter He had been the young man and I his bride. But now I was the lady doctor and he was my husband. A+b they told us in mathematics is equal to b+a. b+a. It become a monstrously unbalanced equation, unequal impossible (36-37).
Saru marries him only when she meets him as an equal "movie actor one time on top" but how clinging to monthly paid job. Her admiration of the remembered talents of Manu gives him the necessary confidence and his unreserved response in turn pleases her ego. The Life that they being together eventually becomes a power race of two egoistic people in which she overtakes him effortlessly. It does not take long for her to realize that there is no respect for him wanes when she recognizes him to be a failure. The carrier becomes an indispensable crutch for Saru as it gives her so much importance and power over the others.

Manu is no ordinary male chauvinist he has absolutely, no reservations about treating his wife as an equal and as a person. But when her success beings to highlight his failure he degenerates. In her attitude we find not just an itching for domination but a total ignoring of Manu. In her self-centered march to progress she nullifies Manu’s existence.

There are three incidents frequently evoked in Saru’s introspection in a fragmentary fashion in the first three sections of the novel. The narrative shifts from first person to third person and meanders between the present and the past. The three incidents regulate and even control saris happiness. The crucial lines connected with them are raised in the very first part. But they are left incomplete and suspense is maintained with brief, incomplete flashbacks in the rest two parts. They run subterraneously and undulate now and then.
The first incident in Saru’s interview for a special issue on career women brought out by a woman’s magazine. The interviewer’s casual query part forth to Manu. “How does it feel when your wife earns not only the butter but host of the bread as well?” (182) under mines Manu’s confidence totally. His sense of insecurity starts with the explosion in the near by factory. The lover in him dies when the neighbours wake up to the fact that Saru is no ordinary house wife but an important doctor. But it reaches the point of culmination with the interviewer’s query and a friend suggesting that a holiday tour could be possible if one had a doctor wife.

Unable to come to terms with the fact that he is a failure and his wife a remarkable success in life. Manu lets his wounded male pride manifest itself in the form of sexual sadism. Bed is the only place where he can assert his animal power over her. Manu becomes a mean, loath some fellow when he basks in her glory by day and ill treats her at night. Married to a practising neuro-pathologist, Shashi Deshpande presumably has sufficient knowledge of the neurotic world of Manu. But she shows remarkable restraint in the depiction of these scenes and spares readers the clinical details.

Saru’s career is exactly Manu’s problem. But he shudder at the suggestion of her giving up the job and tries mediocre licks of cajoling her by offering to take her out for a none. He
cannot dream of going back to the shabby middle class way of
life. So he lets pass her relationship with Boozie with half shut
eyes. When Saru is at her father’s house, he writes casual
letters as if marriage had given him “life long right to affection
love and respect”.

Saru’s gradual change in attitude towards Manu and
their marriage corresponds with her change in attitude
towards sex. She finds “the aggressive, virile mascunity” a
mere faceable and the recently gown beard a mask to hide, to
add something to assert the thing he lacked. This is indicative
of the change in her perspective. Now the world around her
and her place in it have become so significant that his place in
her life becomes relatively unimportant.

Saru loved Manu and she was quite unnerved at the
thought of marriage. It was perhaps the fear of sex, the
unknown, commitment, responsibilities or loss or freedom.
But the reality proved different. Despite the unclean
atmosphere of their small room, sex seemed a clean act. As an
adolescent, sex was a shame then and embarrassment, then a
matter of pride and after marriage a source of enjoyment:

After the first moment of apprehension ........... a purely
physical response, or lack of it, rather............. there was never
any with holding in me. I become in an instant a physically
aroused women, with an infinite capacity for loving and giving,
with a passionate desire to be absorbed by the man I loved. All
the clichés, I discovered were true, kisses were soft and
unbearably sweet, embraces hard and passionate, hands caressing and tender, and loving as well as being loved was an intense joy. It was as if little nerve ends of pleasure had sprung all over my body (34-35).

So Saru’s later withdrawal cannot be interpreted as frigidity as some critics do. She feels utterly humiliated at the thought of being used and reduced to “a dark, damp smelly hole.” She sees sex as a dirty work and the experience a terror an inhuman insult to her personality. Though sex is often said to be a uniting force, in Saru’s case it acts as the instrument of revenge and therefore of estrangement with her responsibilities increasing outside of home, she recoils from Manu’s love making and he takes her rejection of sex as rejection of himself. The degree of fact and of fantasy of the experience in the hands of Manu is left to the reader to consider. The crux of the dubious Problem that falls between reality and unreality is presented as a traumatic, dream like experience in the preface. The whole section is italicized except “him”. The novelist grants the hurting “him” no human dignity and Saru’s gradual recognition of the predator proceeds in this plane; hands lips and teeth – body-stranger-protean monster-my husband.

Saru’s love for power can be identified with her relationship with every character in the novel with the natural love for power, she views her mother as a rival in the game of power. To mother had always appeared an authority figure
and posed a threat to her individuality and self-will. The power that the mother exudes repels her. The archetypal terrible Mother sees Saru only as a burden to be eased, a problem to be solved a responsibility to be dispensed with and a person who has no right to any choice in life. The hatred is deep rooted. Referring to her puberty Saru says: “A king of shame that engulfed me, making me want to rage, to scream against the fact that put me in the same class as my mother......... If you're a woman, I don't want to be one” (55). Saru’s self esteem is pretty low and is induced by her mother and Saru’s over interpretation of that. In her mother’s presence Saru feels that she was being observed, analyzed, weighed up for ultimate criticism and possibly for ultimate rejection. So Saru feels an excessive need to prove herself to the family. But she carries this childhood pressure to prove her worth into adulthood. Saru marrying Manu and her claims to have thereby severed the umbilical cord is an act of defiance proving her strength, power and self-reliance. The mother’s Parthian shot- “I know all these ‘Love Marriages’ its love for a few days, them quarrels all the time. Don’t come crying to us them” (62) – is a sure prediction of Saru’s future and failure. Later Saru’s hurt ego would not admit her miscalculations and defeat. Thought she lies to learn from the mother what not to be, she ends up as an educated version of the mother herself.

The society presented in The Dark Holds No Terrors is certainly one going through transitions where at least
economically independent woman could have choices in life. Saru has tremendous respect for the dignified, self-reliant teacher friend Nalu, who despises all compromises and remains single to lead a meaningful life of convictions. Even among men there is a Padmaker Rao who complains that his wife on him, does not relate to him on equal terms but waits on him and could talk of only middle class concerns like economizing the family budget thought she does not need to. Saru’s vehement advocacy of women’s subordinate position while rehearsing her speech for the women’s college and her inability to rend the same speech there, bring out her strong reaction against such a traditional stand and her inability to adhere to that way of life.

Listen, girls........whatever you do, won’t be happy, not really. Until you get married and have Children. That’s what they tell us. And we have to believe them because no one has provide it wrong till now. But if you want to be happily married, these one things you have to remember. Have you girls seen an old fashioned couple walking together? Have you noticed that the Wife must always be a few feet behind her husband? That’s important, very important, because it’s symbolic of the truth. A wife must always be a few feet behind her husband if her’s An M.A. you should be a B.A. If her’s 5’4” tall you should not be more earn more then 5’3”. That’s the only rule to follow if you want a happy marriage. Don’t ever try to reveres the doctor-nurse, executive secretary, principal teacher role. It can be traumatic, disastrous. And I, assure you, it isn’t worth it. He’ll suffer, you’ll suffer and so will the children. Women’s magazines will tell you that a marriage should be an equal partnership. That’s nonsense. Rubbish. No partnership can even be equal. It will always be unequal, but take care that its unequal in favour, god help you, both of you. And so you must pretend that you’re not as smart as you really, are not as rational as you are, and not as strong either.
She acknowledges this as the way of the world perhaps leading to domestic bliss in the traditional sense of the term, but she would take the road less travelled by. Despite the angry it causes and the difficulties she has to steer through, there could be no turning back.

The modern educated young women’s struggle against the age old slavery, suffering and suppression on is a welcome development. But this striving of the modern women to be free and self-reliant is after debilitated by her timidity and diffidence. Indu of Roots and shadows strives to seek a new environment where nobody, especially people like Akka, can exercise their wills on her. She marries Jayant, a man of different caste but of her own choice and leaves her parental home. In the very first meeting with Jayant, she swept off her feet. He gives her a feeling of solidity and certainty. She hopes that her marriage would enable her to realize the need “to belong” to be “wanted”, ‘needed’ and ‘Loved’ and as she desired, the most primary thing for her is to own the world. But she painfully realizes that she has walked into just another trap. She does not need the warning of Akka, who has good opinion of intercaste marriages, “Such marriages never work. Different castes, different languages............its all right
for a while. Then they realize......." (68) Indu leaves her ancestral house and enters into another to be independent and complete but very soon, she realizes the fruits of her decision. In the worlds of Indu: “Jayant and I.....I wish I would say we have achieved complete happiness. But I cannot fantasies. I think of the cries that had filled my earlier ...... I want to be loved, I want to be happy. The cries are now stilled (13). She feels that she had been deceived and made to hide her feelings ‘as if they were bits of garbage” (38). Her marriage with Jayant suppresses her feminity and her human demands. She is physically and spiritually dissatisfied with her husband who takes her for granted and expects her “to submit”. Her love towards Jayant makes Indu to accept what he wants and does. Her love marriage degenerates into a mere psychological affair and makes her feel that she has abused her body’s Sanctity. She realizes that her marriage with Jayant has denied her of the fullness of experience and therefore satisfaction or happiness. The Paradox of the situation is that Indu is not completely happy with Jayant, but at the same time, she cannot live without him Indu Speaks about her own incompleteness when she says:

This is may real sorrow. That I can never be complete in myself. until I had met Jayant I had not known it ...............that there, was some where outside me, a part of me without which I reminded incomplete. Then I met Jayant.................And lost the ability to be alone (31).
After her marriage with Jayant Indu attends to all the things apparently intended to please him. She says:

When I look in the mirror, I think of Jayant. When I dress I think of Jayant. When I undress, I think of him.........Always what he wants. What he would like. What would please him. And I can't blame him. It's not he who has pressurized me into this. It's the way want it to be (46).

Being tied in marriage with Jayant, Indu comes to realize that it is because of him that her life is meaningful and she wonders why she is trying to please him as time, “Have I become fluid, with no shape, no form of my own : (49). She has never sworn never to conform to the concept of the ideal woman as represented by her aunts and other traditional-oriented female relatives—the one who does not have an independent identity to her husband’s. But Indu realizes that with her marriage to Jayant, she has in fact conformed to notion of the ideal woman. The conventional rituals performed by her orthodox female relatives in order to secure safety and long life for their husbands are ridiculed by Indu. Accordingly, she is determined never to perform such self-effacing rituals that justify her existence only in relation with a man. But her introspective assessment of her marriage makes her realize that she is in reality not very different from very conventional relatives and that by shaping herself to suit her husband’s model of a wife, she is unconsciously falling in line with the traditional women performing self-effacing rituals, Indu, who considers herself independent and intelligent, who is proud of
her logical and rational thinking who sets out to reform Indian womanhood has become after her marriage, one of those arch type submissive Indian women whose identity is only an extension of her husbands. Perhaps marriage has taught her things like deception and pretentious show. Her desire to assert herself has driven her from affection to hypocrisy on the other hand Jayant, inspite of his seemingly western style of life, behaves on different from and average Indian male. Her marriage makes her feel that there was something shameful in total commitment.

It shocks him find passion in a woman it puts him off. When I'm like that, he turns away from me I've learnt m lesson now. And so I pretend. I'm passive. And unresponsive.

Consequently, Indu learns to repress her sexual desire to maintaining the status in her marriage. While Jayant effectively desexualizes Indu is refusing to accept her sexual confusion. A woman who loves her husband to much. Too passionately. And is ashamed of it. (83) Indu realizes that her overwhelming love for Jayant is disturbing and her total self surrender to him is frightening. She fears that she is turning into an “ideal” Indian wife only obeying her husbands wishes and fancies. At one stage she even contemplates leaving her husband, not because she doesn’t live him but because she loves him “too much” and is ashamed of her love and her total dependence on her husband. It makes her feel like an anachronism. She hopes she can be her whole self again by
being away from him and living by herself. She says: “Sometimes I wonder if I will leave him one day and live by myself. The only way in which I can be myself, my whole self again” (88-89). But she hangs on to her marriage and beneath her passive and unquestioning submission lies her willingness to acknowledge her love marriage as failure.

Indu recollects that she has surrendered herself to Jayant step by step, not mainly for love but to avoid conflict and that she has clung tendciously to Jayant, to her marriage, not for love alone, but because she is afraid of failure and moreover, she wants to show to the world and her family that she is a success. She resorts to deception by putting up a façade of happy married life which, as she feels, has taken its toll on her personality. She looks upon marriage as a system which makes one so dependent. She considers love to be a big fraud, a hoax, a trap—a process of making one humble and dependent. To her, “Sexual Instinct”, “Maternal Instinct”, “Self love”, “Self Interest” appear rational and meaningful. Among the many compromises that she has made in order to keep up the semblance of a happy marriage, the most distressing one is that she has given up, her ambition of being a writer, on her own. Furthers as a creative writer and work in a magazine, she loses her enthusiasm to write on being forced by the editor to suppress facts and present a glossy picture to the readers. Angered by the editor’s attitude, she is even more hurt when
her husband, instead of supporting her, asks her to compromise and commands her not to resign her job. He says:

'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'. (17)

In contrast to Indu, Mini, Indu's cousin at her ancestral home, prefers to adopt the traditional life style. She seeks refuge in the traditional ways of life, for there is no other way out for her. When Indu asks her about her choice of marrying, Mini's passive acceptance shocks her. Mini says: 'what choice do I have, Indu? ....... of course I am marrying him because there's nothing else you can do'. (125). Marriage, in the traditional Indian society, only means fear, agony and frustration on the girl's side. Indu learns from Mini that nothing could endure except compromise and that she has to learn to be content with her lot. In the words of Mini:

Any man, Indu? Yes, any man. Any man who says yes. You don't know what it has been like. Watching Kaka and Hemant and even Madhav-Kaka running around after eligible men............ if the Horoscopes matched, there was the meeting to be arranged. And all those people coming and asking all kinds of questions........... and they would say, "she's not modern enough"..........."she's too dark, or something...........and I feeling as if I had committed a great crime by being born a girl ........I am tired Indu. I don't care what kind of man he is. Once we are married, and he becomes my husband, none of his flaws will matter (126).

While staying at her ancestral house, Indu reviews the things of the past. She learnt that Akka's life is a stunning example of how a woman has been subjected to frustration.
and disappointment. As Atya narrates Akka’s silenced streaks to Indu, she realizes that she has not really made good effort to understand and analyze Akka and her behaviour. She understands how, in the name of child marriages, women like Akka were treated inhumanly and beastly.

Words like love have got us meaning to her. In other words, to her there is no such thing as love in real life though that exists in books and movies. When Naren asks her what the truth about live is, she answers

The Sexual instinct ...........that’s true. The maternal instinct....... that’s true too. Self interest, self love............. they’re the basic truths. You remember Devdas ? I saw it with some friends they sobbed when he died for love. But I could have puked. A grown man moaning and crying for love ! God ! how disgusting ! (158).

Young modern women like Indu are sandwiched between tradition and modernity. Those who lived behind the connection and take the initiative to join modernity are entangled as Maria Mies observes:

The non-conforming conduct of the women is not the consequence of an external necessity but of changed consciousness. They are not satisfied with the rhetoric of equality between man and women, but want to see that the right to an individual life and the right to development of their individual capabilities are realized in their own lives (Mies : 29)

After Naren’s death, Indu discovers thought old uncle that beneath the veneer of his care-a-damn attitude. Naren was a person with strong feelings, expectations, and disappointments and that he preferred disappointment and
suffering to negation of feelings. She also learns from the old uncle that one need not be ashamed of their attachments, as nobody can escape from them and that attachments and love are the law of life. He reminds her that the world is made up of independent parts, therefore depending on others is natural and need not be regretted. Old uncle also makes her realize that freedom and fulfillment can be achieved by those who have the right perception of life and abide by certain rules of life. There have to be some rules so that life can have both dignity and grace. One can always find measures of freedom within these rules. This knowledge gives Indu a new perception of life. She understands the true meaning of freedom and fulfillment, from marriage to her appears to be only a means to procreate.

However, Deshpande’s female characters have a realistic and mature approach towards the problems of law, marriage and sex. Sarita, Jaya and Indu are troubled and feel chained by the social norms which kind them to traditional attitudes and expectations having in such conditions, they try to advice an autonomy within that framework. Marriage for them is only a bond of security from which they can not escape and never attempt to challenge the social institution of marriage. Marriage and marital relationships form an important segment of the lives of these protagonists. Deshpande’s protagonists have extra marital attractions which are not always platonic, but they view it objectively as other experience and do not
suffer from guilt complex on account of it. Though these attractions only for short period and never deeply affect their marriage. The social framework of Deshpande's novels reveal two types of tendencies the centripetal and the centrifugal. The sense of revolt due to mechanical life, unmatched marriage or rough ways of the husband compel women to come out to express their anguish. Ultimately Deshpande creates a centripetal spirit of compromise which can be seen in the life of women characters. They feel that they are the bridge between two generations of their martial relationships is as powerful as their expectations to get autonomy.
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7. Ibid


15. Ibid., P. 131


20. Ibid., P. 132


22. Mies, Maria Indian women and patriarchy : Conflicts and Dilemmas of Students and Working Women, New Delhi : concept 1980, p. 29.