

Chapter - II

DEMONIC HUMAN WORLD

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“Here is no water, but only rock/ Rock and no water and the sandy road”¹

The modern man who is inclined towards material advances of the world is utmost crestfallen because he is preoccupied by desires, somatic wellbeing, fleshly pleasure and commercial success. He is also uneasy because of his urge to follow his material self to secure his future which is said to be almost uncertain. Human soul is ruled by wish of passing away since humans have censored themselves from faith in Divinity, self-sacrificing values and religion. The present world is progressing in the field of technology that not only comforts the human lives but also condenses the space besides its assistance. Now the whole realm is globalized and there is cohesion in diversity-- the unity in all nations of the world is worried towards the loss of human values; values which remained the safety device of humans, which distinguish them from animals and demons.

The national spirit of India whose roots are connected with its dynamic history of cultural values seems to be stumbled by the western influences over the collective condition of nation at large. In India, social values and ethics is the legacy of its dynamic tradition which has passed through generation to generation. But the buzz of western culture which is almost spreading across the entire world with a tremendous speed whose stimulus seems to be the genuine threat to our inheritance which believes in high moral values has shaken Indian culture largely. The protection of this legacy of this high morality is the concern for many of us. Though, a

change in social changing aspects is quite instinctive and necessary but to protect its further mutilation is obligatory.

Indian culture is known for its cordiality in domestic relationships, communal welfare, religiosity, all-inclusiveness, and regional loyalty coinciding by western culture. Industrial development starts with the 19th century which vibrated the very basis of Indian civilization and ethos. No doubt the great aim of industrialized improvement is to provide additional comfort to human life and partly this is vital for national well-being and social stability but equally it has side-effects too.

The contemporary industrial society is certainly diverse from pre-industrial society. The citizens of an industrialized community have different way of thinking, living and values. The ultimate target of their efforts is to satisfy their material self by whatever means they could achieve it. In such a case it urges them to lust for materialism and result is spiritual sterility on their part. It is because of the modernization, industrialization and rapid development in technology that a lot of people are migrating from village to city. The village culture which is identified for its common bloodiness, intimate relationship and communal behavior is now being superseded by urban culture that is characterized by unsociable bloodiness, unfamiliar relation and competitive behavior. In such case people have no ties with particular place or community; they are rather unresponsive and are emotionally out-of-the-way.

The modern man survives internally tensed with uncertainty because of all pervasive loneliness about them. All the bizarre events in their life

are, somehow, responsible for corruption and moral degradation. We are in the race of technological development eager to be familiar with the rest of the world and more inclined to know the west. The overview of English in India is inspiring and interpreting the western conducts of life. The Indian culture which is composite of the several cultures puts its fame more on religion than any other thing: The purpose of religion is to control human life in a great magnitude. It finds place in every Indian household but without getting proper meaning of it. With the wider exchange of knowledge and information people start to reconsider about their relationship with God, with nature, with society and with other humans of the world. In this sense they are with their fractured cultural, moral and religious psyche struggling hard to survive happily in this world. The considerable change in human behavior is stress on individuality, which lied deep in human is now on surface.

Shashi Deshpande in her novels exhibits a lively shifting scenario of contemporary Indian society. All her novels are the stories of human: an individual who chooses his/ her path of life and does misfortune and resolves in his/her own way. They all are stories of chaotic human emotions of each and every mortal. In every single of her novels, different characters present frequent characteristics of life which are demonic to single one in one way or other and at the end by killing the demons of their lives they acquire peace.

Moving on

In her thought provoking novel, *Moving on* Deshpande presents her philosophical vision of life. Besides the numerous characters in the novel, the two prominent characters in which protagonist Manjari Aahuja and her father Badrinarayan unveil Deshpande's clear vision of life. Manjari, often addressed Jiji in the novel, challenges many ills in her life and puts up multitude issues. She is a representative of the modern world where human being is slave to his/her self-will and faces the final consequences. In the novel, we have the part 'Baba's diary' to unlock the accuracy of life by the Badrinarayan's intellection. Thoughts presented in the diary show the dilemma and suffering of progressive man. Here, Deshpande depicts the life of 20th century man and woman by uncovering the human's valued desire for the existence and urge for survival while ignoring the religious, spiritual and moral values in the process of moving on as its title suggests. It is not the story of Manjari and several other characters but the story of thousands of us lodging in this changing scenario whose soul is disillusioned at a time when in pursuit of happiness, they lost eternal peace of mind. Deshpande, here, artistically portrays the day to day activities of humans and demonstrates how mechanized life of humans has affected them.

In her realistic portrayal of human's life Deshpande puts her characters in the grip of self-will while leaving behind the Indian traditional, religious and moral values. Along with Manjari, the protagonist, there are several characters that do what they instinctually feel to do so and face the catastrophes in their lives. Manjari Aahuja in the novel

is governed by her voracious will, eager to satisfy at all costs. It is her self-will of marrying Shyam, a cinematographer which brings final catastrophe in their life. Her will is opposed by her mother Vasu to save their life from destruction. There is a tug of war between the two egos and Manjari's insatiable will conquers while the baba Badrinarayan, a rationalist who believes in human body and its passion adheres with negligibility in this context.

It is sufficient on writer's part to show inner turmoil and disputes in house-hold where at a particular age children are rebel to their parents. Deshpande's serious concerns are to show parent- children relationship and other immoral relations mushrooming in Indian family and their different contours. Through this very core family lurks the world of demon: demon of ego penetrates in the relationships while keeping aside all the codes of conduct. In this concern Northrop Fry says:

The Demonic human world is a society held together by a kind of molecular tension of egos, a loyalty to the group or the leader which diminishes the individual, or, at best, contrasts his pleasure with his duty or honor. Such a society is an endless source of tragic dilemmas.²

Manjari gets married with Shyam but the conflict reaches its climax when they got the news of Malu's (Manjari's sister) pregnancy and revelation of the fact that the Shyam is the father of Malu's child. The news plays havoc on them. Mai (Vasu), with all her fiery elements, blames Manjari for bringing disaster in their life; for all those happenings with

which she has no concern. Their inner and outer world become arena where Manjari, objected to accusation, treachery, humiliation and all shame on her part is helpless and Malu blames Shyam for committing serious, moral crime rape with her. Manjari “*could not believe that he had forced himself on her.*”³ Mai proves Shyam a devil and he is restricted to visit their home. Within minutes, Manjari’s loving utopia torpedoed and enters in the dystopia. She is one of those thousand of women in India who grow up in life with the idea of marriage at the tender age as if it is a *Zion* for them but soon her all dreams, hopes, and wishes collapse. The pattern on which every human being wishes to tread is demolished in her mind. The idea of “*Baba- Mai-Malu-and-I was my world*” (Moving On- 41) is deconstructed in her mind. Mai whom she loves deeply and mere idea of Mai’s ignorance on her side scares her, she has to leave her:

I had a feeling Mai not seeing me, of not existing, for if Mai did not see me, I did not exist./ Mai angry was Mai speechless, a silence that was truly terrifying, an ignoring that was like thrown out of heaven. (Moving On-119-20)

And for Malu, Manjari was her ‘*Jiji sarkhi*’ and both were “*ampersand: a word Baba discovered.*”(Moving On-153). The love, intimacy and affection between the two soon turns into abhorrence, hate and dislike and end up in nothingness: “*I tried to speak her but she would not let me. ‘Go away’, she said to me ‘Go away’.*” (Moving on-320) In this context, “*the demonic erotic relation becomes a fierce destructive passion that works against loyalty or frustrates the one who possesses it*”.⁴

The very foundation of human relationship is the trust, respect, love and mutual understanding but man governed by will, lust and ego minimizes the very existence of these values. The relationship which stands on old Indian pattern loses its beauty when man becomes aware of his very existence and emphasizes on his need of survival. The religious approach which is the very basis of Indian culture and tradition is superseded by nihilistic approach. Now, man is abstained from fear of God and in this way he acquires freedom of doing anything which Deshpande visualizes through the climax of the novel.

Social fear is unfathomably buried inside Mai's mind and heart that she announces that the child would be that of Manjari and Shyam to save her social reputation. Manjari like a scapegoat sees, watches but having nothing to speak is completely broken and Malu's death and Shyam's suicide leave her in the nightmare world of isolation and instability. She is overpowered with the feeling of incompleteness, and her inner self is engulfed in such a grief that she forgets the existence of her own child Anand. But soon she rises from her stature and her torn and tattered self emerges into a new one bolting down all her grief, pain and desires. She accepts the harsh truth of life and passes on her track with her two children: Sachi and Anand. Her existential self is highly centered and she determines to manage her life alone. Through Manjari, Deshpande visualizes creeping vein of existentialism in Indian society. Manjari "*for being- itself*"⁵ makes choices and takes responsibility of her actions. She accumulates all her strength for the consequences of her choices and leaves her loving world hopelessly.

Along with Manjari there are several other characters who are governed by self-will like Badrinaryan's father, Gayatri and Sachi. Manjari's grandfather, a rational man, influenced by Gandhian philosophy, marries a harizan girl and disowned by his parents. He settles in Bombay but when his wife dies he marries second time, despite the presence of inauspicious Mangal in bride's horoscope which troubles his family. But Deshpande presents Badri's father a progressive man and a person of sound intellect who discards the prevailing evils in the society. Here, Deshpande casts her sight on the prevailing issues of casteism and superstitions which were deep buried in Indian's psyche. Badri's father, a progressive man, believes in the fact that man is solely responsible for his actions. He is a person of rational bent of mind and spiritualizes his knowledge and lives intellectual life. He seems a rebel by breaking away old tradition harmful to the one sector of the society. He enjoys the greater part of freedom and makes choices and lets his children live their life by their own will and ideals but not interfering in their affairs.

Gayatri is a woman who never crushes her potentiality. She has grown up in such an ambience that she enjoys greater part of freedom as a human being. Her womanhood never demolishes her wishes; she does whatever she wishes to do. This sense of freedom gives humans a sense of responsibility which she pays. Gayatri too leaves her study and marries RK. She is the persona of her kind. In the next generation Manjari too provides enough freedom to Sachi to move in accordance with her will. As Jitendra Kumar says:

*The act of self making is like a work of sculpture where man himself is material unhewn stone from which the form has to be released; consciousness is the chisel which he has to use against himself.*⁶

An individual takes responsibility of actions denying the existence of God but the single activity of a mortal not only affects one but to the surroundings also to a great extent. A single independent atom linked with other atoms change the direction of the society. Man's assertion on taking the responsibility of his action seems futile when it affects others' life in a great measure and brings dissatisfaction, helplessness and frustration. So, most of the characters are governed by their own free self- will which causes enormous pang in their lives:

An identity becomes active, positive and meaningful only to relation to others. The whole potential of who we are and what we are is realized only through our relationship with others. (Moving On-56)

Deshpande emphatically voices her concerns over the increasing forces of agnosticism and exhibits irreligious ambience in the modern world. As a writer she is well aware of the plight of a modern soul. We find corrosion of faith in God in her novels as it is rampant in this sinister world and we also find declining value of religion that emphasizes the life after death and the conception of hell and heaven, where people enter after death by judging by God on the basis of good and bad deeds done by them at earth are rejected by humans. In this concern her characters are governed

by their will and they find themselves the creator of their own destiny and disown the existence of God. As she pictures Badrinarayan as scientific progressive man dealing all things in the scientific manner, never believes in the idea of God and interference of chance throughout his life. He considers birth as only a phenomenon so is the death. But at the end of his life, he travels his life's journey through peeping into past and contemplating the happenings he seems befuddled. He finds the presence of an omniscient spirit about them, a life force interfering in their actions and snatching their command from their life:

But I look back and see our plans were overturned, how nothing turned out as we'd expected it to, I have to rethink.

(Moving On-54)

Do our lives hinge on happenings we have no control over?(Moving On-50)

We are not passive spectators of our own lives, we are not mute witnesses to the events in it. Yet, some of it remains beyond our control. (Moving On-54)

The present scenario clearly puts up the illusory vision of Indian soul because affected by modern and western living ways of life and beliefs, a common Indian human psyche is befuddled. He neither completely disregards his own culture nor entirely accepts the modern ways of life. This shifting in man's attitude leads him in the state of utter desolation because he exists nowhere having no roots he is trapped in web of darkness- darkness of alienation, rootlessness and loneliness. Deshpande

lucidly paints the dreary and depressing state of human mind. Human in search of happiness pursues the desires and choices and finally reaches to the peak point of anxiety and fear. He also admits, “*Happiness was but occasional episode in the general drama of pain.*”⁷ The modern day society as V.K. Roy says:

*withdraws itself from the ways of God and bank upon the ‘grandeur’ of its mind and the glory of its action upon the schemes of human greatness, and the usefulness of science and technology with whose help it has tamed nature.*⁸

The world portrayed in Deshpande’s novels poses the threat to a woman’s existence when she is bound to live alone. It is evident from the reading of her novels that society plays duplex role in Indian’s life. As we know man is a social animal. The purpose of establishing a society is only for the convenience to every individual. All the norms are set up with this view in mind but it happens frightened when we find some ills in society. Actually it is not society that is conspiring against a human but some demons having evil seeds in them. The evil force in them is extremely powerful that they dehumanize themselves. Living alone Manjari is like a sheep in whose search there runs a wolf and somehow she has to escape. In all her encounters with worldly ills she not only alienates herself from her family but her appearance also:

What it is for a woman to live alone? I gave up wearing Sari because I didn’t want to look womanly. I cut my hair short like a man’s. I wore my most forbidding expression. But it was

of no use. They can smell it, yes, they can smell the women in you. No matter how you dress, whether you shave your head or hide behind a burkha, they come at you, wanting your body, touching you, drooling over you, sniffing at you. Like dogs. Like a dogs in heat. (Moving On-284)

As Mariannne Dekoven observes:

Public space, the traditionally masculine sphere, is still a new field for women, even though they now must traverse it, and finally can do so without being blown immediately to bits.⁹

In her portrayal of human lives, Deshpande's intension is to show the true picture of the defeated and desolate modern man. It is seen through Manjari in the novel. Her sojourn in family relationships is harassed and abstracted by her dear ones and on that ground life seems to her as waste land. All the rotten experiences which she encountered left her senseless and meaningless. The glimpse of treachery shatters her into enumerable pieces that she hardly feels composed in her moving on. All the time she is less inclined to talk about her past. She alienates Sanchi from her beginning by hiding the truth about her roots: the roots which once had destroyed Manjari's loving Utopia. Sanchi is always curious to know more and more about her father but she gathers only little information that her father is a cinematographer: *"I think of her as a child....wanting to know the 'why' and 'what' of everything, filling up perhaps, the huge empty space in her life with these useless bits of informations."* (Moving On-

309) This alienation brings the chaos between Manjari and Sanchi and they never feel an ease in their relationship. What they suffer is only loneliness.

Deshpande's vision illustrates her concerns over the pathetic condition of human soul which in clench of alienation is all alone having beautiful relationships around them. Deshpande's characters adopt the inanimate object in expressing their feelings which symbolizes the coarseness and dryness in human relationships in modern world. For Vasu, writing becomes the tool of self expression of those feelings and ideas which could not become true. By writing, she heads off all those factors which leave her inner self captured. In this way, she alienates herself from her real world. Vasu with her family and in the company of her in-laws feels alienated. She is always reluctant to visit their home but she fails. She is exhausted in paying relationship that as a human her inner self always craves for freedom, "*freedom to be by herself, to be on her own, freedom from our constant demands on her, from our claims, from the need to be 'aamchi Mai'.*" (Moving On-125)

The novel shows that the air of doom is in the garb of loneliness which each character suffers and Deshpande's efforts to present modern human's dilemma to cope with this plight through her characters. Badri, a non-clinical lecturer in the medical college broods over past in the hours of loneliness. In his life he seems quite satisfactory having belief in scientific theory but at the fatigue end of his life when he looks back he is regretful for some incompleteness. He observes, analyses and concludes that humans are incomplete in themselves and the continuity of life is only because of achieving the goal of completeness but they fail: "*The search is*

always doomed to failure. We are never complete, we will never be complete.” (Moving On-336) It projects the hopelessness of modern human race. As his vision alters he finds that this incompleteness can be acquired only with the mingling of absolute self “God” who is complete: *“To achieve this wholeness is the final stage of evolution, it is nirvana.”* (Moving On-336) In this way he restores his faith in God.

Man in continuation tries to achieve completeness in relationships and conspicuously thinks that his family would be with him in every difficulty but he is crushed when he finds himself alone amid all his misfortunes. Deshpande’s characters go through the journey of life and get experiences; they change with the course of time. She has a set of characters that are intellectuals and draw conclusions of their lives. They try to find solace and completeness in relationships but they fail and are left alone by her. Badri with some of his family members B.K. and R.K. dream to establish a utopia where they would enjoy their old age:

We had made our plans; we would live together in our old age, RK and Gayatri, BK and Kamala, Vasu and I. Our children would come and go, grandchildren would eventually be part of their visits, but otherwise, most of the time we would be there for one another. (Moving On-52)

The vision of the characters to live among family throughout life shatters when they face horrifying realities of life and life becomes curse to all of them of which they hardly get rid. Their wishes were demolished as BK and Kamala with their daughter Hemi are horribly dealing with all the

worse and never willing to accept Hemi's mental condition. After RK's death, Gayatri is alone and lives with her brother Badri, and after Vasu's death she was with Badri and when Gayatri dies, Badri finds no alternative to share his aloofness. Badrinarayan after Vasu's death lives with his tenant Abhishek at the fatigue end of his life. Majari too is all alone throughout her life. They are just helpless creatures to cope with this emptiness of their life and adopt different ways to come out of this.

The picture of modern man's predicament compels to think to readers that man is doing nothing in this world only killing his time by doing this or that. Baba in his hours of loneliness makes writing a tool of fighting with this situation. Gayatri too deeply involves in reading after RK's death; Vasu writes to reduce the boredom of her life; and what most strikes the attention is Jiji who takes long hours of ride in bus daily without any purpose only to fill the void of her life. Her gloomy speech is enough to make us realize the sorry picture of this human race:

I took to going on long bus rides.....Once a friendly conductor, seeing me doing this the third day in succession, asked me what I was doing, why I came all the way and went back. 'I'm passing the time, I told him and he accepted it, sensing that I was speaking the truth... (Moving On-61-62)

"Living alone is an art that one learns finally to appreciate. (Moving On-62)

What Shashi Deshpande projects in the theme is the tragic life of the characters because of excessive and uncontrolled passions which is demonic to them. Passions cause the endless source of grief. Man obsessed with passion commits immoral acts and violates the moral laws and brings ceaseless anguish for others. Humans have kindled in them the instinct which demands only satisfaction devoid of any contemplation. Passion on the side of Ratana of her husband is so imploring that she has no escape but to take refuge in Manjari's home. Badrinarayan gets pleasure in human body by discovering its mysteries, passions and knowledge and seeks perfection in it: "*For him the beauty of the human body had nothing to do with luscious curves of the female form*". (Moving On-23) His passions to his wife in love render her disappointed and distract to such an extent that she internally feels isolated with her husband and hides the signs of her illness which leads her in the lap of death.

Manjari satisfies her desires of body pandering in physical relationship with her tenant Raman which sends Raja in desolation. The sterile coupling between Manjari and Raman is the glimpse of rotten experiences developing in decaying Indian society to make a world of rubbish. Malu overwhelmed by passion commits sinful act indulging in sexual relationship with Shyam and bears its consequences. These women figures indicate that women are no longer remain the 'Object of Desire' in modern world.

Life leaves Shyam on an unending path of fear and hopelessness; and he finds himself unable to discover the new ways. He thrives for success and gets failure. Frustration creeps into his mind and his sexual

relationship with Malu and his betrayal on the side of Manjari burdened him deeply. His psyche could not develop to meet the calamity, henceforth, he commits suicide. Shyam is one of those thousands misguided men who due to their undisciplined self- will find themselves suffocated in the array of life and because of lack of faith in God have no choice except committing suicide. She presents the real picture of Indian society where lust and passion overpower the supreme feelings of human heart. It becomes *“difficult to discern a unifying pattern of values in the complex and complicated traditions of culture and civilization of the past as well as of the present”*.¹⁰

Love is the very foundation of human relationship eroding its beauty in Indian society too. Human heart no longer remains the abode of love, compassion, self- sacrifice, warmth, respect, endurance. Her characters lack the mutual understanding while spending a long span of life. Though Badrinarayan has a scientific vision but a passionate lover in him fails to him to understand his wife’s vision. He lacks fulfillment in love from her side and Vasu too with her notion of platonic love feels isolated from her husband. Her real self is always surrounded by boredom, loneliness and she suppresses her feelings and finds solace in writings.

Although, Manjari’s love towards Shyam is true but betrayal of Shyam leaves her deconstructed. Outwardly, she takes step but inwardly she is stagnant at a point that could not accept the marriage proposal of Raja. After Shyam’s death Jiji’s inner soul goes fathoms deep in the sea of grief and horror, she dooms in nothingness, never willing to move in her life on the normalcy: *“Worst of all was the feeling that I was set apart*

from humankind that I no longer belonged to the world of ordinary people, ordinary living". (Moving On-326) As the story advances, she grows up mentally but inwardly she stops living: "*The fear of disaster, of failure, of hurting each other*" (Moving On-341) is chilly iced in her mind that she never believes in marriage, which assures life happy ending like her Mai's stories:

Knowing what happened to our parents' marriages, knowing how both ours ended so abruptly, leaving us bereft, how can you believe in a happy ending? How can you believe in the 'happily ever after' myth, I want to ask Raja. (Moving On-342)

Manjari's soul is frightened with her past that she doesn't wish to go even on her mother's death. She says, "*I did not want to see her because to see her was like going back to scene of crime, the crime both of us had committed.*" (Moving On-323) Shahi Deshapande shows how the feeling of love turns into abhorrence, dislike, treachery, subjugation in moral values, lust, passions and becomes the endless source of tragic experiences. The torturous and tragic incidents in Manjari's life leave her neutral state of mind in which she is unable to live her life heartily even she feels discarded from the humankind.

The very vision of writer is to see life as a continuous process which runs, alters its shape always curious to move on even up to the last point of life 'death', that could not holds back it to take shape. Humans see this process to be continued after death through their children and then the

process proceeds forever. The hopes always make them alive. The idea of life after death haunts in the mind of every mortal it will always remain until the last flood devastates everything.

Small Remedies

Small Remedies a novel of Deshpande contains the stories of several characters. Some are one of us who wish to live their life on traditional way while others seek their different ways, choose a goal, strive hard to achieve and ultimately reach the point of anxiety. But the common thing in all of them is the difficulties, problems which they find in their ways. It seems it is not a pattern that affects someone's life but the happenings are destined to them that they don't easily accept. The novel is neither the story of Savitribai Indorkar: a doyen of Hindustani music nor the tale of Leela's adventures or Madhu's own pathetic one but of a human who comes at the earth with a lot of love of God to spread but forgets and lives miserable life. Like other novels of Deshpande this novel too is not crowded by many characters. Only with few, she aims to picture all of human actions. With just a handful of humans, she depicts the entire race of human beings.

India is a secular country where people of all religions wish to live their life peacefully. Although there is no God in their minds but a religion which they have moulded, stresses again and again. Nowadays, massacres are common of the sake of religion; each is trying hard to establish each one's religion, each one is eager to overcome the other one. But no one

does contemplation to achieve God in a true sense. *Small Remedies* is a kind of novel which brings forth such issues which need to be brought out.

Madhu, the agonist of the novel reaches in Bhavanipur to write a biography of Savitribai Indorker with whom she is acquainted from the very childhood. As the narrative advances the clear picture of Bai's life for the obsession of music is visualized. She inherits the gift of music from her mother. Bai has an inborn zeal for music but it is very hard for a woman to carry on such enthusiasm and devotion for music in a traditional bound high caste Hindu family. The situation is worse when someone is daughter-in-law in the family. It is her father-in-law who supports her to start her journey of music. Bai was one of those women for whom it is impossible to suppress her talent, her will. She makes choices in her own way leaving behind her family including an infant of her.

Among all Deshpande's characters Bai is one who devotes her life to give meaning to her existence, for creating a space in the universe she breaks the old Indian social code of living. She adopts the modern way of life and the decisions she makes in her journey show the hollowness of modern soul. Her rejection to live amid the relationships and her will to be free from all the responsibilities is a symbol of burdened soul that is crushed through the centuries and evolves new dimensions. In this new horizon the way Bai plays her role is much against socialization. She is a perfect existentialist.

Her cherished desire of being a great singer sends her in a state of loneliness throughout her life but she seems not to express any regret over

her actions, even not for the negligence of her own daughter Munni from Ghulam Saab with whom she had illegitimate relationship. Abandoned her family (in-laws) she lives with Ghulam Saab but she never marries him. She breaks away all old traditions which create hindrances in her way. In her journey of being existed in the world by adopting modern vision Bai, who wants to become a great singer, deceives not only her father-in-law who appoints a table player for her but that table player named Ghulam Saab too who works hard establishing her as a singer in the society.

She seems cruel to her children- both legitimate and illegitimate by abandoning them and presents fragmented and altered picture of Indian mother. The irony is implicit in her behavior when she becomes a rebel to Indian sensibility of breaking the social law of being a singer and shows great strength, courage but after acquiring all the things for which she once craved, she can't dare to disclose the names behind her success.

Crossing the threshold of norms and traditions she never cares but now seems more concerned about her reputation at the harsh end of her life. Bai is one of those humans who care little about society, traditions, values and she is devoid of human emotions. Now suspicion, anger, loneliness and dependency are the part of the last period of her life. She presents the plight of modern human soul that remains slave of will. David Diaches remarks, "*Human relationships themselves are grounded in no faith, buoyed up by no hope and guided by no charity.*"¹¹ Bai's character is a sort of characters, depicted by Deshpande who identifies herself with the

external objects of her surrounding by symbolizing an identical internal and external hell.

Different sort of characters are picturised by Deshpande that imparts a chance to understand clear vision of the writer. The character of Leela is enough to demonstrate the true picture of Indian woman who is struggling hard to make balance in the society. Leela's presence in the novel is a figment of memories deep residing in the mind of Madhu and others. Leela as a communist worker works for uplifting the condition of factory workers of Bombay, railway workers and her involvements in the participation of the 'Quit India Movement' prove her as an extra ordinary woman who has much courage to face the odds of life.

Soft-hearted Leela dedicates her life to the down trodden section of the society and goes to jail several times but acquires nothing. Achievements she made in her life are only getting popularity in all over India by her genuine works which lead her life in a perfect solace. For Leela a hindu widow, Joe a Christian waits for getting married about thirty years of his life despite the disapproval of his daughter Paula he marries her. She bears the hatred of Paula. It is Leela's well-developed psyche who purposelessly keeps aloof her family from her social life. She faces numerous ills threats, fear, fight, hatred, opposition as a communist worker.

An analysis of the two characters makes distinction between Leela and Savitribai Indorkar. The lives they lived seem extra-ordinary but the way they both deal with the difficulties and shape their life is considerable

to contemplate. Joe's love towards Leela is adoring and strong that there is no barriers in their marriage even the religion. The fact of different religions creates no hindrances in their way of getting marriage but Bai, being a high caste Hindu is never willing to marry Ghulam Saab- a muslim tabla player. She not only deceives Ghulam Saab but her father in law too who understands her music talent and keeps a music teacher for her by eloping with him. With their ardent love Leela and Joe create an atmosphere of love in which not only their children enjoy their life but Madhu, a niece of Leela starts her life who comes to live with them after the death of her father. But the decisions Bai makes in her way never leave her in such an ambience in which Leela's life blossoms.

The two child characters Munni and Madhu project the children psyche. As a human being, we all acquire different patterns, different circumstances and achieve different perspectives. Bai's love affairs with Ghulam saab and other men in her life leave her daughter Munni in fractured, depressed and desolated psyche who always shows her keen interest in observing meaningless relationships and salacious information in the society. She says, *"This one's sister ran off with a boy...Do I know that they it- Yes, it even before they were married."*¹² Munni's observations give readers a chance to see the pathetic condition of a child.

Munni's hatred towards Ghulam Saab is visible in many speeches of her when she creates false stories of his cruelty (of kidnapping, of starvation, of being tied up and beaten) towards her: *"Because if my father comes here, he will kill my mother."/ "You don't know anything. He is different outside the house. When there are people around he pretends. But*

at home....” (Small Remedies-64-65) Madhu, being a motherless child is looked after by his father perceives different idea about life. She was completely unaware of the world which Munni had shown her. Madhu’s psyche is developed in such positivity that she could not believe that Ghulam Saab is a cruel man, scolding, beating Munni. She thinks, “*Yes, a gentle, kind man. But Munni says he’s cruel.*” (Small Remedies-64)

Madhu is very ignorant about family. Her life involves two men: her father and Babu. The similarity between Madhu and Munni is that both are out of the family pattern. One’s mother dies and other one has artist mother. Somehow, their lives were devoid of normalcy which a child expects and both go on their way-Munni, adopting the name of Shailja Joshi, a middle class house wife much different of her elite class mother and Madhu, who does not have any idea about mother, after marriage enters into a different world of familial relationships.

Shashi Deshpande is sarcastic in presenting the need of rituals in Indian life and shows how human has modified the very meaning of each religious aspect in his life. To show Indian sensibility, Deshpande sketches the clear portraits of Indians who have the value of rituals only for getting pleasure and to avoid the demon of sorrow. Almost all the protagonists of Deshpande need the value of orientation while paying relationships. It is observed that Bai is completely unconcerned about her children but Madhu on the other hand highly attached with her son. Bai has no value of relationships, for her only pursuit of goal is the need of survival which she fulfils but for Madhu her life revolves about her son.

Madhu is very ignorant about the rituals, festivals and ceremonies from the beginning of her life. But after getting married with Som, she lives them by heart and the birth of Adit leads her to have faith in not only in rituals but all superstitions which are deep laid in the life of an Indian. Like an Indian house wife she is so much attached with her son that she forgets everything around her, even she is so obsessed that she does not believe anyone to take care of her son; she can't leave him alone for a while if she has to go anywhere she worries too much about him. She is highly concerned about his future:

Motherhood absorbs all of me, I've nothing left for anyone, for anything... But as far as I'm concerned, there's only Adit and me in this new world I've entered. The others are mere shadows. (Small Remedies-146)

While analyzing Madhu's character it is found that in her attachment with her son she is in illusion. Her travels lead her in the plight of troubled soul. She faces many ills and problems because of her unending concerns for her son and evil forces in the society. Madhu is one of those mothers who diminish their own self to take care of their children and after them nothing remain: "*A child's birth is a rebirth for a woman*". (Small Remedies-88) with this rebirth she ensconced with the great fear to protect her child from an evil eye:

But happiness is enclosed in a glass case, so fragile that it seems it can shatter at touch of the fears that surround it. The

baby is so small, so frail, so vulnerable- how can I, how will it keep it safe? (Small Remedies-89)

She gets a book named ‘Small Remedies’ from her friend which is full of tips of bringing up a child and she considers it a Bible:

Motherless, knowing nothing about babies and mothering, unwilling nonetheless to entrust my baby to anyone else, I turn to the book with relief, I clutch at it as if it’s a life-jacket. It becomes my Bible. (Small Remedies-90)

Her motherhood is the glimpse of a mother’s picture in Indian society where the needs and demands of children define the mother’s existence. Her mother dies when she was an infant so she didn’t get mother’s love, she wishes to give whole to her son and never regrets for leaving everything for him. She never gives up a single moment to enjoy his activities. In her process of motherhood, she needs nothing to ask God, *“Mother love is one of the great wonders of this world, we tell one another. (Small Remedies-184)*

As soon as Adit grows up, his dependency on his mother becomes irrelevant. He develops and creates his own circle and enters into a new world where he finds his school friends, teachers, cousins and neighbors. Madhu lets them enter in his world and shares him with others. But Adit’s inner self develops with his age and he is reluctant to be with his mother: *“Then things change, he becomes evasive.” (Small Remedies-186)* Madhu’s enquiries in every matter create differences between the two. It is

typical for Madhu to understand his own child as a human being. She is so absorbed in her motherhood that she forgets the natural process of life.

As a human being, Adit develops his own vision which is not easily digested by Madhu whose existence is already invisible as a human. She wants only her son for her: *“All children are like that, Madhu, Som consoles me.”*(Small Remedies-187) But Madhu’s self is adamant to ignore other things. There is a clash between the two selves. Life seems hell to them. To save his self from his mother’s clutches Adit ignores her, often irresponsible, and uses the language which he often uses with strangers. She doubts that he is hiding some aspects of his life but after his death she confronts the bitter truth- he was hiding his own self from his mother: *“Adit had had nothing to hide. It was his own self he had been guarding from me, his own self he had been protecting from my possessive, grasping hands.”* (Small Remedies-188)

A deep insight into her novels shows that her novels are deep rooted in materialism which causes enormous pangs in characters’ life. The attachment with worldly matters leads humans towards spiritual sterility and the lack of spirituality in the humans does not let them live peaceful life. They forget the existence of God; fear of death always hovers them. This is the human nature to crave for something which he doesn’t possess but once it is achieved, fear of loss darkens the ambience. The fear of loss emanates in Madhu from her son’s birth which was deep buried in her heart. Madhu never saw her mother and as a growing up girl, Madhu loses her father too. After her father’s death she had Joe and Leela to take care of her and in coming out of all odds of life, they helped her. She does not

want to let her son travel on the path on which she has trodden this is the reason that she is in search of someone who takes care of her child if they both die. In this way she tries to be the creator of her son's destiny but God has His own plan for every creature and here, too, it happens.

When she learns to accept the growing self of Adit, unfortunately, he dies in a bomb blast. His death, which she had never imagined, devastates her thoroughly. The shock is invulnerable and it seems impossible for her to bear it. She goes everywhere, searches him for months and hopes for his return but all in vain. She hardly accepts the fact of his death and quite alone she seems to face the calamity because of her differences with her husband. Like other heroines of Deshpande, Madhu too escapes from the reality and finally it is Bai's biography offered to her to write for which she comes Bhavanipur , stays with Lata and Hari and finds solace. Madhu alienates herself from all the surroundings after her son's death. This is the same alienation which Madhu suffers after the death of her father when she goes to hostel.

Madhu's own existence ceases with the birth of Adit and his death leads her in the state of utter emptiness, loneliness, desolation and the feeling of nothingness. All these forces are not only the part of Madhu's life but the effects are wide spread. The cruelty of fate continues to haunt Madhu and she finds it hard to tackle with the trauma. Every single word of consolation breaks her in numerous pieces. The irony in Madhu's life is when she searches alternative to take care of Adit, if they both die but it is Adit who is gulped by death. Life is full of undesirable chances and happenings. Madhu in Adit's world is deeply absorbed that after him

nothing remains only unconquerable void. She does not feel the existence of others in her life with and without Adit. She says, “*There is nothing left. What should I keep going for? /Yes it’s true. There is nothing. There are no words for a void, no words for emptiness.* (Small Remedies- 53-55) The worst is when she says:

I am so unused to physical contact that I can feel myself drawing back, my body rigid. I find the odor of humans strange and disturbing, as if I’ve cursed like Ashvatthama, cast out of the human circle. Such a dreadful curse, I realize that now. (Small Remedies-55)

Humans have lots of emotions and these emotions create havoc in their lives. There is always a sense of loneliness in their heart and mind from the abyss of mother’s womb, the darkness from which they wish to be free. There is always an urgency to disclose the facts of life before some dear ones. The same urgency Madhu finds one of her nightmare and discloses the secret of her life which torpedoed not only Som’s faith in her but her nest too. The disclosure of Madhu’s pre-marital sex with her father’s friend is disclosed by Madhu to Som to unburden her inner self but it brings disaster in their lives:

Suddenly I became a stranger to Som, a woman he didn’t know. And then it was he who changed. From a genial, easy-going man, he turned savage, destructive, hating me, hating himself. (Small Remedies-230)

The degeneration of human soul is effectively seen in some relationships which have been woven by novelist. It is because of the lack of any religious, spiritual deriving forces which regulate human mind and also due to the material pursuits which put man on a complete animal plan of existence. Bai's relationships with other men, Madhu's father's with other woman and Madhu's own with her father's friend are mere animal coupling. It is a picture of growing unnatural relationships and emotional stagnant in Indian scenario. With this sorry picture, Indian values seem to lose its coherence, seriousness and its beauty. Deshpande notices the beginning of downfall of modern civilization, degeneration of human soul and spiritual sterility of human race. She voices her concerns at moral plight of an individual as well as human race.

Deshpande explores the consciousness of modern pseudo- secular, pseudo- religious and materialistic human psyche. She firmly moves to show the real horrible masks of humans which they wear in pursuit of religion and the shatters pieces of secularism which is the core of Indian unity while mentioning the 'Babri Masjid carnage' in this novel. She visualizes the plight of an individual who suffers the consequences of the massacre. The demolition of Babri masjid in India is one of the major catastrophes where thousands of innocents were killed for the sake of religion, people were blood-thirsty in the name of God without getting any proper knowledge of God and religion. Madhu's only son was one of those innocents who became pray of this butchery: "*Hostility, suspicion, anger*"(Small Remedies-299) were not only the part of Madhu's

relationships but outer world was also burning from this hell fire, which Madhu could not sense. As Eliot expresses the futility of man's life:

Where is the life we have lost in living?/

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?/

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?/

The cycle of Heaven in twenty centuries/

*Brings us further from God and nearer to the Dust.*¹³

In one of her bitter arguments with Som she sends Adit out of home to save from the trauma without caring what was going outside. At that time India was burning from the Hindu-Muslim riots and Adit becomes the pray of it. Madhu dumps in such a grief that hardly comes out of this. Madhu in her mind is not liberal. She needs justice; she seeks punishment for the wrongdoers. But her sense of justice got hurt when she ponders over punishment to the culprit who is responsible for her son's death. It is not a single man who is responsible but the demons in the garb of humans. In her thoughts she reaches in utter helplessness and draws the clear image of humans, who suppress their ill- will deep in mind and heart but when they find chance they show what deeply buried in them. And soon their claim of being the better than the rest of the world goes harassed. The Illusion of being the human within a minute fades away. Ignoring all the human qualities, they suddenly become demon in the garb of human, hardly to identify:

After Adit's death, I've felt something savage in me that craves for a rough, rude justice. An eye for and eye. But

whose eye do I exact in revenge? Which one human in the faceless mob can I hold responsible? And what do you do when the masks of evil are taken off and you see instead the faces of vulnerable human beings? (Small Remedies-122-123.)

Madhu is not one of those humans who take revenge of injustice instead she believes justice from the side of God; even she learns this from the life. When years later she watches Paula, all her hatred collapses and diffuses when she finds Paul getting punishment for her wrongdoing with Madhu:

But her face- I started at her and then I saw her as a human being, not the monster of my childhood. An unhappy human being who lacked something, so that she had those frequent breakdowns that had frightened Joe and devastated him. (Small Remedies-122)

In the novel, the marriage place of Madhu and Som symbolizes Deshpande's vision of modern India where people of all castes and creeds especially Hindu, Muslim and Christian mingle, greet and adore one another. The atmosphere is charged with the feeling of love corroding all the ills of the human mind and creates peaceful state of human mind. It is a dream of a writer to see everyone with such a harmony creating no harm to anyone and this harmony is a mystery for other nations:

And Phillo in her best and shining dress.....clutching the huge handbag.....sitting in a front row like an honoured

guest and wearing her shoes even when she enters the mandap- who is she? And Hamidbhai, in spite of his English suit, unmistakably a Muslim, and Joe, so intimate with me and yet so clearly not-a- Hindu- they are all mysteries to the guests. (Small Remedies-104)

At another instance, we see the dichotomy of human conduct in following religion when Hasina gets chance of singing in Bhavanipur temple. Hasina, who is Ghulam Saab's grand-daughter, takes care of Bai for two years. Besides this, she has been her student for fifteen years. Hasina's singing in Bhavanipur Temple at the birth anniversary of Bai's guruji brings chaos in the minds of the people. The idea of a Muslim singer singing in a temple is not easily accepted by the people. Hasina is threatened for her performance in temple because she belongs to other caste. The Hindu- Muslim differences are so rampant in India, even after many decades of independence we are clung to this matter tightly. Growing and developing India is stumbled to this disharmony. How much we humans are inhuman judging one another by caste and religion and worst when we bid farewell to our human virtues in saving religion.

Deshpande depicts Indian's belief in God. She traces the element of satire of human conduct in praying and offering pujas. They perform all pujas to please God so that no harm causes to erase the happiness from their life and at a point of life when happiness starts to erode, his belief in God gets shattered. If there is belief in rituals for making life beautiful, there is also a belief in omen which is waiting for humans to devastate their life. To escape from evils seems only a delusion because happenings

are inevitable. Humans make plan to their life but something happens beyond expectations. Life forces us to be with it at any cost accepting its different appearances on the different points of time:

And so the Ganeshas in niches, the decorated threshold, the mango leaf torans, the Oms, the Swastikas, the charms and amulets- all to keep disaster at bay, to stave off the nemesis of a jealous god. (Small Remedies-81)

In modern India, “*God is dead.*”¹⁴ It is misinterpreted or misunderstood by humans. He believes in God having everything in life but when happenings are not accordingly, he rejects the idea of God, who could not save them from destruction. Madhu confers all the prayers to God once in life being happy of having everything: “*What can you give me, my lord, I who have everything?*” (Small Remedies-80) But when she loses everything she finds God mere a misconception of her mind. In utter despair she rejects the idea of God who could not do anything for them: “*A God in Heaven looking after us, God, that last resort of humankind. But that comforts not for me, I’ve never had it...*” (Small Remedies-308) Her faith in humans also gets shattered, “*I’ve believed in people...But I lost this faith when I saw the cruelty of the mobs. All those faceless men who cold-bloodedly planned the death of innocents.* (Small Remedies-308) Frank Tully says:

The soul must purge itself of all sensuality, free itself from the contamination of the body, it is possible only in a state of ecstasy in which the soul transcends its own thought loses

*itself in the soul of God becomes one with God. This is in real terms can be called the mystical return to God.*¹⁵

Whatever, life brings in our way, we have to accept it. This is the lesson perhaps life wishes to teach us, projecting enormous twists and turns. In every step of life we move forward. The healing process of time is a kind of remedy which we acquire even bestowed by God. Man considers all the rituals small remedies an arm by which they conquer the bad happenings but all seem futile when they feel unable. Nothing can be done to stop what is going to happen. As Jasbir Jain says that we should accept the truth and “*move forward to self- knowledge and acceptance of a flawed self, past mistakes and future failure.*”¹⁶ Only confrontation with the calamity, acceptance of the basic truth and purpose of life and moving on are the small remedies that can protect humans from more suffering as it happens with Madhu. She has no choice but to accept the fact for which confrontation is essential and moving on towards Som when he calls her after a long time:

The only remedy is to believe that tragedies, disasters and sorrows are part of the scheme- if it can be called that. To understand that it's a package deal: you get the happiness, you've got to accept the sorrow and the pain as well. You can't get one and escape the other. (Small Remedies-81)

If I Die Today

If I Die Today echoes man's struggle to survive in the diseased society which is the outcome of human's ill deeds. The novel has the

similar social atmosphere of boredom, loneliness, unnatural relationships, sexual pervasion and self disgust which has been discussed in the preceding two novels of this chapter. Wide spread presence of materialism is felt deeply in the novel. This novel shows us the lives of doctors and their role in the society and we see how they fail to give what they are most expected to do. All the doctors espouse the modern ways and lead peaceful life with the sense of rootlessness.

On the upper surface, there is no problem over all but deeply taken they are the product of lost soul. Adopting modern education system man has left behind his own cultural and religious values which emphasize on the well-being of every creature in the cosmos and fail to develop a sense of rationality. In this novel Deshpande satirizes human's claim to be more civilized than any other creature of the world. She also asserts that if education cannot bring any relief and does not help in directing human actions then our claim of being educated is meaningless. She also tells us about the instincts if they are not properly controlled and its result which cause enormous pang and suffering.

The novel is comprised of several stories of dissimilar characters in distinct circumstances. The novel is declared crime novel which focuses on the lives of doctors, showing the several defects and chinks in them. With this novel, Deshpande foregrounds the life of doctor who has been taken equivalent to God by taking away the sufferings and pain from other's life and bestow them new life. She also focuses in this novel, that doctors are also human beings having impuissance.

It is evident from the reading this novel that Deshpande's most assertion is to show human's life on two poles: virtue and vice. Human's heart is an abode of virtues and vices and our claim of being humans proves to be strong when we continue to live virtuous life by conquering our vices. In this materialistic world, man holds great importance with his desires, well said his ill desires which he wishes to satisfy at any cost. In this way, human heart is a place of greed, anger, affectation, ambition, jealousy, envy and competition. Each one wishes to fell down to others removing happiness and peace from their lives for the sake of self happiness. Humans in their garb look safe, happy and confident but when it starts pulling up, harsh realities horrify, showing how malicious, impure, treacherous human heart is! Each one has several demons inside the heart and mind making life battle field where every single minute he has to fight with each demon separately and this is the process of purification which brings the peace and satisfaction in life.

The narrator of the novel is a doctor named Prem's wife Manju, who is lecturer and is on her maternity leave. Like other characters in the novel, she too is felicitous in her life having everything what one can ask from God. But the arrival of a cancer patient, Guru, in Bombay hospital, who is congener of Meera and Ashok, disturbs the lives of the doctors and their family by watching over others and realizing them their faults. On one side there are murders, fear, disbelief, misunderstandings, death, ambition and love while on the other side Guru and his involvement in other's life make others to assume their faults done by them in their earlier life, run parallel in the novel.

Meera, as a host, is perturbed with the news of Guru's arrival. She desperately visits Manju and shares her fear of handling a guest who is about to die. She is anxious with the fact what to talk and how to grapple with a person who is at eleventh hour of his life and the same enfeeblement Manju feels when she visits her home with Prem. Death is a point on which life completes its journey to reach on another destination. Life, we think, starts its journey from the birth, we desire to cease it after completion of a long span, seems to us happy ending but when it is realized that it is going to stop before what we measured it, dreams, hopes, wishes of man collapse. Man forget to plan the remaining short span of the life which is very soon is going to be swallowed by death. The demon of death each time hovers over them. While believing in inevitability of death humans wish to live through ages and escape to embrace the demon of death.

Guru accepts the fact of his death because to run his remaining life on normalcy. He is a man who conquers his weaknesses having spread enough love to everyone to help them out of difficulty. His needs are restricted only to live abandoning every type of comfort from the life. He has a saint like figure not in appearance but in behavior and in his thoughts. His thoughts are linked not to correct the society by preaching or teaching but by making realize them their faults to correct. This correction brings chaos in the lives of the characters.

The novelist, in this novel, with great skill and perfection, has successfully managed to portray Guru's character to show that a common man with good instincts is enough to correct the faults in the society.

Deshpande imbues her thought that we need not any incarnation to change the world. The God is within us and we should feel Him and act according to that supreme power within us. Guru's genuine behavior brings comfort to everyone who talks with him. His charming nature and goodness are enough to attract others this is the reason that everyone discloses the secrets of heart before him separately.

Deshpande imparts to Guru a unique hold over the characters. He made them realise their mistakes and due to this there is a kind of restlessness in their mind. They loosen up their control over their lives and it is very hard for them to tighten it up. Though there are not any criminal seeds in his mind, but his observation, stark comments, straightforwardness, moral sense, convincing nature and even his own goodness play havoc in other's life. Guru who was very adorable to all members of doctors' family, now, he seems to them a demon who destroys their happiness:

It seems to me that Guru had begun to see himself as a spectator, above and different from all of us. That's when a man becomes dangerous. Yes, dangerous, because he imagines himself God and loses his touch with humanity.¹⁷

Deshpande deliberately shows the creeping seeds of utilitarianism in Indian society. We see utilitarianism as:

an ethical philosophy in which the happiness of the greatest number of people in the society is considered the greatest good. According to this philosophy, an action is morally right

*if its consequences lead to happiness (absence of pain), and wrong if it ends in unhappiness (pain). Since the link between actions and their happy or unhappy outcomes depends on the circumstances, no moral principal is absolute or necessary in itself under utilitarianism.*¹⁸

Through the characters of Deshpande we see the psyche of an Indian under the influence of utilitarianism which emphasizes to get happiness at any cost. Life is a continuous process while living we forget to realize to our happiness amidst several comforts until some wrong happens. This is the realization which makes our life heaven or hell. Manju is wonderstruck to go through into the past having everything she never realized happiness. She unleashes the human behavior of emphasis on happiness which is always believed the thing of past and future that one hardly feels it in present.

Deshpande shows man's thirst for carrying out more and more. It minimizes his sense of his possessions and on this point he erodes his happiness. Humans ensconced with the idea of happiness that they ignore the existence of sorrow. In the process of acquiring happiness they hide their sins, faults, unconquerable weaknesses and their life runs on track until the faults, secrets are disclosed. The idea of achieving happiness of an individual at any cost becomes harmful to society when it harasses the moral aspects of life. An individual's emphasis on the well being of self makes the society miserable. We see that almost all the characters in unison are in pursuit of getting happiness by keeping aside moral values. Dr. Kulkarni, Ashok, Prem, Shyam and other staff of the hospital know the

real cause of Tambe's death but their lips were sealed because they wanted to save themselves from any harm until Guru provoked their soul by pointing out their mistake/ crime which took the life of an innocent one:

Guru was not a catalyst who changed us; maybe he just showed us up for what we really were. And yet the thought remains- if only he had left us alone. If only he had not interfered".(If I Die Today-10)

The character of Manju is a symbol of absolute soul who wanders in search of truth from one place to another and ultimately at the climax, she finds the true essence. She is curious to know about Tambe's death and tries to solve the mystery of his death by asking Prem but get nothing. She tries to accumulate all pieces through places but all is in vain. Amid all the happenings, Guru dies untimely and then Tony was found dead in a pond. The ambience is charged with disbelief, fear suspicion, grief, and helplessness. The lack of communication goes fathoms deep and creates the ditch between Prem and Manju. The moral aspect in Manju's behavior makes distance between the two and the same approach brings her close to Guru:

For the past few years, it seemed to me now, I had been longing for the perfect friend. And I had thought I had found him in Guru. A man who understood and sympathized with all my feelings; she would not have been as curious as Guru had been. (If I Die Today-100)

Her stress on morality compels Prem to hide every point of Tambe's death. He says, *"How could I? You were so- so bloody honest, so..so much against doing anything wrong."* (If I Die Today-109) But he breaks into pieces and discloses the secret of Tambe's death. Prem confesses that the real cause of his death was the negligence on the part of doctors. His speech signifies man's helplessness and cowardice disposition to escape from the bare facts: *"Sometimes one just can't understand how things happen."* (If I Die Today-106) He also admits that such negligence happens so often but this time it came into lime light because the deceased *"was the rare man, a man in million."*(If I Die Today-107) He was too close to workers because of his good nature. They devalued the life of a man and the worst thing that they were ready to compensate it: *"Murder was not just a frightening word any more. It was hateful, a cruel rejection of a man's humanity of his right to live."* (If I Die Today-115)

Shashi Deshpande deliberately makes satire on the human conduct. Humans are far better than animals because they have intellectualized themselves. They are less natural than any creature in the world. Their feelings and emotions are guarded by their wisdom. The moral sense inside them repels them from committing sin. Guru believes feelings and emotions should be expressed naturally. He believes covering emotions, feelings and acts is a kind of crime. But if the feelings and emotions of anger, fear, grief and regret hover all the time and are not controlled by humans then the difference between animal and human will no longer remain. In one of her discord with Prem, Manju frightens when he shouted at her furiously. She realizes the values of masks; we wear- masks to hide

our strong and worst emotions and consider them the armor of the civilized world or humanity:

Prem shouted, glaring at me as if he hated me. I had never seen him so furious. Without masks- is this how you want it to be, Guru? No, better to have them on. Far, far better. (If I Die Today-47)

Deshpande presents the dilemma of modern man. It is a clear picture of transforming psyche of an average Indian. The transformation is worthy and valuable when it removes the ills from the society and makes it worth-living but when the cherished desires of humans overpower him; he forgets the well-being and tries to harm others by dehumanizing himself. While living in the material world, human alienates himself from the God. They are deeply attached with the matter, forget the existence of God and devalue other human in their lives. This materialism leads humans towards sexual vulgarization, hollowness, discrimination, disillusionment and into the world of spiritual decay. This ugly picture of human race is seen through several characters. Through Dr. Kulkarni we find picture of a highly educated man who in his appearance is modern and embraces the modern ways of life but by heart and mind he is backward who never hesitates to make discrimination between male and female child and avoids his daughter Mriga:

I thought of the oh-so-foreign Dr. Kulkarni. Behind the pipe-smoking, perfectly mannered, phlegmatic style that he

cultivated, was he, after all, just a traditional Hindu male, longing for a son and heir? (If I Die Today-38)

The meaningless physical relationships are rampant in modern Indian society and it can be seen through Deshpande's characters which exhibit man's moral degradation. Now, man is morally eunuch. Dr. Kularni has an affair with Dean's wife Rani Agrawal and Mriga catches him red handed. Ashok too has affair with nurse Leena. His affair with Leena is a kind of fort play but when he realizes that Leena is serious about him. He desires to clean his hand from the affair but she is willing to marry him. There is a clash between the two selves: *"That's how I- I mean, I was just being friendly and sympathetic. She misunderstood me."* (If I Die Today- 83) Guru, though, optimistic and smashing in his approach too commits sin by impregnating his beloved and leaves her in the pressure of his parents. Jitendra Kumar says:

Every triumph of technology seems to declare the defeat of man for at every milestone of modern civilization man is being reduced to the status of an object.¹⁹

Science has made human life much convenient. It is in full control of man and he has made constructive and destructive changes which affect the Nature, culture and religious text. The impact of science is seen in the working of Tony and Cynthia. Aswatthama was casted off the human circle because he had tried to kill Abhimanyu's son in his mother's womb and his punishment by lord Krishna was an ideal example to control such heinous act in future but somehow man has veiled over each religious

aspect. Deshpande's concern to present Cynthia and Tony with committing the same mistake is only an attempt to discover such increasing crimes in the Indian society. They commit the same crime before they get married- a murder of an unborn child. After marriage they long for a child but remain childless. It was like a curse on both of them as Aswatthama got from lord Krishna.

In making life elementary and convenient bestowed by science man thinks himself at par with God. He is in his full control to make things in order by any mean. For this he does not hesitate to end the life of an innocent one but other step when happenings seem to him in disorder, he becomes helpless creature and asks God penance for his wrong doings which is shown by Deshpande. The relationship of Cynthia and Tony was not on good terms. The lack of child destroys the love between the two and the death of Tony left Cynthia broken. Cynthia admits it the result of their sins:

A wrong is a wrong. You can't escape the consequences./ It was a punishment for what we had done. We had sinned. And I had done something worse, I had taken a life. I know this now. (If I Die Today-98)

Karl Jasper aptly remarks, "*Man at the beginning of his historical course was in danger of being physically annihilated by the natural forces, now his very being is menaced by a world he has himself established.*"²⁰

Although in her preface to the novel, Deshpande asserts that the novel is only the part of her imagination having no reality but the work of

art can't be completely detached from the real world. After reading it we are bound to think about the workings of the doctors. It also throws light on the fact how it is easy for the doctors to wash their hands off from the sin and crime. Prem humanizes doctors by saying, "*Doctors are only human and they can also make mistakes.*" (If I Die Today-107) but his assertion shows readers that they should get punished for the wrongdoings like other humans. The novel is an instrument to show careless and practical psyche of scientific man to whom life doesn't matter. Tony's speech makes us feel that for crime the doctors have "*not a worry on their minds. Not a sin in their hearts... "You doctors- you think you have a license to kill?*" (If I Die Today-77)

Through Vidya, Deshpande brilliantly discloses the treachery in human conduct. She also shows how ambitious the human heart is! In the grip of ambition, human heart involves in sin. A single ambition changes the life of others. The plot of the novel is not directly connected with Vidya and she doesn't acquire any specific attention and incidents in the plot until the end of the novel. At the end of the novel, it is disclosed that Vidya's unidentified love for her brother Dr. Agarwal creates havoc in other's life.

Dr. Agrawal in his guilt wants to leave his post of Dean and offers it to Prem but Prem in his expiation rejects the proposal. Vidya, unaware of the fact, carries Manju, who is in her labor pain and Prem to an unidentified place and threatens him not to accept the proposal of the dean. There she accepts all the crimes that it is she who has murdered Guru and Tony: "*God, how I hated that man. / He was influencing Ram. What right*

did he have...?” (If I Die Today- 144) She is too much attached with her brother that she tries to kill Manju. Despite all efforts of Prem to save Manju he fails. Manju almost believes to be killed by Vidya and she screamed aloud to help her from an omniscient power. The intervention of an omnipotent power is seen when Vidya changes her idea of killing Manju:

Human, we don't think of them enough. Ideas, principles, ideology, ambitions, success- so many other things come first. And there's our own ego- that heads the list of what matters to us. But it's wrong. It's people who matter most. Nothing should matter more than them. (If I Die Today-117)

Guru's arrival changes the lives of the doctors making them realize that they are human first than anything else. A human being has power to overcome his ills, if a small effort is made. Dean realized his mistakes and resigned from his post and tried his best to absolve himself. Rani returns to his husband. Shanta took a step against her husband by making aware Dr. Agrawal about his wife. Ashok is trying hard to be on track, more serious than before. Mriga, now, is on her best terms with her mother and Cynthia too, is ready to return to her in laws. And Prem, *“he now knows the demons that made him agree to do what the Dean asked him to do, he trying to fight those demons.”*(If I Die Today-151) Through Guru, Deshpande symbolizes the strength of a man who can change the world by his thoughts:

Martyrdom is no longer possible today, for neither God, nor the country, nor anything else, demands such total allegiance. And so Guru may have decided to wake up other peoples' consciences. (If I Die Today-150)

Radha Kirshanan says, “*Man has to grow into something higher than himself he has to rise from the present state of imperfection, ignorance and equanimity of mind.*”²¹

The Binding Vine

The Binding Vine webs the story of other half of the species of human race: the problems they face, emotions they engulf and somehow struggling hard to survive in this world. They trod the path of life which they are never taught to run. The novel asserts that as a human being woman has her own right, freedom and space in the universe. Women delineated in the novel are true pictures of Indian woman, who are instructed to spend their life under the care of man and how this aspect proves demonic to them.

The myth that man as a father, brother, husband and son will protect women entire life is deep buried in their mind. So many of them grow up in life with this ideology but at such point of life when they have to live their lives alone they are alarmed and disoriented and they have nobody to take care. Gradually and gradually they learn to cope with the calamities of life. All these sudden changes make their life an arena where they find themselves trapped and lose their serenity of mind but ultimately find the way to survive. The pattern, they are learnt to follow from the very

beginning of life shatters in their mind. On this point they seem incapacitated having no fault of them. The present study of the novel concentrates on women's concerns and different issues which make their lives demonic and hell.

Shashi Deshpande is often labeled as a feminist writer and studies made on her works are from feministic point of view. But her vision is to see woman as human being and she thinks that woman must enjoy all human rights as man does and has been doing for years. Man and woman both are unique in their creation, in this way they have different ways of life and should live accordingly by not harassing other creatures. The novel has mostly women characters, man are only in form of shadows.

Urmila, the protagonist of the novel, like Madhu of *Small Remedies* is a bereaved mother. She is college lecturer and her husband is in Navi who visits once in a year. She and her son Anand live with Inni (Urmila's mother). Urmila loses her daughter Anu and cannot bear the pain. The shock is so great that she sheds not a single tear on her death. All are worried about her and insist her to let go the fact but Urmila finds it a betrayal on the part of Anu to forget her daughter and easily accept the fact of her death. She mourns death by absorbing deep in the pain. She does not want to come out from pain and does not make single effort to fight. She finds her "*exit is barred.*"²²

Sitting alone with others, mournful, she is unable to count the leap of hours and days. She finds solace in loneliness and irritates on interference of others. For her "*The silence is restful*". (The Binding Vine-

14) Her mind stops feeling any kind of pain except Anu's death: "*Has Anu taken all my capacity to feel away with her? I begin to bang my head against the wall. I can hear the dull rhythmic thud thud. There's nothing else. No pain at all*". (The Binding Vine-15) Although, Urmila is desolated and depressed but she understands the value of life and the bitter truth of human's will to survive:

We're connected to our physical selves by the fragile thread of our wills. It's only when the thread snaps that it's all over. That hasn't happened time, not as yet. I want to live. And I won't break down, I'm in full control of myself. (The Binding Vine-20)

Each time she fights with the demon inside her and each time she struggles hard to come out of the memories of Anu. She feels, "*This is one battle I have to win if I am to go on living.*" (The Binding Vine-21) At this juncture of her life, she coincidentally meets Shakuntala whose daughter Kalpana has been raped. This incident and Meera's diary give her a chance to come forth of the trauma of Anu's death. According to V. K. Roy:

*Detachment as way a way of life does not forsake love and caring it rather expands the canvas of love, beyond the limits of selfish desires and liberates us from servitude of time.*²³

Social texture is so rigid in India on the side of woman that they hardly think to raise any issue. Urmi is hesitant to show Meera's life publically and thinks, "*One Indira Gandhi in charge of the nation and a country full of women not allowed to take charge of their own lives...No,*

Priti, laws can't change people's lives."(The Binding Vine-38) But Preeti is adamant and pragmatic in her views. She wants to make aware the rest of the women by projecting Meera's life by a movie which is the core part of every households and appeals more than anything else. It is not Meera's life which she wants to introduce the world but a woman- a human who is deprived of her right to live life by her way.

Akka introduces the story of Meera's marriage to Vanna and Urmila. The story visualizes how a man's obsession for a woman changes her life entirely. The man sees Meera somewhere and wishes to marry her and trickily wins her without knowing her will. In this novel too we find the treachery of human mind. After her death he wants only a mother for a child. Akka who is the second wife of that man whom he marries only for the sake of his child suppresses her will and has nothing to expect from her husband. Akka too suffers the same oppression which Meera did in her three years of marriage.

Meera's poems of melancholy demonstrate her discontent married life in which she was merely a puppet in the hands of her husband. Meera's poems are also the cry of a woman's loneliness, craving for love, suffering, agony, suppression, her will of freedom, her human's right. They record how lonely she was in her thoughts having nobody to share her pain and this anguish runs through her poems. Meera was one of those women who were well aware of her existence as a human being. She frightens of being changed by her name:

"Nirmala, they call, I stand statue-still./

Do you build the new without razing the old?/

A tablet of rice, a pencil of gold/

Can they make me Nirmala? I am Mira. (The Binding Vine-101)

She wants to see the world by her own mental vision but she was unable by getting trapped in the case of marriage:

As if born blind, I grope/

Finding my way in a new world/

Touching things feeling them,/

Oh, what is this, so strange and new?/

The sun sets, the lamp unit,/

Wrapped in my cloak of darkness, I sit./

What is it that flutters there?/

Is it the glowworm, is it the moth? (The Binding Vine-100)

Love is the very fundamental element of human relationships. The existence of the entire cosmos is just because of the idea of love. The universe is bound with a single thread of love and it is the very base of humanity. All the Pujas offer to trees, plants, animal, earth, sky, water, sun, moon and every object of the universe are meant to bind everyone in a whole. To give respect and love is the key by which humanity works. As the time advances man is not only the threat to natural objects but also to his own race for making life convenient he starts to suppress the one who is feeble and groping. Prisoner in his will, he wants to achieve everything and satisfy them without any consideration while creating hell about other one. All the human relationships are for making equilibrium among the

humans so that each can be benefitted but slowly and slowly they are modified and more demanding to other being.

Marriage is the very foundation of Indian society where two people are equal but Meera's life was not on that pattern. Marriage needs love and mutual understanding but these things have no place in Meera's life. Her husband was completely unaware and unconcerned about her thoughts and her existence yet he says he loves her. Love has been rust by will, desire, obsession, passion, achievement and competition; it loses its natural beauty. So many evils inside the human which he names love causes enormous misery in their life and corrupt the true form of love. Meera's husband's fixation which he thinks is his love causes enormous pang in Meera's life and she hates the word 'love': *"I love you. And over and over again until he has done, 'I love you.' Love! How I hate the word, if this is love it is a terrible thing."* (The Binding Vine-67)

Akka also suffers the same agony and cruelty in some other way when he marries her only for rearing up the child from his first wife-Meera. Urmi says, *"The cruelty, the enormous cruelty of that silenced us. We said nothing."* (The Binding Vine-47) While Inni's husband loves her deeply, Inni feels same cruelty of her husband on her part when her husband leaves her daughter on his parents' home because once Inni fails to take care of her. She pleads him to take back Urmila at home many times but it doesn't affect him and she suffers brutality: *"Even to force your will on another is to be brutal."* (The Binding Vine-133)

Shakutai got married with the man, who promises her to take her Bombay where he works; she awaits for him about a year but he does not return; finally she goes by her own way and reaches Bombay to unburden her father. Here in Bombay, she came to know the reality that the man is not interested in doing any kind of job and he was irresponsible to nurture his wife. Her all expectations doom in nothingness when she finds that he is unable to furnish her shelter and even he could not provide her enough protection for which a single person craves, in this way, he violates her right of a human.

After living in such horrible circumstances, she chooses her way to rear up herself. She finds not only her marriage but her life a failure. She raises a question of wearing a "*Mangalsutra made in gold*" (The Binding Vine-110) for showing the presence of a man who abandons her and marries other woman. The worst cruelty is seen while having lived with Shakuntala he does not hesitate to sleep with her in corridor and harasses the moral aspects of the civilized world. She says, "*We are not animals, I told him. As if he cared.*"(The Binding Vine-111)

She was so tormented that she does not want her child to take birth in this world. Through Shakutai, Deshpande shows us a pattern on which Indian woman's life runs. From the very beginning, she is taught to depend on other being but rough reality and cruelty come in her way when she has to be self dependant not by her own choice but by force of survival. When the pattern shatters from Shakutai's mind, she feels unfortunate having no fault on her part. Sulu, too, faces the same compulsion from her husband's side. When she failed to give him heir, he wishes to marry her niece

Kalpana whom they take for bringing up. He always had an evil eye on Kalpana which he thinks is his love towards her and being aware of this, Kalpana runs away from there and never returns. Sulu belongs to such strata of women who could not oppose their husband's will. The most treacherous and pitiless nature towards her is seen when she has to keep marriage proposal of her husband for Kalpana before Shakutai but Kalpana refuses. Having everything in her life, Sulu could never feel happiness. When Kalpana discloses that she wants to marry another boy, she is raped.

Umila, who spiritualizes herself while living with her grandparents, enjoys greater freedom. She got married with Kishore despite of disapproval of her mother. With Kishore, Urmi develops different relationship in marriage. The marriage never becomes barrier in their way. Urmi sets free Kishore from his entire burden by leaving him alone at their first wedding night when she finds fear in his eyes of being trapped in a case of marriage. She never tries to trap him and engulfs her all grief each time on Kishore's departure. Her marriage bond is built on trust and love of Kishore hence she knows her limits while roaming with Bhaskar. She says to Vanna, *"Do you expect me to live like a cloistered nun just because I'm married?"* (The Binding Vine-115) When temptations enter in her life, she remains chaste by heading off them. She knows her love to Kishore is true and pure. She says, *"My love gave me immense strength."* (The Binding Vine-82) Jasbir jain views, *"Love need not destroy, possess or absorb or annihilate. It can stand aside and let other be free."*²⁴

Rape is the most atrocious crime which not only destroys the self-respect of woman but her right to live normally. Mental and physical

agony is not the only insults but the worst type of torture is the emotional and social. A woman's chastity is questioned by the other human who is the caretaker of the society. Sympathies are the part of victim's life but in real life the oppressed is never treated in the same way as she was in her previous life. Such horrible picture Deshpande shows in the novel through Kalpna's rape. When Shakutai came to know about Kalpana's rape, she is can not accept the bitter truth. She is afraid of going to police because her name will be defamed and she feels quite worried about her other daughter's future:

I'll never be able to hold up my head again, who'll marry the girl, we're decent people./ If a girl's honor is lost, what's left? The girl doesn't have to do anything wrong, people will always point a finger at her. (The Binding Vine -58-59)

The social fear is in the mind and heart of the people that laws are only the part of syllabus. A mass of people has nothing to do; they are completely unaware of them. It is strange that Shakutai does not feel the pain of her daughter but thinks about the society what other people will say, worst of all when she agonizes of having daughters, "*why does God give us daughters.*"(The Binding Vine-60) Being a small atom of the society she blames Kalpana and considers her responsible for this misfortune of her. She questions her way of living and believes that it is the real cause of misery. She finds outer world full of animals always waiting for an innocent one: "*Here boys are like...they're like dogs panting after bitches.* (The Binding Vine-146)/ *Cover yourself decently, I*

kept telling her, men are like animals.” (The Binding Vine-147) As a mother Shakutai fails to understand her daughter.

Sulu aware of the fact that her husband is culprit ends her life by being burnt. She faces human’s treachery, disbelief, anger, hate and the worst feeling of human heart on her part. Shakutai who could not identify Prabhakar’s lust for Kalpana seems helpless what to do. Her all accusations to Kalpana prove vain when she sees demon inside their home while she was blaming the outer world. Happenings are so invulnerable to her that she wishes to die: *“I should die, I’ve had enough.”* (The Binding Vine-177)

Patriarchal system involves the role and working of man and woman: man for the work of outer world and woman for the work of inner world (homely world). It is not male who loses his identity while involving in this process but the female deeply absorbed, diminishes her being. In the process of motherhood a woman completely collapses her existence. A human is so responsible in taking care of another human of her own race that she dismisses her entire existence. Her all ideas of happiness are directed and linked with her offspring that she hardly thinks about herself: *“What’s there in my apart from all of you? If I know all of you are well and happy, I’m happy too.”* (The Binding Vine-101)

Meera who was never happy in her marriage, motherhood has heavy burden on her. She writes, *“No, growing painfully within/ Like a monster child was born.”* (The Binding Vine-83) Bhaskar’s mother eclipses her entire existence when she loses her thirteen years daughter and never

returns on normal routine of life and for Sulu the motherhood is a great curse who could never be a mother but Urmila is the one who comes on track, makes it possible to balance the grief of her daughter's death.

From the few decades, there has been change in social dynamics in modern India where some women are aware of their existence in the world and are supported by their male counterpart, making the space for their own. Urmila develops her vision as a human. She makes choices of her life which makes her capable of dealing harsh realities of life. She is courageous to face her daughter's death alone without expecting anything from her husband's side. She tries hard to come out of trauma. Urmila is the ray of change in the novel. She belongs to such strata of the society that has enough power to change the world.

Though Shakutai was highly concerned and bewildered with the disclosure of Kalpana's rape, is changed. When she knows the truth, she is puzzled but finally decides to seek punishment for the culprit. There is a change in her, and the entire human race needs this change where every single creature is aware of her/his right, raises voice against wrongdoings. Urmila's decision of making Meera's poem be heard publically creates the ditch between her and Vanna; Akka too is perturbed with this idea. Vanna accuses her of being cruel towards them to make their parent's life publically, her dreams of spreading love about them shatters but later Vanna as a human realizes the agony of Meera and rights of woman as a human being.

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