Introduction

In India, where male-domination rules the roost in every sphere of human activities, almost all women are ensnared in the man-made establishments. Due to the existing gender prejudices women are treated by men as a meek, weak and the second sex in all over the places and in the entire field. In every civilization and every culture some determined characteristics are drawn for a woman to fit into the patriarchal social set up. The process goes on even still in the post modern era. In India, women, from their childhood stage onwards, are trained to behave as an obedient daughter, an ideal wife and a sacrificed mother. They are labeled in the name of ‘Pathvirtha’. They are forced to take up traditional roles. They are trained to lead their life as the Hindu mythic models from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas such as the women characters ‘Sita’, ‘Dhrupathi’ and ‘Savitri’.

In the patriarchal society, service, submissive, surrender and tolerance are the needed requirements of women. Adhikari in Changing Values of Anita Desai’s Major Women Characters says that society also defines, “women as mothers, daughters, sisters and wives who care for others, never as individuals” (114). In the male dominated society women are expected to be an excessive patience, shy, pure, and a sequence of adjustments. Their individuality and emotions are seldom considered in the tradition bound patriarchal society. Their identity is brutally stifled. Their whimpers are silenced in the process. Shashi Deshpande, the contemporary Indian woman writer in English, exhibits this tarnished image of Indian women obviously in her novels.

The research study begins with the general introduction on women’s condition in India in order to know to what extent social justices was given to the women from the ancient period to the current post modern era. An attempt, to survey the works of other women writers, has also been made to trace the common tendency and dissimilarities in their themes and perspectives about Indian women. Since the main objective of the thesis is to find how Shashi Deshpande’s women characters’ are emerged from suppression to progression, the predicaments faced by them in domestic, marital and social life are discussed. The study proposes to concentrate on Shashi Deshpande’s
women protagonists of her eleven novels and seeks how they approach the
predicaments, why they want to escape and how at last they realize their self and finally
prepare themselves to face the problems and walk towards progression are upcoming in
the following chapters. Generally Indian women have two houses one is their parental
home and another is their marital home. The study presents their parental house’s
predicaments in the name of domestic life problems and their marital home
predicaments are in the name of marital life problems. In first, the theoretical study
starts with the status of woman in the pre historic period.

In the pre historic period women were free from gender bias. They were treated
as equal as men. They were participated in religious ceremonies and gave their presence
in assemblies. They were glorified and honoured in the Vedic period (2500BC-
1500BC). The learned women Matreyi, Gargi, Lopamudra, Ghosha, and Indranni were
also lived in the Vedic period and they recorded their thoughts in Upanishads. Dutt’s, in
his work, History of Civilization in Ancient India says that, “Women were honoured in
ancient India, more perhaps than among any other ancient nation on the face of the
globe. They were considered “the intellectual companion of their husbands …
affectionate husbands in the journey of life, and … inseparable partners in their
religious duties” (67).

The verses in Rig-Veda period suggest that women married at their matured age
and they were free to select their own husband. They had the rights to rule over the
place and the society. They also enjoyed their father’s property as equal as their sons.
Rig Veda III, regarding this, says that, “An unmarried learned daughter should be
married to a bridegroom who like her is learned. Never think of giving in marriage a
daughter of very young age” (55:16), and the similar sentence also appears in the Yajur-
Veda VIII says, “A young daughter who has observed Brahmacharya (i.e. finished her
studies) should be married to a bridegroom who like her is learned” (01).

In Atharvana-Veda period people began to welcome sons. They started to
believe that their sons would preserve their father from the hell called ‘Punnama
Narakam’. Mothers were expected to beget sons. Their destiny slowly stated to depend
on their sons. Afterwards, woman’s position slowly gets degraded. From Manu
Samhita’s illustration, it is clearly known that how women were treated as degraded.
The Manu Samhita is one of the Dharma Shastras. It has been written long after the
Vedic period. In the Dharma Shastras IX, Manu wrote about woman that, “Where
women are honoured, there the Gods are pleased. Where they are not honoured, no
sacred rite yields rewards and Strike not even with a blossom a woman guilty of a
hundred faults” (18).

He further insisted that a mother’s wealth is to be inherited solely by her
daughters, who also inherit some of the father’s wealth. Manu Samhita’s these
quotations obviously note that women were treated dishonestly and wealth was also
prohibited to them. Then the following centuries women’s position became degraded
and deteriorated. In Mughal’s period women’s position became worst and the child
marriage, purtha and sati were also performed in this period. Education was prohibited
to them. Fortunately Colonization brings many changes in Indian life Style. The main
cause of these changes is by many social reforms. Woman’s liberated face, which was
lost in the Vedic period, was tried to find in this age. Indian women writers such as
Kamala Das, Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande’s contribution are immense to identify
the real predicaments of women. They, by their works, stimulate Indian women to seek
their individuality along with their own identity.

The end of the 19th century is a significant period in the development of woman.
It brought new changes in Indian languages and in social reforms. Women were allowed
to get education. Job opportunities were started to knock at their doors. The reformist
movement, economic independence and the influence of the western feminism made
aware to know their real identity. Meena Shirwadker in Images of Woman in the Indo-
Anglian novel says that,

As women received education they began to feel an increasing urge to
voice their feelings. The awareness of individuality, the sense of
compatibility with their tradition bound surrounding, resentment of male
dominated ideas of morality and behavior problems at home and at place of work or in society all come up in a welter of projection. (02)

In the colonial period, Macaulay’s adoption of English became a ruling language in educational institution, important officials and judicial courts. It was the main cause to welcome a fresh air of new methods in culture, art, literature, science, and technology. In literature fiction is the main segment in the Indian writing in English. Some early Indian writers in English started to articulate their ideas regarding the society in the foreign language. They slowly surpassed their regional languages and sow the seeds for a separate area in Indian writing in English. The glory of the ancient India and its rich culture and tradition were taken the predominant place in their literary works. Women are portrayed as dedicated devotional followers of men. Men writers have focused the world of men’s.

In men writers works, the presence of women was only incidental. Women appear in men’s fiction only as a necessary tool to be used by man protagonist. They are bothered to take up women even as some secondary characters in their novels. Their depiction about woman is not real. These writers choose women protagonists to portray romanticize. The distressed wife, the weeping widow, cheating lady love, or the sacrificing mothers are the common images found in men’s writing.

In men writers’ novels women performed in the images of submissive ‘Sita’ or the ‘Pativrata Savithri’ and tolerance, obedience and submissiveness are considered virtue qualities of women. Women those who do not follow the traditional ideals are labeled immoral. Moral aesthetics, which are followed by traditional, are dominated in men writers’ narratives. Fortunately some men writers start to allot a space for woman in their writings.

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (1838-1894) is a Bengali writer. His work *Rajmohan’s Wife* is the first Indian novel written in English. It was serialized as *Wife* in 1864 in the *Calcutta Weekly, The Indian Field*. It was published in the book form only in the 1930s. *Rajmohan’s Wife* is about the effects of dreadful marriage on women. A
middle class housewife Matangini’s suffering that was caused by her husband Rajmohan is the form of the subject of the novel. Actually this is the time of social reform and not a historical romance.

The following Indian novelists like Raja Rao, Mulkray Anand, and R.K. Narayan present their imagination with their expectations of change in the society. They, in their works, portray the real blemished image of Indian women in patriarchal social set up. In this period, some notable women writers emerged and delineated the real Indian woman’s sufferings. These women writers are considered as the early period women writers.

Swarna Kumara Ghoshal (1856-1932) Toru Dutt (1856-1877) and Cornelia Sorabji, (1866-1954) are some well popular earlier period women writers. Swarna Kumara Ghoshal is a poet, novelist, essayist, playwright, musician, journalist and social worker. She is the first prominent woman writer in Bengali. Dipnirvan is her first novel. It is considered her master piece. She is the elder sister of Rabindranath Tagore. She started Sakhi Samiti (Society of Friends) in 1896. Its main motto was to assist helpless orphans and widows. The following report was published in Bharati and Balak in 1898 that,

The first aim of the Samiti is to help helpless orphans and widows. This will be done in two ways. In those cases where such widows and orphans have no near relations or if those relations have not the means of maintaining them the Sakhi Samiti will take their full responsibility. In other cases the Samiti will give them help as far as possible. In the case of those women whose full responsibility the Samiti will take they will educate them and through them spread women’s education. After they have finished their education they will take up the work of zenana (female) education. The Samiti will give them remuneration for their work. In this way two objectives will be accomplished. Hindu widows will be able to earn through service to others according to sanction of Hindu religion. (149)
She boldly adopts the theme of love rather than the tragic life of women. Historical romance and love are the main theme of her novels. She writes mainly the poor conditions of Indian women. Her works reflect the sad form of women. In shortly her works are reformatory motivation and sympathy for women. Like her, Toru Dutt is a wonderful writer. She writes novel both in French and English. She is influenced and motivated by the Victorian romantic poetry. ‘Our Casuarian Tree’ is a good example for Toru Dutt’s romantic feeling for nature. A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields (1876) is Toru Dutt’s book of poetry. It contains the translations of seventy French poets. She has a good narrative skill. She crafts wide use of Indian myth and legend in order to exhibit how woman is subjugated in the name of old Indian myths and legends.

Cornelia Sorabji is another woman writer in the earlier period. The best works of her are Love and Life behind the Purdha (1901), Sun-Babies: Studies in the Child-Life of India (1904), and Between the Twilight (1908). She fights for women’s widowhood and purdha. The most successful work of Cornelia Sorabji is Miss Sorabji. This work tries to go through the silken curtain of the purdha and exposes the touch of femininity. The later write Iqbalunnisa Hussain’s work Purdha and Polygamy: Life in an Indian Muslim Household (1944) describes the existing and cross-current in an archetypal Muslim family.

Following the earlier women writers, Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Shatha Rama Rao, and Nayantara Shagal are regarded some well known the latest women novelists. Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala are unquestionably the most outstanding novelists. Kamala Markandaya’s novels based on the realistic life of south Indian especially Tamilnadu. The following novels are considered as her notable novels they are Nectar in a Sieve, Inner Fury and Possession. The sufferings of poverty, fear, hunger and despair are the common themes of her novels. It is difficult to find imaginary in her novels because her novels reflect the ordeals of poor people especially women.

The women’s sufferings are also presented by the novelist Ruth Prawer Jhabvala’s novels. Prawer is the Indo-Anglican writer who has published six novels and
all the novels of her deal with the upper middle class life of women in the nineteen fifties and sixties. Nayantara Sahgal is another notable woman writer in English who, the daughter of Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandi, describes the sufferings of married women. Her women characters are aware of the predicaments faced by the married women who are being in the traditional bound Indian society. Her women are the seekers of the freedom. They are fish out of water. Some heroines lead their life as it comes in the name of fate. But many go out to get liberty. She frankly admits that her women characters are always against the patriarchal society. Moreover in an interview with S. Varalakshmi in an interview with Nayantara Sahgal accuses herself that,

My women, right from the start of my novels, have walked out and the main thing which binds them to the status quo is their children very often, the children act as a chain to keep them where they are. They have no option to stay. They are extremely conformist and yet the point I am making is that at some stage even the worm turns. The most traditional, the most passive the most conventional creature at some point will dig her toes and say thus far and no further. (09)

The real ordeal of the Indian woman is depicted in the Indian writing in English literature in 1970s. The post colonial writings in India spell out the essential changes that the writers envisioned in the political, socio-cultural and literary environments of India. The Indian women writers like Kamala Markandaya, Kamala Das, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and other such renowned writers started discussing frankly about the sexual problems of women and questioning the gender-discrimination in their creative writings. They produce women protagonists’ potential and determination of their psyche.

Following the latest women writers, the new generation writers such as Bharathi Mukarjee, Gita Hariharan, Uma Vasudev and Jai Nimbmar are arrived. They are highly educated and having intellectual standards. Their keen observations of life lead them to write the psychological tribulations of the Indian women in their novels. Novels of these writers reflect the psyche of women, inner aspiration and their peculiar
responses to men and things. They have produced a new image for the younger generation of Indian women novelists. It is rightly observed by Naik in *Indian English Fiction: A Critical Study* tells that, “The ‘new’ women novelists naturally share most of the preoccupations of their male counterparts, though in spite of what fanatical feminists would claim, they do have ‘a room of their own’ in the fictional mansion, in terms of certain pressing concerns and attitude towards them”. (210)

Among the new generation women writers, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee and Shashi Deshpande have strongly exposed the psyche of the women protagonists and their inner conflict in their novels. The relationship between husband and wife belonging patriarchal society is very keenly exhibited in their novels. Their protagonists are generally based on the middle class family in the patriarchal society. They are modern, educated, career oriented, married matured Indian women.

Anita Desai’s women characters are generally in search of their own self and in search of fulfillment of the emptiness. They are lonely and sensitive. They are not the social reformer or moralist. Anita Desai’s “Maya” (*Cry the peacock*) or “Sita” (*Where Shall We go this summer*) forcefully attach and cry out against the bindings that strongly binds them by the patriarchal society. But at the end they register a revolt against these in their own way. Maya takes remedy to self destruction. Sita escapes to the island of her desire. Anita Desai’s description of husband and wife is really honest and liable. She creates a different path for her contemporary new generation writers to experiment the inner consciousness. Kanwar in *The Novels of Virginia Woolf and Anita Desai, Comparative Study* says, “The hallmark of Desai’s fiction is to focus on the inner experience of life” (7).

Bharathy Mukreejee is a powerful writer of depicting women’s real ordeal in her works. She begins her writing with the work *The Tigers Daughter* that was published in 1971. Her novels are not set in mind of the central figure. Mukerjee’s heroines, like Shashi Deshpande’s protagonist, think at first that marriage is the suitable way to escape from the patriarchal society. K R Srinivasa Iyengar in *Indian Writing in English Literature* points out these women writers’ novels and characters that,
In Prawer Jhabvala’s work the social background is rather more important than the characters who enact the various comedies, tragic-comedies and farces; in Kamala Markendaya’s, the accent is as much on the principal characters as on the divers background, economic, political, cultural, social; but in Anita Desai,s two novels the inner climate, the climate of sensibility that clears or rumbles like thunder or suddenly blazes forth like lightning is more compelling than the outer weather, the physical geography or the visible action. (464)

Following the new generation women writers, the most ultra modern women writers such as Shobha De and Namita Gokhale, describe modern, highly educated, and upper class women’s predicaments in their existing society. They do not present their women characters related to the values of morality. They deliberately discuss the extramarital relationship and sex before marriage, and they never consider its consequences. In Socialite Evening Shobha de has described the background of the metropolitan city Bombay and the lives of upper modern married women. These women’s loveless married life and their husbands’ treatment of them as they are commodities rather than human being are clearly portrayed in her novels.

Shashi Deshpande’s women are neither like Anita Desai’s heroines who are submissive or choose death to escape nor like the writers such as Barathy Mukeerje, Shobha de, and Namita Gokhale’s women characters that are completely liberate themselves. Shashi Deshpande’s protagonists are the women of patriarchal society who accept the role of mother, sister, daughter and wife and select the enough space to live within family. The living writer Shashi Deshpande is the most proficient contemporary Indian woman writer in English.

Shashi Deshpande was born in 1938 in Dharwad, Karnataka, India. She is the second daughter of the celebrated Kannada dramatist and Sanskrit scholar, Shriranga who was described as the Bernard Shaw of Kannada theatre. Even her father was a popular writer he never rendered any guidance or directions to her in this writing field to Shashi Deshpande. She repents for detached from her father. In an interview with
Vanamala Vishwanatha she says that, “If I should criticize him, I should say he was somewhat detached from us ... never guided us. May be if he had directed us at an early age, I could have done better. He never did that” (237).

She graduated in Economics in Mumbai and gained a degree in Law in Bangalore. Shashi Deshpande is a voracious reader from her early childhood itself. It is because literature was a common fare at her home. After her marriage she went to London with her pathologist husband. She took a course in journalism at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and for a time worked on a magazine Onlooker. Her writing career starts in 1970. Her stories were published in leading Indian magazines Femina and Weakly. Shashi Deshpande’s short story collections The Legacy was published in 1978. The Legacy has been prescribed for graduate students in Columbia University. Her writing profession is an accident to her. In a BBC interview Shashi Deshpande says that,

I never decided that I was going to become a writer; it was never a conscious decision. I got married, I had no definite career, I had two children. I was restless with being just a housewife and mother; I was looking for a job. Then we were in England for a year, my husband was a doctor. I was very isolated there because he was at work all day and I had these two children and no friends, so then we returned and he said ‘why don't you write about our year there?’ Then I joined a journalism course. I loved writing, I felt at home with it ... so I think in one way I stumbled into it but I really think of it this way as writing was something which was waiting for me along the time and then I reached that point, and then I knew what my life was going to be about. (01)


Shashi Deshpande has written four children’s books, they are *A Summer Adventure* (1978), *The Hidden Treasure* (1980), *The Only Witness* (1980), and *The Narayanpur Incident* (1982). She also has published a number of short stories such as *The Legacy and Other Stories* (1978), *It Was Dark* (1986), *The Miracle and Other Stories* (1986), *The Intrusion and Other Stories* (1994), and several perceptive essays that is now available in a volume entitled *Writing from the Margin and Other Essays*(2003). Shashi Deshpande’s novels have been translated into a number of languages, such as German, Russian, Dutch and Danish.

Shashi Deshpande’s early novels such as *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), *Roots and Shadows* (1983) and *That Long Silence* (1988) highlight the sexual assault, emotional abuse, mental agony, aloofness and suffocation experience by the protagonists Saru (doctor), Indu (journalist), and Jaya (writer), in a male dominated and tradition bound patriarchal society. Marriage to the man of their choice or their parents wish brings only disillusionment to them. They find their educated and apparently progressive-minded husbands Manu, Jayant and Mohan are no different from the average Indian male. An extra marital affair that Saru with Booze, Indu with Naren and Jaya with Kamat helps them to break free from the emotional bondage of matrimony and make these protagonists’ aware of themselves, and realize that it is possible to exercise autonomy within the parameters of marriage.

*If I Die Today* (1982) and *Come Up and Be Dead* (1983) are two detective novels of Shashi Deshpande. The central character of the novel *If I Die Today* is Manju, a lecturer. She is honest, straightforward and kindhearted lady. She leads her married life full of silence and hurdles. The anguish and plight of her mind is obviously visible her thought and questioned the institution of marriage. In *Come Up and Be Dead*, Shashi Deshpande starts the story about the suicide of Mirdula, a student in an exclusive school. In this critical situation Miss Kshama Rao is newly appointed as Head Mistress
of the school. The story comes and around Kshama’s incapable mind set to handle the situation and her steps to overcome the problem.

Shashi Deshpande’s middle novels are *A Matter of Time* (1996) and *Small Remedies* (2000). The novel *A Matter of Time* depicts not just the difficulties in the female protagonist Sumi’s marriage but the conflicts within her family. The issues Sumi faces are not Indian problems but they are universal ones. The next novel *Small Remedies* explores the lives of two women. One is Savitribai Indorekar, a musician and belonging an orthodox family and elopes with a Muslim boy. The other is Madhu a writer, who lost her only one son Adit and lives with pain, despair and agony. In the novel the character Madhu gets rid of her mental agony by writing biography of Savitribai Indorekar who manages to live without her child. Shashi Deshpande insists on that there is always the possibility of recovery, especially the mental retrieval.

Shashi Deshpande’s later novels are *The Binding Vine* (2002) and *Moving On* (2004). In *The Binding Vine* (2002) she focuses the innermost recesses of woman’s heart through the experiences of the female protagonist Urmī and makes a bold attempt to portray the agony of a wife Mira who is subject to marital rape. In the latter novel, she portrays Manjari’s ensuing struggle to reconcile melancholy with reality. Manjari is portrayed as a strong woman who faces all the problems without having anyone’s help especially man’s help. It also deals with the man-woman relationship within the institution of marriage and out of that too.

Shashi Deshpande’s latest novel *In the Country of Deceit* (2008) is a story of adult love between middle age unmarried woman Devayani and an aged married man Ashok Chinappa, DSP. Through the character of Devi, Shashi Deshpande tries to present the position of unmarried girls who admits the social and individual reality and attempt to fight against certain orthodox conventions of the society.

*Shadow Play* (2014) is her recent novel and the continuity of the novel *A Matter of Time*. The novel describes the modern urban women’s problems. The novel begins with Sumi who is the central character in *A Matter of Time* dead at end of the novel. In
this novel Shashi Deshpande presents Aru as a central character and her sisters are all grown up. Aru becomes a lawyer and married. She is slowly coming to express with her father’s decision to leave them in her childhood.

Shashi Deshpande exhibits Gopal who is now back in their lives, and the story moves around the central character Aru who deals with the remaining bitterness that his earlier desertion has left her with. At the same time, she deals with her inability to conceive, her ambivalence about adoption, and her relationships with the women around her, her sisters, her boss, her colleagues. Alternating chapters are written from Gopal’s standpoint. Shashi Deshpande tries to present a man’s point of view moderately. The character of Kasturi, a woman who, like Gopal, has abandoned her family provides an interesting foil to his character and motivations.

Shashi Deshpande’s, above mentioned, novels are about women trying to understand themselves, their role and their place in their living society and above all their relationship with others. Her novels are explorations each time in the process of writing. She presents all the characters in psycho analytic way. She shapes the women already existed. Shashi Deshpande’s portrayal of women is distinctive. She portrays her women characters as the central figures of the novels. She describes the real ordeals of Indian women in her novels. She presents an authentic life of middle and lower class women. Her characters are being in the day-to-day life, she is more aware to avoid creating glamour or wooden characters to accomplish her vision.

At the same time she seldom makes the characters of superwoman or idealizing them. In an interview with Viswanatha when she has asked about her characters by Viswanatha she tells that, “My characters take their own ways. I’ve heard people saying we should have strong women characters. But my writing has to do with women as they are” (235). Shashi Deshpande’s concern on women sometimes brings a label that she is a feminist but she strongly opposes this view. She says in an interview with Holmstorm about her extent of feminist that, I now have no doubts at all in saying that, “I am a feminist. In my own life, I mean. But not consciously, as a novelist. I must also say that my feminism has come to me very slowly, very gradually, and mainly out of my own
thinking and experiences and feelings. I started writing first and only then discovered my feminism. And it was much later that I actually read books about it”. (26)

Shashi Deshpande also denies that she is not a propagandist. In an interview to Stanley Carvalho, she says that, “I hate to write propagandist literature. I think good literature propaganda don’t go together. Any literature written with some viewpoint of proving something rarely turns out to be good literature Literature comes very spontaneously. When I write, I am concerned with people”. (02)

Shashi Deshpande’s women are rather spirits of love, service and forgiveness. They never have any defect of their characterization because they are very practical women. They are from the society where the tradition and culture rooted from the age old period onwards. But they stand totally opposite of it. Shashi Deshpande in an interview with S. Prasanna Sree says, “I don’t write from myths. I write from real life … I don’t see women as Sita, Savitri and Draupadi. These are all myths. Let us leave them there”. (94)

On the other hand men characters are devoid of feelings. Shashi Deshpande is a realistic writer. She has created the real sufferings of the Indian women in the patriarchal society. Her female characters are not only having the flesh and blood characters but also the people who live along with us. Her novels have the credible story of authentic characters. Her story bears the contemporary society’s life of people as it is.

There are many of Indian novels deal with woman’s problems and try to find solutions. But at the end the novels sum up with glorifying the conventional virtues of the Indian woman, like tolerance, dedication, patience, and follow the traditional role models of Sita or Savitri. But the heroines of Shashi Deshande are completely different and raise their voice against the tradition and myth that of created only for women. Her every novel starts ‘with people’. Her female characters occupy an essential role in her novels.
Shashi Deshpande’s women protagonists are generally suppressed by gender discrimination in their domestic life. The image of mother is the first and foremost predicament from the beginning of their life. Medha Sachdev in *The Indian Journal* correctly says that, “Deshpande’s novels do not valourize motherhood. In fact, the bond between mother and daughter is perpetually under question”. (182)

Shashi Deshpande presents clearly about the women’s suppression of an unwanted child in her earlier novels. She makes a clear picture of the middle class Indian mothers and their behavior with their female children. It is really a significant one. She feels as a mother can only bring the real nature of motherhood especially the mother who lives in the patriarchal society and so she has a firm conviction that only a woman writer can portray the real picture of a mother because she only can be either a mother or daughter. Mother portrayed in Shashi Deshpande’s novels are not mythical mothers who so love, sacrificing and forgiving rather they are selfish and jealous. Shashi Deshpande often faces such questions why the mothers are in her novels so unloving. She replies answer in *Telling Our Own Stories* that,

Actually, as far as women are concerned, the mother myth, an immensely popular one, is a huge burden. We’ve brought to this relationship a huge baggage of concepts and ideas which are difficult to ignore, we have made it almost impossible for us to get past the image of ever forgiving, the always sacrificing mother. When I became a mother, I found such a discrepancy between what I was told about how mothers felt, and what I really felt, that I was deeply disturbed. It was only as a writer that I could get across this disturbing split and approach reality. And realized that motherhood does not turn you overnight into a different person, it does not make you a nobler, stronger, more loving and lovable individual. (97)

In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *That Long Silence* and in *The Binding Vine* Shashi Deshpande presents the supersession of unwanted child through the relationship between mother and daughter which is far from the stereotyped image of Indian mother.
She avoids the sentimental language to describe the mother-daughter relationship. Shashi Deshpande’s novels focus primarily on mother daughter relationship which she portrays as a problematic one. Shashi Deshpande explaining this phenomenon says, “That is how life is. If I had to portray a father-son relationship, I would give you a huge problem. I have never yet seen a father-son relationship comfortable and happy. A father-daughter one is happier a mother-son is easier and this is how things are. It’s not me, it’s life. That’s the way it is and that’s the way I’ve seen life”. (230)

Most of the protagonists in her novels reject their mothers as models because they represent a patriarchal outlook on life. In *The Dark Holds No Terrors* express an important message that suppression or subjugation are not only restricted to the male-female relationship but also exist between female-female relationships. Saru’s mother’s cold and indifferent attitude develops saru’s enmity towards her mother and she hates womanhood. She says once that, “if you’re a woman, I don’t want to be one” (DHNT 62). Saru hates to all the traditional values represented by her mother. Saru’s experiences of puberty make her disgust womanhood completely that is why she enjoys her hostel life later. She recalls, “The hostel life is a kind of ‘rebirth’ into a totally different world where you don’t have to stay outside for ‘those three days’, you are no longer an “untouchable”; you can even talk about it”. (DHNT 87)

Shashi Deshpande throughout the novel mentions Saru’s unpleasant relationship and her suppressions with her mother. It is to cause Saru to take up medicine as a career and later marries a man from outside her caste. After marriage, Saru totally avoids her mother. Adesh Pal in *Women in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande* says the reason for her hatred that, “Saru starts hating her mother, her values and traditions. Her hatred and apathy for the natural biological functions of the female body is an extension of her hatred for her mother”. (100)

In *Roots and Shadows*, Indu’s mother dies in childbirth, so the suppression of the unwanted child is not there. But the mother figure Akka and Indu’s relationship is very beautifully portrayed by Shashi Deshpande. As a motherless child Indu is given by her father to Akka to brough up carefully. Indu, like Saru, hates orthodox rules drawn
by Akka. In front of Indu, Akka appears as “ruthless, bigoted, dominating and
inconsiderate” (RS 24). Indu acts very stubborn to obey the rules of Akka. She selects
studies and marriage as her own wish. Ramamoorthy in My life is my own: A Study of
Shashi Deshpande’s Women says rightly that, “Indu who had lost her mother at birth
identifies, throughout the novel, Akka as the mother figure. She rebels against Akka,
her world, her values and marries Jayant against the wishes of Akka”. (117)

Another woman character Mridula who deliberately avoids her mother. She gets
happy whenever she says lie to her. Her mother is too unaware of her daughter’s life.
She can’t finds out the fact that she is in problem and miserable. The result of rivalry of
her mother brings her a pathetic end to Mridula. Devayani is almost aggressive towards
her mother. She realizes her mother’s true self later. She is afraid that she would be
known as the girl whose mother gets fits. It gives her a sense of shame and rejects her
all thoughts of marriage. She does not show any interest in getting married a man.

Jaya, too, in That Long Silence, affects by the gender discrimination with her
mother. Jaya, like the same her mother also does not have any maternal feelings towards
Jaya. It is her mother’s disapproval that makes her agree to marry Mohan. She hates her
mother for not living as a role model of the perfect mother. Like Saru, she tries to be as
different as possible. Jaya hates to take her mother as an ideal role to follow.

In The Binding Vine, Urmi’s relationship with her mother is direct. Shashi
Deshpande presents several mothers-daughters’ relationship in this novel. Jasbir Jain in
Shashi Deshpande: A Companion to Indian Fiction in English reckons several other
mother - daughter relationships in this novel and writes how it reinforces the idea of the
binding vine. To quote Shashi Deshpande he says that, “There are several mother-
daughter relationships in the novel-Inni and Urm, Urm and Anu, Akka and Vanna,
Vanna and her two daughters, even Mira’ relationship with her mother. There is also the
relationship between Priti and her mother, forcing her to blank her out for purposes of
her own survival”. (41)
Urmí’s angry tone and language expresses how she has hostility towards her mother. She hates her for having sent her to Ranidurg as a child to be brought up by her grandparents. At one situation Inni explains to Urmí the situation in which she could not get mothering that,

I was frightened of you, Urmí ... I was too young. I was not prepared to have a child. And you were not easy, you used to cry all the time, I didn’t know how to soothe you ... Then he (Papa) decided he would take you to his mother. He didn’t say anything to me, he just took you away ... I begged him, Urmí, I cried ... Nothing could make him change his mind. (BV 199)

But to Urmí this action has seemed as indicative of her mother’s rejection of her and nursed deep resentment and anger against her. Though a grown up woman now and a mother herself, she remains indifferent to her mother. The sub-plot Shakutai and Kalpana’s relationship also has a love-late and bitter relationship.

In Small Remedies, Savitribai Indorekar’s relationship with her daughter Munni is not so warm. Munni feels unwanted and rejected by her mother like Saru. She develops a feeling of hatred towards her identity. Her mother detaches herself from her daughter and in turn, she too dissociates herself from her mother. In fact, Mother-daughter controversy is really in the meaning of the controversy of tradition and modernity. Shalmalee Palekar in Gender, Feminism and Postcoloniality: A Reading of Shashi Deshpande’s Novels says that, “The conflict between mother and daughter is presented by author as a conflict between tradition and modernity, a clash between freedom and dependence, of the assertion of selfhood and the need for love in relationships” (60).

In her later novels, Shashi Deshpande lessens the bitterness between the relationship of mother and daughter. Manjari’s relationship with her mother is good. It becomes against only when Manjari decides to marry Shyam. But in her inner conscious she loves her mother most and believes that her mother would understand her real love
and affection. Shashi Deshpande depicts this situation when Manjari’s mother is in bedridden and struggle to live Manjari visits to meet her mother and while sitting by her mother’s side, who was unconscious, tries to reach her and reconcile to her mother that, “I sat by her, I held her hand. I told her all the things I thought she wanted to hear from me … I knew it was not possible that she could hear me. And yet, there was some hope that may be she” (MO 323).

Her mother died within an hour of reaching her bedside. But Manjari’s love on her mother stimulates her to hope that her mother would listen to her. Devyani in *In the Country of Deceit* has a pleasant relationship with her mother. Both Devyani and her mother have no secrets in their life. They live as a best example of the perfect mother and daughter. Shashi Deshpande illustrates how they are frank each other in a talk of Iqbal, the lawyer who wants to search the possibility of her mother’s selling the 32 acre plot of land without telling her daughter about it that time Devyani says that, “Excuse me, but before we go on like this I must tell you that my mother had no secrets from me. We shared everything. So don’t keep saying that she did something without telling me” (CD 57).

Shashi Deshpande has no intention to exhibits mother images as villain to their daughters but she wants to show how the patriarchal society designed Indian mother to mould their daughters according to the man made society from childhood stage onwards. At the same time Shashi Deshpande shows how the same domestic life gives an opportunity to them to move on the path of progression by the image of father who creates a smooth and affectionate relationship with their daughters.

Shashi Deshpande delineates father characters are more positive, progressive and broad-minded than mothers. They act as proper guide and supporters for their daughters. They stand behind their daughters’ development. They always support before their daughters’ higher studies and their love marriage. Jaya’s father motivates her to get analytical mind set. Her father’s words that “You are not like others, Jaya,” (TLS 136) pulls her ruthlessly out of the safe circle in which the other girls have stood. He names her ‘Jaya’ which means ‘victory’. That reminds her again and again that she
must be a victor. His support and guidance are influential in developing Jaya’s fundamental attitudes and principles.

In *The Dark Holds No Terrors* Saru’s relationship with her father is to some extent normal. He supports Saru to join her in a medical college in Bombay. That brought a turning point in Saru’s life. Saru agrees that with his timely support she can get professional victory. She says, “Baba was with me. He helped me. Without him I would never have succeeded” (DHNT 139). When Saru tells him about Manu’s brutally attach at every day night, he listens carefully and patiently. Despite his traditional outlook, he urges her to talk to Manu about the problem instead of running away from him. He advises her, “Give him a chance ... stay and meet him. Talk to him. Let him know from you what is wrong ... Don’t turn your back on things again. Turn around and look at them”. (DHNT 216)

He makes her realize the duty that she has to accomplish in a positive manner to resolve the conflict. He also helps her to realize her mother’s pain and he absolves her of her mother’s blame for killing Dhruva by saying, “Sometimes, I used to think you took your mother seriously and blamed yourself for Dhruva’s death. You know she was not herself when she said that” (DHNT 181).

Kshama Rao in *Come Up and Be Dead* is very intimate to her father. Her father occupies a remarkable place in her life. He encourages her to have an aim and pursue that. Devayani is also very close to her father. She faces a terrible time of total miserable emptiness when her father death. She says, “I’m alone, yes, but I’ll get used to that. I’ll secure myself against suffering by always being alone” (CUBD 106). She does not relate to anyone and she remains aloof from Dr. Girish who wants to get intimacy with her. But, at the end, she decides to live at her father’s home.

Indu, in *Roots and Shadows*, is a motherless child. She looks her father, Govind, almost as God. Her father arranges for her English medium education and provides her the required head start in life. Even the family members are against her marriage with Jayant; her father along with her elder brother ‘Kaka’ is present. Because of her father’s
encouragement she becomes a freelance journalist. Like her father she writes honest and the matter that needed for the society.

Urmii and Kalpana in *The Binding Vine* are also very affectionate to their fathers even their mothers explain their fathers’ dual role to them. Urmii’s father is different from the fathers of other protagonists. She regards her father as a ‘firm’ and ‘wise’ person. Even though Inni, Urmii’s mother tells her the reason for her father’s strange decision that he has forced her to sent Urmii to take care of the male servant, Diwakar; Urmii is not ready to believe her. She realizes later only. Whereas Kalpana finds fault from Shakutai and says that, “You drove him away”, she said, “You’re always angry, always quarrelling, that’s why he is gone” (BV 93). She gives money to her father though she knows that her father uses that money for gambling.

The father-daughter relationship in *Moving On* is a notable one. Manjari’s father appears as an affectionate on her. He offers her to pay fees for continuing her study of medicine. He even does not mind her decision to give up medicine. Instead he just says to her, “It’s your life. You have to live it the way you want. As long you’re happy” (MO 250). Devayani, *In the Country of deceit*, is also very close to her father. She feels pity for her father’s lack of luck. She gets miserable position when she last her father. She also realizes her father’s pain when he was run over by a train at a level crossing. Devi feels the pain of her father when she recovers from her injuries in a car accident. She remembers that, “I was haunted by memories of my father, of the darkness in which he had lived, of the despair that had driven him to his death. For the first time, I felt myself close to him; I could understand how it had been for him, of why he had done what he had” (CD 249).

Since Shashi Deshpande’s women protagonists fall the prey for gender discrimination they automatically dislike their brother and expose their jealous and enmity on them. In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Saru has great love for her brother, Dhruva but she is a little jealous of him because he gets more love and concentration from his mother. In *That Long Silence*, Jaya’s brother does not love and respect Jaya because he gets privileged treatment from his parents, especially his mother. However,
Urmı’s relationship with Amrut in The Binding Vine is rather temperate and loving. Amrut understands the situations and helps Urmı. If it is noted these relationships, the common factor can be emerged that in all these brother-sister relationships, the sisters love the brothers and care for them despite their annoyance because of the ill-treatment and depravation meted to them for being girls by their own parents especially their mothers’.

At the same time sister bonding relationship is always warming and pleasant relationships in Shashi Deshpande’s novels. She presents these relationships in a very strong and meaningful one though it is the most understated one. There is less sibling rivalry between two sisters than between two brothers or between a brother and a sister. Sister bonding never diminishes rather it gets stronger with time. The fact that Shashi Deshpande has fore grounded the sister bonding in her works like the Biding Vine, A matter of Time, Moving On and In the Country of Deceit is a welcome move. The relationship between aunts and nieces is rather normal and no other opposition and bitterness. The aunts represent the two faces of the same coin - the courage of women and the untrustworthiness of women - and these two qualities teach the protagonists a lot of the different ways of life. The relationship between cousins and friends between the extended family is also remarkable and realistic.

Professional Relationship has become a notable aspect of human relationship since the appearance of career women on the social and economic field. Women are more visible than ever and physical distance between men and women has narrowed considerably giving way to extreme physical proximity at work place, on roads and even on public transport and all over the juncture. Besides these socio-cultural changes, career considerations have now upset the balance in basic human relationships - filial and conjugal relationships. Unconditional love for spouse and children has been replaced by unquenchable hunger for success, wealth, power and position. Career or working women are the most desired as wives but their husbands are yet to give up their male ego and consequently, the success and superiority of their wives become a threat to their husbands and a burden and social humiliation to themselves as seen in Saru-Manu relationship in The Dark Holds No Terrors and Cynthia-Tony relationship in If I
Die Today. Healthy filial relationship is also a casualty of professional life as we see in mother-children relationship depicted in The Dark Holds No Terrors, Moving On and In the Country of Deceit. If not taken care of, it creates a huge tension in marital relationship leading to separation and divorce, and preference for single life and live-in-relationship.

Though husband and wife are quite important as they play the most prevailing role in the traditional structure of Indian families, the older persons in the category of grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts not only play a significant role in shaping their personality in their early years but also represent the traditional value system prevailing in different generations. Likewise siblings, cousins, other relatives, neighbours, friends, colleagues, etc. are minor figures but they also play a significant role in shaping the lives of the major characters. Moreover, there are children of the protagonists, their sons and daughters, to add the needed dimension to their lives and relationships and complete the picture of human relationships. Shashi Deshpande uses the local words those are the customs and traditions of Maharastra and Karnataka and terms like ‘Akka’, ‘Ajji’, ‘Ai’, ‘Kaka’, ‘Kaki’, ‘Mama’, ‘Mami’, ‘Bai’ to indicate relationships more intimate. However, the treatment of human relationship in her novels is both Indian and universal.

Shashi Deshpande who has a deep insight to peep into the female psyche focuses on the marital relationships and through it she seeks to expose the tradition and it’s training to woman to play subservient role in the family. Marriage and sex are the two important theme almost have left and unexplored in many of the early Indo-English novelists. These themes are sometimes discussed along with the various socio-political problems.

The new generation of Indian women writers like Anitha Desai, Bharathi Mukerjee and Shashi Deshpande concentrate the theme of man-woman relationship. Later on the successors of the new generation writers have explored this theme. Simon de Beauvoir rightly points outs about marriage in his work The Second Sex that it has been said that marriage diminishes man, which is often true, but almost always it
annihilates woman. Another writer Kate Millett points out that marriage reduces the status of women to a mere object for decoration and a tool of man’s sexual gratification. Germaine Greer goes one step more and says women not to marry. Comparing these writers’ views of marriage Shashi Deshpande’s opinion about marriage is totally dissimilar.

In Shashi Deshpande’s novels, marriage is shown to be an institution. That binds women to a lifetime of male domination. In all of her novels she depicts various kinds of Indian women and their sufferings in the institution of marriage. Marital rapes, sexual assault, extra marital relationship, child marriage, the role of subservient wife, silent suffering are the common discussions of her novels. Shashi Deshpande focuses intensely and highly on a system of male domination and their power on women. The position of educated working woman’s suppression is highly intimated in her novels. Shashi Deshpande’s portrayal of the suffering Indian married women is obviously exhibited in That Long Silence.

Jaya-Mohan relationship is presented as very real human tragedies caused by male attitudes of superiority. Jaya, the woman protagonist of the novel, suffers for her own desire and acts according to her husband’s wish. She manages to live herself as an ideal wife and mother. She dedicates herself to give comforts of her husband and to the safeguarding of the house. She changes herself “almost the stereotype of a woman: nervous, incompetent, needing male help and support” (TLS 76). It is because of Jaya believes in Vantimarni’s advice that the husband is like a ‘sheltering tree’.

Jaya doesn’t like to live without the husband family. Because the tradition moulds her that living without the ‘Sheltering tree’ becomes vulnerable. She gives up her writing for Mohan. She slowly changes herself according to Mohan’s likes and dislikes. She transforms her appearance to please her husband. She cuts her hair and wears dark glasses. Mohan renames Jaya as Suhasini. Suhasini means a “soft, smiling, placid, motherly woman. A woman who lovingly nurtured her family. A woman who coped” (TLS 15). She even follows Mohan to Dadar flat to live abscond life.
She suffers a lot to keep control her emotions before her husband. She believes that a wife should not get angry with her husband because that loosens husband’s position of authority. She thinks that a wife has to learn many tricks to survive within marriage without any problem. She selects silence is one of these tricks. She then chooses silence to control her emotions as well as her physical desires. Like Jaya, in India many women wear the armour ‘silence’ Lahiri rightly point outs that, “Marital problems, familial disharmony, financial difficulties taken together all these subjugate and enslave women to a considerable extent that she cannot but endure everything, tolerate all kinds of masculine oppression silently. Her silence has its reverse on her psyche”. (196)

It is true and also women have been taught from their childhood onwards the perception of male superiority. They also brought up to co-operate in their own subordination to male. They are refused to get education and job as equal as men. Both Mira in The Binding Vine and Kalyani in The Matter of Time want to continue their studies and attain a job as they wish but the societal undrawn tradition rules does not allow them to fulfill their desire. They are forcefully drawn the societal norms and compelled them to marry men whom they don’t love.

Mira in The Binding Vine endures the violation of her body at every night by her matured husband in silence. She does not lead her life in a happy way. She becomes the victim of the marital rape. Her ultimate sexual pain comes to an end at the time of her baby born. Mira’s suffering is a tragedy of higher value. Shashi Deshpande, by pointing this aspect of Indian Hindu cultural custom, brings the pathetic liable picture of Hindu marriages.

In marital life the sexual relationship is another notable predicament of Shashi Deshpande’s women. Woman’s sexual feeling is never considered by man. It is even regarded a shame. Urmila in The Binding Vine suffers from sexual feelings. Kishore’s job in the merchant navy disrupts her dream of a normal life. Kishore’s short visit disturbs Urmila’s emotional relationship. She longs to have him permanently by her side. Urmila is unable to express her desire to tell Kishore that to change his job. She
feels shy to tell him that she needs his physical presence in her life. She even attempts to express these feelings to him. But she gets answer by Kishore’s passionate lovemaking.

Though Urmila and Kishore’s sexual relationship is passionate after every intercourse, Urmila gets frustrated as her husband withdraw into a world of his own. She expects the emotional security from her husband. She has good academic and leads a sophisticated life but suppressed as the Indian women in a patriarchal society. This is the painful predicament of a middle class matured married woman. They want to express about this to their male partner but attain oppression.

As Shashi Deshpande’s views of marriage, Simon de Beauvoir also, rightly says the marriage in a patriarchal society that, “marriage is a destiny traditionally offered to women by society” (445). In Hindu marriage system, marriage is a bondage that continues even after the death of husband. Generally in the institution of marriage a woman is decorated as an object and for the possession of man’s sexual gratification. It is also teach that the goal of life of a woman is to worship her husband.

The terms of marriage in India are really heavy. Wives often seek consolation from the difficulties of marriage or mental slavery, they prefer to lead physical decay, disease and death. Their silent suffering is here in patriarchal society considered as fate. Mohan’s mother and his sister, Vimala, are the best example in the novel That Long Silence. They endure the tyranny and injustice of male-dominated society as a natural way of life. They suffer throughout their lives. But they never tell a single word of objection. They, at last, die in silent agony without getting any help from their in-laws.

It is clearly display that some generation wise changes are happen in the approach of man towards marriage and his wife, but basically he remains a patriarchal figure and exercises his authority on his wife. Tolerance, lack of protest, submissiveness and faithfulness are the qualities of a truthful wife that the society expects and so self-assertion is not to be regarded as contrary to these values. Shashi Deshpande’s novels
mainly focus on this issue. In an interview taken by Geeta Vishwanatha who asked for a question that why she gives important to marriage in all of her novels, she said,

Now in adult life, our relationship mainly concerns the partner, spouse, lover and husband whoever it may be, a wife and children. Now these are the different relationship, which most concern us. Marriage is a more complicated relationship because it is not a blood tie. Also there is the physicality of sex. And there are enormous demands made on each other and it is that which interests me. Because when it comes to a crunch, you put stress on it, it comes apart. It is so human-made. I don’t see it as anything but an institution made for certain purposes and so much has been built upon this foundation, monogamy, the sanctity of marriage—all these are things which are hard for human beings to adhere to. This is why marriage interests me. (02)

Shashi Deshpande further says that in times of crisis, when there is a small flaw, the whole machine seems to come apart. The parent-child relationship is equally important for her because she says this is again a very deep and complex relationship. But yet, marriage is important for her and so is the family. It is because Shashi Deshpande is interested in the family but not just marriage. She strongly believes that these are the two relationships one is generally concerned with.

Shashi Deshpande by using the theme of marriage she presents the real position of the married women and suggests them how to get rid of the fear on their part that allows the oppression to continue. She says further that it is not only man who subjugates woman but she is also responsible for her own predicament. Woman herself should struggle to achieve her own identity. Shashi Deshpande’s attitude is always distinctive. Though marriage often becomes a prison for her protagonists’, they try to make more breathing space for them as well as for other women within the structures of marriage and family. As Kamini Dinesh observes, “The wife, in the end, is therefore not a rebel but a redeemed wife - one who has broken the long silence, one who is no longer afraid of the dark. She is a wife reconceptualised as woman and an individual” (204).
Shashi Deshpande widely exposes the suppressions faced by the Indian women in the name of rape, marital rape and the extra marital relationship in her novels. She even obviously presents the stereotype of Indian women and their ordeals in her novels. The ordeal that is largely faced by Indian wives is marital rape that occurs both in the novels of *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *The Binding Vine*. In India marriage is considered one of the holy rituals and husband is the lord to his wife. The wife is always expected to obedient to her husband’s wish. Marital rape is not considered a crime in this society. Helpless and unable to confront their husbands, like Saru many wives keep silent bearing the pain and bury themselves thinking as Saru says, “Each time it happens and I don’t speak, I put another brick on the wall of silence between us. May be one day I will be walled alive within it and dies a slow, painful death” (DHNT 96).

Through the protagonist Saru, Shashi Deshpande brings the realistic way of wife’s sexual assault in her contemporary society and by the voice of Saru, Her satires to the young unmarried girls to be cautious in choosing a husband is a testimony to her frustrated, disappointed married life. She warns,

A wife must always be a few feet behind her husband. If he is an MA, you should be a BA; if he is 5’4” tall, you shouldn’t be more than 5’3” tall. If he is earning five hundred rupees, you should never earn more than four hundred and ninety, if you want a happy marriage; don’t ever try to reverse the doctor, nurse, executive, secretary, principal, teacher role. It can be traumatic, disastrous; and I assure you, it is not worth it. He’ll suffer. You’ll suffer and so will the children. (DHNT 137)

In the novel *That Long Silence* the novelist symbolically exhibits the ordeals of Indian wives through the woman protagonist Jaya. As an educated woman, Jaya writes realistic stories for the magazine while managing her domestic works. One of her realistic stories win award but the line ‘a man who could not reach out to his wife except through her body’ that appeared in the story, hurts her husband Mohan. He assumes that the story is about his personal life with Jaya. He gets worries as if his personal life revealed to the world. He says to Jaya,
They will all know now, all those people who read this know us, they will know that these two persons are us, they will think I am this kind of a man, they will think I am this man, How can I look anyone in. the face again? And you, how could you write these things, how could you write such ugly things, how will you face people after this? (TLS 143)

The following lines further indicate the real situation of contemporary Indian housewives. Jaya in That Long Silence says, “A woman can never be angry; she can only be neurotic, hysterical, frustrated. There’s no room for anger in my life ... There’s only order and routine—today I have to change the sheets; tomorrow, scrub the bathrooms; the day after clean the fridge” (TLS 147).

Even though Shashi Deshpande’s protagonists get suppression by marital rape they try to come out from the suppression by having extra-marital relationship. In her novels, the protagonists like Saru, Indu, Jaya and Urmi experience the disappointment in sex. They suffer a silent sexual humiliation and terror in the bedrooms. They feel like enslaved animals and long for love and care from their male partner. When their expectations are ready to fill with other men they create their relation with them. The persons with whom they create a fake relationship help them to shine out their career, their development and their search of ‘self’ hood.

Saru’s friendship with Boozie is a relationship of teacher and student. Boozie helps Saru with enough money to starts her practice. From the monitory help of Boozie, She manages to fulfill her wish of completing higher education. She also gets a sophisticated life because of him. Her familiarity as a doctor is socially accepted. She becomes a famous doctor. She allots a special place for Boozie as he helps her to attain the peak of influence. She thinks Boozie is a man of gentle, meticulous and experienced. She often wonders seeing a marvellous dexterity in his job. She likes to earn the skill from him. She regards, “When I saw him, I knew I would never pray any more for a patient. I would learn this instead, this skill, this proficiency, this perfection. I knew he was a good teacher. Well, I would learn from him. Everything that he could teach me, I would learn”. (DHNT 90)
But Boozie’s approach is totally different from Saru. Boozie’s friendship with Saru is a relationship of a man and a woman. When she realizes that Mr. Boozie’s interest is very close of a woman and a man, Saru feels strange. She recalls, “From the day he stopped his car at the bus-stop where I stood and took me out for a cup of coffee, saying … The day I have no time to take a pretty girl out to tea . . . It took me a long time to realize that his interest in me was as a woman not as a student” (DHNT 90).

Saru’s another relationship with Padmakar Rao, a former classmate of her, looks like to margin on an affair. Likewise, Jaya's friendship with Kamat develops towards physical attraction, but Jaya controls herself and suppresses her desires. Kamat is a widower and a neighbour of Jaya. He lives in Dadar. He lives alone and does all the household activities himself. He is somewhat different from the patriarchal male. He does not feel awkward for preparing cooking himself. He follows equality between man and woman. It is Kamat’s most striking quality.

He is totally different from Mohan. Mohan discourages Jaya from writing but Mr. Kamat helps her to realize her own self. Jaya thinks that Kamat’s approach with her is in a way of father who comforts her daughter. Kamat advises jaya to be honest to ‘self” and realize her own faults. This moulds her to find out her identity. He tells her, “Spare me your complexes. And you're a fool if you think I was joking. I'm warning you- beware of this ‘women are the victims’ theory of yours … Take yourself seriously, woman. Don't sulk behind a false name. And work- if you want others to take you seriously” (TLS 148).

Jaya finds solace in Kamat's company. She wants to respond to him with her body. She shares an intimate relation with him. He makes her understand that it is a part of life. He says, “The relation of man to woman is so natural of one person to another” (TLS 153). In the same way, Urmil's connection with Dr. Bhaskar develops into more than a nonphysical relationship, but she refuses to let herself from the attraction into an extra-marital affair.
Saru’s relationship with Boozie in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* boosts Saru’s career. Indu’s friendship with Naren in *Roots and Shadows* provides her not only with a sexual outlet but also with an opportunity to recover her self-worth as vibrant and emotionally alive person. Jaya’s link with Kamath in *That Long Silence* makes her realize her true potentiality. Urmil’s relationship with Dr. Bhaskar Jain in *The Binding Vine* consoles Urmil in her grief and contributes to her development. Madhu’s relationship with Chandru and Savitribai’s relationship with Ghulam Saab in *Small Remedies* are for recovery and for professional achievement respectively. Manjari’s relationship with Raman, in *Moving On* and Devi’s relationship with Ashok in *In the Country of Deceit* are for biological need, for satisfying the longings of their bodies.

Shashi Deshpande, by the relationship of the extra marital, highlights the plight of the educated women who indulge in egotistical feelings. She expresses how the martial bond shackles them in the name of tradition and convention. She points out that the unfulfilled sexual desire of the protagonist is the main cause to drive them to have extra marital relationships. She also explores that this relationship gives a sense of sexual independence to them and so most of heroines do not suffer from guilt consciousness.

In the contrary it makes them a feeling of understanding, acceptance and belonging, of a shared experience even it is not a solution to their problems it shows their difficulties in their marital bond. By giving sexual freedom to her heroines, Shashi Deshpande has moved the Indian novel into its most controversial phase. She deliberately delineates the extra marital relationships in her novels. She wants to open this subject to people for discussion. She regards the extra marital relationship is not a secret or sin but it is a needed matter for argument to understand the healthy relationship between a man and woman.

In marriage, Shashi Deshpande gives important place to sex. In Indian tradition sex is considered a holy in the institution of marriage but at the same time sex is also feels as shame to discuss even between the couple. In fact sex is not only related with body but also related with soul that is the reason women writers want to bring this topic
for discussion and for this purpose they deliberately pen the theme in their writings. Shashi Deshpande’s purpose of using sex in her novels is to understand people the real pleasure of sex and to intimate that the feeling of sex is common to both genders. As Devyani says in *the country of deceit* that, “Sex without guilt, Sex without any strings attached. Sex without fear” (ICD 77). Shashi Deshpande wants the sex should be pleasurable one between the couple.

Shashi Deshpande’s view of love and sex is notable in her novels. Love is really a difficult question to find out the answer. The definition and clarity of love changes from time to time and alters with each different relationship. It depends more on its concept of seriousness, worth, and complexity. In the eyes of modern society love is considered to be false and meaningless. The reality of love is denied due to hatred and brutality which create a sharp bitterness in relationships. In its wide sense on meaning it is full of tranquility, submissiveness, and happiness but on the other hand it may be a defender, preserver and compassionate. It can happen between two or more persons. Being romantic it may be deep, intense, thoughtless and eternal. It may be common on interpersonal and sexual relationship.

The term Platonic love, familial love and religious love are also matter of great affection. According to Shashi Deshpande, love is difficult to distinguish. When She was asked in an interview that whether the quality of loves different in adolescent, youth and maturity, she replies that,

It is very difficult to distinguish love according to the level of mental maturity. A sixty years old man or a woman can fall in love and behave like a child. People realize the true meaning of love only when they fall in love. My novel is about adult love. The first thing the man tries to tell the woman is that I promise you nothing. But I stand outside your gate and cannot get you out of my mind. I think that’s the real sign of love.

(229)
Saru of *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Indu of *Roots and Shadows* and Jaya of *That Long Silence* pursue the romantic world. They expect love from their husbands. These women do not think at first that both love and romance arrive at the roots of sex in the mind of tradition based Indian men. Saru who anticipates for love and secure falls love with Manu, a post graduate student. Manu’s multifaceted personality of a secretary of literary association, an active member of the dramatic society, a budding writer and a poet of promise make him a good trustworthy student and a hero of the college.

Saru who has romantic feelings with Manu fails to notice her present professional failure. Manu’s good look with a firm chin, dark thick straight eye brows and full lips attracts Saru and makes her blind to see his family circumstance and his low caste. Saru marries Manu for indulging love and affection which have been failed to get from her parents. She always longed for that love and affection from her childhood stage onwards. Saru recalls it later, “I was insatiable, not for sex, but for love. Each act of sex was a triumphant assertion of our love. Of my being loved. Of my being wanted.” (DHNT 40)

She feels happy for achieving the traditional aim of being chosen by a superior male. She, later on, realizes Manu is nothing but just an ordinary traditional based Indian male. In this novel Shashi Deshpande also mentions the predominant theme of sex how it is used by a weapon against woman. Saru’s painful description of her husband’s attack at each night is painful suffering of every woman who affects for sexual assault. She says,

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

Shashi Deshpande insists on the power of love and how Saru by the same power of love makes her tolerate Manu’s brutality. Every day night Manu’s brutal activity
becomes stronger and he starts to emit his frustration still more aggressively. At one stage Saru is unable to tolerate the terrifying attitude of Manu but Saru endures repeated rape because of her love for her children too. Though an intelligent and independent woman, Saru gets afraid of the society yet she longs to talk about her miseries to anyone. She wants to get divorce from him. But the social stigma of divorce unnerves her. Once she approaches lawyer and asks, “Can I divorce my husband? Any reasons? He’s cruel. How? Will you be specific? Please give details” (DHNT 97).

Saru refuses to bring her private miseries as a sociological one and also she fears of her children’s future. In such a societal construction, almost all the women scare to break these kinds of cruel husbands’ relationship. Only a few more women undergo the struggle and seek a compromising solution. The regular brutal attach of her body by her husband Manu grows to detest the sex that once Saru has enjoyed. She sees herself as nothing but “a dark, damp, smelly hole” (DHNT 29). She thinks both the love and sex are just an illusion. She says, “Love? Romance? Both, I knew too well, were illusions, and not relevant to my life anyway. And the code word of our age is neither love nor romance, but sex. Fulfillment and romance came, not through love alone, but sex. And for me sex was now a dirty word”. (DHNT 133)

Like Saru, Indu in Roots and Shadows, is brought up by the dominating Akka who runs the family in a traditional household. She hates the orthodox rules as it dominates her womanhood. She gets desire to break it so she joins a college in Bombay and stay at a hostel. She is stubborn that not to go to the house where she is suffocated by the tradition rules. After she finishes her study she takes up a job as her wish. She also wishes to marry a man whom she loves more. She marries Jayant and wants to lead a happy free life. But she is shocked when she happens to realizes that Jayant is the same as a stereotyped Indian man.

Jayant’s traditional belief that woman should be ‘submissive’ and not to be expressive of her love and emotions was astonished to Indu. As an Indian traditional male Jayant fulfils his sexual desire when he needs at the same time he turns aside when Indu needs sex. Jayant’s rejection of love and affection on Indu hurts her. She upsets for
that. Jayant takes her passive and emotion for his happiness but he ignores her sexuality. Shashi Deshpande, here, mentions the two different types of women how they treat and expect the same love and sex from their husbands. Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* silently bears the physical tortures and humiliation while Indu in *Roots and Shadows* silently crushes her passion and desires to please Jayant.

Shashi Deshpande does not portrait her heroines to give too much importance to sexual encounters unless it serves an urgent physical need. According to her ‘love’ is an overworked word, over burdened by the weight, one put on it. It is also just another word for human contact. Jaya’s loveless sexual life with Mohan was emotionless and gives her no pleasure. Jaya’s relationship with Kamath was the result of her search for a human being who can understand, console and support her. Jaya’s judgment about this relation proves it. She says,

> Physical touching for me a momentous thing. It was only Appa who hugged me as a child, and after him there was Mohan. We were husband and wife and he could hold me, touch me, caress me. But it was never a casual or light-hearted thing for either of us. And then this man … I can remember how his gift of casual, physical contact had amazed me. His unawareness of my shock the first time he did it had told me what touching meant to him. Nothing. And yet that day his dispassionate tone, his detached touch, had somehow angered me. (TLS 15)

Shashi Deshpande uses the word sex as a metaphor. Indu in *Roots and Shadow* have a sexual relationship with her cousin Naren. She did not repent for that. Extra-marital Affair with Naren becomes a metaphor for her rebellion against Jayant’s humiliation of her for being the initiator in their sexual relationship. Atrey and Kirpal in *Shashi Deshpande: A Feminist Study of Her Fiction* rightly says that, “The affair acts as a catharsis and frees her of self-imposed limits” (18). In Shashi Deshpande’s world, women who do not break their silence contribute to their own oppression and to that of their sex. Rajeshwari Sunder Rajan observes, “For women to speak rape is itself a
measure of liberation, a shift from serving as the object of voyeuristic discourse to the occupation of a subject position as ‘master’ of narrative’’ (78).

The earlier discussion indicates that a study of the novels of Shashi Deshpande in the light of these two concepts can prove to be interesting and illuminating. The study from suppression to progression of Shashi Deshpande’s women characters analysis various characters and their lives in the patriarchal society that helps to understand her vision of life better.

In the novel *The Binding Vine* Shashi Deshpande presents the ordeal of rape and how the society treat the woman who affected by the rape and try to find fault on her. Sakuntala, a low class working woman, is presented in a naturalistic way. Sakuntala is a mother of three children who lives separated by her drunken husband. Her daughter Kalpana is brutally raped and admitted in hospital in a serious condition. When Sakuntala hears the fact that her daughter is raped she gets afraid and tries to hide the matter rather to fight for her justice. She says, “You people are trying to blacken my daughter’s name … don’t tell anyone. I’ll never be able to hold up my head again, who’ll marry the girls, we’re decent people … even if it’s true, keep it to yourself, doctor, don’t let anyone know of it. I have another daughter, what will become of her?” (BV 58)

Sakuntala is afraid of thinking of the society because the society find fault with the raped girl. The society, where we live, thinks rape is only the rape of body. It fails to consider rape is also the rape of mind. That is why the society’s attitude towards the rape case is as the police says, “Okay, she was raped. But publicizing it isn’t going to do anyone good. It’s going to mean trouble for everyone the girl, her family” (BV 88).

Shashi Deshpande also reveals, by works, how women get suppression in the name of myth. Her main purpose for using Myths is to expose the psyche of her protagonists. She uses plenty of references with the Mahabharata and the Ramayana in her novels. She builds up the structure of womanhood in the perspective of the socio cultural conditions that survive in the patriarchal society particularly in India. She uses
myths for reordering of the meaning of the Indian archetypes and interrogating them. Shashi Deshpande herself regards that,

They are part of the human psyche, part of our cultural histories. The myths present role models and images that women are expected to adhere to, To be as pure as Sita, as loyal as Draupadi, as beautiful as Laxmi, as bountiful a provider as Annapoorna, as dogged in devotion as Savitri, as strong as Durga-these are the ultimate role model we cannot entirely dismiss … The examples are it seems held out only to women. It seems odd that it took us women so long to realize this truth, to understand why this is so. (85)

The legend of prince Dhruva is skillfully used in The Dark Holds No Terrors. In the mythological story Dhruva was forcefully dragged from his father’s lap by his elder brother like that Saru forcibly pushed out Dhruva from her father’s lap. It is because Saru subconsciously wants her brother Dhruva to be dead. As she is neglected and separated by her parents, Saru lets Dhruva to die by drowning.

In That Long Silence, she tells how the bedtime story affects the female child’s inner psyche. Jaya, the woman protagonist of the novel, often heard the crow and the sparrow story at her childhood stage. It is a story about how the foolish crow was cheated by the wise sparrow. The fable of the story was stored in jaya’s subconscious mind and distorts her personality automatically. When she happens to tell the same story to her children she gets afraid and thinks that,

Even if little boys can forget this story, little girls never will. They will store this story in their subconscious, their unconscious or whatever, and eventually they will become that damnably insufferably priggish sparrow looking after their homes, their babies … and to hell with the rest of the world. Stay at home, look after your babies, keep out the rest of the world and you’re safe. The poor idiotic women Suhasini believed in this. (TLS 17)
Shashi Deshpande also uses the reference of the Bhagwadgita and the Ramayana in *That Long Silence*. There is a description of the tulsi-cult and the folklore of sparrow and crow are also applied in the novel. This novel has a cyclic structure. It is a typical feature of Satyavan - Savitri myths. In the mythological story Savithri took a journey to hell to bring back her husband. Likewise Jaya follows her husband Mohan to Dadar flat to lead an abscond life. She recalls, “I remember now that he had assumed I would accompany him, had taken for granted my acquiescence in his plans. So had I. Sita following her husband into exile, Savitri dogging Death to reclaim her husband, Draupadi stoically sharing her husband’s travails” (TLS 11)

It is also similar to Sita in the Ramayana following Rama to the forest likewise Draupathi. But unlike the mythical characters Savitri and Sita, Jaya’s journey leads her to a certain kind of retrospection of her ‘own’ self. The myth of ‘Pativrata’ is an important concept related to the myth of ideal wifehood. Shashi Deshpande lapses this myth. She does not portray Jaya as a Pativrata. From the character Jaya, Shashi Deshpande reveals that the relationship between Jaya and Mohan is like that of a ‘pair of bullocks yoked together’ and she followed him only because as Jaya says, “to go in different directions would be painful; and what animal would voluntarily choose pain?” (TLS 12). Shashi Deshpande even pays for her challenge ironically when Jaya says, “If Gandhari who bandaged her eyes to become blind like her husband, could be called an ideal wife, I was an ideal wife too. I bandaged my eyes tightly. I did not want to know anything” (TLS 61).

Shashi Deshpande in *That Long Silence* questions the usual mythical image of women as weak and in need of male protection. She also challenges the popular myth that marriage provides protection for women. In fact she tells a truth that husband is not being always a ‘sheltering tree’. In one of her interviews, answering a query that the women writers show antipathy towards traditional models of Sita and Savitri but fail to suggest any replacement, she says,

It is not my idea of replacing one model with another. I am just deconstructing these myths. Now you take the myth of Sita, as a perfect
woman. When I see Sita, I ask myself, when your husband ditches you, abandons you when you are pregnant, how do you feel? I am going to be angry and upset … You know this is what I mean by saying deconstruction … All these myths were created by men, and not by women. So we are in the process of discovery now and we are not just going to move aside some models and bring in new models. We are in the process of discovering ourselves. (100)

That means not Shashi Deshpande dislike myths. In fact she regards myths are the essential need to lead our life vital and meaningful. In the ‘Afterword’ to her short story collection *The Stone Women* she writes,

Myths are still important to us. We do not want to demolish them, we need them to live by; they have shaped our idea for a great many years, they embody our dreams. To destroy them would be to leave a large dent in the fabric of our culture. On the other hand, if we are not able to make them meaningful to our lives, they will cease to survive. In India specially, myths have an extra-ordinary vitality, continuing to give people some truths about themselves, about the human condition. What women writers are doing today is not a rejection of the myths, but a meaningful and creative reinterpretation of them. We are looking for a fresh knowledge of ourselves in them, trying to discover what is relevant to our lives today. (94)

In *The Binding Vine*, Shashi Deshpande uses the mythological characters’ names of Urmila, Mira and Shakuntala. The mythological Urmila is a wife of Lakshamana. She was left alone by her husband who was accompanied with Rama to forest. Urmila here in the novel *The Binding Vine* becomes the broken heartened and goes to aggrieved state of mind. Urmila is getting grief sicken for the loss of one year old female baby. Urmila’s mother-in-law Mira, like the mythological Mira, is being detached with her husband. She has neither love nor sexual pleasure with her husband. The character Shakuntala like Dushyantha’s Shakuntala, is deserted by her husband. Shashi
Deshpande’s usages of mythological allusions are generally not the deliberate or the conscious practice of her. For a question about using mythological characters in her novels she says that,

Not particular reason. They are so much in our part of life. Even today they still form very important part of our life, because many of the moral codes have come from the myths especially for women. We will be so kind imprisoned in that mythical kind of woman. So I think they still matters in our life in India. I would not deliberately take it. Most of the things which writers do, not for a particular reason it comes to you like that. Before you write these things get ready in your mind and this becomes the part of it. There is no way to avoid it not pushing it deliberately. It just so happened and that becomes the part of writing.

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According to Shashi Deshpande, Myths are very important and also a part of life. Especially in marriage and sex using the mythological image of women characters, the patriarchal society moulds and forces women to follow the images. Shashi Deshpande, unlike the mythological images of women, portrays progressive women for contemporary society and deals the institution of Marriage and its love and sex.

The study attempts rather to solve the complicated problem of women’s predicaments, it aims to have a better understanding of the author’s mind and thoughts about human life especially women and their ‘suppression’ and their possible attempt to emerge out as a new ‘progressive’ women. In the following chapters the study is going to provide useful insights into her art of characterization. She succeeds in creating women characters psyche and behaviour. The study attempts to reveal the psychic conflict in the minds of her characters. It may also help us detect a foundation of dramatic structure under the seemingly lyrical structure of her novels. The study will be useful to understand her characters better and to get a righteous view of Shashi Deshpande as a novelist.
The study has six chapters, besides this first chapter of introduction. The second chapter deals with Shashi Deshpande’s women protagonists’ psychological trials and tribulations both in familial and social life. Then, in the third chapter, the women protagonists attempt to find the escaping ways from their predicaments are elaborately discussed. The fourth chapter depicts true awakening in Shashi Deshpande’s women characters that moved from ignorance to knowledge in all spheres of life - knowledge of one’s own self. Finally these characters walk out as progressive women. The fifth chapter deals with the narrative skills of the novelist Shashi Deshpande and the final chapter sums up the whole study, gives conclusion to the research making an attempt at providing valuable insights into Shashi Deshpande’s art and vision of life on the basis of the findings arrived at during the course of the study.