

Oppression and Exploitation of Women

Arvind Kumar Dubey^{1*}, Dr. Aditi Dutta²

¹ Research Scholar, Shri Krishna University, Chhatarpur M.P.

² Assistant Professor, Shri Krishna University, Chhatarpur M.P.

Abstract - Violence against women is a serious human rights problem that affects people of all racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. It covers any behaviour that, whether in the publicly or privately domain, might lead to a woman's death or inflict bodily, psychological, or sexual damage to her. In recent decades, the topic of violence against women has been addressed, argued, advocated for, and battled for. In addition, extensive research on the prevalence, reporting, and effects of this kind of violence against women has been carried out in several areas and nations. The first proclamation that acknowledged the need to grant women the principles of equality, security, freedom, integrity, & dignity of all humans was the result of these coordinated activist actions. Despite these international initiatives and the presence of laws that penalise males who assault women, the issue still exists on a global scale. Therefore, in order to tackle the issue at its core, academics believe it is important to identify the underlying causes & motives for such atrocious crimes.

Keywords - Oppression, Men, Ecopsychology, Women, rights to equality

-----X-----

INTRODUCTION

Sociologists worry about violence against women's bodies, minds, and personalities not because it is new, but because of the new forms, contents, and intensities it has taken on in our day. So-called "organised crime against women" has become the new standard, with material that's ubiquitous and culturally controlled, but the intensity is thought. Sociologists are concerned. Women's situation has deteriorated from pre-industrial times, contrary to the widely held belief that the industrial revolution in the 18th century ushered in an age of humanism centred on equality, liberty, or fraternity.¹ It is possible to pinpoint the causes for this, but one simple truth is that women are safer in rural areas away from city centres, and even safer in rural areas away from contemporary education with its claim to liberate impact. There is a clear correlation between the degree of 'modern' education in a culture and the growth of crime against women, which may seem incongruous at first. For a pre-determined goal, it may have to do with how string-twisting syllabi are structured. Many parents fear for the safety of their daughters even while they are within the four walls of their daughter's school.² You never know whether these institutions aren't snatching up young girls for some sinister games be played with ladies in order to attract them into their ranks. Shashi Deshpande's book, *Come Up And Die*, is a good example of this current phenomenon. Mrs. Jyoti Raman, a school teacher, detects something fishy and chooses to remove her school-age daughter from the area without informing her. The daughter, on the other hand, is adamant about staying in school. "This life is my decision," she declares, against her mother's

wishes. That's all I need." When Mrs. Jyoti Raman sees this behaviour, she becomes very concerned about her daughter's future. What else do I have had in the world but you, she laments? This is a message for the determined Sonali, who insists on having the freedom to choose her own path.³⁻⁵

Violence has long been used as a weapon of oppression and exploitation by those who are clearly weaker than their victims. It is because of her gender that she is a target for violence and the ignominy of outrage committed to her body that she is seen to be an easy target. Since the emergence of the state as a specialised instrument of systematic violence by the wealthy when society was vertically split between haves and have-nots, this has been the tale. When this new characteristic of human history was introduced, a system of exploitation and tyranny began to take form.⁶ Women were singled out by this system because of their unique sex as women and the resulting inequity that resulted. As these forces have consolidated, the oppression & exploitation of women has gone up many times. Through education, its scope is really remarkable. Young people seem to be obsessed with the concept of pursuing 'pleasure' via sex. The number of crimes committed against women is steadily increasing. In this context, Shashi Deshpande's characters and the younger generation in general represent a movement toward self-fulfillment and a desire to rise in society. People like Indu and Naren in *Roots & Shadows* believe it's personal fulfilment, while connection Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and many in *Come Up And Be Dead* say it's revolt against familial bondage. Every one of them is blind

to the causes of their own plight, save for what they believe to be true in their own minds.⁷

Sex abuse is a global epidemic that is on the increase when the market economy has a grip on society. Despite the democratic facade and promises of equality, women and children have been the first casualties of market-driven growth in countries like Russia and China since their introduction in 1991 and 1976, respectively.⁸ They now feel more unsafe than they ever have in their homes, neighbourhoods, and even outside of them, even at work. Increasingly insecure and fragile is the position & status of women as a result of government and industry-sponsored incentives and allures to attract a larger group of small girls into intimate relations activities including tourism, modelling, beauty competitions, commercials, and entertainment. However, at the same time, national and international efforts are being made to stop the decline in their health.⁹

1994 saw the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.¹⁰ According to the Rapporteur's preliminary assessment, women are more susceptible to assault because:

A woman's vulnerability to violence stems from her gender and the fact that she may be part of a social group that views violence against women as a way to humiliate the group as a whole. During times of war, women are subjected to a variety of forms of violence, including domestic abuse, sexual assault in the workplace, and brutality by the government.¹¹

In her works, Shashi Deshpande has dealt with some of the brutality against women. There have been several instances when she has dealt with issues of authority and sexual harassment, as well as rape and the murdering of female foetal tissue.¹²

Eventually, as a consequence of public outcry and sustained pressure on these concerns, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution on December 20, 1993, calling for an end to violence against women worldwide. With it, a global political agreement was expressed that governments had human rights responsibility to prevent female violence or remedy damage caused. Women are defined as 'any act of gender-based conflict that results in or is likely to result . Whether perpetrated by the state, the community, or even family members, the Declaration's definition of violence encompasses more than just physical force; it encompasses all types of behaviour that rob women of their agency because of the threat of violence.¹³

The four walls of a household might make it hard to tell who is being oppressed. In the book *Roots and Shadows*, the mother surrogate, Indu is indeed a rebel against Akka. She ran away from home because she felt resentment against her family, in particular towards Akka. The symbol of power in her eyes, Indu marries

Jayant in defiance of Akka's desires. Indu hopes to get independence and a "room of her own" via marriage. She is looking for a marriage of her own will as a way out of the family's apparent suffocation.¹⁴ Having been a daughter for so long, she longs to be a wife and hopes that her new position as a wife would help her achieve the independence she craves. After a short while, her second 'home' turns into the exact jail she had hoped to flee. She becomes distant from her spouse and soon discovers the "gift of silence" in her marriage. She has mastered the art of deceit and has a history of affairs outside the marriage. She returns to the place she described to a "cradle of bondage" fearing that her stay there will hinder her development toward self-actualization. Indu learns more about Akka's history, her concerns, and her sorrows as she returns to her paternal home. then realises Akka isn't the sadist she had previously thought. It took Indu almost a decade to discover that Akka had donated all of her possessions, not to anyone else, notwithstanding Akka's regrets over Indu leaving the house. In the beginning, Indu believed that Akka was the aggressor and she was the victim. Indu, on the other hand, may have seen Akka as a torturer in those scenario, which would be understandable. However, the harm had already been done by the time Vidya realised her error. However, the harm had already been done by the time Indu recognized his error.¹⁵

Like Sector, Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, repents on her choice of leaving home by rejecting her parents at her early age and marrying Mohan against their desires. She demonstrates a disaster in her marriage couple as Mohan eventually becomes a sadist.¹⁶⁻¹⁸ In this case she deems her mother correct and recollects her words:

You won't be satisfied with him. I know that you wo. A guy of another caste, another community... what would you two have in popular?

Saru has resentment against her mother because she treats her kid better than she does herself, a grudge she had as a youngster. She is deeply hurt and offended by her mother's accusation that she was responsible for her brother's death by drowning. Saru once again challenges her mother, who opposes her travelling to Bombay for med college.¹⁹ Despite her husband's prominence as a doctor, Saru advances to the top of her profession via hard work. However, she quickly realises that her marriage and her obligation to her children are impeding her professional development. She sees marriage as a place of confinement, a place where she will be subjected to constant fear. A new pair of torturous shoes has been added to her collection, and she's not happy about it. Marriage, like her parents' house, seems to be "the chalked lines created by others" that she must cross to go to the other side of. In a moment of crisis, she considers quitting her career,

but Manohar intervenes and convinces her otherwise.²⁰⁻²¹

Saru rejected her mother's wishes and enrolled in medical school in order to become financially independent. However, she soon discovers that, despite her newfound financial freedom, she still lacks satisfaction in her life. She eventually quits her work and goes back to her parents' house. As a result, Saru initially encounters her mother as a source of emotional anguish before meeting her spouse. Once again, she finds her father to be icy. Desire for pleasure and fulfilment may lead a young lady to oppose her family members, according to Deshpande.²²

However, in spite of the oppression of women in the family via customs such as sati and taboos against widow marriage, Indian families remain peaceful. Consider the fact that in India, family is more than just a collection of ties. The term "family" connotes a unity of purpose. The only case in which tyranny assumes a discordant tone is when the family's antagonistic goals collide. Because they didn't recognise the opinions of others and instead clung to a belief in suppression, Indu and Saru's early lives were tragically cut short.²³

In any community, oppression is not the goal. Every time oppression is used, it's to further the interests of the system that's imposing it. The opposite is true if oppression as an object remains, which provides a fertile foundation for tyranny to thrive in one way or another." This is how they work together. Because of patriarchy's origins in society, there have been conflicting groups of those who have and those who have not since the state established as a strong force to dominate the day. This exploitation system includes both males and women. Females, despite statutory and constitutional support, endured sexual exploitation or gender-discrimination in one form. The explicit depiction in *That Long Silence* of "two young guys and a girl" engaging in awful public nuisance is a good example. Even as Jaya screamed in anguish, the laughing became louder and Jaya was pursued into the rain by the laughter. With this one episode, the writer has effectively addressed the problem of sexual exploitation of women in the modern world in all its horrifying elements with powerful impact.²⁴

Author Shashi Deshpande has shown violence against women in her works, evoking empathy for the victims and providing a rationale for her characters' behaviour. Saru, as a daughter, is constantly overlooked and undervalued because of her brother's superiority. On the other hand, her brother's birthdays are eagerly anticipated, but her own is often overlooked. In the event of a drowning, she is the first person to be accused by her mother, who says, "You murdered him. What kept you alive?"

He asks, "Why are you still here?" Saru despised this sort of prejudice, so she went to Bombay to attend university and found hostel life to be a form of 'rebirth'. The author appears to be advocating a different way of

life, one free of the constraints of a traditional family. She uses her right to marry anyone she wants, regardless of caste or religion, since she is living in a dormitory at the time. If you want to speak about what happened to her over those three days at the hostel, you can't since she is no longer untouchable. Because of her mother's religious beliefs, she was not permitted to contact anything for the first three or four days of her period. In *Roots and Shadows*, she is the protagonist. Indu has a sensitive nature. In her quest for success, she finds Akka & her family a major roadblock. Akka forbids her from establishing friendships with male students while she is at college. She eventually leaves the family and marries Jayant, a man of her own choosing, after growing up in the shadow of her own personal pain.²⁵

In the story, *The Binding Wine*, Kaplana, a maid slave daughter is assaulted by a wealthy guy. She experienced trauma. Her mother was in misery and implored Urmila, the heroine of the tale, to understand her grief and not to condemn the daughter for this:

As someone who had been mistreated, she was wronged by a guy who had hurt her. What's wrong with you? What's wrong with you? Because it isn't her fault.

Kalpana, a member of a lower-income household, was hip and trendy despite her status. She was raped by a well-off guy. Two young males with intoxicating cigarettes molested another "thin figure of a female clothed in pants" in *That Long Silence*. According to this interpretation, a weak and sensual person is always open to being used by physical force, and violence will follow if required. In today's culture, clever and creative people have learned how to use contemporary aids like cosmetics and artistic exposes of female bodies to make their targets vulnerable and sensuously beguiling. Kalpana is shown as a Western-dressed woman going along the street.²⁶

Shashi Deshpande uses Saru as a vehicle to demonstrate how a woman may suffer in a marriage of her own choosing. Mohan and Saru were married in college after Saru developed a crush on him. She hoped that by getting married, she would find the love and stability that she lacked at her home with her parents:

I was yearning for love. Each act of intercourse was a victorious expression of our love. Of my being adored. Of my being desired,

Saru, on the other hand, was in for a rude awakening. She was concerned that her feelings for her spouse were eroding. Even though she was a more prominent doctor, there was something missing from their relationship. She is now able to

provide herself with both bread and butter.²⁷ Their relationship was forever altered as a result of this :

Before this, he was the young guy and I was his wife. Now I was a doctor's wife, and he was the man of the house.

She believes that her spouse no longer cares for her as much as he used to. They saw their marriage suffer as she rose through the ranks of medicine to become one of the most well-known doctors in the country. Overnight, Manu had transformed into a sadist rapist, terrifying and humiliating Saru to his core: She informs her spouse that she is resigning from her position as a doctor as a peaceful resolution to their conflict. "Come on, Saru, don't be ridiculous," Manu, the family's rational head of household, replies in response. You're aware of my salary. "You think we can afford to live like this?" Returning to her parents' house in quest of solace, she was faced with the same destiny as before, leaving her perplexed. Roots and Shadows' Indu isn't interested in living like the rest of the family.²⁸⁻³⁰ Under Akka's control, she feels suffocated. So she chooses to run away from the house & marry Jayant of her choosing in order to escape her and her family's ties. She sees no difference between herself and the other women in the household since she follows her husband's orders. "I lost my capacity to be alone when I met Jayant," Indu laments. She realised that her desire for Jayant's company was no different from that of other women. She conforms to her husband's wishes. She makes the following statement :

My mind wanders to Jayant every time I look in the mirror, put on or take off my clothes, or undress. When it comes to his desires, it is always what he wants. And I don't blame him either. I have not been pushed into this by him. It's just as I envisioned it...

As a result of her devotion to Jayant, her holiday home of choosing has become the identical jail she had used to escape. Indu also endures a quiet sexual shame because of her disenchantment with sex. She strives to listen to the voice in her conscience and cultivates an ideal of detachment and independence.³¹

CONCLUSION

The idea of a male-dominated society as an evolving social structure was put forward. Initially, hunter-gatherer tribes discovered that men and women had distinct responsibilities, but the exact origins are still up for debate. The roles that women played limited their access to and involvement in aspects of our society and cultures. Men's duties positioned them at the heart of a predatory hunter structure that facilitated the rise of power and the acquisition of riches. From this vantage, male-dominated society has not altered over

millennia in its perception of the unequal status of women's and men's positions in society.³²

As a novelist, Shashi Deshpande has attempted to portray the strength and self-confidence of women as a remedy to society's ills. A society's intrinsic oppression and exploitation of women is not something that can be remedied only by women asserting their uniqueness. Individual action has no effect on society, hence the question is irrelevant. Deshpande does not address this subject in any depth.³³

REFERENCES

1. Anne F Stenhammer, (December 20 2012) Regional Programme Director, UN Women South Asia.
2. Anthony C (1995) Ecopsychology and deconstruction of wholeness. In: Roszak T, Gomes M, Kanner A (eds.), Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth healing the mind. Sierra Club Books, San Francisco. pp: 263–278.
3. Barry, K., (1995). The prostitution of sexuality New York: NY University Press.
4. Berman T (1994) The rape of mother nature: Women in the language of environmental discourse. Trumpeter 11: 173-178.
5. Besthorn FH (2001) Transpersonal psychology and deep ecological philosophy: Exploring linkages and applications for social work. Social Thought: Journal of Religion in the Social Services 20: 23–44.
6. Bhuyan, D., Panigrahy. R. L. (2006). Women Empowerment. New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House .
7. Biehler J (1988) What is social ecofeminism? Green Perspectives 11: 3.
8. Capra F (1996) The web of life: A new scientific understanding of living systems. Anchor Books, New York.
9. Chande, M. B. (1997). The Police in India New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors.
10. Chandra, R. (Ed.). (2004). Status of Women in India in Social Development in India. New Delhi: Isha Books.
11. Cheney J (1987) Eco-feminism and deep ecology. Environ Ethics 9: 115-145.
12. Christ C (1990) Rethinking theology and nature. In: Diamond I, Orenstein G (eds.), Reweaving the world: The emergence of ecofeminism. Sierra Club Books, San Francisco. pp: 58–69.
13. d'Eaubonne F (1994) A time for ecofeminism. In: Merchant C (ed.), Key concepts in critical theory: Ecology. Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, NJ. pp: 174–197.
14. Das, S. (1990). Crime and punishment in Ancient India New Delhi: Abhinav Publications.
15. Dr. Khokan Kumar Bag, Piyal Basu Roy, (March 2012) Changing Face of

- Women Exploitation in International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow Vol. 1 No. 1 ISSN: 2277-6168 March|2012.
16. Flowers R. B. (1994). The Victimization and Exploitation of Women and Children- A Study of Physical Mental and Sexual Maltreatment in United States. USA: Mc Fasland & Company.
 17. Fox W (1989) The deep ecology–ecofeminism debate and its parallels. *Environ Ethics* 11: 5-25.
 18. Fox W (1995) Toward a transpersonal ecology: Developing new foundations for environmentalism. State University of New York Press, New York.
 19. Gordon, L.P. (2002) Violence against Women NY. Nara Science Publishers.
 20. Johnson H, Ollus N & Nevala S (2008) Violence against women: An international perspective NY: Springer.
 21. Kheel M (1991) Ecofeminism and deep ecology: Reflections on identity and difference. *Trumpeter: Journal of Echospy* 8: 62–72.
 22. Lerner G (2005) The majority finds its past: Placing women in history. University of North Carolina Press, Charlotte, North Carolina.
 23. Mathews F (1994) Relating to nature: Deep ecology or ecofeminism? *Trumpeter* 11: 159-166.
 24. Merchant C (1994) Key concepts in critical theory: Ecology. Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, NJ.
 25. Mukhejee, D. (2005). Women and Urban Crime. New Delhi: Kalpaz Publication.
 26. Queralt M (1996) The social environment and human behavior: A diversity perspective. Allyn and Bacon, Boston.
 27. Rao, M.K. (2005) Empowerment of Women in India New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House.
 28. Renzetti C.M. & Bergen R.K eds. (2005) Violence against Women UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher.
 29. Salleh A (1992) The ecofeminism/deep ecology debate: A reply to patriarchal reason. *Environ Ethics* 14: 195-216.
 30. Skolimowski H (1990) For the record: On the origin of ecophilosophy. *Trumpeter: Journal of Ecosophy* 7: 44-48.
 31. Tripathi, R.S. & Tiwari, R.P. (1999) Perspective on Indian Women New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation.
 32. Warren K (1990) The power and promise of ecological feminism. *Environ Ethics* 12: 125-146. 8. Griffin S (1990) Curves along the road. In: Diamond I, Orenstein G (eds.), *Reweaving the world: The emergence of ecofeminism*. Sierra Club Books, San Francisco. pp: 87–99.
 33. Zastrow C, Kirst-Ashman KK (1997) Understanding human behavior and the social environment. Nelson-Hall, Chicago.

Arvind Kumar Dubey*

Research Scholar, Shri Krishna University, Chhatarpur M.P.

Corresponding Author

Arvind Kumar Dubey^{1*}, Dr. Aditi Dutta²