Projections of New Dimensions & Aspects in the Indian Literature Scenario Based on Shashi Deshpande’s *That Long Silence* and Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*

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**Introduction**

The Post-1990s Indian English novels dealt with the various ideas. It attracted to the international reader and introduces the new trends and tendencies to the Indian English literature. It also helps to understand the glorious Indian world, its heritage, folklore, civilization, different issues concerned with the Indian society and the representation of the New India. Indian English Novel expands the new dimension and introduces the new aspects of the Indian scenario to the world. These writers also presented the Indian women issues and violence against them through their novels. Women are the pillar of the society. Women could enhance the social circumstance in order to rebuild the society based on the new invention. Any violence against the women is shameful to the humanity. Women are also the pioneer of the society but they exploited by the male violence. Mental abuses of women are also a part of violence against women. Exploitation, harassment, mental torture and threatens these are some parts of domestic violence. Violence is a horrible act against women where she finds herself a coward. Due to the violence against women, she is not able to contribute the society, culture and nation’s other region. Violence is harmful proceeds to women’s prosperity and for the development of self.

The present paper will explore the notion of violence in Shashi Deshpande’s novel *That Long Silence* and Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*. Shashi Deshpande’s novel explores the notion of violence against women, oppression, exploitation, gender discrimination, physical violence, sexual assault, melancholic life of the Indian women and look at the women’s position as subordinated in the Indian society. Deshpande focuses on the women issues and raises the voice for them. Her novel is also the massive reaction against the patriarchal world. On the other hand, Arundhati Roy’s novel is a major achievement. It dealt with the domestic violence against women, marginality, and subaltern of women. Roy takes the position of those women who are extremely downtrodden. Her novel also exposes the issues of distress of women, subjugation, loss of self, and suppression of women, mental harassment, and rape. Roy presented the dilemma of the Indian women through her novel. She depicted the depressing women and provides her moral support to rebuild her individual world. Both the writers presented the female issues through their women experiences and give the psychological boost to Indian women. They want to reconstruct the new Indian women society. And deconstruct the old orthodox male
dominating approach. These two narratives will explore the violence against women through the feminist theoretical perspectives.

**Keywords:** Violence, Marginality, Subaltern, Suppression, Rape, Phallocentrism, Caste

**Introduction**

What is Feminism? Feminism denotes women’s sovereignty. Feminism stands for the women’s shifting or rights. The notion feminism dealt with the comprehensive circulation in the association between the sexes in the relatives and people. Feminism focuses on the individual women’s problems and condemns the women social inequality. Feminist ask for the women privileges, equality in justice, political affairs and in the communal social order. Moreover, there should be signed for the women’s excellence in the personal and social circle. The anxiety between detachment and disparity is the center point of the feminist dispute (Hannam 4-5).

Moreover, feminist stand against the division, trade, and industry and gender intimidation and it also throw the dominance of capitalism, patriarchy and that entire violence act against the women. Feminism also operates against the subordinated position of women. Where the women face the dominating world created by the male-centric society (Hannam 6).

Feminism started to give the power to women to articulate and to come in the stream of education, and to break down the dominance of patriarchy. Henceforth, they began to write the history and memoirs. It also helps to understand their rights and look for the women’s freedom (Hannam 7). Furthermore, feminist activist involves in the nationalism, in fact, revolt against the colonialism, and criticizes to male power, come forward for the women struggle, and their attempt to capture the societal, financial and diplomatic rights as well (Hannam 8).

Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*, the novel dealt with the notion n of violence to Ammu’s life; who is a female protagonist of the novel. She has divorce woman. Rahel came back to India, Estha back to home. They have their own violent life. They try to survive in the bad circumstances and face much violence created by their own people. They have lost their self. And have the predicament of life. It’s because of human unconsciousness (Tickell 5). The novel depicted the violence lift up by the casteism. It has a main focus of narrative in the novel. Roy also projected the violence against women in Kerala. It happens due to the social disproportion in the context of untouchable existed in Kerala. The violence happens against women under the notion of history, trespass, and biology (Tickell 9). Moreover, Roy narrates the life of Velutha who is untouchable. Due to the marriage with Ammu a middle-class women. He was outcast from the society and harasses mentally and physically by the villagers and the police inspector Thomas Mathews. He is suffered from the mental disorder because he belongs to an untouchable category. Another incident of the violence happened against Velutha when Sophie Moi died and the police inspector turns the case against Velutha through the assist of Baby Kochamma. Moreover, he was deceived by the police in case of abduction of two children and sentenced to
imprison and pass on by suffering mentally (Ebrahim 148). So this is what, Roy presents the brutal violence committed by the society against Velutha due to his lower caste position. They do not judge as a human. They played the game of mental violence against Velutha to control the own supremacy. Roy stands for the justice of Veluth. She was against the caste violence of individual. According to Radford and Kelly violence is “Violence against women is not the result of random, individual acts of misconduct, but rather is deeply rooted in the structural relationship of inequality between women and men…Violence constitutes a continuum across the lifespan of women, from before birth to old age. It cuts across both the public and the private sphere (qtd in Lombard and McMillan 9).

Moreover, the History House stands for the sexual violence of women, murdered, rape and the bloodshed during the time of colonialism of British Empire. The class, ethnicity, and political beliefs make over into the social violence (Giles 9). Chacko describes the History House, “When we look in through the windows, all we see are shadows. And when we try and listen, all we hear is a whispering, and we cannot understand the whispering because our minds have been invaded by a war” (Roy 52). Another incident of violence appears when Rahel hates her mother Ammu “she hated her mother then. Hated her” (Roy 153). Rahel disliked her mother because of her marginal position in the society and her worth past and present life. Ammu’s life become miserable and she died in frustration. Her death “It gave nothing away… Silence hung in the air like a secret loss” (Roy 87). The village and entire family went in the dilemma due to the pathetic death of Ammu. The society was the responsible factor to devastate her life (Giles 8). According to Kenway and Fitzclarence violence against women, “Violence is one of the major social problems of our time. It is increasingly understood that violence occurs along a continuum and involves physical, sexual, verbal and emotional abuses of power at the individual, group and social structural levels” (qtd in Lombard and McMillan 9).

Furthermore, Ammu struggle against her husband drunken manners “Drunken violence followed by post-drunken badgering” (Roy 42). Ammu get married to Velutha against society. But her husband’s drunken character plunders her life and brings her in distress. He tortures for the liquor and money and sexual desire as well as offers own wife to his boss Mr. Hollic. Both Hollic and Velutha make her physically, mentally and sexually tired of their desire and beaten up her badly until her last breath comes. Ammu’s sexual violence by her partner divulges the male-dominated tendency of Indian male supremacy (Rahman 187-188). Furthermore, Kochmma creates the racial violence against the Rahel and Estha by saying ruined and orphan “As they were half Hindu hybrids, no self-respecting Syrian Christian would ever marry them” (qtd in Rahman 201). Here Roy explores the violence of racism. It was a part of the postcolonial period and people had different sort of views about inter-caste marriages. So similarly it happens with the Estha and Rahel. They suffered from this kind insult. It was a kind of mental violence of both. Roy presents the social violence of caste and marriages in the society that how the women become the victims of this verbal violence. According to Amnesty International highlight “At least one out of three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her
lifetime…Usually, the abuser is a member of her own family or someone known to her” (qtd in Lombard and McMillan 10).

Moreover, Ipe Family was the most patriarchal in Kerala. Vicar Ipe also tortures his wife called Aleyooty Ammachi. She was the first lady of their family who was the victim of social norms, patriarchy, tradition and cultural dominance over her beliefs. She had a terror in the mind of her husband. She was an obedient and frustrated woman due to her husband’s threaten, “Aleyooty Ammachi looked more hesitant. As though she would have liked to turn around but couldn’t. Perhaps it wasn’t as easy for her to abandon the river. With her eyes, she looked in the direction that her husband looked. With her heart, she looked away” (qtd in Rahman 183). Here Roy focuses on the patriarchal culture of Kerala. How it is dominating to women. Male-dominated society does not allow women to recreate their own world of their rules. They must have stay in the circle of patriarchy. Roy explores the ruling violence against the women by male-centric society. According to Weiner, Zahn and Sagi violence is “the threat, attempt or use of physical force by one or more persons that results in physical or nonphysical harm to one more other persons” (qtd in Zahn et. al N.p)

Roy presents the social violence reach the high acme. The Indian social values and beliefs become outdated due to the violence around the women and lower caste communities in India. Roy presents a distinctive and influential narrative that mechanism on several stages. It also represents the discourse of east and west. Moreover, it confronts central narrative of Indian antique, rebel against tyrannical dogma, and demonstrates the anarchy, violence, and illusion of a country struggle by means of its colonial history as well (Giles 14).

On the other hand, Shashi Deshpande’s novel That Long Silence, explores the notion of violence against the women, their discrimination and sexual exploitation by the phallocentric society. The novel dealt with the violence moving around the Indian women as the portrayal in the form of Jaya who struggles for the existence after her marriage. She faces violence, inequality, mental trauma and sexual violence within the periphery of society. She finds herself in limited freedom and the power of articulation of her own aspiration (Usha 126). The other women characters are Jeeja, Nayana who works as a maid in the house of Jaya. Whose life is lifeless without their husband? Nayana has a negative approach to life. She doesn’t want girl as a daughter because of male dominance over women. Nayana said to Jaya:

Why give birth to a girl, benji, who’ll only suffer because of men all her life? Look at me! My mother loved me very much, she wanted so much for me...a house with electricity and water, shining brass vessels, a silver waist chain, silver anklets…and what have I got? No, no, behnji, better to have a son (qtd in Usha 127).

Deshpande exposes the fear of women nature due to the violence effect on their psychology. Henceforth, Nayana scared of the drunken husband who would torture her daughter akin to her. Nayana has already very painful life. She does not want to see any other women sufferer under the name of patriarchy and violence of male power. According to Newman violence is “the use of force to gain dominance over another or others” (qtd in Zahn, et. al. N.p)
Mohan’s father represents the dominating nature of male vigor. Wherever he comes to the house he asks for the clean cooking if Mohan’s mother was not capable to afford the food he bowls the plate of chutney and his mother look at him without reaction it was the cold silence of his mother. She was unable to resist her freedom. This was a mental torture and harassment of her pride and feminine identity. Mohan mentioned about this violent confrontation “He saw strength in the woman sitting silently in front of the fire, but I saw despair. I saw despair so great that it would not voice itself. I saw a struggle so bitter that silence was the only weapon. Silence and surrender” (Deshpande 36). Deshpande clearly focuses on the violence against women. Her insult and struggle against male power.

A woman doesn’t stand firm against the male force because traditionally women have subordinated place in the society. Mohan’s mother represents all those silences of women who are the victims of social violence and patriarchy. According to Brownstein violence are forms of social activity that we consider violent are those that in our judgment symbolize and represent physical force and domination” (qtd in Zahn et. al. N.p).

Jaya articulated her inner violence “I had often found family life unendurable. Worse than anything else had been the boredom of the unchanging pattern, the unending monotony…I remember how I had signed for a catastrophe… to shake us out of our dull grooves” (Deshpande 4). After marriage, Jaya is dissatisfied with Mohan because the whole family has traditional outlook towards the life. They are so orthodox by nature. Mohan’s nature is also dominating, torturing and violent. Henceforth, she seems so frustrated with him. Here Deshpande exposes the women’s oppression under the reality of male power and violence. Moreover, Jaya faces the same problems of a husband who becomes frustrated in life. Jaya was so disappointed because of her husband and want a divorce but her aunt Vanitamami advice Jaya “A husband is like a sheltering tree… without the tree, you are dangerously unprotected and vulnerable. This followed logically (Deshpande 32).

Here the influence of patriarchy reflects through prejudice view of her aunt. It denotes that how the male society controls the women world emotionally and makes them passive. Furthermore, Jaya seems frustrated “I would not be given to anyone…But all this actually a futile exercise, trying to figure out why I married Mohan; the truth is that he had decided to marry me. I had only to acquiesce (Deshpande 94). Here also male approach reflects the desire of dominance of Mohan and violent desire to conquer her and to enjoy her physical charm. According to Riches violence is “A necessary condition of violence since the performer uses it to justify the acts of violence themselves” (qtd in Stewart and Stratherm 8).

Furthermore, Jaya’s abortion of the third child makes her life so pathetic. She lost her courage and hopes to live anymore in life. It happens because of Mohan’s unawareness. He wants only physical pleasure instead of saving the life of her and the little child. At the end of the novel, Jaya wants to discard the way of tradition. And she wants to begin her new life. She realizes “Life has always made to be possible” (Deshpande 193).
Conclusion

Deshpande explores the idea of violence in case of the Indian women. Who is the most sufferer of male-dominated society? The whole novel is a journey of women struggle and violence against them. Jaya is an isolated woman in the novel. She doesn’t have any mutual understanding with Mohan. Her married life is full of clashes with Mohan who becomes aggressive and frustrated husband against Jaya (Das 85). Deshpande raises the voice for the Indian women and wants to bring back in the main stream of the society.

References: