



The Impact Of Women Protagonists' Growth Mindset In The Select Works Of Shashi Deshpande And Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

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Citation: R. Anuradha, Dr. K. Suresh, (2024), The Impact Of Women Protagonists' Growth Mindset In The Select Works Of Shashi Deshpande And Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(3), 2259-2262

Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i3.3913

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

He who reigns within himself and rules his passion, desires and fears is more than a king." - John Milton

There is nothing in the world that can trouble a person more than his or her own thoughts. A person having a positive mindset helps them to stay emotionally present during difficult situation. They have emotional knowledge to control impulsive feelings and takes initiatives to adapt to changing situation. A person with a growth mindset believes in their ability to make the circumstance best with their continuous effort. Cognition is an important aspect of the personality that helps to understand the self. Thus, cognition influences the self by managing stress, controlling emotions, and recalling things or situations. According to Prof. G.K. Nanda (ed.), the self of a person is enlightened by the environment and culture through various functional frames i.e. self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-consciousness, self-control, and self-actualization. Emotions play a very important role in human life that promotes a congenial relationship with others. Shashi Deshpande and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's protagonists are all intelligent-thinking personalities capable of self-analysis and self-understanding. The characters who have a positive approach towards life believe in themselves and decides the course of action. This paper aims to reveal the psychological aspirations concerned with an infinite capacity for growth in the novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *The Last Queen*. The characters were able to discern the true meaning in life doing their best in fulfilling their potential. The growth mindset between Sarita and Jindan Kaur enhanced them to solve inevitable obstacles in life through self-confidence and emotional knowledge

Key words: courage, potential, emotional knowledge, growth mindset, self-confidence.

Introduction

The Indian English women novelists of the second generation, particularly after Independence have responded to the psychological realities of Indian lifestyle. The authors Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jabvala, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Shashi Deshpande, Nergir Dalal, and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni who were constituted emotionally and Intellectually to an authentic treatment to the situation. Thenovelist's intellectual training seems to have endowed them with the speciality of humane touch and psychological depth. Shashi Deshpande and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni are eminent authors among the contemporary Indian writers in English. Their novels reflect genuine humanistic concerns and human emotions. Shashi Deshpande is a well-known Indian novelist who writes in the English language though communicates well in Marathi and Kannada. Her knowledge in the colossal domain of Indian folklore and her principal content are woven from Indian woman's lives and their everyday lives profoundly oriented by male power structures.

The Dark Holds No Terrors is a story of a middle-class woman named Sarita, often referred to as Saru. She seems to be an educated and independent woman who is dejected, forlorn, and isolated. She was grown up in an environment of hatred, hostility, and sibling jealousy. She was deprived of parental care and affection. The protagonist of the novel was bound by the guilt of her brother Dhruva's death and the abandonment of her parents. Against her parents' wishes, she marries a teacher by profession from a lower caste. She married Manohar to get away from her mother's house. She realized Manu was her savior who would rescue her from her insecure maternal home. Saru was very soon disappointed with her husband as he tortured her both physically and sexually. Manu's male ego is hurt by his wife's superiority complex. Manu's masculinity asserts itself through nocturnal sexual assaults upon his wife Sarita. She becomes a mute sufferer wallowing in self-pity and silence. Her marriage with her loved one did not allow her to live in peace and her happiness was short-lived.

She believed that the homecoming could help her to find solace and peace within herself. She returns to her father's house after fifteen years. The protagonist comes back to her father's place to introspect and interrogate her relationship with her husband. Sarita's conversation with her father provides emotional knowledge with the tiny hope of a new beginning. Her father's guidance helped her to analyze the problem and re-examine her crisis. She was longing to find comfort and refuge in her soul because the protagonist was suffering from a sense of guilt and resentment. All through the years she lived with the guilt consciousness thinking that she was responsible for her brother Dhuruva's death. But it was her father who believed her from the beginning that she was not responsible for her brother's death. When a person is in the situation of trials and tribulation, a fellow human who has a positive mindset supports her to make a decision courageously. It was her father who explained to Saru about Duryodhana

It was that episode of Duryodhana in the Mahabharata, Duryodhana at the very end of the battle' He waits there for the Pandavas to come and kill him. Yes, that's what all of us have to face in the end. That we are alone. We have to be alone.' (194)

Truly these words motivated Saru to decide better for her life. One has to face the problems in life courageously and should not avoid facing problems. He also says that she should understand the reality. S. J. Rachman defines courage as perseverance in the face of fear and stress. A person with a growth mindset helps to continue to lead life by making his or her own choice. When Saru is not prepared to face her husband, she decides to leave her father's house to avoid the embarrassing situation. It was Sarita's father who changed her negative thinking into positive by pleading with her to live life present and forget the dead. Truly, her father provided a psychological strength to face the guilt and fear. 'Give him a chance, Saru. Stay and meet him. Talk to him. Let him know from you what's wrong' (217)

She had a suicidal thought and didn't want to be labeled as a coward forever. This mindset helped her to face the world with fearlessness, confidence, and determination. Saru realizes her different selves as a guilty sister, unloving wife, and undutiful daughter and accepts all these selves as they are because she has the wisdom and courage to decide wisely. An emotionally aware person can persist in the face of frustrations.

My brother died because I heedlessly turned my back on him. My mother died alone because I deserted her. My husband is a failure because I destroyed his manhood. (217)

The problem in Sarita, throughout her lifetime, is unable to decide and this leads her to insecurity. Saru faced an identity crisis due to her confused self. She attains a growth understanding that there is no refuge other than one's self. She realizes that she cannot be happy unless she attains peace of mind through her efforts.

Finally, she regained confidence as she became emotionally aware that everyone has to face the events of life to shape it according to one's own will. The protagonist with a strong mind had focused on positive growth in realizing her potential. She had a growth mindset that embraced her to learn and solve personal challenges. Saru healthily managed her emotions by adapting to the changing situations. 'that the terrors are inside us all the time. We carry them within us, and like traitors they spring out, when we least expect them, to scratch and maul.' (85)

She decides to move onwards getting rid of her guilty. The growth mindset in a person helps to develop the intelligence and a desire in learning to lead a successful life. It makes the person to embrace challenges and persist in the face of setbacks. Saru expects her father to help her but he strongly points out that it was she herself who has to decide and should not again avoid her problems as she had done during her childhood. It was Madhav who made to realize the truth of life 'My Life is my own boldly he had said' (220). At first Sarita was not convinced and did not understand the life better. But, soon she realized that if a young boy can think of his life then why can't she think of her life better?

Dweck says, the growth mindset allows a person to give up the blame and move on'. One cannot go back to the past life and has to continue on the path of one's own choice that may lead them all alone. The reality is understanding self- one's own self. G. K. Nanda (ed) says, Human beings are social animals and they often get carried away by the flow. They must think rationally and consider what could be the best option for them in a given situation, before they choose the right option. He also says that, decisions should be made to improve the quality of the work. A person should have the courage to face failure with a bold heart. A person cannot achieve or succeed in life, if they get afraid of the situations. One should understand the fact that the courage and patience are the two important stepping stones to success.

Saru tries hard to prevail over her psychological fears and grows up to overcome the suppressing forces. She analyzes the dark corners of her soul. She discerns to undergo the arduous journey by learning to free herself of guilt, fear, and humiliation. She accepts herself to become the whole again with inner solace and peaceful co-existence. 'She had to accept these selves to become whole again.' (220).

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni was an Indian-born American Author and poet was born in Calcutta, India. In the year 1976, she received her B.A. degree from the University of Calcutta. In that same year she went to the United States to pursue her master's degree. Chitra has also received a PhD in English from the University of California, in 1985. Her works have been translated into many languages and two of her novels have been made into films. She is attributed in presenting the characters with more real and human than any other textbooks. Her novels are often based on true life events depicting the characters and situations from various backgrounds. Her writing style exhibits human experience but certainly not a feminist but simply a humanitarian.

The author's mastery with words and exceptional storytelling skills shine through the novel *The Last Queen*. It perhaps leaves the reader to know more about the real life of Jind Kaur who was rarely spoken of. Shabana Azmi says that, it is 'An unforgettable story about the fearless, much feared queen whom history seems to have forgotten. Jindan is heroic. Her strength and spirit are lesson for us'. Chitra Banerjee in her novel *The Last Queen* paints Jindan as an inspiring figure who dared to dream of glory.

The British were wary of Jindan Kaur as she established herself as a formidable queen. Jindan was the last queen of Sikh Empire who fearlessly fought against the British, to keep alive the royal legacy of her late husband Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Jindan was not only hailed for her beauty but also for her braveness, curiosity and intelligence. Being the daughter of the kennel keeper, she became the youngest wife of the first Maharaja of the Sikh Empire. How was it possible for a girl from a no-name family on the outskirts of a small town, ended up in Lahore, the city of emperors? It was all possible because of her positive thoughts which gave rise to her action. The growth mindset in Jindan Kaur had a tremendous impact of being fearless, inspiring others, laying emphasis on persuasion and perseverance, making the impossible as possible and treating every problem as a challenge.

Positivity is a change in perspective by keeping others positions and circumstances into consideration. 'Besides, it's important to learn as much as I can about the Sarkar's world. Knowledge is power'. (124). The growth mindset in Jindan Kaur was attributed with accepting the situation and always seems to be hopeful. Most wedding ceremonies involve an exchange of marriage vows by a couple, presentation of a gift, flowers, money, and flamboyant wedding dress with a public proclamation of marriage by an authority figure. But Jindan's marriage was entirely different. She was married to the Sarkar's sword as he can't be there because of state matters. After the prayers have been chanted the sword was tied to her dupatta. She felt the sword very heavy but carried it so proudly. Above all, her marriage ceremony happened at midnight without the bridegroom. She understands the situation and attributed to the emotional development. After entering the haveli, she developed more emotional control, enhanced her tolerance and learned to deal with the pain of severe intensity by not getting perturbed.

She encountered so many problems like Sarkar's ill health, Mai's enmity beside, the forgotten rani's and concubines hostile stares. She was not afraid to counter the risks and hurdles; instead she taught how to solve those problems. The growth mindset in Jindan helped her in inner energization and directing her thoughts and efforts towards her goal for achieving success. Jindan believes in her abilities and determine to make things happen. Positive mindset significantly contributes to success in life, particularly in the environment of struggle. When Sarkar was in his sickbed, Jindan had a strong hope that he would become better from his illness. Unfortunately, maharaja succumbs to death due to his illness. After his death she was dejected and felt lonely. Her world seems to be doomed of not knowing what next. Jindan was not afraid to share her views of what others think about her. After the demise of Sarkar, the life became more challenging. The unrelenting stress affected her mentally and emotionally but she derives strength when her husband's voice pulled with her realizing the purpose of living for the sake of her only son. 'You must be both father and mother to our son. Didn't you promise me that?' (169).

Gary Mc Guire says 'There's something that you and you only can do, and when you find your heart's desire, you'll have the key to unlocking your potential in every other part of your life.' As all of the king's heirs were dead, the fate pushes prince Dalip to the throne, making maharani Jindan as a queen regent. In her new role, she fights hard against the British as well as her own treacherous courtiers, politics and endless battles to power. Jindan being strong and fearless woman claims to take full responsibility on her mistakes and decisions.

Mc Guire says, every day is better than the previous one. He also says, that's the way a person should live. A person grows better by becoming MORE by realizing MORE of their potential each day. The first thing they need to do is to decide on what they wish to accomplish.

Jindan became a symbol of national dignity with self-directed thinking as a major component of intelligence dealing with the enhancement of healthy thoughts and ideas. It is the quality of Positivity as a firewall that converts negative emotions into opportunities or solutions. Numerous problems confronted the queen, but she applied herself the solution to those problems with the assistance from elder statesmen and military generals. The British employed a smear campaign to discredit the queen's image as the 'Messalina of the Punjab'. Jindan never bothered about the defamation of her character. She positively handled the situation

because her only intention was to shield the land of Punjab from the hands of colonialists. The regent was the only person who exhibited strong determination and courage during the critical period of the war with the British.

She was separated from her son Dalip and was imprisoned in Sheikhpura Zila and later banished to Chunar fort in Banaras. She remained under strict surveillance of British control for several years. 'I was so desperate and lonely at Sheikhpura and Chunar' (302). The prison environment can be inherently damaging to a person's mental health as they have disconnected with their family and society. It is not a pleasant place to live in. They have no freedom or decision making power or no action can be taken. However, Jindan continued to fight with courage and stubbornness. She had mental resilience when life circumstances change unexpectedly. 'The tears come because I'm leaving my beloved country forever. I had a small hope of returning'(307). Jindan escaped to Kathmandu by undertaking a dangerous journey all by her. She crossed the treacherous mountain terrain and proved herself to be a fearless woman who would take up the risk in life. The Nepal prime minister, Jung Bahadur granted her asylum and it was widely believed that Jindan was engaged in political intrigue to secure the revival of Sikh dynasty in the Punjab.

Maharani was informed that her son Dalip Singh was about to return to India, towards the end of 1860. She was reunited with her son after being estranged for a period of fourteen years. She became even stronger than she were before 'This is good because I need to grow. There are many things I must do once I reach England, in the little time I have left' (308). Jindan fought greater obstacles in life and proved she was no less than a lioness herself. Her growth mindset allowed her to try the hardest part of her life with more confidence and hope.

Conclusion

The self of a person is enlightened by the cognitive process. A Growth mindset discovers peace and makes the best of the circumstance. The characters understand themselves better during tough situation and discover peace within self. According to Carol Dweck "there is a mindset that helps people cope well with setbacks, points them to good strategies and leads them to act in their best interest". The characters Sarita and Jindan have certain emotional traits which lead them to the major source of strength and impulse control. They believed in themselves and had positive thinking. Sarita had tolerance as not to fight or take revenge against anyone. Finally she analyses whether she needs to remain a prisoner of her past. She understands the reality that she will be able to walk free only if she unlocks the door of a self-made prison. It's not her home, family or job holding her as a prisoner. It is she who has to free herself. Dweck says, 'In a relationship, the growth mindset lets you rise above blame, understand the problem and try to fix it together.

On the other hand, Jindan decides to accept responsibility to make it right reasonably. Being a strong woman, she embraced her own inherent power and manifested her dreams into reality. Jindan realized to be strong in the most terrifying moments and proved herself as the most fearless woman of the 19th century. When the characters analyze, realize and understand the situation, they try to start the process by creating the energy to achieve things that was meant previously impossible.

Gary Mc Guire says 'We can be decisive and decide at this very moment to acknowledge that we, and no one else, are responsible for our lives. We can decide from this moment on to make only those choices that will improve our lives '(Gary 87).

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