



Female Empowerment in *That Long Silence* by Shashi Deshpande, *The Liberation of Sita* by Volga and *Mahashweta* by Sudha Murty

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CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, women are increasingly challenging societal norms by asserting their individual identities and asserting their rights as human beings, rather than solely identifying themselves based on their gender. They are bravely breaking free from traditional gender roles and expectations, striving for equality, and demanding recognition and respect for their diverse talents, skills, and abilities. Women also attempt to find their personal fulfillment. These novels *That Long Silence* by Shashi Deshpande, *The Liberation of Sita* by Volga and *Mahashweta* by Sudha Murty focuses attention on empowerment of women and their self-exploration which helps them to see the reality and break free from all the societal restrictions which are forced upon women by tradition and the male dominant society. Every single of these books presented a unique and creative perspective on female empowerment. These books show how the female characters in Indian society face difficulties and challenges, their fights and struggles to liberate themselves. Through the encounters of their female characters; Shashi Deshpande, Volga and Sudha Murty investigate the intricacies of gender dynamics in Indian culture and support the liberation of women and their empowerment. So, it can be observed that female empowerment is not a necessary reality (or naked truth) for our nation, but it is an unquestionable necessity for the sustainable improvement of a country.

In the novel by Shashi Deshpande, it has been shown that the male supremacy reflects the patriarchal culture in the marriage bond between Jaya and her husband Mohan. The after effect of marriage results in disappointment, abandonment and conflict as there was lack of affection with only sex. Jaya was constrained to keep silent and was forced to embrace socio-psychic nature. The conventional organization of the Indian family is diminishing as the familial relationship lacks gender equality. Male individuals from the family are qualified for a wide range of solace and reasons while female parts need to forfeit her life keeping quiet,

smothering feelings and wants. The mechanical and counterfeit love is remarkable where gender biasness prevails in the family habitat. Jaya could break free from her shackles after being helped by Kamat. However, she chooses the path of silence and gives up. Brutality isn't the answer for the issues to bring a change, one needs to be patient and to be hopeful. Many women writers in India have stepped forward to let themselves heard by people regarding their feminist approach to deal with life and male centric families. They feel that the actual idea of gender is not solely a biological phenomenon, however it is a result of social construction. Shashi Deshpande is a famous writer of Indian writing, which she writes in English. She has the recognition of writing widely known novels and *That Long Silence* is one of her well-known novels which is an interesting and distinctive work of Shashi Deshpande which connotes the pitiful state of Indian women.

Volga also known as Popuri Lalitha Kumari's exceptionally commendable work *The Liberation of Sita* has received a lot of criticism from specific segments, primarily cautioning against tampering with mythology. However, Volga has kept up with the intriguing, contemplative viewpoints of Telugu writing, displaying Sita and other neglected female heroes from the Ramayana from an alternate perspective - according to their own point of view, showing their understanding about the men in their lives. In 2017, Volga was also honored with an award of 'Laadli Media Award for Fiction's Gender Sensitivity'. The suffering of these ladies, including Ahallya, Surpanakha, Renuka Devi, and Urmila, is not made clear in the Ramayana and some more, still Volga manages to make it happen.

When we talk about other Indian writers, a well-known name in Indian English writing is Sudha Murty. Her entire body of literary work has as its main goals the empowerment of women and the teaching of their own rights. The finest way to explore the idea of a new woman who is more powerful than any man is through *Mahashweta*. The major objective of this paper is to present a lady as a role model for the female community. The book demonstrates that women can be independent thinkers rather than being controlled by men as they once were. The primary issue with women is that they are more focused on their husbands while their husbands neglect and mistreat their own wives. Women reject their husbands at this time and forge their own identities. The most significant jab at the patriarchal culture comes from the novel *Mahashweta*. In the novel, Anupama decides to divorce her spouse and embrace her new, independent existence as a result of her education. The study's findings suggest that Sudha Murthy's "Mahashweta" is the best illustration of how to dispel gender stereotypes and demonstrate how important women are to society.

Literary Review

Rajesh Reddy in "Marginalization of Women in Shashi Deshpande's novel *That Long Silence*" talks about female empowerment as a major issue handled via the events of the female protagonist, Jaya. The story explores the difficulties women encounter in patriarchal societies as well as their path to self-realization and empowerment. The pursuit of education by Jaya becomes a crucial component of her empowerment. She recognises the value of education and pursues it despite social pressure and parental expectations in order to obtain knowledge, independence, and a sense of self-worth. Jaya's personal development is accelerated through education, which is essential to her empowerment. Jaya's battle to stand up for her unique identity and desires serves as a representation of her empowerment. She challenges the limitations placed on her as a

wife and mother by defying traditional gender roles and cultural expectations. Jaya seeks independence and speaks out for her own needs and objectives because she longs for personal fulfillment and freedom outside of her jobs. The novel criticizes patriarchal conventions and women's oppression in the domestic realm. In an effort to eliminate the oppression and quiet that go along with the constrictive gender roles that have been placed upon her, Jaya confronts them. Her voyage serves as a metaphor for a larger struggle against society conventions and the requirement for women to question established gender roles. The pursuit of a profession and financial security by Jaya becomes a crucial component of her empowerment. She decides to become a teacher, which gives her financial autonomy and a feeling of independence. Jaya obtains a degree of freedom and authority over her life by working for her own money, enabling her to take charge of her own destiny. Female empowerment is portrayed in the book as a unique and transforming path. The struggle for women's emancipation in a patriarchal society is reflected in Jaya's will to overcome the limitations of her traditional roles, pursue education, declare her identity, and achieve personal fulfillment.

A brave and talented Indian woman writer named Sudha Murty illustrates the realities of earthly life. R.Geethanjali in "Women's Beauteousness, Intelligence, and Empowerment in Sudha Murty's *Mahasweta*" portrays that it is a perfect example of the want a man has to marry a seductive beauty. Getting married to a seductive, serpentine beauty helps a man achieve success and makes him feel proud and content. He acts impolitely when he examines his wife's leucoderma patient. A man betraying their wife for a rapidly fading beauty is an ignominious deed. The distressed victims are strengthened by Sudha Murthy, who also manifests blinding light for those servile souls. She highlights that knowledge is the key to entering the enlightenment portal and emerging as a woman freed from the constraints of males. Anupama's husband betrays her in *Mahasweta* because of the 'leukoderma'-like white patches on her body. She experiences the endless annoyance and shame that patriarchy causes. Being a woman in a culture where men predominate is difficult. In this universe, some guys with lustful eyes are attempting to steal the chastity of such women. It is also mentioned in the book that when I first noticed you. In my fantasies, I only see you. Why are you keeping your naive husbands waiting? Do you believe he'll ever return to you? Instead of enjoying your youth, you are wasting it. Anu, we can cohabit without anyone ever finding out. In every situation, I'll keep you safe. Anupama slaps the man and mocks his admirable qualities. She was horrified by her situation and started sobbing hysterically. She imagines herself clinging to a string for support as she climbs a steep mountain face, and she later investigates the rope after it transforms into a snake.

Silpa Joy in "Revisioning Women's Voices from The Ramayana: A Feminist Analysis of Volga's *The Liberation of Sita* and Sarah Joseph's *Ramayana Stories*" examines five short stories and analyze the female characters Soorpanakha, Ahalya, Renuka, Urmila, and Sita in "The Reunion," "Music of the Earth," "The Sand Pot," "The Liberated," and "The Shackled." The perception of women's roles and status in society has historically been negatively impacted by the stories of these ladies. The Liberation of Sita will suggest that these stories develop into "revisionist mythology" and provide readers with fresh perspectives on gender and society. "I am a feminist," Volga declares. I humbly identify as a soviet feminist. I don't write only for the pleasure of it. I started writing as a way to help spread feminism's views through literature (254–255). Through

the writings of Volga, who advocates for the political empowerment of women, Telugu feminist literature opened up fresh avenues for the debate of women's issues. *The Liberation of Sita* is a collection of short stories that revolve around the persona of Sita and her conversations with other female characters like Soorpanakha, Ahalya, Renuka, and Urmila. By composing these stories, Volga demonstrates her cognitive process. Volga refutes this claim and portrays Sita and Surpanakha as worshippers of beauty and lovers of peace, in contrast to how the grand narrative has traditionally blamed them for the start of the Great War. However, despite being used as pawns in the Rama-Ravana conflict to further the Aryan kingdom, these women are unable to free themselves from humiliation, disgrace, and mistrust. Soorpanakha is depicted in *The Ramayana's* grand story as a demonic being. Popular retellings focus more on Sita's suffering. However, in her short story "The Reunion," Volga tries to include the problems of Surpanakha. Since her sufferings were due to her longing after a married guy, they were never justified. In addition, Sita and Surpanakha are never described as confidantes; rather, they are always seen as adversaries. Volga advances to show that they are acquaintances. Soorpanakha's empowerment and the actions she takes to accomplish it are depicted in the story.

Research Gap

This research examines the feminist viewpoint in all the three books- *That Long Silence* by Shashi Deshpande, *The Liberation of Sita* by Volga and *Mahashweta* by Sudha Murty. The other critics in their works and in their research, have tried to show female empowerment from a viewpoint of how the female protagonists in each of the books namely, *That Long Silence* (1988), *The Liberation of Sita* (2016), and *Mahashweta* (2000) by showing the female characters struggling, and then rising up from all the struggle by becoming a strong, independent, and a pillar who can support herself. She becomes a person who is complete on her own and is ready to take the world by the storm. My research paper intends to show the other side of female empowerment, which does not necessarily depict the life of women in two zenith and nadir.

The research paper is aimed at showing the part that men play in empowering women, and how men can also be a prime factor in pushing a woman towards her empowerment. Although in few scenarios men can also play the opposite role of helping women in achieving their independence and freedom, not trying to generalize the whole gender (male). Some men can be the catalyst for the upliftment of the women class, while on the other hand some want to crush and oppress the women class.

CHAPTER 2-Female Empowerment in Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*

One of the well-known writers of Indian English literature is Shashi Deshpande, born in 1938. Her work paints an accurate image of her roots in Indian society's middle class. Like many other female novelists, Shashi Deshpande bases her stories around the weddings of female protagonists and her status in the family, which reflects the role of Indian women in society. Shashi Deshpande's opinions on the status of Indian women, their search for identity, their frustration, and their alienation are clear from a close reading of her novels. Deshpande is praised for having exceptional potential as a serious author. The majority of her heroines are women who are well educated and exposed to liberal western concepts, but who are unable to fully escape the grip of radical masculine notions that are ingrained in her culture—that culture that is produced by the patriarchal society. In her books like *That Long Silence* (1988), *Roots and Shadows* (1983), and *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), Shashi Deshpande reflected the marginalization of women. In her books, Deshpande focuses on a variety of issues, including gender inequality, patriarchal culture, and women's servitude. Deshpande, a feminist, has a better awareness of the situation of middle-class housewives in joint families in India. Despite having a good education, they must follow ages-old traditions and norms. Deshpande has focused most of his attention as a novelist on the negative effects of male supremacy and male-oriented ideology as well as how they affect the lives of women. Her works give voice to her awareness of the issues facing middle-class women, particularly the effects of economic hardship and gender discrimination on their psyche. In the 1990 Kendriya Sahitya Academy Award-winning book *That Long Silence*, the author describes the interpersonal dynamics in a typical Indian middle-class family.

The book *That Long Silence* (1988), which is broken up into four sections and includes an Author's Note, confronts the 'Woman Question' head-on and examines the tragicomic existence of Jaya and Mohan in their marriage. The narrator (Jaya) declares at the start of the book, "I'm writing of us". "Self-revelation is a cruel process. Of Mohan and me." Rahul and Rati, the couple's two children, live a dreary, routine-filled life with Jaya and Mohan in a Dadar flat. They appear to be happy while actually fighting constantly. Jaya is a smart woman with a talent for writing, but she gives it up over her husband's objections. He has her feeling choked and cut off from him. They are comparable to a yoked-up pair of bullocks. When Jaya refers to Mohan's mother as "a cook" in a furious temper (which is true), their connection becomes exceedingly strained. Mohan is upset after hearing his educated wife's sudden outburst and he avoids talking to her. He believes that being angry is inappropriate for women and renders them unwomanly. He keeps his distance from her and listens to the "long silence." The metaphor "silence" recurs here as it does in other of Shashi Deshpande's other books. This metaphor is used so frequently in *That Long Silence* that it does so roughly six times. Lack of communication, emotional freeze, and a need for understanding are all indicated by silence. The tension of Jaya's marriage causes her to lose her identity, uniqueness, and "personal vision". Additionally, Jaya struggles with her creative writing, namely with her short tales, as a result of the conflict in her personal relationships. She is not pleased that her spouse has changed her name from Jaya to Suhasini. Jaya gets refuge in Kamat's companionship, with whom she shares her personal issues resulting from Mohan's lack of concern for his family and kids. Mohan abruptly disappears to Delhi without informing anyone of his whereabouts.

At this crucial time, Kamat comforts Jaya, just like Bhaskar did for Urmi in *The Binding Vine*. They become more intimate with one another and start making physical advances. But suddenly, Kamat passes away, leaving Jaya alone and abandoned. On Mohan's return from Delhi, Jaya makes the decision to break the ice and tear down the walls of the "silence." The only option for her to escape her isolated life or end the stillness between herself and Mohan is to talk to him and pay attention to him. That suggests that one or both of them have changed their attitudes or perspectives.

Mohan was impatiently moving about from one moment to next, while Jaya being a woman had learnt to wait, for the women's waiting game she knew started from childhood. A girl is told, "To wait until you get married, until your husband comes, until you go in your in-law's house, until you have kids" (TLS, p.30)

Mohan and Jaya both come to the realization that life is impossible without the support of a life partner. The book closes here, with a sense of promise and optimism: But we may always hope. Life would be impossible without that. If I've learned anything, it's that life must constantly be made possible, says Jaya.

CHAPTER 3- Female Empowerment in Sudha Murthy's *Mahashweta*

Sudha Murthy, a Padma Shri and feminist who works as a social worker, writes in both Kannada and English. She earned a B.E. and has previously served as chair of the Infosys Foundation. She held employment throughout India. She actively participates in a variety of humanitarian initiatives, including health care camps, women's empowerment initiatives, public health initiatives, art and culture initiatives, and efforts to combat poverty. Due to her personal experience in various parts of India, Sudha Murthy was able to observe many of the issues that women face in society. As a result, she started a trust and engaged in charitable work, demonstrating that the characters she creates in her writing are not only real but also people she may have encountered in her real life. *The House of Cards*, *Dollar Bahu*, and *Gently Falls Bakula* are three of her books that specifically highlight the insensitive behaviour of men towards women.

The protagonist of the book *Mahashweta*, Anupama, embarks on a journey as a flawed and abandoned wife in search of freedom, identity, empowerment, and happiness. The Sanskrit novel "Kadambari" by Bana Bhatt, in which Mahashweta plays a key part as a heroine, appears to have been the inspiration for Sudha Murthy's "*Mahashweta*" novel. The author frequently used legendary techniques to highlight the stark contrasts between traditional love, which grew out of a person's inner beauty, and modern love, which is founded not on an emotional commitment or sacred relationship but rather on the fleeting and deceptive display of physical beauty. In the following phrase, the main character Anupama of the book "Mahashweta" expresses her ardent and unwavering love for her partner Dr. Anand, who does not recognise it merely because she was diagnosed with the incurable disease leukoderma after marriage.

Mahashweta, a 2007 film, is a powerful tale of bravery and resiliency in a society riddled with deceptions and betrayals. The victims of the prejudices that still pervade society today can find comfort and hope in this moving story. When Anupama notices a white patch on her foot and learns she has leukoderma, her dream marriage to Anand falls apart in the book. She is left behind by her callous husband and indifferent in-laws and is forced to go back to her father's house in the village.

She is forced to think about killing herself because of the societal stigma associated with being a married woman who lives with her parents, her stepmother's constant jabs, and the isolation brought on by her skin condition. Anupama travels to Bombay determined to overcome all obstacles and rebuild her life. There, she discovers success, respect, and the possibility of a lifelong friendship. Anupama, the main character in *Mahashweta*, encourages readers to cultivate the values of humility, truthfulness, and fortitude.

Mahashweta is a fantastic book that exposes the erroneous beliefs and superstitions that many of us hold. We are unable to live fulfilling lives because of these values. Anupama, a stunning young woman, is the subject of the tale, which details how the disease struck her after her marriage and the horrifying agony she endured as a result of those who were infected with the illness.

Her husband is a doctor who is fully aware that leukoderma is a completely benign disease in which a person experiences a deficit in skin pigmentation. It is the surface beauty that one sees frequently and the inner beauty that one neglects above all. She eventually makes the decision to end her life, but only after realizing that she shouldn't die for ungrateful and cruel people and deciding to approach life with greater assurance, faith, and compassion. She returns to her world of theatre plays when the writer eloquently captures her change. When she understands that inner beauty is more significant than external beauty at any moment, people will love, respect, and adore her for these traits. Her spouse, who initially leaves her, eventually returns, but he is rejected. The author has depicted a variety of facets of Indian society, including arranged weddings, a mother-in-law who rules the household, supportive friends, hypocritical family members, a stepmother who curses, and frightened parents of a young Indian girl. Compared to inward beauty, external beauty has a distinct place in society. This fantastic tale does a fantastic job of highlighting this amazing reality. Although the novel *Mahashweta* is written in a fairly straightforward manner, it carries a very powerful message. The book describes how women can succeed and lead decent lives even when the odds are stacked against them. *Mahashweta* was Anupama's triumph over social norms, marriage vows, and even illness to live her life according to her own terms.

CHAPTER 4- Critical Analysis of Volga's *The Liberation of Sita*

Telugu poet and author Popuri Lalita Kumari, better known by her pen name Volga, is renowned for her feminist viewpoint. Her books, essays, and poems feature strong, contemporary female characters. She received the coveted Sahitya Akademi Award in 2015 for her Telugu collection of short stories, "Vimukta Kadha Samputi." Her work has received the 2017 Laadli Media Award for Gender Sensitivity in Fiction. In *The Liberation of Sita*, Volga depicts Sita and other underrated female characters from the Ramayana from their own perspectives, illustrating how they view the men in their life. Renuka Devi, Ahallya, Surpnakha,

Urmila, and numerous others women's struggles are not detailed in the Ramayana, but Volga does. As one reads through the book's first few chapters, upon meeting several of these other women who had been abandoned by their husbands or sons, Sita's apprehension and unease begins to take on an oddly appealing tone. Volga takes us there, from Sita's naive questioning about the injustice done to these women to Rama's perplexed silence on the matter in general. The feminist movement's opposition to the upkeep of a patriarchal society and its initiatives to demolish the same ideas that systematically oppress women may now be linked to her inquiries. This book's promotion of the concept of "sisterhood," which, in contrast to the commonly praised idea of brotherhood, is significantly less well-known is one of its main achievements. The way Volga portrays women departs from this absurd presumption that women are typically shown as being envious of and resentful of other women. When Sita first encounters some of these women, such as Surpanakha, she immediately empathizes with her, comparing the struggles to her own trial by fire. Surpanakha is described by Volga in such a way that one cannot help but be awed. A demon clan member who serves her brother's commands learns to accept herself for who she is. Lakshmana's disfigurement of Surpanakha's face inspired her to learn that a woman may love in many ways than one, including through her artistic endeavors, her connection to nature, and just appreciating her value as a whole person. Even though Surpanakha was alone in the physical world, she was happy because she had truly realized who she was.

Do women exist only to be used by men to settle their scores? Rama and Lakshmana would not have done this to Surpanakha if they did not know that she was Ravana's sister. Rama's objective was to provoke Ravana; his mission, to find a cause to start a quarrel with Ravana, was accomplished through Surpanakha. It was all politics (Volga 4).

Words cannot express how well Volga has portrayed each of the women's travels, which are all eloquently conveyed by her use of the theme of meditation and the spiritual bond that women find within themselves as a result of being rejected and degraded by men their entire lives. In the novel, Ahalya is described as being unchaste and is cast out by Gautama despite the fact that she was innocent of being molested by a man against her will after being duped by Indra into believing he was her husband. Ram calls her a "characterless" lady, and when Sita learns the truth, she becomes enraged. She visits Ahalya's cabin in the woods out of curiosity, when she is confused by her disagreement with Sita's assessment of Rama as an amazing, heroic man. Volga then leads us to the trial of Sita where she decodes every word Ahalya said that day to demonstrate to how males have put so many restrictions on women's sexuality that it is never about the women and is always about the men who can't stand to see this chastity being violated by other men.

The ordeal of Renuka Devi is extremely horrific on a number of levels. Her husband demanded that she be beheaded, and her son did as asked by his father. This purportedly took place as a result of Renuka Devi looking at a man for whom her husband accused her of being unchaste. Renuka Devi was deceived by the two men she had given her life to, and it wasn't until her husband's rage faded that he gave his son Parasurama the order for the beheading to stop. Renuka Devi was left scarred for life as a result. Because she had been duped by her son and husband on a flimsy pretext, Sita is informed by Renuka that it is utterly useless for ladies to make men the center of their universe. Women will always be the objects of male

disinterest. She talks about how these men, who believed they were the representatives of dharma, denigrated her role as a mother and wife. Instead, women must work to develop their own identities and carry out meaningful activities in their own lives. That is satisfaction. Sita learns to discover this later in life when her sons wish to live with their father, Ram.

Making the Ramayana relevant in the modern world where females have openly started to no longer tolerate oppression, whether it be mental or physical in order to follow any traditional ideas of femininity was one of the motivations behind Volga's writing of this book. She is aware that for many ages, upper castes have utilised epics like the Ramayana to oppress women. Furthermore, one recurring theme in our most significant mythical tales is that women serve as the battlefields on which men wage their conflicts. Men still put their wives through trials to demonstrate their loyalty and wage wars to "restore their wives' honor," both of which are realities in various forms today. Sita was intelligent, and according to mythology, she could lift a bow without difficulty that no one else could. The daughter of mother earth, who was the epitome of perfection, was still only allowed to play the role of a wife and spent all of eternity at her husband's side before realising she would never be content in the mortal world. Her entire life was devoted to raising their sons after her husband left her, only to hear them praise their father's valour and noble character while abandoning her to live with him.

According to Volga, Sita was ultimately able to free herself from everything she endured in the mortal realm thanks to all of these experiences. It's crucial to realise, however, that liberation for a woman extends beyond her emancipation from the physical world. While spirituality is important, a feminist interpretation can also contain the idea that a woman's existence can be secure and happy regardless of her experiences, even in the very society that rejects her for being "unchaste." Ram's portrayal by the author is also pretty intriguing. Ram is observed getting unhappy towards the end since he was unable to be himself. His struggle to break free from these worldly responsibilities that never made him happy continued to be hampered by the Arya Dharma's bindings everywhere around him. Sita, on the other hand, discovered her release from these identities while he persisted and made the decision to live a loyal, honourable life as a king. She finally admits to Rama that she is the Earth's daughter and that she has come to understand who she is. She also claims that she is the owner of the entire universe and that she is in complete possession of all things.

CHAPTER 5- Conclusion

Empowering women entails giving them more authority and control over their own life. Empowering women and enhancing their political, social, economic, and health conditions is crucial in and of itself. Additionally, it is crucial for the accomplishment of sustainable progress. Women's empowerment, if explained beyond the two self-explanatory words, refers to the complete liberation of women from the socioeconomic chains of dependence and privations. To equalize the value of both genders in this society, women's empowerment must advance quickly. Every woman must be aware of her rights in order to achieve true empowerment. The characteristics that society demands from a woman are: tolerance, lack of dissent,

submissiveness, and fidelity. A woman should undoubtedly cultivate values like love, kindness, faithfulness, and tolerance in herself, but self-assertion is not as highly appreciated as these traits.

This is the main subject of Shashi Deshpande's most recent book. Deshpande makes the case here that women shouldn't accept the roles that are imposed on them. Women need to overcome their own fear, which makes it possible for oppression to not persist. Women are not only subjected to men. She should work hard to establish her own identity because she is also to blame for her current situation.

The knowledge that Jaya can stand on her own gives her newfound confidence. This is her moment of liberation. At the same time as she chooses to stay in the family and breaks free from the constraining roles that the patriarchal society had assigned to her, Jaya develops as a unique individual with a separate identity. Shashi Deshpande demonstrates how women desire love, respect, and the freedom to express themselves in marriage but are unable to achieve their goals. But Deshpande argues that if a woman frees herself from the stereotypical indoctrination of society and stops depending on the presence of males to validate her thoughts, emotions, and actions, she can live a healthy and meaningful life. A woman's relationship with her family must evolve over the entirety of her life as a woman in order to achieve contentment.

Deshpande therefore appears to be conveying the idea that "women should accept their own responsibility for what they are, and see how much they have contributed to their victimization. It is only through self-analysis and self-understanding, through vigilance and courage, that they can begin to change their lives."

Mahashweta was Anupama's triumph over social norms, marriage vows, and even illness to live her life according to her own terms. Until death do us part, a marriage is a commitment made for better or worse. Do all marriages have the same outcome? Well, maybe not always.

It was generally accepted that when marital vows were broken, there were significant disagreements that were unresolvable. Despite forging a lasting friendship, the partners part ways. But it's difficult to conceive that a tiny white patch will cause a marriage to end. Yes, that is exactly what happened to Anupama, the central character in the book *Mahashweta*. The feminine theme in the book makes it highly intriguing.

The short stories by Volga create new places within the pre existing discourses, allowing women to see their lives and experiences from various angles. They build a world of freedom where they not only voluntarily take on the burden of ensuring their own survival but also feel joy and total independence. Women are no longer tools to achieve another person's goals or simply spoil the quests and conquests of males. Instead, they are pilgrims looking for their own redemption. As much as men are to be blamed for the subjugation of women, it is also important to note that men have also helped women in many spheres of life to overcome obstacles and empower themselves in order to achieve higher excellence. Indian women still have a long way to travel after traveling so far!

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