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P. G. CENTRE, CHITRADURGA

TWO-DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR ON REPRESENTING SUBALTERN IN LITERATURES

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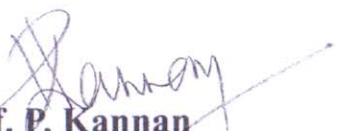
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The title of the paper is

Representation of a Woman Character Nira as a Subaltern in Sharada Deshpande's Novel The Binding Vine


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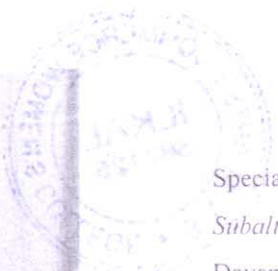


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REPRESENTING SUBALTERN IN LITERATURES

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11	Smt. Shilpasri R	Women As Subalterns in Patriarchal Literatures with reference to the poems – 'Farmer's Wife' by Volga and 'Indian Women' by Shiv K Kumar	41
12	Mr. S. Praveen Kumar	An Efficacious way of Vocabulary Instruction to the ESL learners.	46
13	Soumya K. M.	The Emancipation of Women in MeenaKandasamy's Poetry	55
14	Savita F Nagannavar	A Theme of Marriage in the selected novels by Buchi Emecheta	58
15	Miss. Sunita M. Gumashetti,	The Theme of Marginality in Bapsi Sidwa's novel <i>Water</i>	64
16	Mrs Gayatri G,	Women as Subalterns in Patriarchal Literature Sub Title :- Contribution of a Dalit Woman For Empowerment of Women	69
17	Prakasha N	Cultural Hegemony as a means of Marginalisation	72
18	S.ANBUTHAMBI	CULTURAL HEGEMONY IN MANJU KAPUR'S NOVEL- A STUDY	75
19	Dr. P. Vijay Anand	RAJ GAUTAMAN'S <i>SILUVAI RAJ SARITHIRAM</i> AS A REPRESENTATION DALIT CHRISTIANS	79
20	Anitha S Metre,	ALIT WOMEN'S LITERATURE IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION	86
21	Radhika M Patil	Representation of Subalterns in Shakespeare's Plays. <i>'The Tempest'</i>	90
22	Amrutha. M	AN ANALYSIS OF HEATHCLIFF'S CHARACTER AS RACIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY SUBALTERN IN EMILY BRONTE'S <i>WUTHERING HEIGHTS</i>	96
23	Dr. S. Diravida Mani (Author) S. Manikandan (Co-Author)	REPRESENTATION OF SUBALTERNs IN CLASSICAL LITERATURES- A STUDY	100



24	Ms Nayana K	Narrating a Subaltern Consciousness: Bama's Karraku	103
25	Ganesh Prasad S G	Arvind Adiga's <i>The White Tiger</i> - A Satire on Indian Society	108
26	Bhavani, M	INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH: <i>Subaltern Literary concept – Oppression of Untouchables in Rohinton Mistry's a Fine Balance</i>	113
27	BeenaMuniyappa	Language Boundaries: An Invisible Border	117
28	Sitaram JA	Title of the paper-- Literature and Society	124
29	S.Yagna Sri	Abuse of Power and a Spirit of Rebellion in Jomo Kenyatta's ' <i>The Gentlemen of the Jungle</i> '	126
30	MANJULA A.	A study on – Role of Caste system in India in the novel untouchable	129
31	Stresh G.S.,	The Game of Power: A study in Margaret Atwood's 'The Handmaids Tale' and Anitha Desai's 'Clear light of Day'	132
32	Mathan Kumar asanthaKumar.N.S	Voice of the voiceless : A cross analyzing the life of dalits , Through the novel chinnaum is also a priest !	135
33	Deepa. M. Madiwal	Feministic Concerns in the Selected Novels of Sunetra Gupta: A Study	140
34	RUKSAR BANU	TREATMENT OF WOMEN IN PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY- IN LALITAMBHIKA ANTARJANAM'S "GODDESS OF REVENGE"	146
35	AEZAZ AHAMED	A SUBALTERN STUDY ON E.M. FORSTER'S CLASSIC <i>A PASSAGE TO INDIA</i>	148
36	Basavaraja.C	<u>Political Resistance in the Fictions of Rohinton Mistry</u>	151
37	PRAVEENKUMAR T.	<u>Caste and class conflict in Mulk Raj Anand : Coolie</u>	155
38	Dr.Renukadevi B Baad	<u>Representation of a Woman Character Mira as a Subaltern in Shashi Deshpande's Novel The Binding Vine</u>	159



39	Ashwini A. Malaghan	Rosie as Tragic Heroine :A Brief Study on R.K.Narayan's The Guide in the New Women Concept	161
40	DIANA A. D'BERTA	<u>RUDALI AS A REPRESENTATIVE TEXT OF SUBALTERN COMMUNITY</u>	164
41	Miss Samrin. M	READING TWO SHORT STORIES AS PARTITION NARRATIVES	167
42	AEZAZ AHAMED	A SUBALTERN STUDY ON E.M. FORSTER'S CLASSIC - <i>A PASSAGE TO INDIA</i>	170
43	M. Balamurugan,	Solemnity Intuition in Barbara Kingsolver's <i>Pigs in Heaven</i>	174
44	<i>Dr.Haseena Begum</i>	Subaltern in AravindAdiga's -The White Tiger	178
45	ShilpaBasavarajGadag	Subaltern Voice in Shakespeare: A Study in The Tempest	181
46	Suma .T	Subaltern predicament in Kamala . Markandaya's Nectar in a Sieve	187
47	SANA AFREEN H.G,	TITLE: TANIZAKI JUNICHIRO'S THE MAKIOKA SISTERS: TRADITION VERSUS MODERNITY	191
48	S.C Maria Pinto	Subaltern Experiences in Autobiographies of PrathibhaNandakumar and Bama.	196
49	Ms.RoopavatiS.Koregol	Woman as Subaltran even in Modern Times in the light of Manju Kapur's novels.	202
50	Anil Apral	Can Heathcliff (Subaltern) Speak ? : A Brief Study on Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights in the Concept of Subalternity	206
51	SHABANA BANU	REPRESENTATION OF SUBALTERNS IN THE NOVEL THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS BY ARUNDHATI ROY	211



-38-

Representation of a Woman Character Mira as a Subaltern in Shashi Deshpande's Novel *The Binding Vine*

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In cultural theory and post colonialism the term subaltern designates the populations which are socially, politically and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure of the colony and of the colonial homeland. On describing history told from below, subaltern was coined by Antonio Gramsci, notably through his work on cultural hegemony which identified the groups that are excluded from a society's established institutions and thus denied the means by which people have a voice in their society.

As a method of intellectual discourse, the concept of the subaltern is contentious because it originated as a Eurocentric method of historical enquiry for studying the non-Western people of Africa, Asia, and the Middle-East. From its inception as an historical research model for studying the colonial experience of the peoples of the Indian Subcontinent, subaltern studies transformed from a model of intellectual discourse into a method of "vigorous post-colonial critique". The term "subaltern" is used in the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, human geography, literary criticism, musicology and art history.

The feminist scholar Gayatri Spivak spoke against an overly broad application of the term in 1992. Subaltern is not just a classy word for "oppressed", for the other, for somebody who is not getting a piece of the pie.

Shashi Deshpande is an award winning Indian novelist. She is a recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award. Shashi Deshpande has written four children's books, a number of short stories, and nine novels, besides several perspective essays, now available in a volume entitled *Writing from the Margin and Other Essays*. Her novels are *The Dark Hold No Terrors* (1980), *If I Die Today* (1982), *Come Up and Be Dead* (1983), *Roots and Shadows* (1983), *That Long Silence* (1989), *The Intrusion and Other Stories* (1993), *A Matter of Time* (1996), *The Binding Vine* (2002), *Small Remedies* (2000), *Moving On* (2004), *In the Country of Deceit* (2008) and *Shadow Play* (2013). In the novel *The Binding Vine* how Mira has been treated in a patriarchal society is drawn here.

Mira, a woman character in Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Binding Vine* was a mother-in-law of Urmila underwent a great humiliation in her husband's house and treated as other. She had suppressed all her feelings, dreams and desires due to the position which was given to a woman in a male-dominated society. The novel explores the aspirations of a woman for her identity but fails in getting it. Mira who aspired to become a poet, did not want to suffer the conventions of marriage and surrender herself to her husband. But all her hopes of becoming a



poet has smashed after getting married, though she was very well versed in writing poems. Even her identity has changed after coming to her husband's house. she was named as Nirmala. How the question of identity has aroused in her mind, she expresses in this poem

A glittering ring gliding on the rice,
Carefully traced a name 'Nirmala'
Who is this? None but I,
My name hence, bestowed upon me.
Nirmala, they call, I stand statue-still.
Do you build the new without razing the old?
A tablet of rice, a pencil of gold
Can they make me Nirmala? I am Mira. .(*The Binding Vine*-101)

Though she wanted her identity as Mira but it was suppressed in her husband's house as she was treated as a house keep, nothing more than that. So a question comes to her mind which she wanted to ask her mother,

"Mother I always wanted to ask: why do you want me to repeat your history when you so despair of your own? But she died and I will never know her answer now.(*The Binding Vine*-126)

Even the mother of Mira underwent the suppression in her in-laws house suffered the humiliation of her husband but she wanted to repeat the same history with her daughter. Even the daughter-in-law of Mira underwent the same humiliation. This history goes on repeating in the life of woman. They were treated as weak, other, bearer of children and a working machine so they did not get respect in their in-laws house. though Mira wanted ask her mother a question but her question remained unanswerable as her mother died before she could ask. If her mother was alive, she could not have done anything to her as women were placed the places of a mother, daughter and wife. So her position in her husband's house was also the same and nothing is going to be changed in her life. Even her mother could not help in her problems, as she suffered the same. The woman has to undergo such humiliation and problems. Women were always suppressed and treated as other and did not get any place in the society.

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P. Kannan completed M.A English from Karnatak University, Dharwad in 1989. He was awarded M.Phil for his dissertation "Treatment of War Theme in Ernest Hemingway's *Farewell to Arms* and *Form Whom the Bell Tolls* – A Comparative Study" by University of Madras (Madras Christian College) in 1990. He obtained PG Diploma in Teaching English from CIEFL in 1998, PG Diploma in Communicative English from KSOU in 2012 and PG Diploma in Dr.B.R. Ambedkar Studies from KSOU in 2014. He was awarded Ph.D for his thesis entitled Postmodernist Indian Fiction in English – A Study of Subversive Themes and Technique by Karnatak University in 2015. He has started his teaching career in 1991 and has served in such various cadres as Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor of English in MGC College, Siddapur, Karnatak College, Dharwad and Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura, respectively. He has published twenty research articles in the National and International Journals. He has participated as paper Presenter and Resource Person in sixty National and International Seminars and Conferences. He has successfully guided six scholars for the award of M.Phil and eleven for the award of Ph.D in English. He has served as NSS Programme Officer and Associated NCC Officer MGC College, Siddapur and Karnatak College, Dharwad respectively. He has also held such positions as Chairman, Chairman Board of Studies and Chairman of Board of Examiners of Dept of PG Studies & Research in English, Dean Faculty of Arts, Academic Council Member in Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapur. He has served as Director of Karnataka State Women's University Regional Centre of PG Studies and Director of Dr. BR Ambedkar Studies Centre, Akkamahadevi Women's University. He worked as NAAC Coordinator in Akkamahadevi Women's University. He works as Registrar of Davanegere University, Davangere presently.

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