

Shashi Deshpande: Handling of English language

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Abstract

Shashi Deshpande has created an independent place for herself with artistic creations. While dealing with the problem of emerging women, she has mainly concentrated on the theme of human relationships in her novels. In this respect she has made distinct position for herself in the history of Indo – Anglian literature. Most of her novels deal with the problem of human life in one form or the other. This provides universality and artistic beauty to her novels.

Shashi Deshpande has been a very serious Indo – Anglian woman novelist who has depicted different aspect of women's life – in her short – stories as well as novels. She has repeatedly refused to be labeled as a feminist writer for taking a feminist i.e. extreme stand, there by fighting against the patriarchal society and male domination. She takes a balanced view of life from a woman's point of view by bringing in all the perceptiveness of a sensitive writer that she is. As she has declared in many public speeches and inter views, she believes in having a contented family life, inspite of her pleading for freedom of women in the Indian society. Her sober philosophy of life is expressed in many of her short stories and novels, Shashi Deshpande uses the different speech styles of her characters not only to give an insight into their mentalities but also to indicate the influence of the vernacular. These the pronunciations and into-nation of the typical Indo – Anglian is different from that American. The speech pattern of English is again different and distinctive from that of the man from the other places. The only language she knows in English, she begins with short stories and write novels quite late she says, "When I started it just came to me as a short stories. That's all give never written poetry in my life."¹ She writes in English because that's the only language she knows, she feels, she belongs to the same class a regional writer do.

Keywords: Shashi Deshpande, Handling, English Language

1. Introduction

Shashi Deshpande's themes centre around family-relationships and more so, that relationship between the husband and the wife and later's dilemmas and conflicts. She admits that undoubtedly my novels are all about family relationships. Her novels often portray the frustration of wife or mother. The image of woman she gives in that of a "breeding animal." An aversion towards feminine functions is often explicit in her novels. She has a strong feeling that until very recently women in our society have been looked upon just as breeding animals, they have no other role in life. She has, a strong objection to treat any human being in that manner, woman have been so dispensable in her mother's family that one would see woman dying and immediately the man getting married again she could see that the female life has no value at all. The whole chronology of their life centre around child birth. They would say "this happened when my first child was born. This when she was pregnant ...and so on. It is used to mystify me. Does nothing happens in your life other than having children? The stress laid on the feminine functions, at the cost of all your potentials as an individual emerged me"^[2]. She knows that she is very intelligent person, but for a woman, intelligence is always a handicaps. Shashi Deshpande has consistently sought to grips with the problems of Indian womanhood in the post – independence scenario, a major issue is, whether the female archetypes of old are valid still.

The language used by Sarita in "The Dark Holds No Tenors" becomes her character. She is the protagonist, afraid of 'the dark' at night leaving that a man would attack her body. The woman, has been so bold in her childhood and adulthood, fell entirely helpless and panic – stricken with the terrible dark.

She describes her condition in the following words: "Panic and terror mounted in me as the hands deliberately, with a kind of casual cruelty, gradually tightened round my throat, oh God, I was going to die"^[3]. The disgusting dark the heavy weight, the pain and the hurt associated with the sexual act make her life hell, and she wishes to see the light, to have relaxation. In this novel, she very tactfully represents 'the dark' and linked with the 'panic and sensation simultaneously Darkness and light holds a paramount importance in the novel. Darkness in case of Dhruva signifies the fear of the unknown in a child. However in case of Saru it implies the physical and sexual assault that she undergoes in the darkness of the night, In the novel Saru's life changes after the death of Dhruva and she calls her life after him and Dhruva. Secondly her mother's death is the end of another phase in Saru's life as she gathers courage to return home.

Her characters are not careless in and indifferent to the use of their words. inspite of provocative and insinuating stance taken by Saru is "built around the metaphors of 'dark' and the 'light' "⁴ does not use even a single point to indicate her insulted vanity. Sex for the female is never a mechanical physical action, but an intense psychological and psychological act the height of love. The joyful state of sex, for Saru is a proud declaration of her love. The crawl house is heaven in spite of corridors smelling urine. But happiness always seems unreal to her, an allusion are undisturbed, she does not show disrespect to her erstwhile master or even to her present master. He weighs every words she uses, she makes her position clear to Sarita and besides that, she fails to put the two men to gather, the fearful sadist of the night and pathetic Manu of the day. The cheerful and caring mood of the same husband the next morning compels her to thank

whether Manu is a shame or pretence. She almost predicts correctly the result of companionship between herself and her husband. She is the medical doctor by profession and self-reliant woman by all means. Yet her marriage with Manohar has not proceeded smoothly. So she turns back to her parental home, leaving behind her children. She thinks that the bed is the only place where he can affirm his animal power over her. Her dream of happy home with children and loving husband is now totally shattered. She wants to sleep peacefully the night through. To wake up without pain. To go through without apprehension (27) but she does not find the congenial atmosphere of her parental house and its peaceful surroundings. She considers sex in her life as loathsome object where she male body entraps a female body for the social norm and law have empowered him to take the possession of a female body. The sweet sensations, even if felt, are consigned to the silence of torture and pain. The pain and shame, she undergoes in deep feeling torture that kills her creativity and imagination. Soru feels that she is roped not only physically but also psychologically. Ultimately the pain and suffering enable her to take the crucial step of leaving her house, children and husband, in order to become her individual and to have an identity and with a purpose of life.

In Deshpande's novels there is long list of minor characters who spend a sizable portion of their in remaining mute, a mute existence. Silence takes various shapes in her works. There is the unthinking silence the resigned silence and finally the one bristling with suppressed anger." Says Anuradha Ray^[5] Kusum in "that long silence, whose sole aim is to become an ideal self – offering woman, always tries to achieve it. The way she tries to please people and her failure to do so, proved to be a great setback for her. Her unthinking silence results in her madness. Nayana the sweeper in "That long silence". Continues to get pregnant in the hope of giving birth to a child. She does it to fulfill her husband's demand for a son even though she truly loves her daughters and is happy with them. The childlessness of Vimala. Mohan's sister, forms her to listen silently the trends of her mother in law's, her suffering that results from an ovarian tumour with metastases' because of which she bleeds to death, never finds a voice. As Jaya recalls Mohan saying, "why didn't she tell us? Why didn't she write to me? Mohan had cried out; but Vimala never gave us an answer, even to that question. She sank into coma and died a week later, her silence intact (36)" Jaya's maidservant, Jeeja too surrenders herself to silence, which hopes her to go on living. Jaya's Saptagiri, Ajji, also lives a life of silence. Strictly following the traditional code of conduct of a widow, she has chosen a life of devoid of comforts and luxuries. Silence dominates her life as she spends her days in the borders of her room. Jaya a child is uncomfortable in her company as she described her as:

Ajji, a shaver widow, had denuded herself of all those that make up a woman's life. She had no possession, absolutely none, apart from the two saris she work. Her room was bare, except for the large bed on which may grandfather had slept, a bed which, even since I knew it, was unburdened by a mattress. Ajji herself sat on the bare ground and slept on a straw mat at night (26).

Mukta, Jaya's neighbor in the Dadar flat, also accept a life of silence. After her husband, Arun is killed in a train accident, Mukta devotes her life in maintain harmony between her

sharp tongued mother-in-law and her disobedient children Nilima and Salish endures her mother in-law and complaints of her blunt daughter. Her own self has no importance and she never expresses her loneliness and frustration. Mohan's mother is a woman caught in a hopeless situation wherein she is verbally, physically and sexually abused by her husband. She fulfills the irrational demands of her husband like wanting his rice fresh and hot and from a vessel is untouched she sits the whole day in home of the fire on such night her husband throws food at for there is no fresh chutney. She wakes up Mohan and asks him to get fresh chillies, from the neighbors. In the middle of the night she prepares the food again. The novel is most powerful portrayal of silence in woman's life.

Death too, is a frequent metaphor in Deshpande's novels. In that long 'silence' Jaya recalls her Appa's death as the event that ended for happy childhood. The novel witnesses the death of Kamat, Kusum, Soptagiri, Ajji, Makaranda Mama, Mohan's Mather and sister Urimala and Jaya's tired child. Though these cannot be marked as incident that end a phase in jay's life but they hold importance because of the way they affect her. These death in Deshpande's works, in a landmark with which she ends a phase in the life of her control characters. In respect through the deaths of their loved ones her protagonist's categories the beginning and the end of different phase of their lives. It also implies change in the life of these characters. Thus her description is made very realistic pictures and true to life. On such is the women scene. Deshpande has used the vocabulary of an educated India, but at changes with the situation. In a situation where there is a dialogue between people whose relations are not very intimate and cordial. She uses a formal diction. Normally, however, she tries to use a informal and colloquial type of language. When Saru reaches her father's home after fifteen-years her father welcomes her "like and unwilling host entertaining are unwelcome guest (14)" Dhruva's death which is reoffered to in the novel overshadows all other memories of her life as if that is the point of her fall. She remembers how she is treated second to Dhruva. She recalls her dialog us with her mother:

Don't go out in the sun. You'll get ever darker, who cares?
We have to care if you don't. We have to get you married.

I don't want to get married.

Will you live with us all your life?

Why not?

You can't

And Dhruva?

He is different. He is a boy (45)

Deshpande represents colloquial type of language as there is a Puja on his birthday but none of her birthdays. After his death her birthday is not celebration she recalls: "After Dhruva's death, there were no more celebration, my birthday was passed over in silence both at home and the school" (169) Saru remembers that when she is wanted to study in medical college, her mother has been against her studies. Though unsuccessful her mother has been against her studies. Though unsuccessful her mother is tried her best to persuade her husband not to send to medical. Shashi Deshpande, in all her novels have decorated with many metaphors and similes, which help to illustrate her point. She has concentrated on the

theme of sexual confusion suffered by women in tradition oriented in-situations. The reality of modern Indian woman is that even to the need of love and sex. She is in a state of absolute confusion. The novel "The Binding vine" has tried to present the character Urmi, the most independent heroine of Deshpande, seeks to bring light, the silent suffering of Mira, her dead mother-in-law and Kalpana, a lower middle class rape victim. The central theme of the novel is "The Binding vine" of feelings and emotions between parents and child and between husband and wife. It is love which is binding vine of life. Urmi is out and out a feminist. She is leading an economically and socially secure life even without her husband. She has developed a kind of super ego in herself which denies to submit before her husband Kishore. She does not use the money Kishore send her to run the family. She realize that she never asks Kishore anything. Even "when he goes away from me even in our few days together I never reveal my heart, my longing to keep him my side:-

Fixed forever in our places
Face to face the two of us
Like Siva and his nodding Bull" (82)

Since the beginning of married life Urmi finds that the relation between her and her husband is not that of love, marriage which in spiritual bond in Indian society has become only a sexual and legal bond. Whenever Kishore goes away from her he satisfies himself sexually. Kishore, the archetypal Indian husband, never understands the depth of her feelings. "Each time you love me, he parting is like death (139).

The situation changed and Urmi develops the friendship with Dr. Bhaskar, her mother objects and Yanna tries to check the predicament of the new woman that can be seen in her character when she rejects Kishore just to show that she can live without him. Through these Deshpande reveals the suffering that goes unexpressed. And to achieve one's true 'self' women will have to break away from the tradition of enduring in silence. She must speak in order to create a place for herself and to affirm life, R. Mala writes, "it is this working on individual dialectic of the sexual dilemma in her novels, that makes Shahsi Deshpande a modernist feminist"^[6]. In the novel, "The Binding vine," death emerges to be a recurring metaphor. It begins with Anu's death and marks the beginning of a new quest in Urmi's life. Mira's and Salu's death signify women's submission to silence and suffering. Baijji's, Affu's and Papa's deaths are all incidents that affect Urmi's life.

Shashi Deshpande has deliberately used slang not only to isolate the identity of the speaker but also to create a specialized atmosphere. She makes copious use of military terminology in "Binding vine". 'If I die today' and 'A Matter of Time' the indo-Anglican element is predominant and thus she uses typical indo Anglican slang.

In the novel marriage is offered as a metaphor for security. Urmi realizes that women like Kalpana's mother find security in marriage. At best they are safe from other men. Marriage in life of such women act as 'Purtoh' or a security which serves a 'Provision of symbolic shelter'^[7]. When Salu knows that her husband has raped Kalpana, She finishes her looking, gives breakfast to her husband and then commits suicide because she wants to avoid telling a lie to serve her husband

from the police. Her suicide symbolizes the anguish of the weakened soul of the typical traditional Indian woman. Mulk Raj Anand says about the plight of Indian women, "No woman in our land is beyond the threat of rape because of the suppressed energies of the male, through the taboos of patriarchy, which deny sex before marriage and make male young into wanton animals who assault any possible victim, when possessed by lust"^[8].

Generally a mother is protective towards her daughters compared to that of a son. She wants to give her the best in life. Shakutai has suffered a lot in her married life, the only thing which she has got from her married life is trauma, misery and children nevertheless, she is wanted her daughter to get married, Dr. Bhaskar is unable to get the idea of it in slang.

"Women are as astonishing. I think it takes a hell of a lot of courage for a woman like that even to think of marriage. Have you seen her husband? Kalpana's father" No? I have. Well" He lets out his breath in laugh. 'A poor specimen. Vandana tells me he is deserted this woman long back. What has she got out of marriage – except for children of course? And Yet. She is longing for her daughter's marriage. One always hopes one's children will get more out of life than one has. And women like Kalpana's mother do find something in marriage.'

'What'

'Security, you're safe other man. it usually gives them that guarantee of safety. It takes much greater courage to dispense with man's protection (87-88).

Deshpande's pre-occupation with death, murder night-marish suspense in the novel betrayed as it is in this novel, is discernible also in her other novels. The novel seems to the script of a popular movie combining thrill, misty, suspense and honors in it, in the manner of observation while Deshpande's short stories follows a conventional linear narrative structure often in the first person's narrative. Her novels have more compacted structures. They have digressive patterns with the present juxtaposed with flashbacks from the past.

Life as Deshpande presents it in the novel goes. After sting of tragic life sprouts again through the narrator who gives birth to a baby girl the day after that terrible night. It is this assertion and celebration of life that makes Deshpande's work different from a popular writer be it victim of psychologists call a passive aggressive husband who neither hints the wife nor says even a single angry words to her, but makes her feel guilt-ridden and consended. Her sentences are as simple as her vocabulary. They create the sense of mind in process of thinking a mind thinking discursively adding to, qualifying, or making, more vivid some initials statement or observations.

'I'd heard of a pregnancy bringing and wife together with Vijay and me it seemed to have the opposite effect. We have drifted even further apart. This child^[9], I had made my own, the fight to bring it to life, my own struggle, I don't know at Vijay had sensed this feeling of mine, but he kept himself aloof. He looked after me, but it was the detached kindness of stranger, we had even. I realized one day, stopped quarrelling as it we had not even any areas of disagreement between us (43)." Text. Here she uses beautiful blend of commas rather

than periods' semi-colons, colons connectives and clauses. There are not many writers around in India today writing in English as their second language who can put together words or sentences as crafty as she.

"Shashi Deshpande has experiences of life that she well portrayed the myth in unique way in the novels. From the time memorial myths are integral to every society and express the greater truth of human life. An intensive study of myths regarding its origin and its meaning and implications on human life has been explained and consisted of allegorical stories in the novels of Pande. Shashi Deshpande reinterprets history and myths. For her, history is also myth. She thinks that there is a problem with myths which are written by man that women were never allowed into the main stream and has no voice in the Ramayan, the Mahabharata or the Puranas. She has reinterpreted the stories of mythological women like Sita, Draupadi, Kunti, Lakshmi, Amba and many more giving them liberated voice in her stories. She has written not only about women characters but also has given voice to Duryodhana, Lakshman and other mythical male characters.

Folklore may also be used in the novels of Shashi Deshpande. It is the body of experience culture including tales, music, dance, legends, oral history, probe, jokes, popular beliefs customs and the tales and superstitions of a popular group of people. In her novel she focuses on the form of artistic expression communicated with groups' modern Indian women and men. Her novel offers a valid perception of the inner world of Indian womanhood forced to remain silent. The decolonization of the India creative mind is just seen in the use of myths and folklore that Deshpande makes in her fiction. Since many of her novels have women for the control consciousness, the deices of myth and folklore are especially useful to the novelist as a means of illuminating the inner landscape of women's mind. Through the novel "That Long Silence", Deshpande's Jaya mentions Maitrey, who begs for knowledge and immortalities from her husband, rather than material possessions, but Jaya rejects this image later on. Finally Deshpande makes use of the parts of the Bhagwadgita from the Mahabharata which describes the great mental and moral struggle faced by Arjun when Shree Krishna advises him "Yutheehasi Tatha Kuru" (192) from Shree Krishna's advice Jaya takes the indication that one should not blame others for what they have to endure in life; one has to make our choice. The novel ends with myths use saying of her son, Rahul, the promise of Mohan to return on Friday morning and Jaya learning the truth that "life has always to be make possible" (193) choosing the column of 'Seeta', Jaya seeks to identify herself as a representative for the typical Indian women who accept everything silently without raising their eyebrows. This column receives good response from all and Mohan too is happy And Jaya feels secure as she could maintain peace in family. She says:

She (Seeta) had been the means through which I had shut the doors, firmly, on all those other women who had invaded my being, screening for attention; women I had known I could no write about, because they might-it was just possible – resemble Mohan's mother, or aunt, or my mother or aunt. Seeta was softer, I did not have to come out of the safe whole I'd crawl into to about Seeta. I could stay there, Warm and Snug (149).

For writer's career, the role helps her find a corner in a women's magazine and she becomes popular among

sentimental readers. Deshpande is to be admired for resources of myths for the process of self – revelation of her protagonist. Hindu mythology has a profound stock of archetypical women who are different from one another. There are last of wives, ready to sacrifice themselves for their husbands; there are also powerful Goddesses like Durga and Lakshmi; Deshpande utilizes these mythical figures successfully.

The novel "A Matter of Time" represents a familiar word experiences of Indian women, like, Kalyani, Sumi and Arundhati. By giving to these silent women characters she has given them a new base of life. She presents a meaningful and creative reinterpretation of myths, through such readings and interpretations myths need to be liberated from fallacy that they are relevant only to one sex. The characters in myths especially the women characters should be seen as complex, questioning human beings whom we can identify with.

Thus she can be said to be making innovations by giving the myths a new organic significance and status in the modern world from her outlook. Deshpande makes extensive use of mythical allusions and parallels in her fiction. She has created a familiar word a new in which authentic experiences of interior landscape of Indian women is powerfully projected through devices of myths folklore and so on.

Shashi Deshpande uses 'free in-direct speech' as well as the mixed dialect, useful for characterisation, most skillfully and their English equivalents are cleverly inserted in dialogues. He stories provide insight, a wealth of understanding and reservoir of meaning. She mostly depicts the contemporary women on the threshold of tradition, her struggle in context of the society, to find and preserve her identity as wife, mother and most of all human being. In fact initially she always has in her mind people from real life to write about, but it seems as proceeds, woman becomes the focus of her writing. Her stories cover a vast range of topics and are mainly concerned about understanding emotions of women. In her stories Deshpande recreates Indian in her present situation and the characters with authentic and sincerity. G.S. Balaram Gupta makes a valid point when he says:

Shashi Deshpande's women are conscious of their predicament; they are victims of inequality; they are creatures of conventional morality; they are the once who are unfairly abused, misused and ill-used. But they believe in conformity and compromised for the relation of domestic familiar concerned. Shashi's fictional world as replete with only Savitris, not norms.

She in the most accomplished novelist who wants to light entertainment and serious social analysis as in Sumi in 'A Matter of Time' where comes back to the natal home, and it is always here that past and present meet and some evaluation takes place. Besides the house links the characters with the members of society. In "A matter of time" the big house represents the life of its in-habitants. The life of a lovely recluse lived by Shripati is represented by his secluded room upstairs. In a way the house in this novel is also personified as a member of the plainly as after Shripati's death. There is a strange sand as if the house has exhaled its breath and shaken itself before setting down into a different rhythm of breathing" (236). In her creative waiting, she explores her talents to get a job in a residential school to look for independent dreams that bay hidden in her. Borides, she

strives to give a normal life to her daughter and even succeeds in attaining an understanding with them. She tells Aru, "Be happy for me, Aru, this is the first things in my life. I think that I've got for herself. I was sure I would not in get it, there is my age, it is against me and I have no experience at all. And now suddenly I want to do so many things" (230-31).

It is the Death in her work as implied the end phase of life of her central characters. His style is characterized by lucidity. Precision and control; quickness confidence, eagerness and masterly control over the metaphor to find and presence her identity as, wife mother, husband, daughter and father.

It is as if her own life of action and drama has been transposed into the pattern of her novels. Her main concern is with humanity, but not the average and democratic but the unusual and exceptional in human experience and tradition and the disintegration of these values is disheartening to her.

Shashi Deshpande has conservative attitude to extend the use of language and her style. While summing the initial difficulty with the language even though she is supposed to have remarked that the English language write often experience a counterfeit feeling as if she were going about with a false feminist – considering it a vogue term she is also able to cultivate a highly individualistic and sensitive style.

Speaking about her style Shashi Deshpande admits that she cannot write like the master of English fiction as the language they used was suited only to their condition according to her Indo – Anglian writer's consciously or unconsciously tries to develop a separate and distinct diet of English which does not go against the basic pattern of English but at the same time is capable of expressing the spirit and sensibility.

In the story 'A wall is safer' is a extreme example of spirit and sensibility where is expressing the light of the family living in a small house with no partition walls but a thin curtain to separate the drawing room and bedroom the daughters sleep on sofa and father who comes late in the night for the working hard for living do not see for days to them express the darkness in her children's life and is a unable to accept the reality of the situation ^[10].

In the story 'A wall is Safer', Sushama is a lawyer working for constitutional and social awareness among woman. She resents being called a feminist, considering it a vague term, because she has been doing in something concrete. She does not like the idea of Hema working her law – education in a remote place and playing a good house – wife's role for her husband who is an agricultural research scholar. The story ends with a close ménage, i.e. wall is safer than pointed fence. The 'wall' works as a metaphor to be away from the restricted atmosphere of marriage this feeling of having sex as a adventure has stated, based on fidelity and marital love.

"Why a Robi" by; Shashi Deshpande is a story of woman who does not fit with the rest of her family. However, she longs to be close to her daughter, the narrator considers herself as 'a failure – as wife as a companion, as a mother' (vol./ 48) but she decides to build a bridge to pull her family together. Due to all account of discussion some people would doubt the acceptance of the new heroine of Shashi Deshpande in the society but the fact cannot be ignored R. Mala writes: It is this working on individual dialectic of the sexual dilemma in her novel that makes Shashi Deshpande a modernist feminist ^[11].

2. Conclusion

Thus Shashi Deshpande has used handling of language to depict the complexities of life to convey the state of a women's mind and her true feelings. Deshpande has used various narrative methods to convey the example of such strained mother - daughter relationships – Kamala – Sarita – Renu ; Inni – Urmi // Vanna – Mandira / Sakutai – Kalpana in "The Binding vine". The usual pattern in her fiction has been a better daughter – father equation than a daughter – mother equation. This is true of Sarita, Indu and Jaya and that is how it also seems initially in her novel. Jaya's father is most 'feminist' among the fathers in Deshpande's novels. He has never displayed any kind of gender – bias towards his daughter. At the end of their search for personal values, the protagonists are seen preparing themselves for a confrontation and opposition to the patriarchal values of their husbands. Their struggles for self – assertion their readiness to challenge and undermine the status quo. In this way the language handling of Shashi Deshpande has concentrated on the conflicts, predicaments, joys and sorrows of woman confronting various difficulties in their daily life. The changing life the changing socio and economic conditions have added new dimension to the portrait of women in India.

She is woman novelist so she has explored the psyche of modern women. She has projected valid picture of womanhood with all its redness and variety without totally ignoring the traditional picture of women in India. The novel has concentrated on the psychological problems which women are facing in modern age. As result of this perspective the picture of modern women are working and they face the problem of maintaining their identity while playing the role of traditional house wives. Shashi Deshpande has tried to respect the woman in society who has distinct position for herself in the history of Indo-Anglian literature. Most of her seven novels, of deal with the problem of human life and relationship in one step to another. This provides universality and artistic beauty to handle the language for clear support to it. Asked whether she would like to herself a feminist she replied to Geeth Gangadharan:

Yes, I would, A am a feminist in the sense that I think, we need to have a world which we should recognize as a place for all us human beings. There is no superior and inferior; we are two halves of our species. I fully agree with Simone de behaviour that "the fact that we human, is much more important than our being men and woman" I think that's my idea of feminism. (Indian communicator, 20. Nov. 1994)

Thus the language handling of her is published by women, criticized by woman, read by women and studied in the women's studies departments and so on. Through the devices of symbols she tries to present the values of security and harm us that symbolize Indian way of life.

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