

# STATE OF EDUCATED WOMEN: POSTCOLONIAL FEMINISTIC STUDY ON SHASHI DESHPANDE'S NOVEL *THAT LONG SILENCE*

Kalpana B,  
Assistant Professor,  
PG Department Of English,  
Don Bosco College, Yelagiri Hills.

## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to portray the psychological problems that a career oriented woman encounters in her life. This paper is to examine the middle class women's struggles and male-domination. Through the novel "That long silence" Deshpande brings out the concept of middle class women's struggle and tolerance due to the family condition. In this novel the character of Jaya belongs to middle class society and she has two children. When she got married she has lost her Identity because she was dominated by her spouse and it displays the identity of women lost when they born as women, because society has a stereotype that women should live dependent life. Women lose their freedom when they depend. Here the character Jaya lost her identity due to subjugation of male. The researcher indent to show the patriarchal supremacy over the women and the tolerance of women due to the family coercion. The researcher also elaborates the writing style of Shashi Deshpande as women standpoint.

**INDEX TERM-** Women, domination, educated, supremacy

## Introduction

Generally, a woman's identity is distinct by others, in terms of her relationship with men, is a daughter, as a wife, as a mother, and so on. Her appellation keeps on changing according to the wishes of others. In *That Long Silence*, the writer has presented this singularity through the character of Jaya, who is named by two names: Jaya and Suhasini. Jaya, which means victory, is the name given by her father when she was born, and Suhasini, the name given after her marriage which means a "soft, smiling, placid, motherly woman." Both the names symbolize the traits of her personality. The former symbolizes victory and the latter submission.

Jaya tries to adapt herself to the main current. She longs to be called an ideal wife. She revolts in silence. She comments on a situation when her husband talks about women being treated very cruelly by their husbands and he calls it "strength". He saw strength in the woman sitting silently in front of the fire, but I saw despair. I saw a despair so great that it would not voice itself.

I saw a struggle so bitter that silence was the only weapon. Silence and surrender. Jaya's husband, Mohan, interprets things in relation to the effect it may have on the society.

He likes to conform to the social norms even if they are strong. The success of Jaya's novel depicting the relationship between man and woman is weighed in relation to what society would think in future. He wants to make Jaya also think like him and induces her not to deliberate on such themes that would endanger their marriage. Jaya, a representative of the typical Indian woman, then wants to mold herself as her husband wills. Her father made her think that she was different from others and hence, she could not cope with her hostel mates and kept herself aloof from other girls. 60 In her childhood, she had been brought up in a loving and affectionate manner without any responsibility. But after her marriage, she changes automatically. As a child she used to get angry very soon. After her marriage she controlled her anger. She realized that to Mohan anger made a woman 'unwomanly'. When she leaves her home after getting married, her father advises her to be always good to Mohan and her, at all times, and tries her best to follow his advice. It also throws light on her being closer to her father than to her mother. At times she complains against her mother to her father.

Jaya is very particular about molding her tastes in order to suit those of the rest even if her superior intellect is not satisfied. In the very beginning of the novel, we see that she tries to reason out with her father as to why she should not listen to the songs broadcast on the radio, but ultimately she keeps silent, suppressing her desire. Here, Deshpande has presented the theme of lack of communication. As she herself declares: "The themes of lack of communication may be over-familiar in western fiction, but in extrovert India it is not much analyzed.

Shashi Deshpande presents the meanings of silence in this novel. As she puts it: "You learn a lot of tricks to get by in a relationship. Silence is one of them... To make the story authentic and appealing, Deshpande has used the device of first person narrative to ensure its credibility by making the protagonist read her inner mind and thus representing the psyche of the modern middle-class learned woman. Jaya is basically a modern woman rooted in tradition, whereas her husband, Mohan, is a traditionalist rooted in customs.

The difference between their outlooks is so great that they fail, time and again, to understand each other. To Mohan, a woman sitting before the fire, waiting for her husband to come home and eat hot food is the real "strength" of a woman, but Jaya interprets it as nothing more than despair. The difference in their attitude is the main cause of their failure to understand each other. In her stream of thoughts, Jaya, too, looks at her marital relations where there is no conversation with her husband. This unhappiness is reflected not only in her conjugal life, but also in social life. Her books, her stories lack anger and emotion. Her writings are rejected by the publishers. And when, finally, Mohan angrily walks out of the house, she feels that she has failed in her duty as a wife.

As Veena Sheshadri writes: "One ends up by wondering whether Jaya has imposed the long silence on herself not out of a sense of duty or to emulate the ideal Hindu woman of the ages gone by, but in order to camouflage the streaks of ugliness within her." In order to have a well-balanced conjugal life, it is imperative that husband and wife be on a par with each other. They should supplement and not supplant each other. Further, they should know each other well physically as well as emotionally. It is this harsh reality that Deshpande tries to project through the female protagonist who, at the end, chooses to break her long silence of the past. It is not only Jaya's silence that Deshpande is highlighting but the silence of each and every character in the novel from different strata of society.

The novel is not only about Jaya's efforts to obliterate the silence that is suffocating her. It is also about the despair and resignation of women like Mohan's mother; Jaya's servant; Jaya's mentally disturbed cousin Kusum. It also deals with Mohan's silence which is the silence of a man who speaks but can find no one to listen to him. Thus, in the novel, Deshpande has presented not a woman who revolts openly in the beginning and later on reconciles to the situation, but a kind of woman who wants to revolt, but ultimately does not. Her inner turmoil's are so bitter that she is unable to speak them out and remains silent in order not to be frustrated and disappointed and disapproval of her actions by the society. She is unable to unfold the truth. Her image becomes like that of a bird who has got wings and knows that it can fly, but, somehow, does not. In the same way, Jaya is aware of her abilities and she knows that she can expose them openly, but somehow she does not. She always remains silent which indicates that the traditional roles of women still have primacy over all the newly-acquired professional roles.

Jaya is the protagonist of this novel. She has two children and her life totally changed when she married with Mohan and he shifted to Mumbai where she didn't feel comfortable. She accepted that and became silent in every work. When her husband doesn't like her writing and starts to dominate her works because of that she became a confident woman in her life and accepts all the pains in this novel her father named Jaya it means victory but her husband named Suhasini which means soft woman but Jaya wants her old name starting from their name women's lost their identity. "Husband is a sheltering tree'....after so many years came back to me. A sheltering tree. Without the tree you're dangerously unprotected and vulnerable" (167)

When Jaya married Mohan she thought he will be a sheltering tree in her life but he focused only on the money unfortunately his business is in inquiry that's why they shifted to another house. In the poem *old play house* same things happen before her marriage her husband said that he will carry her and treat in a well manner but after marriage he used her only for his needs and given her a dark place he was treating as material things. Jaya accepts everything silently because which is named as a traditional. Women have lost their identity and it never comes back to them. So their dreams went vain.

As my own anger had grown, I had felt his dwindling, and finally I had found myself raging at a silent, blank - faced man. I had ignored silence at first, but when it had gone on, not for hours, but for days. (82)

Middle-class women start to sacrifice everything because of their family. Jaya loves her father and he encourages her always she has named by her father as Jaya. Her father made her to be courage in the world and his dream was she will be the strongest women in the world. When she married understand that impossible to survive in this world because of male – domination. If a women wants to live happy life should have support, especially from her husband. Once a women gets married either it love or arranged marriage. She has to be under the control of her husband. Either her husband follows the right path or wrong path she has to follow the same way no other go but Jaya is not same as like other women so it was difficult to follow the way of her husband. At last she accepts everything and become normal women.

When marriage and love destroyed women's life started to lose them independence so women are changed themselves as a stereotyped because of their husband. In Indian culture women's are having more dreams but sacrificing because of their husband and changed themselves and then sacrificing their whole life to their family.

A family consists of members related by blood as well as by marriage. Family structures and role relationships differ from community to community. Since a majority of Indians are Hindus, the family structure and the role relationship in the Indian society are based on the ancient Smriti's law-codes of the Hindus. The familial roles and the codes of behavior prescribed were in favor of promoting patriarchal values.

The patriarchal structure, with its resulting class and gender hierarchy, is more or less a universal phenomenon, which cuts across all nations, religions and races. Since the beginning of time, man has been related to power and strength. Man controls, subjugates, and has always enjoyed his pre-eminence. A woman carries out her duties without expecting any recognition. The roles and behavior deemed appropriate to the sexes were expressed through values, customs, laws and social roles. In the words of Rehana Ghadially, "In a patriarchal culture, what we get is a masculinist definition of ideals and images of women" (21).

Radical feminists have claimed that men use social systems and other methods of control to keep non-dominant men and women suppressed. They believe that eliminating patriarchy and other systems which perpetuate the domination of one group over another will liberate everyone from an unjust society. According to radical feminist theories, the male supremacist ideology is experienced in its most severe form within the domain of the family, subtly subverting the most personal of human relationships. Millet observes, "Patriarchy's chief institution is the family. It is both a mirror of and a connection with the larger society; a patriarchal unit within a patriarchal whole" (33). Within the clearly marked hierarchical structure, the man controls the woman's

sexuality, labor or production, reproduction and mobility. Thus, the family can be the site of power play and manipulation of a dangerously elusive environment.

Jaya clearly expresses her life as nothing and her only career is to be a wife and take care the family. Before the marriage she had a dream to become a journalist but she was forced to take the career as a wife and care taker of the family nothing more than that. Jaya belongs to middle class family. Because of her marriage she lost her identity. So she tries to achieve her identity in her life. This novel mainly focuses on marriage. Women are divided into two parts i.e., lower class and middle class. Lower class women do domestic chores and middle class women never ask the question and they will accept their injuries and humiliation.

To the Indian society, family is not merely a group of people genetically related, living together under the same roof, pursuing different personal goals. Rather it is an anchor to which one can hold on to, a refuge from all dangers. It is the most mystifying thing. It is tremendously intriguing and fascinating. On the one hand family, appears stable, enduring of all universal cultural forms, but on the other each family is endangered by diverse threats of disintegration.

Jaya being a woman she reveals her inner personality saying I'm scared of cockroaches, lizards and electrical gadgets. All these she got after her marriage she was a brave and stereotype girl who was grown up by her father. She says soon everything will change. Since she educated she has a belief that everything change one day. "My mother never raised her voice against my father, however badly he behaved to her, he had-said to me once. I had learnt to control my anger after that, to hold it on a leash". (83) Mohan says that his mother never raised her voice against his father this the superiority that a male has in his mind.

Jaya narrates the story once she a girl who was sexually exploited by two men she could literally shouting t them but she can't do anything than shouting at her because in India women and not even allowed to go out alone in the concern of her protection but she never get the freedom of being liberal. Jaya, suppressed at every stage of her life, compromises to conform to the role of an ideal Indian woman.

Jaya is caught in this dilemma, firstly trying to be a suitable wife to her husband and secondly, struggling to express the emotions of women's experience, seldom expressing them in a male-dominated, chauvinistic society. Deshpande herself admits this kind of dilemma when she says that women have this kind of emotions but never come out.

Jaya knows that her relationship with Mohan is spoiled by incompatibility and lack of communication. If she suffers, it is in silence, if she revolts, it is also in silence. She suppresses her feelings lest they should spoil her relationship with her husband.

**References**

Deshpande, Shashi. *That Long Silence*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 1989. Print

Maria, Mies. *Indian Woman and Patriarchy: Conflicts and Dilemmas of Students and Working Women* (New Delhi: Concept Publications, 1980), 32. Print.

Mishra, Sudha. *Breaking The Silence: A Feministic Study Of Self Actualization In Shashi Deshpande's That Long Silence*. Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL) Vol. 5 Issue 3, 2017 (July - Sept)

