

**THE QUEST OF LIBERATION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF IT IN SHASHI DESHPANDE'S
THAT LONG SILENCE**

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Abstract:

Shashi Deshpande got the Sahitya Academi Award for her 'That Long Silence.' She writes about women and their quest of liberation. Marriage has victimised all her heroines like Jaya in 'That Long Silence' women's are forced to become as secondary in the family. They are neither decision maker nor taker in the life. The social imposed relation like mother, sister, wife etc are paralysed them in male dominated society. Shashi Deshpande takes her reader inside the consciousness of her protagonist to present their fear, plight, dilemmas, ambition and contradiction. The present paper endeavours Jaya quest of liberation and achievement of it through her creative writing, introspection and self realisation, while her silence helps her to fight against radical male domination. Culture defines the role of woman like mother daughter and sister in parent's side and wife and mother at her husband home. Woman carries the double power, but that too make secondary marginal and submissive.

Keywords: Male domination, Quest, Liberation, New identity etc, etc.

The power of self-discovery takes Jaya to victory. Jaya breaks her silence through her writing. Jaya voice unanimously presents the reality that women should realise the hidden power in themselves to break the silence which imposed by the society. Jaya character begins with meaningful feature 'silence'. That totally incorporated her mind when she tried to come out of it the revolt began. When she tries to establish proper communication between her and husband that resulted in failures. That unspoken communication creates a vacuum in her life. Jaya doesn't ask herself during this period of doubt:

Whether she should leave her husband and children to start a new life. Instead she begins asking herself, why does the silence become deeper and deeper between us? What has made us what we have become? (Deshpande, 8)

Jaya's name means victory but she bears her suffering silently. Even Jaya keeps on her changing according to the needs of her husband. As a result her individuality gets blurred. In each and every elements of her life, she thinks according to her husband. She gets her haircuts and wears dark glasses. Almost many religions allow, change wife's name after marriage. Its practice might be famous in male dominated society because it eradicates woman's total existence before marriage and creates new identity. That new identity can only manipulates by her husband. In the new identity women can't resist or raise their voice. Even with the new identity they can't go back to their past to claim own identity. Jaya means victory but after marriage become Suhasini means soft, smiling, placid and motherly women, who is born only to take care of her family. Myth also advocates that women should serve her husband by her looks, her beauty like a goddess of Lakshmi, mother like feeding in

bed. If women obeys all social cultural rules, then she honoured by the society. But reality is far from that thought she play all roles with wholeheartedly but, become consider only the 'second sex' and 'other' in the society.

It's been minutely observed in the novel; women have no right to express her physical desires. Jaya also follows the same and brings frustration in her marital life. Jaya's communication with Mohan resulted in emptiness and suppress her silence deep in to her consciousness. She realises that in seventeen years of married life they have not become one only their bodies occasionally meet not their soul. Jaya is the women who lost her identity and begins to think her as a wife and as a mother. Jaya before getting married informed that, "Remember Jaya, a husband is like a sheltering tree" (Deshpande, 39).

In Jaya's real married life she takes care to nurture and keep that tree alive even if she had to water it with deceit and lies. She changes being as an individual and moulds herself to suits the needs and principles of Mohan. Even her childhood her father object listening to songs broadcasted on radio. Jaya's father loves the classical music of Polushkar and Fiayaz and recommended to Jaya, she was fond of the listening of the Rafi's song. Shashi presents the meaning of silence in this novel as, "you learn a lot of tricks to get by in relationship, silence is one of them.you never find a woman criticizing her husband, even playfully in case it might damage the relationship"(Deshpande, 85).

Society sharply defines the rules and roles of women they have no rights even to be angry. Mohan feels that it is unwomanly to be angry. It is not only Mohan's thinking but male dominated society created them. Patriarchal society not even allows women to be angry and express their felling. The patriarchal structure of society control women's psyche. One of Jaya's stories wins the prize, when she writes a man who could not reach out to his wife except through her body. This hurts Mohan because he is afraid that people would think that the man is Mohan and the woman is Jaya. Jaya doesn't want to destroy the family relation so she stops writing. Even her new made friend Mr. Kamat replies that her stories lack anger.

Jaya marriage with Mohan was the result of Mohan's wish to marry convent educated girl. In their physical union he would ask, "Did I hurt you? And her answer is 'No'. It is sex that brings both of them together not love. She realises love is myth, without which sex with the same person for a lifetime would be unendurable (Deshpande, 97).

Mohan objects Jaya writing which gave birth to Seeta who stand for total self-surrender. Seeta and Savitri were strong women but their life directs not towards self-liberation but towards welfare of their husband.

The novel depicts gender inequality, and discrimination existed in society. This gender discrimination is strong evidence of Ramu Kaka's spoken words that shows Jaya the family tree only male members name are mentioned. Even Jaya finds her name missing in the tree chart. After further enquiry she realises that her mother, aunts and Aji's name also not incorporate in the tree. In conversation with Ramu Kaka she comes at conclusion "*how can you be there? You do not belong to this family you have no place here*". All female characters of the novel are victims of gender inequality. Mohan's mother met a tragic death. His sister develops an ovarian tumour. She does not tell anybody about the problem and bleeds herself to death in silence. Kusum Jaya's cousin sister deserted wife, Jaya's maid Jeeja, whose husband is drunkard and beats her frequently. Even Jaya's grandmother Aji, after death of her husband keeps herself behind the door rest of her life.

Every critic commented on the 'waiting'. This is destined for every woman forever in male dominated society. It can be pointed out in the following lines:

Wait until get married, wait until husband comes, wait until you go to you in lows home. Wait until you have kids, yes, ever since i got married, i have done nothing but wait. Waiting for Mohan to come home, waiting for children to be born, for them to start school, waiting for them to come home(Deshpande, 30).

Shashi Deshpande's protagonist always liberates themselves through the means of writing. Jaya's entity as a creative writer helps her to find a space of her own. Deshpande has always tried to establish this autonomous self of a woman in male dominated world. The entire novel is a preparation which will break Jaya's silence. Auther gives a lot of hint that Jaya is going to break her silence. So

she asserts, “will have to erase the silence between us, but the actual drama is postponed to the future” (Deshpande, 192).

Jaya earlier accepted the symbolical pair of bullocks where one can't drag it in different direction. It gives a lot of pain. But the self realisation is that life can always be made possible. The earlier impulsive Jaya becomes a mature woman and with self realisation changes her attitude towards life. Shashi Deshpande asserts that, here not only male dominated psyche is responsible but also women's disinters to raise their voice is responsible. The novel also traces the growth of the protagonist from a state of weakness feeling of failure to that of relaxation. Jaya accomplishes this through assessment and self-criticism. Jaya also moves from despair to hope from self-negation to self-assertion. Her struggle throughout is to attain wholeness, completeness and authentic selfhood. Jaya even says goodbye to her silence, and anger and resentment. She realises her self-worth and decides to give up the prefixed norms of society. Jaya wants to liberate herself through her writing and respecting to her feeling and desire. She tries to find out her inner resources to strengthen her life. Jaya's Quest of liberation ends with her self realisation, self-dependence, self-analysis, self-understanding through vigilance and courage. She achieves it with the weapon of silence.

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