

RESEARCH ARTICLE

SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IN SHASHI DESHPANDE “*THAT LONG SILENCE*”

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Abstract:

This paper aims to study Jaya’s search for identity in Deshpande’s novel “That Long Silence”. Shashi Deshpande was born in small town at Dharwad, Karnataka. Deshpande is one of the most contemporary Indian Women Writer in English. The novel “That Long Silence” won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1990. Shashi Deshpande reveals an image of ordinary middle class Woman Jaya, a house wife to be in search for her own identity. In this novel Deshpande gives a extraordinary portrayal of Jaya tries to reject a Long Silence and search for her identity begun in childhood and she rooted herself in the obstacles of her young life.

Keywords: Identity, Silence, Marriage, Middle Class Woman, Culture.

Introduction:

Shashi Deshpande is one of the most significant contemporary Indian Writer in English. Deshpande was born in

1938, small town of Dharwad, Karnataka. She was the second daughter of her father. However her small Volume of writing works has drawn critical attention. Deshpande’s concern for Women strongly reflects in all her writings. The novel “That Long Silence” is won the Sahitya Akademi Award in1990. This novel was translated in Dutch and French languages. In most of the Deshpande’s novels there is no sympathy from men, but the women’s set to challenge and find balancing in their roles. In this novel sets to search the identity through Jaya’s life. Deshpande explains deeply about the women independent in this novel “That Long Silence”.

Search for Identity:

Shashi Deshpande is one of the most contemporary Indian Writer in English. Deshpande have concern on female repression and struggles for Women. Deshpande is also called as passionate feminist. In the novel “That Long Silence” Shashi Deshpande brings the story of married couple Jaya and Mohan. In

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the middle class family the women bear the authoritarian by men silently. Jaya finally decides to break her silence after seventeen years of marriage life.

In the novel “That Long Silence” protagonist Jaya is a modern, well educated, creative writer and English Speaking Woman who represents the Middle Class Woman, and rising in her status in the society. Shashi Deshpande represents the character like her in the way of thinking and telling of opinion. Deshpande makes her readers to feel that all path breaking discoveries are the result of faith that helps a human being reach to the peak.

The novel “That Long Silence” reveals the story of mankind. In Deshpande’s novels male character doesn’t play the prominent roles. In her novels she gives importance only for female characters. She presents male characters only as dominating figure. Mohan married Jaya only for his social betterment. This novel brings out the state of middle class man after his marriage. In Mohan’s family women’s are perfect in their roles and the responsibilities, but Jaya doesn’t have any idea of the women’s role in the family. Jaya’s life was different before and after marriage. During her childhood her father named Jaya, Jaya means ‘VICTORY’. After marriage Jaya husband Mohan named her ‘SUHASINI’, Suhasini means the

clever, soft, smiling, perfect and motherly women. Both names symbolize her personality.

Jaya leads life with many restrictions. She is helpless and cannot do anything to prove her identity. Jaya decides to lead a ideal wife, and she maintains her silence in all the things. Mohan feels that woman being silent is the strength of woman.

“He saw strength in the woman sitting silently in front of the fire, But I saw despair. I saw a despair so great that hit would not voice itself. I saw struggle so bitter that silence was the only weapon” (TLS 36).

Deshpande’s views of women character does not encourage to walk away from marriage or to get divorce. Instead of that her female character decides to tackle the problems in the marriage. Jaya makes her husband realizes that she has to be treated equally without damaging the status of her family. In Dadar flat Jaya has nothing to do, She learns her real identity. In the middle class family the duty of woman is to fulfill the roles of life and mother before realizing her own identity. Jaya breaks out the constructed rules set by the society. She begins to search her identity of her own. Jaya feels Mohan is not a man and husband as she wished. The important aspects in the novel That Long Silence is that Jaya is bright and old in her

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ideas and her heroism goes down, she shifts to upper floor at Dadar. Mohan left the house; Jaya feels absence of Mohan is sufficient to shake her dreams of glory. The end of the novel Jaya was bold and mature. Jaya refuse a shadow of her husband, she is very strong to break her Long Silence in her life.

She says; "I will have to speak, to listen; I will have to ease that Silence between us" (TLS 192).

Silence implies suffering, shame and death. Mohan has come to Dadar Flat again. Jaya breaks her Long Silence with her husband. The themes of Deshpande's novels possess universality. And she mentions how the Indian culture kept woman in Silence. This novel That Long Silence is revolt against the women's treatment in Indian culture. Jaya attempts to search her own identity as well as to rebuild the culture in the society of women.

Conclusion:

The novel "That Long Silence" says Jaya is a weak woman, that the middle class woman whose courage fails at first. Deshpande says the passage of woman through the fears and doubts in her novels. This novel deals with Jaya's search for her identity. The protagonist Jaya longs for herself and identity, because she suffers Long Silence with her husband. Jaya wants herself to respect her feelings and desires at the end of the novel.

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