

Feminist Perspective in “That Long Silence” By Shashi Deshpande

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Abstract

A woman is known as a mother, a sister, a daughter and a wife. If you see it all relationships seem to be related with man. In the Indian society women are still dominated by males. Our society's rules are orthodox and enclosed with a conservative mindset and these rules are especially meant to be followed by women. This gender discrimination has been running in our blood for centuries. Women are bound to follow the steps of males in the lives. They are not allowed to raise their voice and take big decisions. It is a male who is the head of the family and takes all the decisions. He will tell her sister, her wife or her daughter to go or not to go outside. He will take the decision to select which stream if she wants to go for higher studies. Still women have to fight for their independence as they are not allowed to go to new a new or strange city for job or study. By the end of 20th century and the start of 21st century a new wave has risen and that is the independence of a woman and her fight for identity. There are many young writers who penned down their revolutionary thoughts for the women's rights with conviction. Many writers, poets, intellectuals have raised their voice in support of women and for their rights. These intellectuals want to provide equal rights to women who can contribute in our social and political setup and structure. This research studies the feministic approach through the novel, That Long Silence. This novel was written by the renowned Indian writer Shashi Deshpande. She was graced with Sahitya Akademi Award and also won many other awards in the field of literature.

KEYWORDS: Feminism, conservative approach, women's rights, male domination.

The novel's all the main characters are females, namely Kusum, Jaya Mukta, Vanitamami, Jeeja, Nayana, Manda, Nilima, etc. The researcher feels that all the female characters are shown as a victim. Some or the other way all of them are leading a life of degradingsubjugation. Women are being dominated, harassed, and suppressed by men. Men have always dominated and controlled women throughout her life. A woman is known in the society only in relation to the man in her life, like a mother, a wife, a sister or a daughter.

DrSapna Tiwari says that women in the society has to sacrifice her dreams and desires. She has to follow the footsteps of her husband. Same is the case with the novel's protagonist, Jaya. She has to shift, leaving a posh society, to a comparatively low standard society because her husband has to leave the job. An inquiry is going on her husband due to some discrepancies in the office finances. She has done all this for her husband against her will. Vanitamami, another female characters, always teaches her to not to raise her voice even if her husband is having mistresses in his life. She is always taught by her elders that man is a like shelter tree which gives her shadow and protects her from the evils of the society. This kind of approach and thinking of a woman shows that how men have suppressed women for generations. They can't think of her identity without a man. They have to lead the life even if her husband is doing wrong and

injustice. Jaya's grandmother is of the same view that she should not ask question to her husband even if he is wrong. Jaya still is unhappy in her life despite being quiet her life and never raised any question.

DrSapna Tiwari in her research work in IJELLH says that even in the modern life, women have no rights to speak her heart out. There is no self-identity for a woman. In some communities, woman has to change her first name too. By changing her name she loses her identity given to her.

DrSapna Tiwari reiterates in the research in IJELLH paper that *"The plight of the middle-class women and the base male psyche that has not undergone any fundamental change is projected through the character of Jaya . It is appropriate to quote Rashmi Gaur's observation: "The novel records the fact that the changing social dynamics had brought about a change in the socio-economic-educational-rights of the women , but they still have to create a niche for them". Jaya is basically modern but rooted in tradition, whereas Mohan is a traditionalist embedded in customs. The difference between their attitudes is so great that they fail to understand each other. To Mohan, a woman sitting before the fire, waiting for her husband to come home and eat hot food is real 'strength' of woman, But Jaya interprets it as nothing more than despair. The difference in their attitude is the main cause to understand each other.*

This paper explores the different facets of life of a woman. At each stage she is the puppet of a male in her life. Even in the digital world, a woman's life has not changed much. She is still suffering and sacrificing her dreams. In the novel, That Long Silence, Jaya is a path-breaking character. Jaya breaks her long silence and raise her voice. All her life she was leading a passive life. But now she can't lead that suppressive life. She wants to make her name in the society. She feels that she has her own identity.

CONCLUSION: The paper explores the place of a woman in today's society through the novel. The paper also studies the psyche of males. Man still thinks that woman is a piece of a furniture kept in the house. They still want them to follow their steps without raising any question. Males psyche needs a major transformation. They must respect the females' desires and choices. DrSapna Tiwari writes that it is also the females also who are responsible for their sufferings. They must raise their voice and fight back for their rights and place in the society. DrSapna Tiwari says that through the character Jaya, writer expresses that a woman can rebel and fight if anything is going wrong. She has all the rights to protest. A woman can only change woman's life. She has to take her steps and decisions to mark her identity. The role of a traditional woman must change. Feminism is the theory which asserts that women have the equal rights and role to play in social and political scenario. A country can make all round progress only if the woman has the equal rights and opportunity to progress.

References

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