

Condition of Married Women in that Long Silence

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Abstract-This paper defines the condition of married women in the novel of “That long Silence” by Shashi Deshpande. This novel described the milieu of patriarchal culture, frustration, male superiority, and timid behaviour of female characters. Many Indian women novelist raises a question about the condition of married women in traditional and patriarchal society. Shashi Deshpande is a renowned and eminent novelist of contemporary Indian in English Literature. She has the credit of writing well known novels: *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *The Binding Vine*, *Small Remedies*, *Roots and Shadows*, *If I Die Today*, *In the Country of Deceit* and *That Long Silence*. Her works translated into many languages. *That Long Silence* (1988) was her fifth novel which was recognised with ‘Sahitya Akademi Award,’ in 1990 and The Padma Shri Award in 2009.

Key words: Patriarchal, Frustration, Timid, Male Superiority.

INTRODUCTION

Women writers not even in India ,but across worldwide raises her voice against women suffering, mental or psychological level, abusing behaviour, physical or emotional torture by her husband or some time her husband family members. The word family comes from the Latin word “familia” that signifying of a slave who belongs to a power full person that is called a MAN. Many Indian women novelist such as Anita Desai, Kamla Das, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Mukherjee and some others novelist whom they discussed women condition in marriage bond with her responsibility, sexuality, frustration, emotional or mentally level described through her writing in literature.

Jaya

In the novel *That Long Silence*’ Jaya is the central and strong protagonist character who suffers several problems in her childhood and after her marriage life when her husband loss his job and left her parent home and come to Dader Flat, all this Force to insanity and

madness. Every time her grandmother prohibited to Jaya for her way of talking because she thought that women can not take any decision of her own life.

Her grandmother says,” for everything, a question, for everything a retort , what husband can be comfortable with that?”.

Her father gives a name Jaya to his daughter that represents a sign of Victory. But her name Jaya changed into Suhashini after marriage, this name is given by her husband which represents submissive , lovely ,a meek passive girl and devoted wife .The novel open with Jaya and Mohan when they shifted his new house in Dadar flat with her children Rahul and Rati. Every time Jaya thinks about her past and present life and thinks about her marriage life...Marriage become their destiny as Jaya thinks:

“...As we grew into young women, we realized it was not love.

*But marriage that was destiny waiting for us
And so with young man there was the excitement of
Thinking will this man be my husband?...It had been
our*

*Parent’s who had taken vague desires of ours and
Translated them into hard face . It was like the game
we*

*Had played as childeen on our buttons thinker,
tailoer,*

Soldier, sailor....(That Long Silence:19)

Mother in law

When Jaya comes Mohan house after marriage she knew the truth of the death of her mother in law. His father in law frequently drunkard and beat his wife only satisfied his male ego. One day Mohan tells Jaya about an incident that his mother forgot to making a chutney with rice than his father loses his temper and flung the plate away and walked off without having dinner. Mohan in his childhood saw his mother Vimla regular torture by her husband without any mistake , this type of scenario left a mark in the mind of Mohan

how the wife treat and control her mind thinking. Jaya's Mother in law Vimla death is a tragic cause of ovarian tumour and bleeds herself to death in silence. At time Jaya remember the word of Vanita Mami says about the position of husband in society and even her life:

*.....A sheltering tree, Without the tree you're
dangerously*

*Unprotected and vulnerable. This... followed
logically;*

*And so you have keep the tree alive and flourishing
even*

*If you have to water it with deceit and lies (That
Long Silence:32)*

Kusum

Jaya's mad cousin Kusum lives with her family where her husband always used abused word for her even some time beat his wife only to full fill his frustration. Kusum gives three female baby not any male baby so that's why she feels lonely in her life. Kusum commits suicide because she didn't conceive a male baby in her life. In our Indian cultural context marriage assume a peaceful, protect, respectful and a spiritual bond between two persons. Marriage is the basic or web mechanism where male superiority thought that woman only bears the childbirth and a life long caring without any expectations. This idea of childbirth is clearly portrayed in the poem of well-known famous poet Margaret Atwood is "Spelling".

"At the point where languages falls away

From the hot bones, at the point

Where the rock breaks open and darkness

Flow out of it like blood, at

The melting point of granite

When the bones know

They are hollow and the word

Splits and doubles and speaks

The truth and the body

Itself becomes a month".

Jeeja

Jaya's help maid Jeeja, has her own oppression and miserable story. She has been frequently beaten by her husband. She is fail to protect her own identity and self respect when her husband remarried with another women because she has failed to give birth to a male child in her family. Jaya says about her marriage life to Jeeja:

*"This man...it had been a revelation to me that two
People a man and woman could talk this way. With
this*

*Man I had not been a woman. I had been just myself-
Jaya.*

*There had been ease in our relationship, I had
Never known in any other. There had been nothing I
could not say to him. (That Long Silence:153).*

Tara

Tara and her eldest daughter Manda belongs to the lower sections of society. They are doing all type of house hold work and other type of odd task that come towards her, both of them represents a self sufficient and independent woman. They are working twenty four hours for their livelihood as their men were drunkards and unwilling to perform any work.

Asha

Asha is another minor characters in this novel. She is wife of Ravi, show how husband become cruel to their wives, they have not left any option for their wives only to survive in her life, so that's way they left her husband house and come to their parents house. The cruelty and the insensitivity of the husband clearly show the discrimination against and subordination of women in the character of Asha.

Jaya says: " If your husband has a mistress or two, ignore it. Take up a hobby instead, cats ,may be, or your sister's children "(That Long Silence:32).

CONCLUSION

'That Long Silence' is one of the unique works of Shashi Deshpande which signifies the pathetic or miserable condition of Indian women. It also reflects how women suffers deeply and ends up life silently baring molestation of male power. The novel illustrates the image of women in the middle-class family and the way she is sandwiched between the tradition and modernity. Jaya uses the mythological counterparts Sita and Gandhari, define the situation of married women in Indian context.

Jaya explain the role model of Gandhari:

"If Gandhari, who bandaged her eyes to become blind like her husband could be called an ideal wife, I was an ideal wife too, I bandaged my eyes tightly. I didn't want to know anything"(That Long Silence: 61)

This novel describe the blend of traditional and modernity status of women in the case of Jaya. Finally, after introspection, retrospection and contemplation, she comes to believe that self reliance, self confidence, moral courage and inner strength is the only remedy.

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