

Deshpande's Man-Woman Relationship : That Long Silence

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between Man and Woman is manmade and happens to be the basis for all other relationships in the world. Especially, an Indian woman procures a key role the family structure. Though it appears to be beautiful people living in harmony, on the other side, it is entirely different as the women are exploited by the male ego in the form of domination and gender bias. There has been a conflict with men as they do not treat the mother and wife with same sweetness. The concentration of Deshpande has been on the Man-woman relationship, gender Bias and protest. Though her concentration has been woman, she never wanted to be called 'a feminist writer'.

KEW-WORDS

Relationships, woman, realization, identity, Jaya, Man- woman relationship.

INTRODUCTION

Shashi Deshpande is a dynamic and persuasive writer in Indian literary arena. Her works reveal the struggle her characters go through seeking autonomy from the chauvinistic society in the name of culture and tradition. Women are often forced to obey the social norms of the Indian arena very strictly. At the same time, she is so clear that her protagonists strive to attain freedom from the so called norms. Pande's novels have earned enough appreciation for her insightful and realistic illustration of characters through realistic events. Her concentration is ultimately to settle a harmonious relation among the folks in the family. The eminence of the writer is understood through her practice to establish consciousness and the outpouring of human emotions.

Shashi Deshpande through her characters raised a protest against the several types of stigmas and exploitation of women not only in the society but in the family itself.

In the present novel, silence represents patriarchy and it has been used as a metaphor. Girls are educated, trained by the family and moreover, socialized to learn to be silent and never equal to men anyway. Consequently they practice observing silence which questions their very existence. The protagonist of the novel Jaya happens to be a writer and she makes it quite clear in the beginning of the novel that she is writing a story but it is not the story of someone else's but rather it is her own story. Writing her own story as heroine is not an easy task. Usually, a writer hides many events that are not to be known by the world outside. It is the human tendency to hide facts sometimes. Hence, presentation of an objective amount of one's personality is always a convoluted process.

JAYA: THE NEW WOMAN

Jaya is married to Mohan and becomes the representative of the married girls from the middle class families. In the current novel Jaya struggles but fails to keep the harmonious relation with the husband or family within for seventeen long years. And now, it is out of her frustration, her thoughts haunt her inner self. *That Long Silence* depicts Jaya's fears, guilt, assertion and doubts about her own self.

As Suman Ahuja, observes: Jaya caught in an emotional eddy, endeavors to come to terms with her protean roles, while trying albeit in vain to re-discover her true self, which is about an ephemera... an unfulfilled wife, a disappointed mother and a failed writer.⁵² (1999:103)

PUGNACIOUS MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP

Family happens to be the greatest gift of God not only to humans but also in case of animals in certain cases. The emotions like, love and affection, care, share and suffering and empathized by the members of the family. Woman plays pivotal and dynamic roles of mother, wife, sister, daughter and sometimes everything. At the same time, in the Indian mythology, women are revered as an immortal source of love, affection, sacrifice and learning. But the cultural, social and economical reformations have changed the entire scenario effecting the human relations very badly.

COMPREHENSION AND HARMONY

The key factor for interpersonal relationships is harmony and understanding. It is all about the communication between the individuals. When the question of subjugation and domination arises, the interpersonal relations are effected and that results in suffering. The protagonist Indu is independent and refuses to be imprisoned by false

notions. It has been a practice from the parental house that women were never involved in important matters. Instead, it was their duty to satisfy the hunger and needs of the family. In her parental house, women were not allowed to have their say in important matters.

Akka... I thought she was just an interfering old woman. But she was more than that. She was almost like a property though very strong. A family... it's like any other group. It is everywhere possible and inevitable that the strong not only dominate the weak but exploit. Akka was of the same opinion that I was one among the strong in the family. My strength has become an obligation for me to carry the burden stay silent inspite of all odds. I have learnt to be hard rock. If I am soft, I'll just cave in. Can I just put down the burden and walk away... Can I enrich only myself? I can't... This is my family, these are my people.74 (159) says Jaya.

The very opinion of the Writer is to communicate to the world is that, the inter personal relationship can never be a one way affair. The hatred and uneasiness preoccupies when the basic needs of the individuals are ignored. May be it is this happens to be the reason that Indu tells Naren:

I despise them. They are mean and petty and trivial and despicable. I had always told myself... I won't be like them. I won't live like them. And I thought... I've got away. But to what, Naren? To what have I got away? Is that any better than this? Is there no more to life than this? Are we doomed to living meaningless, futile lives? Is there no escape? 75 (160)

SUMMING UP:

The Man-woman relationship is a man-made relationship and it is the basis of all other relationships. An Indian woman secures an important place in all human relationships.

The present paper is a thorough study of Shashi Deshpande's treatment of inter-personal relationships in *That Long Silence*. The writer's perspective towards social and cultural norms towards women in Indian scenario is discussed thoroughly. It is a moderate endeavor to explore inter-personal relationships in the novel as Jaya finally feels the need to break the chains of silence imposed on her for seventeen long years. Now she is strongly determined that no longer she continues an unprotected life. She finally rises her feminine voice in the patriarchal society.

The very title of the novel *That Long Silence* proposes that the long period of silence is over and women are emerging strength not only socially but also economically. It is felt that the economical freedom brings them everything. Silence takes various shapes in the novel, ranging from Mohan's mother's silence of absolute despair to the resigned silence of Vimala who impassively bleeds to death. The unthinking silence of Kusum as she sinks into insanity, the stoic silence of the maid Jeeja, whose only purpose in life was to go on living though, in the beginning of the novel, Kusum is portrayed as a parallel character to Jaya. She is the touchstone against which Jaya tests her sanity.

Kasum's mother was constantly burdened with child rearing. She, therefore, looked after the youngest child on her lap while others were neglected. The research paper, tries to discuss that Deshpande's novels have earned great appreciation not only for her insightful and realistic illustration of characters but also creation of incidents. If all her novels are taken together, we find that Shashi Deshpande is obviously a master in painting inter-personal relationships. The flow of consciousness and the outpouring of human emotions change the very structure of any relationship.

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