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**Address**

•Vikram Nagar, Boudhi Chouk, Latur.  
•Tq. Latur, Dis. Latur 413512  
•(+91) 9922455749, (+91) 9158387437

**Email**

•aiirjpramod@gmail.com

**Website**

•www.aiirjournal.com

**CHIEF EDITOR – PRAMOD PRAKASHRAO TANDALE**

**Portrayl of Jaya in Shashi Despande’s That Long Silence**

**Mr. Suryakant Vishwanath Jogdand**

Assistant Professor of English  
Vasanttrao Kale Mahavidyalaya, Dhoki.  
Tal &Dist. Osmanabad (MS)

**Abstract**

*This paper presents the portrayal of the Indian middle class women. This novel was written by Shashi Deshpande. This novel focuses on the struggle and mentality of Indian women in holding familial and social identity with new aspirations and choices in the male-dominated society. The concept of self-discovery for self-identity consists of two dimensions to the lives of human beings. This research paper identifies Jaya’s revolt against patriarchy and self-discovery for self-Identity*

**Keywords:** Portrayal, self-discovery, Patriarchy

**Introduction:**

That Long Silence (1988) by Shashi Deshpande got the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award. This novel is translated into French and Dutch languages. This novel deals with The female’s leading face a lot of uncertainty, distrust, violence, oppression of the self, and silence towards patriarchy and finally rise as a “New Woman” In this novel, the author depicts educated middle class who possibly keep them vibrant with the changing pace of the modernity. They find the disabilities of cultural and social aspects in the male-dominated society. The novelist presents her women independent economically and ideologically but they are usually found trapped in the familial and professional roles of them along with the individual ambitions and the social demands.

Jaya is a modern highly educated fluent in English speaking woman. She is a creative writer who represents the emerging new woman conscious of her status in the society. Jaya writes her story about her feelings, emotions, and various incidents of ups and downs that caused her despair and disappointment and engaged her life. The long silence points out very significant question whether woman lives for her or for someone else or her children and husband. This paper explores the realities behind the long silence of the protagonist Jaya and how she overcomes the difficulties which she faces in her family by emerging as a new woman. This project aims to give a clear picture about the inactive nature of women and their difficulty in expressing their emotion and patience and how women have been suffering in silence in the male domination society because of tradition. At the end, she breaks out the age old customs of patriarchy through her courage.

In this novel, Jaya is a typical Indian middle class woman .She lives with her husband Mohan under patriarchal condition. She wants to escape from the condition. Her father brought up Jaya as an individual, who has the rights in the society as well as family irrespective of gender. Yet, this upbringing still looks strange in front of a society to hesitate to accept the woman as an individual. Immediately after her graduation, Jaya gets married and steps into the role as a dutiful wife and affectionate mother. Her husband Mohan also plays his role as a dutiful Indian husband and never looks up to consider any imperfection in the life. As time goes, Jaya's dutiful behaviour to Mohan and his family becomes a routine. According to the author, Indian husbands take for wives emotions, likes and dislikes to the same like them .The husband never realizes where he lacks and the anger behind his wife's sadness.

When she leaves her home after getting married, her father advises her to be always good to Mohan and she at all times, tries her best to follow his advice. Jaya exactly responded to the image of a



wife had already built in this mind. Jaya's family felt that Mohan was a good match for Jaya. They get married and soon they were blessed with two children Rahul and Rati. Jaya gets out of touch with her daily schedule and becomes disappointed with her married life. There is no interaction between Jaya and Mohan, neither verbal nor emotional. Jaya in that long silence has romantic ideas of love like school girls at the marriage. When Mohan is suspended from his job due to misconduct, Jaya is compelled to take account of what her life has become. Jaya and Mohan have to move from their present apartment into a small one, while their children stay with relatives. Jaya starts writing more to supplement the family income. Some of her articles are frank and open about her dissatisfaction, including the way in which her husband is unable to connect with her or their children. Though Mohan is unhappy with the article, he does not say anything about it to Jaya. She gets idea from his expression of face that he does not like her writing and automatically and unthinkingly seeks to please him.

Mohan faces further disgrace when he is found guilty of counterfeiting at his job and fired. Jaya's sister Kusum visits Jaya and discusses her own husband from whom she has recently separated. Jaya thinks that Kusum's abusive husband and her own distant one have very different flaws but that they stem from the same cultural expectations of the way men should treat women. Next, Jaya meets with her brother Ravi, who speaks harshly about Mohan. When Mohan learns about this, he is angry with Jaya.

But soon she comes to know that she has to support her. Jaya understands that she has to share Mohan's difficulties because she was a party to the plans of getting more money. She had thought of him just as a 'sheltering tree' but now she cannot remain just Mohan's wife. She decides to 'erase the silence between them'. She also understands that only the traditions and society were not responsible in creating the silence between them, she was equally responsible for it. Her suffering has a beneficial effect on her. It initiates the process of self-discovery for self-identity in her which leads in the last analysis to her fresh perception of life.

Jaya and Mohan become separate and they are staying at different places. Jaya gets that she is partly to blame for withdrawing from her husband during his difficult time. She recognizes that the long silence has stifled communication and openness in her family, making it difficult to support her husband and vice versa. Mr. Kamat, an elderly man in her apartment building helps Jaya think through her feelings about herself as an individual and her relationship towards her husband.

The novel concludes with Mohan sending a telegram to Jaya saying that he will come home soon. He also further writes that he has got his job back. Jaya is ready to accept Mohan back into her life, and she takes oath that never again will she let the long silence separate them emotionally from each other. In this way, she emerges at the end of the ordeal as a woman with certain willingness to compromise with life's problems while earlier she completely ignored her family. But now a change has occurred to her. Everyone has to fight his own battle.

The novel becomes a self-critique of Jaya. Others can't be blamed all the time. Anger or protest is not a weapon for fighting our battle and realizing peace of life. When she hears the news that all ends up well in the office of Mohan and Rahul also come back, she is again in danger of falling entrapped in the prison-house of marriage. She breaks her silence and refuses to be led by nose. Now she will continue as a writer and would not look up at the face of Mohan for an answer he wants. She knows that she does not speak in her true voice or present her personal vision. She now realizes that she cannot be a complete woman if she remains a wife or a mother and ignores the other equally important self, namely a writer. She finally decides to quit the 'Sita' column and to write what she really wants to write. Thus, at the end, Jaya succeeds in creating a fuller self. Marriage may not offer the best of all possible worlds to a man and a woman. In general life, women like male counterparts want to liberate in all its approaches and recognise. They struggle for equality for women's rights historically and politically. Shashi Deshpande has presented modern Indian women's search for self-discovery in her novels.

**Conclusion:**

Thus, Jaya represents the middle class educated woman in India during 1990s in this novel. She tries to find her self-identity throughout the novel for her role clarity, her life or is she living for her children and her husband. This novel deals with journey of heroine Jaya for self-identity and self-discovery. This novel also points out the imbalance of marriage in Indian society and it causes the frustrations, disappointments, failures rather than the endurance and solace.

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