



Review of the theme of the novel *That Long Silence* by Shashi Deshpande

Sanjay Kumar, sanjay35197811@rediffmail.com

Abstract : Shashi Deshpande's award winning novel, *That Long Silence* was published in 1989, The story, revolves around Jaya and Mohan, who belong to a middle-class Indian Brahmin family. In this novel a sensitive portrayal of Indian Womanhood probing the complexities of human psyche is presented by Shashi Deshpande. She precisely describes the struggle and anguish of the narrator Jaya, a housewife and a failed writer. Jaya manages to suppress her feelings ever since seventeen years of her marriage in order to become a good wife, a good mother and a good writer.

ISSN 2454-308X



Introduction : Suman Ahuja reviewing the novel for The Times of India observes that “Jaya caught in an emotional eddy, endeavors to come to terms with her protean roles, while trying albeit in vain, to rediscover her true self, which is but a ephemera of unfulfilled wife, a disappointed mother and a failed writer.” Male supremacy discourages Jaya as a writer .Her story gets awards but she gets annoyed when her husband takes objection on one of her stories as he feels that the story is about him, the story she wrote is about a man who cannot reach out to his wife except through her body. Jaya undergoes the feelings of frustration, alienation and mental and emotional trauma. She had totally absorbed herself in the family and in doing so she is no more aggressive and inquisitive but she becomes a docile, meek, passive, nervous and dependent upon her husband. She suffers from isolation .The novel traces how Jaya gradually emerges as a confident individual fully in control of her own-self and refuses to be led by others.

Jaya's husband Mohan is involved in mal-practice in his office and is advised to move from the Church gate house to somewhere to avoid defame and shame. Her family moves to Makarandmama's flat in Dadar. Mohan's excuse by saying that he was engaged in malpractices for his wife and children 'I did it for you, for you and the children' (That Long p.10)15 makes Jaya angry;she compares herself “ Like the mythical woman – Sita following her husband into exile, Savitri dodging Death to reclaim her husband, Draudpadi stoically sharing her husband's travails,” (That Long p 11), Jaya follows Mohan to Dadar flat, her marriage is based on compromise rather than on affection and understanding. She compares her marriage as:-

Two bullocks yoked together... it is more comfortable for them to move in the same direction. To go in different directions would be painful and what animal would voluntarily choose pain? (That Long p12).

The duties of a woman are taught at an early age and the wife has to dutifully to follow the customs. Mohan exercises his power over the family. Moreover, Jaya recalls Vanitamani's opinion: “Remember, Jaya, a husband is like a sheltering tree....Without