



SILENT UPROAR IN "THAT LONG SILENCE"

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ABSTRACT

The novel deals with the psychoanalytic subject concerned specially with Indian orthodox society abetting the gender biasness system of Indian –society. This issue has been laid bare in form of many female characters in the novel. Kusum , Aiji, other Aiji, Ai, Vanitamami, Jeeja, Tara ,Nayna, Vimala, Mukta and many more. They are made the part of the novel depicting various pictures of society and the efforts of those women to cope with life struggles and problems. Male superiority is the major cause of this biasness. Though Jaya , the female protagonist, presents her father whom she calls ‘Appa’ , as the contrary to all blameworthy male characters in the novel. As a whole, the novel deals with the inner conflict of mind which turns a human into a *silent creature*. The inner tumult makes Jaya tolerate all and makes her pessimistic towards life though she yearns to make her soul free of these adversities till the end of the novel.

Keywords: Foeticide, Infertility, physical assault, Widowhood.

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INTRODUCTION

That Long Silence penned by Shashi Deshpande reveals various aspects of society concerning women problems including widowhood, foeticide, physical assault, sexual abuse, gender biasness, poverty, child labour, women education and so on. Different woman carries a different problem leaving the narrator Jaya in a state of dilemma. She keeps on thinking of her nears and dears meditating on their life problems. It results in her deviation from her real life and she pessimistically attempts on her life and responsibilities.

Her *Aiji* was leading widowhood, a strict discipline and isolation from her own children and luxuries of livelihood. She insists Jaya to lead such disciplined life saying that she should listen to her husband carefully and follow his instructions. Jaya remembers on a moment in the novel about her *Aiji* saying as ,

“Wait until you get married. Wait until your husband comes. Wait until you go to your in-laws’ home. Wait until you have kids.”

This all was to teach Jaya to have patience for everything which she followed but on the other side she also lost her interests and tastes.

Jaya’s maternal aunt *Vanitamami* also suggests her to adopt some habits in order to deviate her mind if her husband gets involved with other women. She says her to cherish a pet such as a cat. She herself has cherished a cat which always revolves round her mami and follows her everywhere. As gues Dinu and Jaya,

“If your husband has a mistress or two, ignore it; take up a hobby instead-cats, may be, or your sister’s children; perhaps someone might have told this to her.”

Jaya’s Ai is blamed of her Appa’s separation from her *Aiji* . Jaya’s Ai is Marathi while her Appa is Kannada.

This difference of boundaries and customs suited not to Jaya's Aji throughout her life. So she had to remain away from her own son. *Jaya's mother-in law* was also a sufferer like other women. She had to bear so many children still she remained pregnant till her end. She was the major prey to physical assault and sexual abuse. She worked in others' houses to feel her kids' empty stomach still she was the main target of her husband's anger. At last she tried to abort through midwife and died soon after taking the blame of foeticide. Thus her life ended and thus her sorrows. While *Vimala* was suffering the agony of infertility. She also died of the dangerous ailment 'the ovarian tumor' totally unnoticed of her agony like her own mother. Even after this painful disease *Vimala's* mother in law taunts her regarding infertility. As Jaya mentions about her:

"Vimala sank into a coma and a week, later, her silence intact"

Jeeja is also the victim of agony of infertility. Though her husband had married other women and bore a child. That boy on being young is married to Tara and has three children. While *Jeeja* is suffering the grief of widowhood, Tara's husband has adopted drinking and gambling. That sole person has ruined the family bliss. And this was not less that he was attacked by some people for debt of gambling.

Kusum was brought to fill *Vanitamami's* lap but *Chandumama's* ignorance of *Kusum* and his relation to other women never let *Vanitamami* to live a peaceful life. Finally her sorrows get accumulated in her body in form of an ailment; her failure to bear a baby leads to the failure of her uterus.

Mutka's mother in law behaves rudely to *Mukta* and *Nalini* but she tolerates all so that she may provide family to *Nalini*. *Jaya* never liked *Kusum* but takes care of her till her end. *Kusum* became mental patient due to her circumstances which turned herself into a determined self killer. She jumped into the dry well. Her main sorrow was her prohibition to see her kids. Even *Chandumama* had never accepted her so she always managed to disappear from sight. The cry of '*Run, Kusum, Chandumama's coming*' always made her fly in terror. She remained neglected throughout

her life. *Jaya* compares *Jeeja* and *kusum* and finds them both sailing in the same boat. She majorly connects herself to *Kusum*. *Jaya* feels that *Kusum* was able to reveal herself under the pseudonym of 'insanity' while *Jaya* was not. *Mukta* says, "people don't change". *Jaya* sets it in her mind but soon realizes a scope of change in the statement too. *Nayna* and *Nalini* have their own problems in life. One is suffering from poverty and lack of male progeny and the other is suffering due to dusky complexion and absence of father's love. *Revati* and *Rati* are discontented with their respective fathers *Vasant* and *Mohan*.

Jaya herself feels uneasy to talk about her profession of writing. She could not carry it for long. She is depressed with her married life too. She used to think a quote, '*first love and then sex*' but found quite invert situation. She was not asked to marry *Mohan* but was convinced. She feels hurt to see *Mohan* lying on the bed with his back toward *Jaya* after sex. She feels they are not living a love life rather they are well playing their characters of husband and wife. She feels unable to express herself to *Mohan*.

Jaya Yearns to be free from the cage of restrictions of thoughts and manners like a sparrow struggles to get out of the cage. She wants to have that all she had before. Finally she has turned from a pampered and bad – tempered brat to a sincere and obedient wife and a worrying mother.

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