



## SHASHI DESHPANDE'S PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN "THAT LONG SILENCE": AN OBJECTIVE STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

*Indian English Literature has undergone a drastic change over several years. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Indian women writers were undervalued because of some conservative attitude with patriarchal form of society. But in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the women writers are successful in placing themselves with their male counterparts in Indian literature. Previously their writings are confined to woman's perception and experiences within the enclosed domestic arena. The last two decades have witnessed a remarkable achievement in feminist writings of Indian English literature. Their novels deals with burning issues related to women to retain their dignity. Women novelists writing in English attempted to project woman as the central figure and seem to succeed in presenting the predicament of woman most effectively. The work of these writers has given a distinct dimension to the image of woman in the family and society.*

*Shashi Deshpande maintains a unique position among the contemporary, up-coming Indian writers in English. Women deprived of love, understanding and companionship in their lives is the main theme of most of her novels. The serious conflict between their traditional roles and personal satisfaction leads to surrender and submission. The protagonists of all her novels desperately hunt for achieving their goal of maintaining their self-dignity without breaking the obstacles of traditional and social institutions. Jaya, the protagonist of an award winning novel of Shashi Deshpande, "That Long Silence" is in no way different from others. This paper attempts to study how Jaya suppresses all her desires and needs for the fulfillment of every role assigned to her by the society with the weapon of silence, unable to find a language to communicate. Not only Jaya all other female characters in the novel have to compromise at every step to sustain their married life. According to Shashi Deshpande, woman though married and having lot of responsibilities, has every right to live her life, to develop her qualities, to take her decisions, to be independent and to take charge of her destiny. But at the same time she does not advocate separation from husband but a careful affirmation of one's identity within marriage.*

**Key words:** Feminism, Silence, Identity, Women, Family, Relation