
CHAPTER V :

CONCLUSION

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Both the novelists Shashi Deshpande and Shanta Gokhale of That Long Silence and Rita Velinkar, are Indian. Therefore, their writing is originally and truly Indian. Their experiences, situations, characters along with their social, psychological, cultural views are purely Indian. We do not find their novels influenced by the current extremist views of feminism. They have the first hand knowledge and experience of Indian cultural, social and family life. Both of these women novelists are again, from the middle class and educated. No doubt, they know the real pulse of the middle class people, their hypocrisy, their traditionality and modernity, the roles of men and women in their family, man-woman relationship, problems of educated and working women, etc.

The other leading Indian women novelists like Nayantara Sahegal, Anita Desai, Ruth Praver, Jhabvala have also written on Indian people situations, themes etc. About their knowledge and experience of Indian society and people Sarabjit Sandhu rightly says :

... The women novelists like
Anita Desai, Nayantara
Sahegal, Ruth Praver
Jhabvala have, in their
novels, portrayed this
aspect (traditional Indian

women suffer, submit and
adjust themselves to the
circumstances) of women's
life without having the
first hand experience of
it....¹

Their writing is either prejudiced or only superficial, without probing deep into the psyche of people. Hence, to some extent their writing seems to be rather artificial. Their writings do seem to have certain limitations. But the novels of Shashi Deshpande and Shanta Gokhale, on the other hand, represent reality authentically.

The present novels under study focus the thematic study, in terms of comparison. The thematic analysis of both these novels has emerged with certain conclusions. These conclusions are largely in the following aspects :

(1) Themes :

- a) Woman's place in society,
- b) Man-Woman Relationship.
- c) Quest for Identity.
- d) Child-Parent Relationship.
- e) Traditionalism and Modernity.

2) Imagery

Themes : The study of these two novels brings out the three dominant themes.

(a) Woman's Place in Society : In the Indian society male is worshipped like God. He is the true leader and the head of the family. It is he who takes all

the financial, domestic, educational decisions. Women in the family are expected to follow his wrong or right decisions, rigorously, and blindly. It shows ~~as if~~ women don't have any intellect and right, to take such decisions or to oppose wrong decisions. The man heading the family may be father, husband, brother or son. That is to say, woman has to play a secondary role, to live within the four walls, doing domestic works like childbearing, cleaning the house etc, suppressing all her desires of freedom and independence.

That Long Silence presents a woman protagonist Jaya who is well-educated writer. But her husband-Mohan, doesn't like her writing, thinking that her writing is against the social conventions of authority of men over women. It is he who discourages her from her writing. She rightly blames him for this when she says :

'My writing,' 'I said, clumsily
abrupt. 'I gave it up because
of you'. (P. 119)

Thus, she holds Mohan responsible for giving up her writing. Mohan tries to hide himself in the name of society.

Her women relatives like Vanita Mami advised her to live with her husband according to the traditions. This constant psychological pressure of male superiority and social conventions have prepared Jayas's mind to accept these social and moral norms without complaint. ~~S~~he surrenders before them and adjusts with them.

On the other hand, Rita is more bold, courageous

and independent than Jaya. She doesn't care for society and its outdated customs and traditions. She casts off all the social pressures that deprives of all her independence and freedom. She continue her sexual relationship with her boss Mr. Salvi, without marrying him. Had Jaya been in her place she would have never shown such revolting power and courage against the society. She revolts but submissively.

(b) **Man-Woman Relationship** : This is one of the most fundamental and universal themes. Man and woman are such components of human life which can not be separated from each other. Both these novels, therefore, pay much attention towards this theme.

Pankaj K. Singh describes this man-woman relationship in a very beautiful way :

In this male world where men pass
orders and women carry them out
where men create situations and
women live them.....²

In the Indian traditional society, especially, man-woman relationship has become an act within the four walls of the dark room. A wife doesn't have any freedom to talk about any matters, may be of family or out of family. The culture and other social forces like marriage must be held responsible for such a weak position of woman in India. Sarla Palkar aptly says :

...Both men and women are products
of their culture and victims of
the institution of marriage....³

In this culture men are becoming like men, and women like

women in the past, without any change.

Jaya in That Long Silence, is also the product of the same culture. Although educated, she wants to be an ideal wife. The things that her husband doesn't like she either gives them up or winks at them. But truly her mind is not at peace. She seems to be puzzled. In her mind she gets angry with the bossing of Mohan even for simple things, but she remains mute thinking that it would affect their relationship. Afraid of the enquiry of her husband's malpractice when they turn to live in her Dadar flat, she gets the time to think about herself.

in her review of this novel in daily 'Sakal' Kamal Padhye aptly writes :

...आपण आजपर्यंत इतर बायकांप्रमाणेच केवळ मोहनची बायको आणि रती आणि राहुल या मुलांची आई म्हणूनच जगत आलो आहोत. नव-याच्या "हो" ला "हो" करणारी, त्याला आधारवड मानणारी, आपण आपल्याला काय हवंय यांचा विचारही न केलेल्या पारंपारिक स्त्री प्रमाणे गृहीत धरलेली एक सर्वसामान्य स्त्रीच आहोत....⁴

She doesn't enjoy sexual relations with Mohan. So, it seems to her a mechanical work. But when she is in the company of Mr. Kamat, she is afraid of society and her husband, and so though very happy in the company of Mr. Kamat, she doesn't want to keep any sexual relations with him. She expresses her dull love making with Mohan as following :

... Later, when we go into bed,
and the lights were of there
would be caresses. And then
lovemaking, a silent wordless
lovemaking....(P, 85)

But being moulded in the traditional society, she has no courage to develop her relations with Mr.Kamat.

On the other hand, Rita in Rita Velinkar, enjoys her love and sexual relations with Mr. Salvi who is a married man. She is afraid neither of her parents nor of the society. She thus, refuses to believe and behave according to social conventions like castism . marriage etc. Perhaps, this tendency of enjoying freedom in the field of love and sex, she may have inherited from her father and mother. Her parents' marriage itself symbolizes the success of an inter-caste marriage in Indian society. About her relations with Salvi, she is very satisfactory, so she says :

मी व साळवी सात वर्ष उत्कट प्रेमाचा डाव
खेळलो.... (P, 36)

But the real conflict starts in her mind when Salvi refuses to keep his relations with her openly, in her new flat. She tries to survey all their past relationship and becomes very angry, In order to take revenge upon Mr.Salvi, she loses all her morality and develops, for a short time, relations with a few other men. But she doesn't get any satisfaction and so finally, she adjusts herself with Mr. Salvi and allows him to visit her flat occasionally. This adjustment can be easily seen from

the following dialouge between Salvi and Rita :

"म्हणजे मी हयापुढं तुझ्याकडे यायचं की नाही? "

"मला भेटायला? अर्थातच, हा काय प्रश्न झाला? "

"म्हणजे तू मला झिडकारत नाही आहेस? "

" नाही, मुळीच नाही."

"मग मी येऊ? कधीही येऊ?"

"अर्थात". (P.108)

It clearly points out that Rita's early rebelliousness has come to an end, and like Jaya, she has to adjust herself with Salvi in the end.

Hence, both Jaya and Rita in their relationship with men do not follow the extremist ways, but get adjusted by living within structures with a hope for psychological change in their respective husbands for better future.

c) **Quest for Identity** : It requires much psychological identity. It requires much psychological insight, human and social understanding, and watching oneself objectively. This is a long process. One can not do it within a day, a month or a year. Sometimes throughout one's life this search goes on.

Jaya, a writer, is caught in the conflict between tradional^{ity} and modernity. she wants to throw off all the male domination on women from their childhood and wants to assert their freedom and individuality. The way, she knows, is not very easy. She is the representative of all such women in society. Shashi Deshpande therefore, is writing not only about one Jaya's quest for identity, but she has in mind all such

women in society. She gives much importance to reality. In her interview by Vanamala Vishwanath, her love for reality can clearly be seen. She says :

My characters takes their own ways. I have heard people saying we should have strong woman characters. But my writing has to do with women as they are....(5)

Hence, though readers expect from Jaya something brave and revolutionary, Jaya knows her limitations and controls herself. Jaya probes deep into her psyche and tries to understand the mysteries of her life, and her relations with Mohan and other people. She looks at herself objectively and finds herself divided into two Jayas - 1) Mohan's wife, and Rahul - Rati's mother. 2) A woman who struggles for individuality and identity. But finally, she accepts the traditional principle 'silence and surrender'.

Rita, from the beginning, is quite strong, bold and more independent than Jaya. She doesn't like to walk on the road which is prepared for her by her parents. She wants to find out and prepare her own road by herself. She doesn't like to live as an appendage on somebody. In her letter to Saraswati Rita writes :

तू (सरस्वती) तुझ्या आई-वडिलांच्या प्रत्येक "हो" ला "हो" करत जगलीस. मी माझ्या आई-वडिलांच्या प्रत्येक "हो" ला "नाही" आणि "नाही" ला "हो" करत जगले....(P.42)

It shows her independent nature. She has tremendous self-confidence, decisive power and is ready to face any danger that might emerge through her decision. She doesn't like to be a doll in the hands of men may be a father or a husband. Mr. Salvi is really surprised by her qualities. He thinks about Rita's personality in the following way :

कशी होती रीटा ! एका बाजूनं मऊ, लुसलुशीत
वाळूसारखी. आपला छाप संपूर्ण स्वीकारणारी .
दुस-या बाजूनं कणखर, ध्येयनिष्ठ, स्वतःच्या
हुषारीनं, कर्तबगारीनं पेटलेली. आपल्यावर कोणताही
भार न टाकणारी. (P.66)

But when she tries to think about her future life and relations with Mr. Salvi in her new flat, all her dreams and expectations are shattered into pieces, by Salvi's refusal to live with her in the flat. Her condition becomes not better than a mad person. By that refusal she gets collapsed. After this incidence, she understands fully her own limitations of being a woman. She comes to know that she can not change the whole society and hence, has to adjust herself with the situation and Mr. Salvi.

Alongwith Rita, her sister Sangita also is very much strong and independent. She walks in the shoes of Rita. No doubt, after many bad and sad experiences like resigning her job, makes her to adjust herself with the time and situations.

On the contrary, Saraswati - Rita's friend, in the

beginning is very much passive, and submissive. She has kept away all her freedom and education and preferred to obeying her husband's orders like a servant. She thinks like a traditional submissive woman. But Rita's letter and her company, brings about a surprising change in her.

She tries to know herself as a woman, she looks at herself rather objectively and comes to know her own limitations. She makes up her mind to continue her writing afresh.

The basic point which needs to be highlighted about these women is, all these women do not cross the threshold of their houses. They do not rebel against men and society. They come to know that alone they can't change the whole patriarchal set up of the society. They can, to some extent, do some reformatory work by their own examples; and so, they accept the principle of 'silence and surrender' and follow the route of endurance silently. But the end of both the novels is optimistic.

Surprisingly enough or may be merely by coincidence, both the protagonists - Jaya and Rita are Arts graduates; and Mohan, Jaya's husband and Mr. Salvi Rita's lover, are both engineers. Both represent the world of men in a male-dominating middle class society. Both of them are hypocrites. They want to enjoy the pleasure of money as well as sex. Moreover, they always try to show their superiority over women. Both of them are opportunists. Both the novels have got one and the same city, Bombay as setting.

The only important difference between Mr Salvi and

Mohan is, Salvi loves Rita naturally, more than he loves his wife; and Mohan's love for Jaya is very artificial, dull, mechanical like a commercial man.

In comparison with the women protagonists, the characters of Salvi and Mohan seem to be very weak. Perhaps, they are weakened purposely, in order to glorify women protagonists. Both Salvi and Mohan seem to be in the process of searching their identities.

The other themes which have found expression in these novels are parent-child relationship, loneliness, tradition and modernity, poverty, dowry, the monotonous unchanging pattern of woman's life, puritanism, etc. The themes of silence and adjustment are also rooted in these novels. Among all these themes child-parent relationship, and tradition and modernity are of much importance.

Child-parent Relationship : The child-parent relationship in both these novels is significant. Children are innocent and ignorant. So, most of the parents neglect them and don't take any serious efforts for their upbringing. Their childish curiosities and strange ideas are crushed mercilessly. This kind of behaviour with children increases the hostility between children and parents. There are three major reasons for this hostility. They are :

- 1) Forceful behaviour of parents,
- 2) Negligence towards children,
- 3) Psychological effect.

(1) **Forceful behaviour of parents** : Mohan and Jaya in That Long Silence have the negative attitude towards their children, Rati and Rahul. They don't try to pay any attention to the emotional world of their children, because Mohan has a fixed theory about children. About this Jaya says :

...To Mohan, parents loved their
children and children loved
their parents - because they
were parents and children....(P.78)

Mohan thinks that affection between children and parents is very natural. But his own children have proved this wrong. They have developed hostility towards him. Both the children, especially Rahul is very much annoyed about sending him for the tuition and to the tour with Rupa, in spite of his constant refusal. No doubt, Rahual comes back to his uncle from his tour without informing Rupa.

In Rita Velinkar too, Rita's parents treat her and her sisters without any affinity. Both father and mother force their children to live with the maid-servant Victoria. When they used to attend parties and clubs, poor little girls used to be with Victoria. Sundaram, Saraswati's husband, also used to beat his son Shankar, to score good marks in the examination. He always forces the son to study very hard. The result is the hostility.

(ii) **Negligence towards children** : In both the novels, children are neglected by their parents. Mohan doesn't have any time to pay attention to Rahul and

Rati, due to his money making business. Jaya, the protagonist of That Long Silence, runs after him to keep the balance between their relationship. Hence, though she knows her children's minds, she can't give sufficient time for them. When Mohan ^{gets} trapped in the net of malpractice, both of them have sent their children away purposely, on tour. As a result, Rahul has become very dull and apathetic.

Rita's parents have never cared for children. From the beginning of their lives, the maidservant looks after and feed them. Their parents never care for daughters' education, future and their marriages. When Rita wants to join morning college while doing office job, her parents become very angry with her. When she tries to learn dance, they laugh at her. About this problem Rita says :

"डॅडीना मी विचारलं तर त्यांनी टिगल केली माझी.
संध्याकाळी इना मावशीला सांगितलं, मग ती, डॅडी
आणि मम्मी खूप हसले. इना मावशी म्हणाली,
"सोसायटीत तू भरत-नाटयम् करणार आहेस की काय?"

"(P.31)

These sentences point out discouraging attitude of parents towards their children. •

(iii) **Psychological effect** : Constant refusals for the comics and forcing for tutions and the tour, have made Rahul rather dull. The psychological suppression of his desires have made him introspective, angry, and rather inactive. Rati also complains about her father that he loves her less than his niece Revati. In Mohan's childhood, his father's beating to his mother

has made a deep impact on him. As Rahul and Rati are passing through their adolescent period, they are experiencing physical and psychological changes. In fact this is the proper time to pay much attention to the children. But the parents haven't thought at all about these changes. But Jaya, to some extent, tries to understand her children.

Being always away from her parents, has made Rita and Sangita to think that their parents are only caretaking. Both the girls develop a kind of apathy towards parents. Moreover, sexual acts of her parents at one night, have affected Rita's mind very much. This incident has disturbed Rita psychologically. The example of Rita's writing only a few words about her mother in the school-essay also points out that there is a very big gap between children and parents.

Thus, both the novels try to explain the gap between parents and children, and parents' negligence and discouragement of children, very vividly.

Traditionalism and Modernity : Traditionalism and modernity are the time concepts. The first one refers to the past time whereas the second one refers to the present time. From the historical point of view, modernity is always in conflict with tradition. The old ideas about different theories are always being challenged by new ones, they may be in the field of literature or science. Both the novels under study, have shown this conflict between tradition and modernity. It is one of the major themes in both the

novels.

Jaya, the protagonist of That Long Silence, herself faces this conflict. As a child, she has different ideal ideas about her marriage, husband, married life, children, etc; but the reality of the present time, that is, modernity has broken all her dreams. There is a conflict in her mind between the traditional thoughts about her husband, her duties as a wife and mother, and the modern realities like Mohan's prosaic behaviour with her, his mechanical and hypocritical love for her and her children, his traditional views about the relationship between husband and wife, parents and children, etc. From the very beginning of her married life, Jaya has to face this conflict.

When we think about the relationship between Jaya-Mohan and their children, the parents do represent tradition and the children with their new looks of the life represent the modernity. Jaya and Tara, Jeeja's daughter-in-law, represent the modernity in comparison with Jaya's and Mohan's parents and other relatives.

Rita, the protagonist of Rita Velinkar, and her sister Sangita represent the modernity. They challenge the traditional ideas of marriage, love, sex, woman's and man's place in society. They are not afraid of the outdated customs of society about man-woman relationship.

Therefore, Rita accepts and continues her sexual

relations with Salvi without marrying him. She doesn't like to hide herself under the social veil. She insists Mr. Salvi, to declare their love relations openly and live with her in her new flat.

On the other hand, Mr. Salvi and to some extent Rita's parents, represent the tradition. They are of the opinion that Rita and Sangita should not go against the traditional views of marriage. Especially Mr. Salvi who is already married, is very much afraid of revelation of his secret relations with Rita in public. As he hasn't that much daring to face the society, he tries to take shelter in social traditions. He is not ready to give divorce to his wife Sushila.

Saraswati, Rita's friend, like Rita and Jaya, is caught in the conflicting forces of tradition and modernity. Saraswati, originally a traditional woman, after coming in Rita's contact, becomes modern in her behaviour and life and tries to fight against her old ideas.

Thus, both the novels present the theme of tradition and modernity in clear terms.

Imagery : In both the novels different images from various fields play a very important role. They give more strength for the expression and explanation of the various themes presented in the novels. The images chosen by both the novelists are from mythology to daily life of common people. There are human images as well as animal and bird images too. The following images are

very remarkably used in the novels to reinforce the thematic concerns.

(i) **Bullocks yoked together** : It is again very much surprising and perhaps coincidental that both the novelists have used this same image very effectively to explain the relationship between husband and wife. Mohan and Jaya represent husband and wife, and Rita and Salvi represent man-woman relationship. They throw floodlight upon the reality that man and woman are bound together in the chains of marriage, they cannot come out of them and the life becomes dull, mechanical and uninteresting.

(ii) **Mirror** : Another common image is found in both the novels is that of a mirror. A mirror is used as a standard of change in the personality. It is also used to represent the reality and truth. For Rita, a mirror tells the physical changes in her. For Jaya, a mirror represents different faces and different truths.

(iii) **That Long Silence** : makes use of the other images such as husband is like 'a sheltering tree'; the images of mythological women like 'Seeta', 'Savitri', and 'Draupadi' to create the picture of ideal wife and a true follower of her husband in his good as well as bad deeds and times. The story of a crow and a sparrow also throws light upon man-woman relationship.

The end of both the novels is optimistic. It doesn't expect the sudden and drastic change, but the gradual changes in woman's life. It expects co-operation

from man and society. Therefore, woman's adjustment instead of rebel can be seen explicitly in the final sentence of That Long Silence. :

... life has always to be made
possible. (P. 193)

In the end of the novel Rita Velinkar also, Rita, Sangita and Saraswati are in a very happy and jolly mood. Rita dances happily and others are garlanding the house. The final sentence of the novel

... त्या सुगंधात खोल खोल श्वास घ्यायला बरं
वाटत आहे, प्रसन्न वाटत आहे. (p.112)

clearly points out that woman's future is hopeful if she gets adjusted with the present condition.

Thus, both the novelists have tried their best to reveal the psychology of modern, educated, middle class women successfully. They try to bring some reforms in the maid-servant like condition of women by highlighting their problems in male-dominated Indian society. Moreover, both these novelists are optimistic and they hope that there would be change in women's condition as well as in the psychology of man and his treatment of woman, and they would prove as real equal to men in the given structure of the society.

To conclude, we can say that while delineating complexity of feminine consciousness in Indian context both these novelists have used the medium of language that they feel more comfortable in - Shashi Deshpande used English while Shanta Gokhale used Marathi for the

same purpose. After analyzing both these novels thematically in comparative terms, we find Shanta Gokhale more convincing as she uses her mothertongue Marathi for creative pruposes than Shashi Deshpande who uses English instead of Kannada, her mothertongue for the same.

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