

Quest for Identity: Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*

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Abstract

Shashi Deshpande is an eminent Indian English novelist, who portrays the plight of women in a traditional Indian society in most of her writings. That Long Silence is the story of a stereotypical woman Jaya, who comes to terms with herself. In the beginning of the novel, she is dissatisfied and finds her relationship with her husband troublesome and mechanical; she gets realized that she herself is also responsible for her plight. She seeks to realize her identity as a female and is not ready to press the beaten path, but tries to come to terms with herself by writing about herself and thus by trying to break the "Long silence". Deshpande holds the patriarchal set-up of the society mainly responsible for the victimization of women.

Key Words: Shashi Deshpande, That Long Silence, Identity, Indian English Novel.

Shashi Deshpande, a Sahitya Akademi and Padam Shree Award winner, is one of the significant women writers of India. She was born in Dharwad in Karnataka in 1938. Her father Shriranga was a great Sanskrit scholar and well-known Kannada dramatist. Deshpande received a bachelor's degree in Law and Economics, whereas she postgraduated in English Literature. In her works, Deshpande has given voice to disappointments and frustrations faced by women due to their marginal status in the society. Her works include the novels: *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), *If I Die Today* (1982), *Roots and Shadows* (1983), *That Long Silence* (1988), *The Binding Vine* (1993), *Come Up and Be Dead* (1993), *A Matter of Time* (1996), *Small Remedies* (2000), *Moving On* (2004), *In the Country of Deceit* (2008); short-story collections: *The Legacy and Other Stories* (1971), *It Was Dark* (1986), *It Was Nightingale* (1986), *The Miracle and The Intrusion and Other Stories* (1993), *The Stone Women* (2000); Children's books: *The Hidden Treasure* (1980), *The Only Witness* (1982), *A Summer Adventure* (1983), *The Narayanpur Incident* (1992). Mostly her protagonists are educated, middle-class, intelligent, career-oriented, but conflicting between tradition and modernity.

Her novel *That Long Silence* is the story of Jaya, who is a wife, motherly woman, and a writer. In the beginning of the novel, Jaya and her husband Mohan came to live in Dadar flat in Bombay, which was given to her by her uncle. They come there as a hiding as Mohan has been indulged in malpractice of funds in his office and an inquiry is set against him. Mohan has given Jaya and their children everything to live a comfortable life. But now their normal life has been interrupted and both of them see their life introspectively. Jaya thinks that she has wasted her seventeen years after marriage in arranging and re-arranging things and bringing up her two children Rati and Rahul. Now she introspects her life as her illusion of husband being a sheltering tree has been shattered. She thinks that she has destroyed her career as a writer because she has been performing the roles of wife, mother perfectly during these years. She has been dressing up and living a life which Mohan likes her to live. She feels herself attracted towards Kamat because he treats her as his equal. But she remains detached not to affect her marital life. After his failures, Mohan blames her and when she protests, he leaves out of the house. The children have been away with family friends. Jaya comes to know that her son Rahul has gone somewhere, but after some time, he comes back to her. Mohan also sends a telegram that all is well and he is returning home. But now Jaya comes to terms with herself. Now she decides to break the silence between Mohan and herself. She hopes that a person cannot change overnight, but they should not lose hope.

In the novel, it has been portrayed that the position of women in society is subordinated to that of men, whether they are the convent-educated, middle class women like Jaya, Mukta, or the uneducated, poor women like Jeeja, Nayana etc. Amar Nath Prasaad, in the preface to *Shashi Deshpande: A Critical Elucidation* writes:

That Long Silence deals with the various shades of the life of Jaya who journeys from ignorance to knowledge through her untold sufferings. It is a novel of self analysis, self-realization and self introspection. She realizes at the end of her life that her very compromise shatters her individual identity. She also comes to the conclusion that women have allowed themselves to be victimized instead of bargaining for making a sweet relation in the family and so she herself is also very responsible for her victimization. (viii)

The novelist has tried to say that women should not subjugate themselves to the circumstances. They should not victimize themselves. Not only others, they themselves are also the cause of their suffering. They should not blame others, but also recognize their ability and try to seek their individuality. They should not merely limit themselves to perform the gender roles provided to them by the society, but should prove themselves as individual human beings first and should not accept their fate passively.

The term “silence” is important to symbolize the marginal status of women in society. Geetanjali Singh Chanda in her critical work *Indian Women in the House of Fiction* observes: In Shashi Deshpande’s novels, womanly silence is often seen as a silencing of women by patriarchy. In *That Long Silence*, particularly, Jaya’s silence and her writing are linked. In the

biography she has to submit to a newspaper she pares herself down to the barebones of “I was born. My father died when I was fifteen. I got married to Mohan. I have two children and I did not let a third alive.” In literary terms this would be the plot of her life. The sum total of the actions that happen. It does not at all reveal who she is. (45)

As in the epigraph to this novel: “If I were a man and cared to know the world I lived in, I almost think it would make me a shade uneasy – the weight of that long silence of one-half the world” makes it clear what the novelist is going to say. It is not the case of the women, but those women – who think they have any responsibility towards society and who think they have something more to do than to perform the traditional roles of wives and mothers, and who think they are human beings first like men. As Indira Nityanandam opines:

Jaya in *That Long Silence* attempts to break not only her own silence but that of women, specially women writers, down the ages. A desire for identity and self-expression spurs the creative writer but Jaya finds it being smothered by her husband’s reactions. (45)

In a patriarchal society, man and woman are not considered equal. Man is given central position, whereas woman is marginalized. Deshpande holds the women equally responsible for such marginalization. If they try to change their own mindset, the society can be changed. In *That Long Silence*, Jaya also tries to break the silence and thus wishes her emancipation.

In a traditional society, everyone wants that a girl should not talk so much because traditional men like meek, silent, docile women as wives, who follow them and do not irritate them by questioning, and accept their subservient position in the family as their fate. They do not like talkative women who can threaten their position as the head of the family. Jaya’s *ajji* (grand-mother) is always irritated by her so much questioning: “Look at you – for everything a question, for everything a retort. What husband can be comfortable with that?” (27). After marriage, Jaya changes herself much, but in spite of the changed behaviour of Jaya, there is no comfort in her relationship: “I had neither any questions nor any retorts for Mohan now, and yet there was no comfort. So much subjects were barred that the silence seemed heavy with uneasiness” (27).

When Jaya was born, her father had named her Jaya – “Jaya for victory” (15-16). But after marriage, her husband named her Suhasini: “But I had been Suhasini as well. I can see her now, the Suhasini who was distinct from Jaya, a soft, smiling, placid, motherly woman. A woman who lovingly nurtured her family. A woman who coped” (15-16). Jaya who has not been so soft, motherly woman earlier, has been changed so much. As Toril Moi states:

Patriarchy . . . wants us to believe that there is such a thing as an essence of femaleness, called femininity. (123)

Softness, loving others, making others happy, not to be angry, having patience, waiting for everything, obeying the husband in every respect and sacrificing everything for the family are

the qualities which are expected from the women whether they are the wives or mothers. If any woman lacks any of these qualities, she is considered “unwomanly”, as Jaya says:

A woman can never be angry; she can only be neurotic, hysterical, frustrated. There is no room for anger in my life, no room for despair, either. There’s only order and routine – today I have to change the sheets; tomorrow, scrub the bathrooms; the day after, clean the fridge . . . (147-8)

For Mohan, “[A]nger made a woman ‘unwomanly’” (83). And therefore he does not want Jaya to raise her voice as his mother had never done so: “My mother never raised her voice against my father, however badly he behaved to her,” and therefore Jaya “had learnt to control my [her] anger after that, to hold it on a leash.” (83)

Jaya has sacrificed her writing career for her husband and family. Jaya has written “a story about a couple, a man who could not reach out to his wife except through her body” (144). The story was published in a magazine and won first prize. There were opportunities for Jaya and hopes for a bright career in future. But her husband Mohan took that story, a revelation of their own private life:

“How could you have done it? How can you reveal us? How can you reveal our lives to the world in this way?” (143-4)

He thought that people would think the man in the story to be him. After this incident, Jaya thought she has hurt Mohan and stopped writing.

In such a society, a wife is always considered a partner in her husband’s deeds. If he does anything wrong, she is also considered the guilty of that crime. As Jaya affirms in this novel: “I will have to take on the burden of being a partner in the crime, an ally, an accessory before the fact” (31). Mohan also accuses Jaya for his malpractice in his office, “It was for you and the children that I did this. I wanted you to have great life” (9). Playing his role as a father and providing them with everything, Mohan feels that he is doing something great. As Avinash Moharil comments, “It shows that he is doing something remarkable which Jaya cannot” (21). Also he expects her to be his companion in whatever he does. Jaya also affirms her role:

I remember now that he had assumed I would accompany him, had taken for granted my acquiescence in his plans. So had I. Sita following her husband into exile, Savitri dogging Death to reclaim her husband, Draupadi stoically sharing her husband’s travails . . . (11)

This is so because a woman is considered everywhere as a person who needs protection, and without a husband she is considered a vulnerable person who can easily be threatened by others. Without a husband, a woman is considered unprotected in society, whereas the husband is the provider of that protection. While going to her in-laws’ house one of the relatives (Vanitamami) has advised Jaya - “Remember, Jaya, a husband is a sheltering tree.” And Jaya feels – “Without the tree, you’re dangerously unprotected and vulnerable” and “so you have to keep the tree alive and flourishing, even if you have to water it with deceit and

lies” (32). A woman should not be worry if her husband has illicit relations with anyone because without a husband her own life is meaningless. Vanitamami advises the same to Jaya: “if your husband has a mistress or two, ignore it; take up a hobby instead-cats, maybe, or your sister’s children” (31).

Although Jaya is brought up in a traditional family, she is not ready to accept her inferiority. She wants to oppose but does not do so because she does not want to hurt Mohan. She remains silent and Mohan takes her silence as conformity to her subservient role. Mohan only expects conformity to his demands from her and his own silence makes her follow his demands because she cannot make the environment of her house quarrelsome as happiness of the husband and the home depends entirely on her.

In such families, married-life, motherhood and the bringing up of children are main activities in a woman’s life. They should be ready and wait for the feeding and caring of husband and children. Without them, a woman’s life is meaningless. They are expected to wait passively to be prepared for these roles. Jaya also grumbles at the passivity of a woman’s life:

But for women the waiting game starts early in childhood. Wait until you get married. Wait until your husband comes. Wait until you go to your in-laws’ home. Wait until you have kids. Yes, ever since I got married, I had done nothing but wait. Waiting for Mohan to come home, waiting for the children to be born, for them to start school, waiting for them to come home, waiting for the milk, the servant, the lunch-carrier man . . . (30)

Mohan tells Jaya about his mother that she never raised her voice against his father however bad he behaved to her. He used to say: “God, she was tough. Women in those days were tough” (36). She made the fresh rice again and again till his father came and had it. She had a lot of patience and she never grumbled. He expects the same patience from her, but this patience is despair for Jaya: “He saw strength in the woman sitting silently in front of the fire, but I saw despair. I saw a despair so great that it would not voice itself. I saw a struggle so bitter that silence was the only weapon. Silence and surrender” (36).

But Jaya wants to rebel against the stereotypical roles expected from her and she protests her mother’s unreasonable questioning about her going out or talking to anyone: “She behaves as if she owns me . . . She can’t dictate to me! I’ll do just what I want!” (75). In spite of the traditional set up of the family, Jaya has some seeds of enjoying an independent life. Her father had sown these seeds in her. He wanted and expected that she would bag a prize or go to Oxford. Her father always used to say: “You are not like the others, Jaya.” She as her father used to say is different from “the girls who, asked for nothing more than the destiny of being wives and mothers” (136). But her father’s untimely death has made her limited to the life of a stereotypical wife, mother. Earlier, Jaya has not been like this: “I’m scared of cockroaches, lizards, nervous about electrical gadgets, hopeless at technical matters, lazy about accounting . . . almost the stereotype of a woman: nervous, incompetent, needing male

help and support” (76). She has been changed, but she herself does not know at what point she has changed and how all this did happen: “But what puzzles me is this: how did I get this way? I’m sure I wasn’t always like this. I can remember a time when I was not so full of fears, when the unknown, when darkness and insects did not terrify me so. When did the process of change begin?” (76). She is confused and bewildered at the change that has come into her life. She recalls that all this change has come due to the stereotypical women in Mohan’s house, who used to remind her about her wifely duties. That was only after marriage, and going to her in-laws’ house, Jaya learnt the roles to be played by women in society: “It was when I first visited his home that I had discovered how sharply defined a woman’s role was. They had been a revelation to me, the women in his family, so definite about their roles, so well trained in their duties, so skilful in the right areas, so indifferent to everything else” (83). She learnt that by doing the duties assigned to a woman, a woman can be free from the guilt she is always made realized:

These women of Mohan’s family were right, I had decided. I would pattern myself after them. That way lay well, if not happiness, at least the consciousness of doing right, freedom from guilt. (84)

She does not want to know how her husband is keeping his family; she only wants to perform her own duties. However, her indifference towards everything and consciousness towards her own role changes her and makes her a stereotypical woman who wants everything for living a comfortable life and does not want to know how Mohan has arranged these facilities for her and her children: “If Gandhari, who bandaged her eyes to become blind like her husband, could be called an ideal wife, I was an ideal wife too. I bandaged my eyes tightly. I didn’t want to know anything” (61). As Simone de Beauvoir states: “a wife is what her husband makes her” (484). She becomes a typical woman who has nothing to do with the business matters of her husband. The result of this indifference is that Mohan uses unfair means in his business and an inquiry is set against him. Even then, according to Mohan, she is not eager to know anything about him. Consequently, there are differences between the husband and wife.

According to Betty Fridan, an educated housewife is sympathized with "Like a two-headed schizophrenic . . . once she wrote a paper on the Graveyard poets; now she writes notes to the milkman. Once she determined the boiling point of sulphuric acid; now she determines her boiling point with the overdue repairman. . . . The housewife often is reduced to screams and tears. . . . No one, it seems, is appreciative, least of all herself, of the kind of person she becomes in the process of turning from poetess into shrew" (18). This is what happens with Jaya too. She uses her convent education only to keep record of the daily routine of her life: trivial details of dates when the children get admitted to school, when the servants joined the work, how much advance they have taken etc. or to write light, gossip like column “Seeta” about the travails of a middle-class housewife.

With marriage, all household duties are assigned to the women – cleaning the house, washing of clothes, cleaning of utensils, dusting, arranging and rearranging things, which is done repeatedly, which require no skill or creativity. The routine work is so dull that a woman thinks that their whole life would be spent aimlessly:

Few tasks are more like the torture of Sisyphus than housework, with its endless repetition; the clean becomes soiled, the soiled is made clean, over and over, day after day. The housewife wears herself out marking time. She makes nothing, simply perpetuates the present. (Beauvoir 470)

Now before marriage she thinks that she will enjoy her life fully, but “Marriage subjugates and enslaves women and it leads her to ‘aimless days indefinitely repeated, life that slips away gently towards death without questioning its purpose’” (Beauvoir 500). If she has to go anywhere, she has to take permission of her husband and in-laws whereas man is thought as a more responsible person. A woman has to pay her life’s confinement for her happiness. As Beauvoir puts it: “She shuts behind her the doors of her new home. When she was a girl, the whole countryside was her homeland, the forests were hers. Now she is confined to a restricted space...” (469). Jaya also has romanticized views of marriage, but all her dreams are shattered after marriage. Now she understands that: “This, I’d thought, feeling his heavy, damp body on mine, this is the real truth” (95).

Jaya wants to protest the traditional values of her family, is evident from the incident of family tree. In the family tree prepared by Ramukaka, she was surprised to see that her name is not there. When she asked him about it, he said, “How can you be here? You don’t belong to this family! You’re married, you’re now part of Mohan’s family. You have no place here” (143). Mohan also affirmed the views given by Ramukaka. But she was not satisfied with the answer: “I’d wanted to ask Ramukaka, if I don’t belong to this family, what about the Kakis and Ai? They married into this family, didn’t they, why are they not here? And what about ajji, who single-handedly kept the family together, why isn’t she here?” (143). Even the family boys got place in the family tree whereas the females whether they are young or old, do not get any place in the family tree.

Looking through her diaries, Jaya notices: “As I burrowed through the facts, what I found was the women who had once lived there. Mohan’s wife. Rahul’s and Rati’s mother. Not myself. But what was that myself? Trying to find oneself – what a cliché that has become” (69). She thinks of herself as an individual, not as a relative to man or children. As Betty Fridan says, she suffers from “crisis of identity . . . It has been called ‘discontinuity’ in cultural conditioning; it has been called woman’s ‘role crisis’” (69). It happens, when a woman begins to feel “I have no personality. I’m a server of food and putter-on of pants and a bedmaker, somebody who can be called on when you want something. But who am I?” (Fridan17). At Dadar flat, for the first time, Jaya, getting relief from the routine-life tries to assert herself as an individual.

Jaya is frustrated with her married life and feels disappointed even after seventeen years of marriage. She feels emptiness in their relationship: "We lived together but there had been only emptiness between us" (185). She rejects the myth of stereotypical women like Sita, Savitri and Draupadi and compares the relationship between her husband and hers to a pair of bullocks:

No, what have I to do with these mythical women? I can't fool myself. The truth is simpler. 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? (11-12).

These words indicate that Jaya's relationship with her husband is more based on convenience than love. At the time of her marriage, she found no reasons to marry Mohan; but she has to marry him because she had no reasons not to marry him. Their sexual life is also mechanical. They share no words while love-making. And due to this silence, their relationship has become burdened. This is the major cause of her inclination towards Kamat, her neighbour. Her relationship with Kamat cannot be fitted into any category of human relationships: "My relationship with this man . . . refused to take shape at all; it just slipped about, frighteningly fluid" (151). It is through her relationship with Kamat that she could understand man-woman relationship properly and come to know that there is nothing in it. It is "only treachery, only deceit, only betrayal" (158). She was so comfortable in his company that she could discuss even those things with him which she could not discuss with Mohan. They could also make personal remarks about each other. Kamat remarked that Jaya's name is like her face. Jaya used to discuss about her stories with Kamat and asks him what is wrong with her stories that they are rejected one by one by the editors of the magazines. It was Kamat who advised her to put her frustration and anger into her stories. He also advised her to leave "women are victims" theory of hers and express her real inner feelings. He also receives her mail at his address. Her relationship with him was so close that she was almost shocked at his death. She left him lying on dead on the floor, in order not to affect her marital relations with Mohan. She does not feel guilty about it. Her attitude towards her extra-marital relationship is not that of guilt and she wants to be sexually autonomous. Her attitude is a step towards assertion.

Jaya has got her third child aborted without getting known to Mohan. This shows that she knows about her motherhood rights and wants to use them. It is also a self-asserting step that she needs no male help.

While opening the Dadar flat, Jaya refuses to hand over the keys to Mohan refusing to be servile to him any more: "It was not he who, relinquished his authority, it was I who no longer conceded any authority to him" (9). Her refusal to give Mohan the keys is the symbol of negation of her subordination to him.

In the beginning of the novel, Jaya waits for a catastrophe to happen, that would make changes in her dull and routine life. But towards the end of the novel, she is changed through

the process of introspection that gains confidence and is ready to face life as it is: “We don’t change overnight. It’s possible that we may not change even over long periods of time. But we can always hope. Without that, life would be impossible. And if there is anything I know now it is this: life has always to be made possible” (193). She comes to know that fragmentation of one’s self is not possible: “What have I achieved by this writing? The thought occurs to me again as I look at the neat pile of papers. Well, I’ve achieved this I’m not afraid any more. The panic has gone. I’m Mohan’s wife, I had thought, and cut off the bits of me that had refused to be Mohan’s wife. Now I know that kind of fragmentation is not speaking with Mohan:

While studying Sanskrit drama, I’d learnt with a sense of outrage that its rigid rules did not permit women characters to speak Sanskrit. They had to use prakrit-language that had sounded to my ears like a baby’s lisp. The anger I’d felt then comes back to me when I realize what I’ve been doing all these years. I have been speaking prakrit myself. (192-3)

Firstly, women have to stand against their own marginalized condition as imposed by the society on them. Only then their condition can be improved. In the case of Jaya, she decides to remove the silence between her and Mohan. As Sonima K. K. observes: “In *That Long Silence* Jaya had reconstructed her identity and along with that her capacity to dream. She decided to get rid of the silence, which women have lived with for ages to stop speaking prakrit” (6). Now she decides to change herself and not to accept everything told by others to do. She will put her opinion and not remain silent as before. Now Jaya will not say what Mohan wants her to say. Now Jaya moves to accept mutual responsibility in marriage. Painfully, she realizes that she has “tried to make Mohan the scapegoat for her failure as a writer and blames her parents too like glowing teenager” (153). But she understands her responsibility in her mutual relations. She would not blame Mohan for anything and breaking the silence, she would make him reveal her inner feelings. It is hard to introspect oneself objectively, but Jaya is successful in asserting her identity. It was her father whose words give consolation and inspiration to her: “Bite on your pain, don’t let it escape, don’t let it cry out – yes, it had been Appa who had said that to us when we had got hurt” (129). She does not blame Mohan for her failures but finds that it is lack of communication which has destroyed their sound mutual relations: “... it was not Mohan but marriage that had made me circumspect” (187).

She reads the words in the diary of her father: “Yatheccchasi tatha kuru” or “Do as you desire” – the message given to Arjuna by Krishna. He said – “I have given you knowledge. Now you make the choice. The choice is yours. Do as you desire” (192). S. Prasanna Sree aptly remarks: “Her giving up writing for the newspaper column ‘Seeta’ symbolizes giving up her traditional role-model of wife, now she will write what she wants to write and will not look up at Mohan’s face for an answer she wants. This makes her voyage of discovery complete”

(191). Although there is no outcome of the decision taken by Jaya is given, yet there is a hint what she would do in future. Whether her decision is successful or not is not known.

Now she herself rejects the image made by her earlier: "Two bullocks yoked together that was how I saw the two of us the day we came here, Mohan and I. Now I reject that image. It's wrong. If I think of us in that way, I condemn myself to a lifetime of disbelief in ourselves" (191). But now she affirms her position in her marital life and is ready to accept her responsibility as a wife and as a writer. She rejects the life which has no purpose and which depends upon the wishes of others. She comes to know that only by keeping herself to the traditional roles and by not raising her voice; she has made her life full of frustrations and anger. She realizes that as men do not need any female help to make their opinions agreeable, women should not be dependent on men for making their opinions valid. She takes up writing again as "it has helped her to have her own identity" (Burke 68). Now she will write to express her inner feelings and suppressed anger, not the light, frivolous, petty things having no serious concern. As Ram Sharma rightly opines: "Such an ending suggests a new beginning for Jaya and Mohan". (93)

Women are conditioned by our society in such a way that they consider themselves inferior and to make others happy is the sole purpose of their life. According to these roles, men are the creators and women are the objects and they are for the facility and entertainment of men. Margaret Walters opines:

All through history, Beauvoir argues, woman has been denied full humanity, denied the human right to create, to invent, to go beyond mere living to find a meaning for life in projects of ever-widening scope. Man 'remodels the face of the earth, he creates new instruments, he invents, he shapes the future'; woman, on the other hand, is always and archetypally Other. She is seen by and for men, always the object and never the subject. (98)

But now the situation is gradually changing. Though a woman is not considered a slave, yet she is not given the freedom and independence she deserves. Avinash Moharil aptly remarks: In India, the woman is neither free nor dependent but she is lying in between the two. The same picture of society, where transition is taking place, is projected by Shashi Deshpande" (21)

That Long Silence is the novel which depicts the conflict and relationship of man and woman in the contemporary era. Jaya wants to change, but she reassesses herself before that.

The novelist has presented her protagonist who challenges the existing norms of the society. She wishes to change the society but does not negate the institutions like marriage and culture completely. She expects hope and mutual understanding on the part of men too; only then life can be worth living for all. In the words of Satdev Verma and Krishan Lal: "The novelist has unleashed a scathing blow to the patriarchal set up and ushered a novel chapter of women liberation in any sphere of life. It has been vehemently emphasized that it is not the

circumstances that contribute to the negation of women right but has also highlighted the fact that even their own women folk are polarizing their dig at the emancipation of women” (19).

In the novel *That Long Silence*, the protagonist of the novel presents a crisis faced by one-half of the humanity. It presents before us the gender discrimination prevalent in society and the patriarchal set up of the society which has marginalized that half humanity and has made their lives miserable.

According to the novelist, only the patriarchal order is not responsible for the marginalized condition of women in society, they too are responsible for their own victimization by making themselves succumb to the traditional roles. They should not passively accept their position and should raise their voice against gender discrimination and inequality and should not keep silence.

Hence, at the end of the novel, it is not shown whether Jaya's endeavour towards the assertion of her identity would be successful or not, rather the novel ends with a hopeful note that one must not lose hope.

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