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Concept of urban woman in the novel of Shashi Deshpande's that long silence

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Abstract

Urbanisation refers to the population shift from rural to urban areas. It is predominantly the process by which towns and cities are formed. This phenomenon is closely related to modernisation, industrialisation and the sociological process of rationalisation. Urbanisation is not merely a modern phenomenon but a rapid and historic transformation of human social roots on a global scale. Rural culture is rapidly replaced by urban culture. Village culture is characterised by common bloodlines, intimate relationship and common behaviour whereas urban culture is characterised by distant bloodlines, unfamiliar relations and competitive behaviour. Shashi Deshpande is one of the best writers of feminism in India. She is the winner of prestigious Sahitya Academy Award for her novel That Long Silence. In That Long Silence, Shashi Deshpande brought forth the theme of alienation and isolation, nostalgia and revolution. The ideas of revolution comes from her difficult theme of urbanisation. She takes the characters from urban as well as rural areas and compares them by their psychology and rational thinking, adjustability, education and revolutionary spirit. Many things from the above said finds missing in rural people. This paper deeply analyses her concept of urbanisation and its effect on people of different areas in the novel That Long Silence.

Keywords: Population, industrialisation, modernism, urbanisation, sociology, education

Introduction

India had been called an agricultural country. Most of the population of India was living in villages. But due to the rapid growth of industrialization, the population of the towns increased with the migrants from villages mobbing the towns in search of job opportunities. It resulted in the creation of a new social order and mental set up.

Urbanisation and industrialization affected the pattern of social classes and their living and working conditions. Indian English fiction has always been responsible to these changes.

Indian English fiction writers have succeeded in their efforts to portray creatively the rural as well as urban India. They not only present the various problems such as social, political, economical and cultural of the contemporary society but also offers solution in terms of fictional art.

Quick urbanization of the Indian society in recent years, vehement role of institutionalized form of democracy and an unrivalled awareness of human rights have resulted in self assertion and individual independence that can be observed from the lack of the sense of community and a disregard for moral and social values. This type of writing is about the marginalized form of life. These writing focuses on the life problems of the people at the margins due to the compulsion of gender, caste and ethnicity.

Shashi Deshpande maintains a unique position in this type of genre. Her novels deal with Indian middle class women's turmoil predicament and terror. Impact of urbanisation on community is one of the important factor in the literary world of Shashi Deshpande.

Shashi Deshpande's fiction focuses on the real urban life situation of society. That Long Silence of her is one of the foremost novels dealing with the plight of urban women from a subtle feminist perspective.

That Long Silence is the reflection of classes and cultural based urban society. Her novel deals with the middle class tied with conventional values as Jaya's (the main protagonist) marriage is decided by her family members. The main story is about the marital relationship of Jaya and Mohan. Mohan is suspended from the post of Junior Engineer in a Govt. Office becomes irritable and insecure and wants support from his wife.

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Jaya cannot blindly support her husband because she is well educated and can understand everything but she does not want to criticise him because of her orthodox culture. This dilemma reduces her to silence. Mohan leaves the flat and never returns. Jaya under goes in an emotional trauma. She screams and howls but no way out for her. Jaya's experiences provide a picture of the plight of women who are from urban educated and respectable section of the society.

All these examples put together to create a very pathetic situation in which women find themselves secondary and unwanted in this male dominated society.

As we are watching things from generation women generally prefer silence. Because they think that while doing so no benefit will come. They are brutally beaten and insulted. Things have made set up in them and that they do not have intellectual ability. They are just emotional fool. Shashi Deshpande does not believe in fiery dialogues. She shows her protest artistically through silence.

Urbanisation has opened the way for the growth of individual and provides the sources for education. Education is the foremost requirement for social change. Social changes make person self-assertive and independent not only economically but socially and mentally.

Jaya, the protagonist, has no faith in after life. She is a writer in the truest sense of the world and the novel records her self-analysis. The novel also contains herself assertion that she will start a new life, make an end of her long silence. She was like Sita who never question her husband and now she has decided to take up the role of Maitreyee who wanted to question everything and even challenged her husband. The novel ends with the Jaya's self-assertion that she will start a new life with her husband. She says:

"But it is no longer possible for me. If, I have to plug that hale in the heart. I will have to speak, to listen, I will have to erase the silence between us. (192)

The intelligent and highly conscious individuals (the women protagonist) in Deshpande's novels proceed through the hazardous way of making decisions on their own, for this is the only way to assert oneself. As it is realised by Jaya towards the end of the novel.

It is Jaya's capacity for acute herself analyses that paves the way for making an independent choice. And this we can say the effect of her urban thoughts which flourishes while living in city, studying in convent school and with the freedom given by her father.

On the other hand we see the negative effect of urbanization on Mohan which makes him materialistic and self-centred man. He is a dutiful man, a dutiful son and a dutiful husband. But he is lacking in moral sense. Mohan adopts illegal ways for getting money and living a comfortable life. There is no poetic justice. This is the example of corruption going on in the third world countries like India. Corruption and the loss of moral values are the effects of urbanization.

Conclusion

I conclude my paper with the conclusion that the trend of urbanization is going with full speed in India. We find its positive effect on marginalized people and their growth and awareness. However as compare to rural areas development, urban areas have developed a lot, the ratio of education is higher. Literacy rate is one of the factors that determine the quality of population. An improvement in life expectancy

indicates a qualitative change in people whether male or female. The novel traces the life and hope of urban India.

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