

**Familial Bonds and Familiarisation of Self in
Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and
Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe***

Vinothini.J

21PEN018

Thesis submitted to
Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for
Women, Coimbatore – 641 043.

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

May 2023

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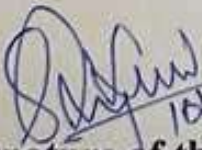
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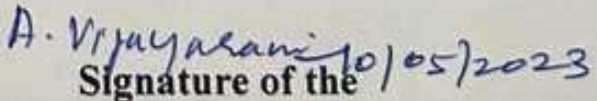
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Signature of the
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Signature of the
Head of the Department

Declaration

DECLARATION

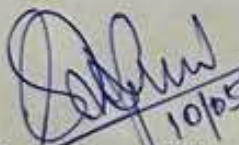
I declare that the thesis entitled "**Familial Bonds and Familiarisation of Self in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe***" submitted by me for the degree of Master of Arts (M.A.) in English is the record of work carried out by me during the period of December 2022 – May 2023 under the guidance of Dr. (Mrs.) S. Jayalakshmi, Assistant Professor (SS), Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore and has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or other titles in this university or any other similar institution of higher learning.

J. Vinothini
10/05/2023
Signature of the Candidate

Certificate

CERTIFICATE

I declare that the project entitled "**Familial Bonds and Familiarisation of Self in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe***" submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (MA) in English by VINOTHINI.J (21PEN018) is the record of work carried out by her during the period of December 2022 – May 2023 under my guidance and supervision. This work has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or other titles in this university or any other similar institution of higher learning.


10/05/2023
Signature of the
Supervisor

A. Vijaya Kumar
Signature of the 10/05/2023
Head of the Department

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Chapter 1

Introduction

Indian English Literature or Indian English Writing refers to the work of Indian writers' writing in English. It also includes the writings of Indian Diasporas. It is also referred to as Indo-Anglian Literature. In the Pre- Independence era, English became the medium of communication not only between India and other countries but also among Indians. When Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott had become classics and Dickens had written most of the novels in England, the early Indian English writing appeared. Novels by Indian authors focused on Indian Contexts and exercised a direct confrontation with the values and experiences that were lacking in the early generations of educated Indians. The theme of Indian writers before the Independence was nationalism, the freedom struggle, social reforms, rural-urban issues, untouchability and poverty. The other themes dealt with oppression by the British rule, superstition in the society and social disparities.

The popularity of Indian English Fiction was fortified by writers like Mulk Raj Anand and R.K Narayan published their novels in English. Anand's *Untouchable*(1935) and *Coolie* (1936), *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor* (1936) and Raja Rao's *Kantapura* (1938) are influential Indian English novels based on Socio-Political realism. The partition of the sub-continent and a number of significant novels on themes of partition were published. These include Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) and Attaia Hosain's *Sunlight on Broken Column* (1961).

Indian English writers have influenced an entire generation with their writings. They have contributed to the world literature through writings in their regional languages. Indian writers have portrayed India with its rich culture, heritage with

social norms in their writings. Amitav Gosh is a twentieth century Indian English writer, whose writing includes epic themes of diaspora, political history, communal violence and ecological issues. Aravind Adiga is a 20th century Indo- Australian Writer and a journalist, who uses the Postmodernist narrative techniques in writing. He mainly focuses on religious hypocrisy, women in the society, poverty, exploitation and feudal system. He won the Man Booker Prize for his debut novel *The White Tiger* in 2008. Shashi Tharoor is a 20th century Indian writer has explored India's past and their relevance to its future through his writings. Salman Rushdie, an Indian born British-American novelist, uses magic realism with historical fiction. Ruskin Bond, a 20th century Anglo-Indian author is known for his unique English fiction and essays.

In Indian English Literature, there are numerous gifted women novelists like Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Nair, Kiran Desai, Anita Desai and others for bold points of view. These writers have handled in their writings in the themes of feminism, identity crisis, gender inequality, loneliness and alienation.

The progress of English fiction in India is also due to the liberal thoughts from the West. The image of the woman in Indo-English novel is based on the traditional ancient literature of India, which showed woman as a devoted wife or a devoted mother. The post-colonial Indian English novel was equipped with a new education and sociability with different perspectives of the images of woman. The women novelists are responsible for bringing out the plight of women struggling against the oppressive social norms of a patriarchal society. The image of the woman as a guardian of extraordinary moral virtues was incorporated with devotion and sacrifice, and sacrifice has thus become an archetype. The image of woman and her quest for her identity has emerged from the archetype.

Feminism states that men and women should have equal political and social rights. They have only biological differences, but they are equally talented and have power and ability to work. In India, the first stage of feminism began in the mid 19th century when reformers started defending women's rights and focused on solving legal inequalities, especially women suffrage. The second wave feminism (1960s to 1980s) broadened debate on cultural inequalities, gender norms and the role of women in society. The third wave (1990s-2000s) of feminism dealt with diversity and intersectionality, and the fourth wave (2010) of feminism focuses on women empowerment. In the book *Women and American Politics (2017)*, Lynne.E.Ford says that "I myself have been able to find out precisely what feminism is. I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from the doormat or a prostitute."(183)

Radical feminism is most closely related to the second wave of feminism, which emerged in the early 1960s and 1980s and was most popular in the United States and Europe, fought against patriarchal frame of capitalist society in order to make women liberal from the traditional domestic roles. In the book, *Gender Hurts: A Feminist Analysis of the Politics of Transgenderism (2014)*, Jeffrey states

Radical feminist theorists do not seek to make gender a bit more flexible, but to eliminate it. They are gender abolitionist, and understand gender to provide the framework and rationale for male dominance. In the radical feminist approach, masculinity is the subordinate class of women. Thus gender can have no place in the egalitarian future that feminism aims to create. (33)

Marxist feminists took their ideals from Marx's writings and applied them to the treatment of women during the 19th, 20th and 21st-century movements. Marxist feminists believe that the path to women's emancipation is dismantling the capitalist society that allows women to work freely - For example, creating wages for domestic and household labour to compete in the market.

Cultural feminism was popularised in the 1970s. Cultural feminism is a variant of feminism that emphasizes significant differences between men and women based on biological differences in fertility. Motherhood is celebrated as a role in cultural feminism as a natural beauty of the female body, soul and spirit. For instance, it promotes gender differences.

Liberal feminism is known as the first wave, which began in the 19th century. This type of feminism deals with women's legal rights and gender equality - for example, access to education. Mary Wollstonecraft is considered the founder of feminism because of her advocacy for women's education in her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Charles Fourier is credited with coining the term "Feminism" in 1837. Tarabai Shinde is the first Indian English Feminist writer. Her work *Stri Purush Tulana* (1882) is a comparison between men and women.

The Indian English novelists generally deal with society in its rich customs and they view women's predicament differently. The attitude to women has changed in recent times. Their writings are based on observations of external behaviour and the inner journey into the psychological realm of feminine sensibilities. Some women novelists like Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande journey into the tensions generated by the discord between the individual and the surroundings. They try to understand Indian women and portray them in their novels.

Indian women writers like Shashi Deshpande are considered as feminists. She was born on 19th August 1938 in Karnataka. Deshpande won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1990 and the Padma Shri Award in 2009. She alternates skillfully between third-person and first-person narrations. Her novels deal with the quest for women's identity. It talks about family relationships, the context of marriage, the trauma of troubled adolescence and male hegemony. Shashi Deshpande's novels are about a middle-class Indian woman. Her novels deal with the inner world of Indian women. Deshpande's book presents the social world of relationships. In her story, the women search for themselves and the connection at their heart. She has written four children's books, several short stories, and nine novels during her career. Her essays are published in a volume entitled *Writings from her margins and Others* (2003). Another work of Shashi Deshpande is *A Matter of Time* (1985), which is a reflection of Indian culture. She portrays the truth of Indian society in Indian families. The crucial of culture for Indian women is also discussed. Her novels feature authentic depictions of Indians and their history. She used Indian names and roles of middle-class Indian women in her books.

Shashi Deshpande, with her frail body, needs no introduction. She is a riot of imagination. Everyone who comes into contact with her will learn something from her amorphous thoughts and thought-provoking subjects, as well as her defiant grasp of simple but potent words with which she weaves an effortless language while writing or speaking. Deshpande's novels have characters rearranging themselves into new patterns of family ties, after each change, as they navigate the tangled family relationship. Her books depict trying times, yet the stronger woman may cut through them and yearn for human space.

Shashi Deshpande writes a lot of emotions, assumptions and sentiments that run through human knowledge, much like Virginia Woolf and Jane Austen. The contemporaries of Shashi Deshpande are Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai. Kamala Markandaya was an Indian English writer. She uses social and cultural realism. The cultural confrontation here is not the usual 'East versus West' but tradition and modernity. She thus traces a woman's journey from self-sacrifice to self-realization.

Anita Desai is a 20th century writer whose fiction exposes the inner life of Indian men and women. Desai has considered the mother of an Indian psychological novel. She also touches upon political and gender issues in her stories. Her primary theme is the importance of the family. Other prominent themes include forgiveness, childhood power, and women's status, especially as mothers and caretakers in modern Indian society. Her novel *Clear Light of the Day* (1980) deals with two sisters from a loveless home. The elder sister stays in their dusty old house in Delhi and looks after their mentally-disabled younger brother after the parents' death. The younger sister Tara marries a man in the Indian Foreign Service. Moving back and forth in time, Anita Desai beautifully presents the complex web of childhood love and guilt. This is the only novel by Anita Desai with an unequivocally happy ending.

Anita Nair is another Indian English writer, who writes in a powerful yet gentle manner, in a sharp and precise narration with message as well as emotion. She has the theme of family relationships, gender inequality and social position. Anita Nair's novels require her reader to mature, and that's something to develop before plunging into her fictional cage. Her novels reflect the struggles and conflicts that must lead to expressing themselves.

The Dark Holds No Terrors (1980), written by Shashi Deshpande, narrates the story of an Indian Women's life of marriage and life at her parents' home. This novel deals with the conflict of a middle-class woman and her marital issues. The protagonist of this novel searches for her self exploration. This story has mainly five characters. Sarita is the protagonist of this novel, serving as a doctor, and her husband, Manohar, is a lecturer. Before her marriage, Sarita lived with her father, mother and a younger brother Dhruva.

The novel deals with Sarita's life with her parents in childhood and her married life with her husband, and it shows the conflict she faces as a doctor and wife. The novel has gender discrimination. A mother is caring and pleasant for every child, but in Sarita's life, her mother is a dominating character. She always favours her son Dhruva because he is a male child, and she fails to look at Sarita. So Sarita hates her parental home and lives in a male-dominated society. In her childhood, Sarita's father took Dhruva on his bike for a ride, but as a girl, Sarita is not considered to be cared by her mother. Her mother always wants her to help in the kitchen. Saru's mother always dominates her by saying she is not fair and has dark skin, which shows racism in the novel. Due to the lack of love and care from her parents, Sarita loves Manohar, a professor. Her parents oppose her marrying Manohar as he belongs to a lower-caste family. Sarita comes out from her home and marries Manohar. One day interviewer asked Manohar about his wife's profession and earnings, "How does it feel when your wife earns not only the butter but the bread as well?"(35).

Sarita earns more than Manohar. He does not like Sarita to be superior to him. He is an 'Indian man' who wants to control the family, especially women. He is a man who takes good care of his wife in the morning, but at night he forgets his character and behaves like a rapist in their private room. Finally, Sarita silently protests the

oppression. She hesitates to apply divorce because of her Indian way of thinking. So, she mends her relationship with Manohar. Sarita can only adjust the male character as to fulfill her needs and desire. Deshpande projects the men characters are the victims of society. Overall, the male figures are bound by tradition and face adaptation problems. In an interview, the author reveals that all her characters are concerned with their 'selves', and they learn to be honest with themselves. The novels of Shashi Deshpande are about women's self-quest and struggle to free themselves from the restrictions imposed by society, culture and nature. This novel also has the familial struggle before and after the marital status of the protagonist. Through this novel, Sarita tries to hunt for her self-exploration.

Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* (2001) shows the journey of a middle-aged Indian woman named Akhila, a tax office employee and still single, and is getting away alone, for the first time in her life, from her constructive, traditional Brahmin family. Her late father was a bookish clerk whose favourite newspaper was an English-language publication. In the novel's opening sequence, Akhila was at Bangalore cantonment station, waiting for the train. She travels to Kanyakumari on the train in search of her independence. She meets five women in the compartment who have different life experiences. All these five women eventually inspire Akhila to live her own life.

The title *Ladies Coupe* denotes the ladies compartment in the train. This novel does not portray freedom and gender roles, but the changes happen at the end. Akhila's train journey is not just a journey of entertainment. It is an emotional journey for her. The five women characters represent the woman's life can entail, from the pampered person to insensitive bullies, from the perfect child to an innocent child. Neither of these women is portrayed as the wrong choice. They are just different from

their own. Akhila says her eternal dilemma is whether she needs a man to fulfill her life. Does she need a man to support her goals, or can she achieve happiness as a single woman? Akhila is worried that she is taking too long to do what others have asked her to do. She feels like she never got the chance to live her life. She has always faithfully played the role of daughter, sister and aunt but never a wife.

Anita Nair addresses the concept of patriarchy in which a woman bound by tradition must depend on men who are disabled to realise the power of the Self. She tries to show that, in life, oppression is not always in subtle form, but often under the guise of love, protection, and security. On the one hand, Nair explores the anguish so that their lives become productive and peaceful. Her female characters are not weak; they are courageous and possess impressive boldness and the will to resist social evils. They are intelligent and curious women who are not content with injustice and rebel against them.

Akhila has learnt much about other women's lives and sees how other choices have affected her. She respects all interlocutors, but she judges them. Less strict, more careful. She eventually learns that instead of just following the social norms. She needs to think for herself, which goes back to feminism. The novel's main theme is self-exploration, which has family conflicts and struggles.

Familial bonds are strong and important for overall well-being throughout life. Several family bonds, including sibling, intergenerational and marriage ones, are significant well-being factors. Children's well-being, as well as their assessment of their families and overall life satisfaction, depends on their familial relationships. Thus family is a complex subject with many interpretations and conclusions regarding its function and significance in society. Many sociologists see family as a crucial and vital structure in contemporary society. Many family units are involved in society's

changes; because of the huge disparities among them, including those in culture, religion, and the geographic region they occupy, changes in various communities may differ substantially.

People have always been connected by their relationships with one another. These partnerships undergo some modifications and reactions when there is unrest or disturbance, adding new aspects to their personalities. So, the novels expose this and push it to the edge. The role that society plays for humans is crucial. Families must interact with one another, and this contact can only produce different dimensions. Marriage is essential in Indian culture in bringing about important changes in their families. The wife and husband, the major characters in these households, frequently respond or behave differently depending on the circumstances.

The relationship between a man and a woman has significantly altered the family's structure and other connections. Over time, the relationship between a man and a woman has changed. The male member of the joint family typically assumes leadership roles, which causes female family members to jockey for positions to feed their egos and ambitions. Yet, Indian feminism treats female dominance, such as that between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law, a wife and a sister-in-law, or even between a daughter and mother, as a threat to bonds, which runs counter to the idea of bonds.

Women form bonds when they are in need, such as through pregnancy, childbirth, a death in the family, or even a health issue in the neighborhood. The Indian Society was close-knit up until the post-colonial era. No matter their social standing or relationship, people coexist peacefully. No matter their social status or relationship, people coexist peacefully.

Yet, the breakdown of joint families and Western influence at the start of colonial authority brought about a swift transformation in the social and economic structure of the country, giving rise to nuclear families that have grown extremely isolated and independent. The older generation is losing its cohesiveness because the younger generation needs to understand the value and benefits of nuclear families. Nonetheless, there are isolated instances where we can still see traces of the joint family culture in our rural communities.

Marriage refers to the combination of two true wits and devoted souls who are compatible and effectively expressed as a man and woman in society. Marriage plays a vital role in the life of both men and women. The freedom enjoyed by women differs from that of men. Even if a woman selects her spouse, she is viewed as a rebel by society and her own family.

Healthy relationship requires effort and compromise from both partners and involve clear communication, transparency, faith, tolerance and respect between the partners. There should not be power disparity. Partners share decisions, accept each other's independence, and are free to act independently without fear of repercussions. The foundation of all other partnerships is the man-woman relationship, an artificial union. In all interpersonal relationships, Indian women hold a significant position. Outwardly, the connection between a man and woman seems to be built on mutual love, trust and understanding, but inside, it is tainted by vices like the male ego, male dominance, and gender prejudice. There has frequently been tension in a man and woman relationship since the male does not find the mother and spouse in the same person.

Self-exploration means knowing about strange things, being aware of oneself, and examining and analyzing one's unrealized spiritual or intellectual capacity. It is

the process of dialogue between "What you are" and "what you really want to be". It is self-evolution through self -investigation. Self-exploration is knowing oneself and through that, understanding the entire existence. For example, journaling is a great aid for self-exploration. The main focus of self-exploration is the process of finding that there is something inherent, constant and universal in every human being. This allows one to see the inner confusions and contradictions and to resolve them by recognizing one's natural acceptance.

The term self-exploration describes a person's struggle to find purpose and significance in their life. It is an introspective voyage that is also a quest for life, a look for origins, and a fight for self-expression. A close examination of Anita Desai's writing indicates that every responsive character has an underlying desire to find their identity. She discusses man's alienating experience and outlines the numerous strategies and tactics he uses to survive. He is viewed as an outsider and an outcast in his surroundings, yet he is also a seeker after the meaningful reality of his existence. He will not give up on his search for self-identity, even if he has a catastrophic psychic experience due to the breakdown of his value system and the absence of adequate alternatives. People view a person's ongoing fight as a heroic effort that ultimately vindicates him and elevates the spirit of freedom. Even in a miserable life, this desire for truth or identity gives him a new dimension, depth, and significance.

Self-exploration is defined as the flow of thoughts in a character's mind. Memories of the past flow into the present like a river, revealing the character's introspection. Self-discovery is important in literature; it shows the moral and monetary disciplines of different eras through literature. It presents the physical and psychological dilemmas of people of different types of societies of all ages. The

various genres of literature reveal the human spirit and mind. Self–discovery deals with achievement, power, purpose and authenticity in life.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1603), personifies power. Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847) reveals her life's meaning through her journey with her journey of self. The discovery of life is found by the protagonist Akhila in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*.(2001) Every person's manner of life and cognitive processes are closely intertwined. Literature fosters morally upright and upbeat thought patterns that help people realise their potential and live successful lives that can only be attained through the union of heart and mind.

In the article, *Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, and Bharathi Mukherjee- A Comparative Study*(1981) by Dr S. Hannah Evangeline discusses the case of Indian women, who are victims of neglect, suffering oppression and exploitation.

The article, “Exploitation and Subjugation of Women in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (2021)” shows Shashi Deshpande as an advocate of women's anxiety and struggle and that her work portrays the diverse roles of women, including wife, mother, sister, daughter and daughter-in-law. Her work is not an anti-man. So, she cannot be directly classified as a feminist.

In the *The Indian Express* the article titled “Female Desire takes the power equation out of patriarchy's hands(2018)”: Anita Nair discusses male entitlement in her new book and why a woman's search for identity will always be difficult.

In the article, “A Study on Feminism in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande: The Contemporary Writer (2003)”, Pradeep Kumar analyzes Shashi Deshpande's female characters from a feminist perspective. As an author of the 70s and 80s, she reflects a realistic picture of the modern middle-class, educated, urban Indian woman. Her

novels portray the plight of modern middle-class urban Indian women and analyze how the twentieth century has not changed much for women's fortunes.

In her article "Thematic Studies in Shashi Deshpande's Novels" (2020), Rabbi Rani states that Deshpande's novel also shows how carefully she expresses her frustrations, disappointments experienced by women in martial relationships and mature, balanced relationships.

In the article "Deshpande's Novels (2015)" says, Deshpande seems to believe the sentiments of de Beauvoir, who she admits has influenced her according to whom it is women who have to define, measure and explore their special domain.

Dr T.Vasanthakumari compares Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* to Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* and she says:

Anita Nair has employed a style evocative of Chaucer's mixed crowd of pilgrims travelling to Canterbury, telling tales to each other. Her characters are singularly life-affirming. Once locked in together, it is a question of age bar, caste no bar, sex no bar, and the intimacy with which the ladies discuss their sexual adventures seems to underline the message that having sex is destiny. (119)

According to Dr K.R Srinivasa Iyengar, *Indian Writing in English* (1993),

Sarita strips herself of self-deception, guilt complexes and emotive illusions, and Shashi Deshpande's language itself flickers like a candle and blobs of remembrance melt and form icicles of furrowing thought. Sarita cannot forget her children or the sick needing her expert attention, so she decided to face her home again. In this unpredictable world, even total despair can open up a new spring of element self-confidence. (758)

In *A Writer's Diary (1953)*, Virginia Woolf talks about women's independence of self and mind. She says, "I will go on adventuring, changing, opening my minds and eyes, refusing to be stamped and stereotyped. The thing is to free one's self to let it find dimensions not be impeded." (187).

In the book, *Women Empowerment: Challenges and Strategies (2019)*, Vishwanatha stated, "Women must live within relationships. But if the rules are rigidly laid that as a wife or mother, you do this and no further, then one becomes unhappy." (73). The intelligent and educated protagonist soon begins to feel restricted in the traditional claustrophobic existence. Their balanced and practical approach towards life makes them realize the importance of marriage and family. Concentrating on traditional values Deshpande almost always shows her woman seeking the solution to their problems within the union.

Considering the discussions cited above, this dissertation aims to study the Familial bonds and Familiarisation of Self in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*. The following are the objectives:

- to explore the familial bonds and their traits in both the novels
- to study the characters in both the novels and their modes of familiarisation of self
- to examine the impact of and change in relationships before and after marriage in the lives of these characters
- to discuss and understand how the protagonists overcomes the struggles in maintaining relationships

Chapter One discusses the feminist implications in Indian English Literature and introduces the concept of family relationships and quest for self in families. It also gives a brief review of literature in this regard. Chapter Two portrays the struggle in families and relationships among the characters of the select novels. Chapter Three traces how the characters struggle in domestic relations, and how the women characters attempt to familiarize themselves to their own selves. Chapter Four summarizes the findings of the discussions.

Chapter 2
Familial Bonds

Chapter 2

Familial Bonds

A family is a group of two or more people living together and united by birth, marriage or adoption. They are considered to be members of one family. Whether people love or dislike the relationships with their parents, children and siblings or the lack of huge relationships can have a profound effect on their lives. It also applies to the beliefs about a family that may be challenged, reshaped or reaffirmed due to their journey. J.K.Rowling says, "Family is a life jacket in the stormy sea of life. "A family relationship has the major aspects of love, respect, humility, responsibility and spirituality. Healthy family relationships are built on quality time, communication, teamwork and appreciation to motivate others.

Families act as interactive units. This entity manages its members' physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual well-being. A family provides its members with food, clothing, shelter, medical care and a safe environment. It teaches the children to adhere to social norms. Families have their own culture; each family has its beliefs, customs, practices, rituals and values.

Family entails a state of attachment, a network of cravings and belongings—a call to love and destroy, if not to die, for one's family. As a foundation of society, families are a matter of enormous obsession for societies and individuals, both pre-modern and ultramodern. A singular invariant homogenous description of the family as respectable to all would be a nearly insolvable task to negotiate, to own to the fact that the structure and foundation of the family appear to be situationally different.

The understanding of the family's hierarchical structure takes into account an understanding of power, gender, age and socio-economic class within it. It is made possible by the conflict theory of the family. Families can contain people who are motivated to advance and defend their interests. Age and gender play a role in hierarchy, affecting how power, privilege, and authority are used. Family life is characterized by conflict. In the *Family Theories: An Introduction*(2019), Theodore Caplow states that:

Family life is fraught with tension of conflicting emotions precisely because it is based on coalitions, and every alliance involves an opponent. Begun with a husband-wife team, continued by a mother-child section, a family is sustained by the interlocking forces of Love and hate in the same way that opposing forces of tension and compression hold up buildings. (78)

The relationships are the foundation upon which man constructs his life. Humans always want and need relationships, no matter how happy or depressed the situation is. Everyone is concerned about how these connections keep changing as time passes. India's industry, educational system, career possibilities, family planning and other factors have all contributed to the social and economic advancement of Indian society over the past ten years. These modifications have significantly affected the Indian system's economic and social life.

The nuclear family structure has taken the place of the joint family system. Industrialization, rising modernization, deteriorating values, and shifting jobs are some of the factors that broke the joint family system. The Indian social system is built on the concept of the family. Each person performs their role in the family well under this spirit and feels a sense of belonging. Tyler claims that the family provides

each individual with stability, emotions, behaviour etc. In this circle, young people, widowed ladies, senior citizens and other dependents who need help and companionship. This lack of trust has changed the dynamics of relationships. The husband and wife relationship is the closest and most crucial of all the family interactions.

In ancient societies, where Indians believed that marriage relationships are made in heaven, compatibility for marriage was determined not by a man and woman's love but rather by several factors such as matching star signs, caste, religion, and family status. So, a great majority of them were arranged marriages. Except his *Swami and Friends*, *The English Teacher* (1945), and a portion of *Grandmother's Tale* (1992), most of R.K. Narayan's works that address husband-wife relationships contrast the real world with the ideal. The least charming family is portrayed in *The Dark Room* (1938). It paints a picture of a broken-down household where the children have no intimate connection to the father. Ramani's wife, Savithri, is from a middle-working-class family. She has no literacy experience and is forced by the social obligations to live with her authoritarian and forceful husband, who has an inflated sense of his own significance. Even before he enters the house, Savithri and her kids can sense his frequent mood changes. Ramani loses control and hits her and the kids. Savithri complies ethnically with the Hindu tradition's view of a wife's role in her home.

A wife should have implicit allegiance to her husband; this was the criteria and showed how the male made other people in the house afraid of him. In his novel *The Guide* (1958), the husband and wife relationship is unusual and verges on profanity. Marco and Rosie could be a better match. Marco is a cold, queer man who lacks empathy. His only interests are collecting and making notes on historical

artwork. Raju is immediately enamored with Rosie's attractiveness. Later in the narrative, he laments the day he first encountered her at Malgudi station because that was the day his problem began. The marriage between Rosie and Marco needs to be better. She breaks away from Marco and begins a new chapter with Raju. According to the Hindu religious principles, this behaviour is the most unusual. Raju's mother has strong feelings against this arrangement. She said he was breaking the law by fleeing with a married woman.

Many Indian English writers can be seen to have dealt with the theme of family relationships. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) essentially deals with the complex relationship between the members of the Ipe family living in Ayemenem, India. This novel examines the relationship between brother and sister, mother and child, grandparents and grandchild, and aunt and niece. It also looks at how families are forced to come together and how they fall apart.

Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day*(1980) shows family bonding.it is primarily concerned with the Das family, but the Das siblings often compare their plight to other families like Alis and Misras. The Novel *Cry the Peacock*(1963) is a family oriented mainly concerned with a man-woman relationship in marital discord between husband Gautama and wife Maya. The novel is about Maya's cry for Love and connection in her loveless marriage to Gautama. The peacock cry alludes to Maya's anguished cry for her love and devotion to life.

In Jumpha Lahiri's *The Namesake*(2003), family relationship is the major theme. The theme of the family is presented throughout the novel by showing the variant relationship that Asima and Ashok have with their family compared to the relationship that Gogol and Sonali have with their families.

In Indian English literature, Shashi Deshpande, a dynamic living woman writer, holds a prominent position. She has portrayed the modern middle-class ladies with a unique identity and has handled the customary Indian issues with great sensitivity. In her novels and short tales, Shashi Deshpande explores the sorrow and tension of the modern educated Indian woman who is caught between patriarchy and tradition on the one hand and her need for independence, individuality, and self-expression on the other. Her literature focuses on a woman's quest to realize her potential as a basic human being separate from her different traditional duties as a daughter, wife, mother etc. Her hero's portrayals of their selves are recurring themes in her books.

The novels by Shashi Deshpande bring the reader to a revealing and fascinating investigation of the family situated primarily within the conventional, mostly orthodox, Hindu worldview as she engages in a rereading of culture. She gives her story of characters stuck in the social and cultural muck and trying to construct a family that will accept reasonable changes and modifications to provide a unique sense of liberty and freedom and permit the flourishing of the individual mind. In order to achieve this, the novel's author offers a rereading of stereotypes related to the family structures and engages in a thorough investigation of the subtle operation of cultural politics that gives legitimacy to the inequalities inherent within the family.

In Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* (1988), She states the Man-woman relationship between Jaya and Mohan, which has permeated with hard-hearted silence in their marital relationship. Between customs and uniqueness, Jaya is torn. She is aware of liberal concepts, yet she accepts patriarchy as a fact of life. She cannot escape the grasp of a predominately male hegemony society. She says,

"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 indifferent would be painful, and what animal would voluntarily choose pain?"(32).

She views her marriage life as a pointless exercise in being together. Her statement reveals how frustrated she is. She states, "We lived together, but there had been only emptiness between us."(185).The only reason Mohan married Jaya was not in Love was because of her fluency in English when she spoke to her brother Dinkar at their first meeting. He proudly says,

"You know Jaya, the first day I met you at Kamukaku's house, you were talking to brother Dinkar, and somehow you sounded so much like that girl. I think it was at that moment that I decided I would marry you."(90)

Jaya has a close relationship with widower Kamat, who lives next door to her in Dadar. Kamat is a marketer who resides alone in the apartment above in Dadar. Although their relationship is successful, it cannot be classified as an extramarital affair. She states, "My relationship with this man...refused to take any shape at all; it just slipped about frighteningly fluid". (151). Jaya moulds herself into Mohan's desires. When Mohan accuses her, she quits her work, has an abortion with their third child, and even stops writing. She discovers that to keep their married life, she must remain silent.

Jaya's desire is satisfied by knowing Kamat in her life. Kamat reveals himself to be her true friend, mentor and philosopher. He develops in her self-assurance, bravery and capacity for thought. Kamat encourages her to continue listening to

herself and reminds her of her power and ability to do great things. Kamat is very sensitive and the opposite of Mohan. His intelligence attracts Jaya's attention. She is liberated to share thoughts with him. He offers her writings helpful criticism. He attempts to support her while acknowledging and accepting her anxieties. They have a cordial, amicable and companionable relationship.

The evolving situation of the marriage relationship is presented in Shashi Deshpande's *Roots and Shadows* (1983). The protagonist Indu is given into Akka's custody when her wandering father abandons her following her mother's passing. Indhu was raised by Atya, Kaka, and Akka and was expected to uphold family customs from an early age. Meanwhile, her education, cleverness, and rebellious personality meant that she and Akka were often at odds. Indu was raised challenging social norms that established the distinct behavioural patterns of boys and girls. She continuously conflicted with Akka because she refused to be the meek, obedient and selfless girl conventionally expected of her. She also had problems in her marital relationship.

Indu's love marriage stifles her human needs. It is unhappy on a physical and spiritual level. It turns into a purely psychological interaction giving her the impression that she has violated the sanctity of her body. She is prohibited from expressing her emotions. Indu's marriage to Jayant denies her the totality of experience. They struggle to communicate clearly with one another. By forcing Indu to live with him in a condition of armed neutrality and undermining the harmony of their relationship, Jayant drives her to hide her true nature. She confides to Naren, a childhood friend with whom she feels comfortable sharing her feelings about her irritation, disappointments and degradation.

In Shashi Deshpande's novel *A Matter of Time* (1996), the three generations of the same family are shown in living together in the same home. Gopal leaves his house at the start of the novel. The novel is devoted to the relative's quest to learn why Gopal behaved foolishly by abandoning his family. Sumi, Kalyani's daughter and the wife of Gopal embodies passive resistance and seems to suffer in silence, but she differs greatly from Kalyani in many aspects. Sumi is portrayed as a self-assured girl who is proud of herself. She is so self-respecting and firmly of the opinion that life should go on as it is that she does not even ask her Husband one question when he quits her for no apparent reason. She says,

What is it, Gopal; I will ask him what makes a man in this age of acquisition and possession walk out on his family and all he owns. Because...it was you who said that we are shaped by the age we live in, by the Society we are part of. How, then, can you, in this age, a part of this Society, turn your back on everything in your life? (27)

The marriage of Sumi is the epitome of love marriage. Before getting married, Sumi and Gopal agreed that if any of them desired freedom, they would both be permitted to go. During their early married years, Sumi and Gopal had a peaceful relationship. Although abandoning his wife and kids is weird for the sake of itself, Gopal feels an inner emptiness that drives him to do so. Gopal's childhood experiences are the key factor in his decision to leave home. His early years were not typical. Besides the difficulties faced by women, Shashi Deshpande does an outstanding job of portraying a man's feelings in this novel. Gopal, in addition to the novel's main characters, Kalyani, Sumi, and Aru, also suffers as a victim. Gopal never expresses his emotions or feelings to gain sympathy from others.

The Dark Holds No Terrors (1980) was written by Shashi Deshpande. It talks about the familial relationship among the family members. Shashi Deshpande portrays women's annoyance and dissatisfaction due to social and cultural discrimination in Society. The major character in the novel is Saritha, the story's female protagonist. A marriage that is in trouble is described in the book. The successful female doctor Saritha is the central character. It details the conflict between her responsibilities as a wife and doctor. She violates her own mother's wishes to become a doctor. She breaks the social norms by using Boozie, the professor to improve her profession and rejects her caste by getting married outside of it. Saru represents a woman who is very eager and desperate to find her true herself. She wants to be recognized as an independent social being. Her relationship with her husband is very sad. She is the victim of physical and sexual violence. Her mental State is expressed in a very realistic manner.

In the relationship between mother and daughter, Kamala is her mother, the one who dominates her daughter Saritha. Sarita's mother is a traditional Indian woman who values Dhruva much more than her daughter. She always makes an exception for him and spoils him. Despite Saru being a young girl, she also takes particular care of Dhruva. Such behaviour causes Saru to experience sibling jealousy. One day, Sarita planned to go to a secret place. She abruptly stops by Dhruva and offers to take him to the hidden location. Once they get there, it's a lovely place, according to him. Dhruva asks, "look at the water it is a river isn't it, Sarutai?" (187).

When Saru announces her intention to return, thinking he will follow, She is shocked. He disappeared and drowned in the river. Even though Saru doesn't like her brother, she genuinely cares for him. Dhruva was seven years old when he died. Dhruva is not talked about much in the novel. Saru's mother blames her for Dhruva's

disappearance. Her mother's following words to her echoed throughout her life. She says, "You did it, you did this, you killed him, why didn't you die? Why are you alive, when he's dead."(191). Although the Indian mother is terrified and concerned for her son. To the daughter, she should not say these things.

Shashi Deshpande depicts the struggles between mother and daughter in this work. The daughter is an educated modern woman, while the mother is a traditional woman. Sarita, the protagonist, despises her mother. She believes her mother dislikes her. Her mother compelled her to remain inside the house and follow the conventional path. She is a mother, and all mothers are responsible for their daughters. She takes care of everything. But young Saru, who bears responsibility for her brother's murder, punishes herself under the impression that her parents are no longer concerned. Her mother trains Saru to be good when she attends the age. However, Saru is not welcomed by it and is misunderstood by her. They are all hostile towards one another and have no friends. Saru's mother is illiterate and struggles to relate to younger generations. This is the current scenario happening in Indian Society between girl children and the mother. The generational gap harms the family's unity. They might not know how to handle the situation.

In the life of the daughters, the father plays a crucial role. Her first male-female relationship is typically with her father as a daughter. When she went to her parent's house, she was standing by seeing a strange man along with her father; she saw a man named nearly two three years younger than her age named Madhav. Baba says, "A student. In his first-year college. He's been with us for two years now."(19). He is a first-year student of Baba. He is staying in the house before her mother's death. After the death of Saru's mother, Madhav is very supportive and helpful to her father.

However, from the novel's start, the reader discovers that the protagonist, Sarita and her father are not properly communicating. She genuinely leaves because she no longer tolerates her Husband's sexual sadism. But, she could not express her emotions or anguish to her father. Like an uncomfortable host receiving an unwanted guest, the father is uncaring and lacking in support. He cherishes the honour of being the master and head of the family, much like a traditional Indian father. He doesn't care about his own family's issues, as the reader knows from Sarita. She says, "He had always been so much a man, the Master of the house, not to be bothered by any of the trivial of daily routine." (20). In Indian Society, married women are not allowed to visit their parental house alone, argue with their husbands or be divorced. They were intended to remain in her Husband's home until his passing. So, like any other traditional Indian father, Sarita's father looks down and knits his brows when he sees her standing with the suitcase. When Sarita informs her father that her Husband has been torturing her sexually, he is unable to understand what she is describing because he has always kept his wife at a distance and shown reserve. Therefore, the social attitude also appears to be the source of these issues.

Saru's relationship with her brother has been given a special presentation. She has always been ignored in favour of her brother Dhruva. Her brother's birthday is celebrated with much fanfare, whereas her birthdays are not even acknowledged. Her mother constantly reminds her that she should not go out in the sun as it would worsen her already dark complexion. She recalls her conversation with her mother:

"Don't go out in the sun, you'll get darker."

"Who cares?"

"We have to care if you don't. We have to get you married."

"I don't want to get married."

"Why not?"

"You can't."

"And Dhruva?"

"He is different. He is a boy" (40)

This conversation makes Saru hate her mother and brother.

This novel majorly discusses the husband and wife relationship, which has a male ego and social status, and this attitude leads to family destruction. Marriage is an honest recognition of the inherent equality between Man and woman as the union of two souls. Marriage is an equal necessity for both spouses. Since it is a commitment to share the benefits and burdens of the joint endeavour. The partnership between a man and a woman is unlike any other human interaction. It is highly bilateral and mutually pleasant. Marriage requires the ability to endure and go forward. But in many marriages, the wives experience male dominance and lack of independence and privacy. Bijay Kumar Das makes a salient point about how various dashes of realism are portrayed in Indian English fiction in his work *Critical Essay on Post-colonial Literature(1999)*:

If we look at the trends in Indian English fiction, we will be struck by the realism that underlies this genre in the post- Independence period. We come across five broad types of authenticity- Social realism, Psychological realism, historical realism, mythical realism and magical realism in Indian English fiction. Women novelists like Kamala Markandaya, Nayanthara Saghal and Shashi Deshpande emphasized social authenticity and family relationship.(168-69)

In today's culture, every girl must assume the role of a wife. But Saru, the main character, has always struggled to accept that she is a girl. A disdain for tradition that, in the guise of marriage, limits the prospects of women like Saru begins when her mother says that Saru is treated like a burden. She adamantly marries Manu despite the disparity in their castes and his meager salary from his lecture job to resist these obstacles persistently. By thinking of him as a traditionally more superior-minded husband, Saru compensated for it. However, the community must still be ready to embrace the wife's participation.

Marriage remains a social necessity in which women seek stability and reputation in men. Dominance is considered in an analysis of the male-female relationship where the male characteristics are those coupled with good activity and psychological notions. At the same time, a female is viewed as generally submissive. Her task is to satisfy the male sexual drive for the subsequent reproduction of the species. In their marital journey, they have two kids named Renu and Abhijit. They became parents, and their responsibilities were added because of their children.

In the sweetest journey of their life, Saru and Manu's disagreements are getting progressively severe. Manu has an inferiority mentality, which causes him to turn into a sadist who enjoys making his wife ridiculous, tormenting and abusing her wife physically and psychologically. When a girl shows up to conduct Saru's interview, she casually raises Manu a question which severely wounds his masculine pride. She asked him, "How does it feel when your wife earns the butter and the bread as well?"(35). This question made Manu behave badly to Saru. Sarita works as a credible doctor in the daytime; she is held by her Husband, a fearful and caged animal, during the nighttime. She didn't initially pay attention to her Husband's

attitude towards her. Because her mother had shaped her to withstand the hardships, this is necessary for her marriage phase to flourish.

The relationship between Saru and her two children, Renu and Abhijit, was very close and caring at the earliest stage. Renu was a nine-year-old girl, and Abhijit was a five-year-old boy. He looks similar to Saru's brother Dhruva. They both never had the experience of being with grandparents as Saru's marriage was pure Love, inter-caste marriage. She hesitates to go to her parent's home and faces her parents because this marriage had happened against her parents' desire. Manu also restricted Saru to only sometimes meeting her parents. He said her parents did not even accept her daughter after marriage. So, their children don't have the opportunity to spend time with their grandparents.

Abhijit always questions his mother, "Mummy, Why don't I have a grandfather? Like Sangeetha's grandfather? Why don't I have one? Your grandfather's dead, Renu. But Sangeeta has two grandfathers. Where's my other grandfather?" In Indian society, mainly during the phase of childhood, children seek affection and special care from their grandparents. In the book *You Are Special (1995)* Fred Rogers states, "Grandparents can be very special resources. Just being close to them reassures a child, without words about change and continuity, about what went before and what will come after." (102). They are especially fond of hearing bedtime tales of their grandparents. In the bitter journey part of life, Saru left her children with Manu and went to her Baba's house. Her father treated her as an unwilling guest. He doesn't even ask about her children. She voluntarily says about her children. But he was not interested in hearing it. This behaviour made Saru angry. She asked in a different tone, "A boy and a girl. Don't you even want to know their names?"(20). This shows her father is not interested in hearing about her family members.

In the novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Deshpande portrays the familial relationship and struggles in the marital life of a woman. And how a female child is neglected and treated partially in the presence of a male child. The novel only has the sufferings in family relationships. No character in this novel has a healthy and happy relationship. The protagonist Saru lacks parental Love from their parents as she is a girl child. She was asked to follow a traditional lifestyle. She was restricted from fulfilling her desires. Renu and Abhijit lack the grandparent's affection. Saru and Manu banned themselves from meeting their parents because they married against their parent's desire. They lack support, Love and care from the side of their parents. These are sufferings portrayed by the author in the family of this novel.

Relationships are crucial to human interactions. It is the music of life. Without a relationship, naming any aspects of the body or mind is impossible. It travels the globe to maintain people's lives filled with emotion. Anita Nair has depicted modern Indian women's quest for the resurrection of connections essential to women in her novels. Her academic struggles also indicate the anti-feminist sentiment that pervaded India in the mid-twentieth century.

Anita Nair, a renowned and influential Indian woman author who writes in English, has innovative ideas regarding marriage and the relationship between men and women. She believes that contemporary social consciousness brings us closer to a time when the segregation and individual growth of men and women will provide the best conditions for their betterment and two complementary components. Her primary emphasis is on the development of personality and brilliance, which is quite challenging to do.

Financial independence is incidental and unimportant in a man and woman's relationship; instead, atmosphere and surroundings are crucial. In contemporary society's framework, Anita Nair has put forth a fresh theory on the relationship between men and women. She strongly asserts that the social and traditional foundation of marriage is being undermined, and as a result, marriage may no longer be considered or performed. One will live under the same roof without getting married, has recently been acknowledged by Indian Supreme Court. This is referred to as having a live-in partner. The male and female couples are allowed to start their relationship. The relationship may continue as long as they have mutual trust and their fundamental emotional connection still exists—the Family relationships in Anita Nair's novel. *The Better Man (2000)* is a novel for men. Since Mukundan, the protagonist, recovers from the psychological damage his domineering father did. The female characters in this novel are the protagonists of their chapter. They are significant in that women live in a male-dominated family structure and are the victims of the tyrannical rule of the men in the family, even though the novel relates the lives and experiences of Mukundan.

Anita Nair illustrates the shifting roles of husband and wife in Indian Society in her novel *Mistress (2005)*. Her idea of a liberated woman goes beyond social or economic boundaries and refers to her psychological and emotional approach and welfare. A sprawling love story is *Mistress*. The book explores several themes such as abuse, failed hopes, deep family secrets, and the exhilaration of falling in Love for the first time, boredom in traditional partnerships, poverty and brutality of Love, and art and immorality. The novel explores attraction and fixation with gaps in religion, marriage, authority and social conventions. It also addresses pre and post-marital intimacy in great detail. Like the river Nile, which rarely has enough water and

represents the shallowness of the protagonist who lives in *Mistress*, most relationships that develop have a foul taste in their mouths? *Mistress*, a novel on premarital, nonmarital, and extramarital relationships, is held together by the author connecting it to Kathakali, a well-known and demanding dance style of Kerala. An internationally renowned Kathakali performer is the main protagonist. The nine stages of human emotion, or navarasa, portray many character interactions.

In Anita Nair's novel *Lessons in Forgetting (2010)*, her main focuses are on interpersonal interactions, particularly between men and women, as well as on their isolation and absence of communication difficulties. Akhila, embarks on a journey of rediscovery that focuses on the female aspect. Akhila's family members always view her as a man dressed as a woman. It suited their demands to have an unhindered money-making machine. Sadly, even her mother has not recognized that her eldest daughter, who had made sacrifices for the welfare of her brothers, deserved a future for herself. In Akhila's home, her brother, who is raised lavishly with her hard-earned money and leaps without hesitation across the boundary of marriage. He doesn't even consider the responsibility of supporting her to start a family of her own.

In the selected novel *Ladies Coupe (2001)* by Anita Nair, the dynamics between men and women are well portrayed. While reading this novel, one encounters a wide range of fascinating people. Each one seems to be working very hard to maintain their identity and sense of self because they all are unique from one another and come from vastly different ethnic, socio-economic and educational backgrounds. The novel's protagonist, Akhila, was raised to be a decent wife, just like all other women in the neighbourhood. Her mother frequently provided her advice on being a good housewife. She was also getting ready for the tasks around the house when the tragedy of her father's sudden death. In the novel, "When Akhila's father died, two

things happened: Sundays became just another day of the week, and Akhila became the man of the family."(75). She is compelled by circumstances to take on the job as the family's primary provider and consequently assumes responsibilities for leading and maintaining an efficient household. She deliberately forgets everything her mother had taught her, including her identity and what is required of her. She is now disguising herself as someone else. All the dormant masculine characteristics emerge with the new responsibilities she keeps her schedule limited as a woman. Her routine chores are those of a male. Nobody in the family regards her as a woman; rather, they view her as a caretaker, a figure of father or even the head of the family. Akhila is ordinary in every way, so it makes sense that she would yearn for a happy marriage. After all, Love is what provides security in a relationship. Yet, she must break off her relationship with Hari due to social pressure and her feeling of duty to her family. After this little incident, her life returns to normal. Akhila helped her younger brothers to be settled. She married her more youthful sister Padma and stayed with her. She was helping her sister's family, but her sister never failed to criticize Akhila. This is the early life of Akhila.

Sarasa Mami and Subramaniya Iyer are the neighbours of Akhila. Sarasa Mami is the best friend of Akhila's mother. Iyer was working as a peon in the office. This couple has one elder daughter, a blind son and two younger daughters. Iyer is the finance provider of their family. He is always very cheerful, and he makes his wife embrace him. He has plenty of problems at his office. But he never complains about it. Their family is a very happy family. Akhila has observed the care given by Iyer to his family members. These two couple connection offers Akhila a glimpse into the relationship of a husband and wife.

Margaret Shanti is a smart, balanced woman. Who earned a gold medal in the M.Sc. chemistry Programme. She intended to continue her education and enrolled for the Ph.D. Programme. She first encountered Ebenezer Paulraj, a tall, athletic young guy of twenty-nine, at the point. Her parents approved of their relationship, and they had a happy wedding. Before she told Ebe, she was pregnant. The first eighteenth months of their marital relationships were full of cheer and comfort. He convinced her to have an abortion by telling her they could start a family and grow it after they settled down. She gave her all to satisfy Ebe because she loved him. She gave up her PhD to pursue B.Ed. because Ebe believed B.Ed. It would help her property and job. In the book *Indian Writing in English: Resurrection of Self*, Nair states

Love beckons with a rare bouquet, Love demands you drink of it, and then Love burns the tongue, the sense; blinds. Love maddens. Love separates reason from thought. Love kills. Love is methyl alcohol pretending to be ethyl alcohol. (104).

Margaret Shanti details her stressful situation with her Husband and how she governs her career and personal life. Later she discovers that she has made enough compromises and that he is crushing her life and restricting her original personality. Without speaking, Margaret answers. She practices militant feminism rather than aggressive feminism. She intends to make him dependent on her to gain the upper hand. With Ebe under her control, she can lead the life she desires, whether concerning her career, diet, sexual preferences or having a child. Margaret changed her role from what she had been playing until now.

Marikolanthu is a gorgeous and lovely young lady. At the Chettiar kottai, her mother, Kanakambaram, worked as a chef. She starts working as a babysitter at Chettaikottai after her father passes away in order to support her mother and brothers.

Murugesan, the chettiar's nephew, sexually assaulted her. Later, it is revealed that she was Sujatha Akka's proxy. In a trembling voice, Sujatha Akka asks about the Missies that Marikolanthu was employed in Vellore. She says, "Tell me about the Missies again. Tell me what you saw." (259). Marikolanthu describes Missy's unusual affection and their delight in one another's bodies. Sujatha then expresses her hatred for her Husband, Sridhar. Sujatha says to Marikolanthu about her Husband, "When he comes near me, I feel as though lizard is crawling up my skin." (259).

Marikolanthu learns that Sujatha resisted a man's touch rather than feeling repulsed by it. Marikolanthu needed to rekindle the ember of desire because it was still present. Everything she accomplished was motivated by her Love and dedication for Sujatha Akka. In the late afternoons, she satisfied her Mistress's hunger and longing; in the evening, she made the master happy by allowing him to do the same. Marikolanthu performs a dual character in these scenes, switching between Man and a woman. Marikolanthu says, "By day I gathered with Sujatha Akka's lilies by a giant lake...And by night, Sridhar Anna drove me to the centre of the earth, where molten lava clutched at my feet as I heaved, panted and burnt in the crush of his embrace." (261). She exacts revenge on Murugesan by mortgaging their son Muthu for two years.

Again, in this case, masculinity takes centre stage. She says: "A perverse satisfaction flared with me. Murugesan might not know it. But I have sold him, his own son." (265). Marikolanthu comes to terms with the fact that there is nothing left to hate after Murugesan dies. When she realized that there was no point in hating Muthu because the youngster had done nothing wrong to deserve it. Her bitterness vanished, and now she feels Love for Muthu like a mother or a lady. She says, "As the flames leapt, my hate burnt with them. What was left in this world for me to hate, I

thought...? The bitterness unraveled, 'Muthu,' I called softly." (268). Marikolanthu plays many roles, including a submissive maid, a family provider, a lover who attends to a Mistress's needs and wishes, and a woman who satisfies a man's arousal demands. She decides to change her life after learning that she is the only person in the universe and the only person she may love or hate is her kid Muthu. In this novel, Marikolanthu performs multitasking roles. Though she is a woman, she never stepped back when her husband passed away.

Janaki is another female character in the novel. She is the oldest woman in the Lady's coupe of train travel. She is considered to be a most happy woman. Because she was taken care of by her father and brother until she married in her parental home, she married Prabhakaran. After her marriage, she is a loving wife who loves her Husband, takes care of him, and only lives for him. Her family member says, "All through her girlhood, marriage was a destination she was being groomed for." (25). She had trained from an early stage that a husband is equivalent to god and that it is her responsibility to serve him. "He is your husband, and you must accept whatever he does."(25). Despite being content with her marriage, she is reliant on her Husband. She lacks originality and self-thinking, and she depends on her spouse and son, who she is, because that is how her life has always been. She frequently questions whether her son loves her and takes care of her in the future.

Prabha Devi is a character who spends lavishly and adapts to a foreign culture. When Prabha Devi was born, her father was unhappy with this girl child. Her father asked, "Has this baby, apart from ruining my business plans, addled your brains as well? If you ask me, a daughter is a bloody nuisance."(169). Here Anita Nair illustrates the gender prejudice in Indian Society, where girls are still viewed as less valuable than boys, in the novel. He was expected of the male child. Nair has

described the happiness of Prabha's mother; When Prabha was born. She says, "This one daughter of hers gave her more pleasure than all her four sons put together." (170). She is the rich wife of Jagadeesh. He is the son of a diamond merchant. She has visited New York; she changed and start imitates the Western culture in her dressing sense, makeup and food routine. She felt her life is the happiest of all. In Indian Society, there has always been discrimination against women. A woman's life is completely impacted. In this book, Nair makes an effort to illustrate how Indian Society still views women as less than human and how they are given lesser status in Society only due to their physical attractiveness. In her novel *Ladies Coupe*, Prabha Devi's familial relationship is the best example of gender inequality.

The subsequent narrator of this novel, Sheela, is a tender-hearted fourteen-year-old girl with a sound of understanding. She observes the relationships between her grandmother, mother, father, and the families around her to grasp life's dynamic behaviour. Her granny imparts vital lessons to her. She is the youngest of all six members. She speaks about how males have abused women as children. Sheela was embarrassed and offended when Hasina's father, Nazar, touched her inappropriately. In the life of Sheela, Anita Nair brought out how a girl child suffers in the absence of her mother's security. Though, she is well taken care of by her grandmother. She lacks the Love of her mother. Sheela's grandmother plays the role of mother.

All the characters in the novel have suffered in the family relationship. Relationships between people come in many forms. The family unit is a cornerstone of all civilized societies, and all are governed by moral principles and laws designed to handle Society. The fact that it encourages and fosters love, tolerance, compassion, and sacrifice, all of which are honorable virtue to practice.

Chapter 3

Familiarisation of Self

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Self-exploration is the flow of thoughts in a character's mind, it is getting familiarized to one's own self. The reminiscences of the past flow like a stream into the present, revealing the characters' introspection. This method illuminates the novel's plot and sheds light on the reader's mind. Reading a character's thoughts and feelings leads the reader to their thoughts and feelings. The better the people understand themselves and their motivations, the more informed and productive their identity search process. Self-assessment is the first stage in self-exploration or familiarization of self. It starts by reflecting on the interests, values, skills and personality traits.

The main point of literary excellence is the theme of self-discovery. In literary works, self-realisation is the ultimate goal of the interior journey of the self. Self-exploration explores the characters' inner lives and the changes in their lives. Self-realisation must happen eventually in life. Some people experience it when they are young, some throughout the middle-ages and others when they are elderly. Individuals can explore their inner ability to reach their life goals through an internal inquiry. Identity further inspires one to strive for their life's mission.

The purpose forces them to undergo a complete transition by forcing them to face reality, an unavoidable fact they must accept. This is the soul's transfiguration, which grants insight for decision-making and judgment. Throughout literature, self-exploration displays the physical and mental struggle of people from different communities and historical times. Literature of all kinds reveals the heart and

thoughts of humanity. As a result of economic development, moral values have been corrupted. All across the world, people are drawn to luxury. The current generation seeks its identity; although it makes more money, values are frequently destroyed. This results from the external factors and the force of reason that revolutionised the globe. The sad reality is that ideals are ignored out of pure selfishness. This can be changed by changing oneself, which will change society. In the book *Alchemical Quotes* (2016) by Sreechinth, Paulo Coelho states,

From the moment we are born, people tell us that the world is like this and like that, this way, that way. It is natural that for a certain period. We end up believing what we are told. But we must soon push these ideas aside and discover our own way of living reality.(209)

The search for oneself is thus essential for improving one's life and community. Individuals must build up their strength. People grow mentally healthy and robust due to their experiences throughout life. Decision-making has become a significant factor for people to consider because of the complex reasons, experiences and challenges. Literature explores and experience also offers explanations for the perplexing experiences of life. Although the scope is broad, restrictions are considered when discussing the many literary genres. Psychoanalysis is crucial in a person's life because the emotional stress people encounter at various life stages has become their biggest issue. It evaluates a person's actions and attitudes towards himself and other people. It queries whether the change is necessary for the Self. It also queries whether anyone can skip the route of self-discovery.

Literature itself is a mirror of the self. Examining one's inner self reveals the truth about a person – their obligations, objectives and success from the framework of human life. The illumination of an individual on their life's path is self-

familiarization. In the journal *Knowing Yourself Is the Beginning of All Wisdom* (2018), The beginning of all wisdom, in the words of Aristotle, is, knowing oneself. People are highly preoccupied with their sensations and emotions. The human mind and heart are ruled by or dominated by these attributes, which cause consciousness to become closed. The ultimate goal of the dark soul is self-realisation. It comes from inside and lights the lamp of consciousness, empowering the mind and hearts of people and illuminating the road to be taken. Finding out about one's life and how it relates to the world around them is the ultimate aim of self-realisation, as it inspires people to lead moral lives.

Familiarization of self results in acceptance and internal change since the inner journey resurrects the individual. The two basic goals of any literary endeavor are success and failure. The first step towards a life of reason and perfection is self-exploration. It is a new day breaking through the night of ignorance and divine dawn over the realm of fancy. Only the character's inner journey allows them to succeed. Identity is the perception of who we are as people and as members of particular social groups. Identities are not just something people make up for themselves. They also develop in reaction to internal and external events. Over time, identity evolves and becomes more complex. While adolescents are vital for creating self and identity, children are always growing their sense of self. This includes commitments, personal objectives, motivations and psychosocial well beings.

Search for identity has become popular in literary and academic circles. The concept has given rise to the idea of a woman searching for her identity. Any period in life, particularly during the great depression, can lead to an identity crisis. Psychologist Erik Erikson is credited with creating the term 'Identity Crisis.' In his book *Life History and the Historical Moment*(1975) Erikson defines identity as

A subjective sense and an observable quality of personal sameness and continuity, paired with some belief in the equality and continuity of some shared world image. As a quality of oneself conscious living, this can be gloriously obvious in a young person who has found his communality. In him, we see a unique unification of what is irreversibly given: body type and temperament, giftedness and vulnerability, infantile models and acquired ideals with open choices provided in available roles, occupational possibilities, values offered mentors met, friendships made and first sexual encounters. (18)

Women's empowerment has mostly focused on achieving personal freedom. The advancement that assists women in obtaining the knowledge and skills required in contemporary society is known as women empowerment. Women's empowerment recognises the gender inequality that exists in our culture. Women are marginalised on all societal normative levels, including physical, psychological, and mental, as a means of defining, confronting and overcoming obstacles in women's lives.

Women can actualize their identity and influence the sphere through the multidimensional process. Writers like Margaret Atwood, Virginia Woolf, Toni Morrison, Anita Desai, Anita Nair, and Shashi Deshpande, have written on self-exploration or familiarization of self, and also about women empowerment. The defining of the relationship between the structure and society is demonstrated through the empowerment of women. Its diversity has been used as an exercise in the community. Through many novels and fiction, Indian writers, who wrote over the years, have given back to society by raising awareness of the defects that drive women down and cause them to be subjugated. Later writers contributed to themes like the search for self-identity, equality, and women's liberation. They have also

contributed to the fight against patriarchy, male chauvinism, and violence in religion and society.

In Anita Desai's novels, failure, disappointment, and dissatisfaction, especially concerning interpersonal relationships do not always result in total anarchy and disorder. According to her, the most important motivation for human existence is the desire for values and meaning in life. She presents the man as fighting with life's predetermined circumstances. She also tries to delve into his innermost being, which she calls an iceberg. She is not very interested in conventional ideas of truth. She is usually moved to look inside a person rather than navigating a subject, digging deeper into a character, a circumstance, or a sense to engage. She said about this in a book *Feminism in Indian Writing in English (2006)*:

I am interested in characters that are not average but have retreated or been driven into some extremity of despair, turned against, or made a stand against the general current. It is easy to flow with the current, makes no demand, and costs no effort. But those who cannot follow it, whose heart cries out 'the great no', who fight the current and struggle against it, know what the demands are and what it costs them. (161).

She has used the fundamentals of existential philosophy as the framework for her creative work—the quest for being and the act of becoming. The earlier idea alludes to the actuality of the existing man. In contrast, the later statement speaks of the struggle for existence and each person's enormous potential for becoming. Her character tries to find the truth by rejecting attempts to fit into the realities of life today.

The protagonist's life in Trinidad is chronicled in V.S Naipaul's book *A House of Mr Biswas* from birth to death. The story follows him as he moves to temporary housing and unfulfilling employment and tries family dynamics before finally finding a momentary sense of freedom in his home. The essence of Mr Biswas's troubles is his desire for independence from family, labour and fate, and his search own home is motivated by his need to feel a sense of community and belonging.

In Anita Nair's novel *The Betterman*, the relationship between Anjana and her husband and the nature of their marriage are also critically examined in the book. Their inability to comprehend one another negatively impacts their connection. Anjana has struggled more with the marital relationship. Finally, Anjana's optimistic outlook on life, new career, financial freedom and sense of self-identity enable her to move forward optimistically. This innovation shows that women are capable of achieving autonomy. Anjana discovers her identity and her voice. Also, she developed her gender identity and found an essential way of living with Mukundan. It demonstrates that the novel finishes strongly with resolve and optimism rather than sadness and mental strain.

The novels by Shashi Deshpande are obsessed with a woman's exploration and familiarization of self. The role of the protagonist is the familiarization of the female mind and comprehension of the riddles of life. Shashi Deshpande has revealed the Indian women's peculiar and lonely situation, in which the traditional society has stripped them of their human rights. Women are constantly marginalised because of the orthodox society's expectation that they will serve as vassals. The feminism of Shashi Deshpande emphasises the social as well as the legal being able to overcome their deprivation until they are socially accepted as actual people. Even financially independent women experience tension in their life between traditionalism and

modernisation. Being an Indian, Shashi Deshpande has diligently and eloquently exposed the social structure and traditional standards built for women in India.

The character of Jaya in the novel *That Long Silence* (1988), is a brilliant creation by Shashi Deshpande. Deshpande has done a masterful job of capturing the loneliness of a lady trapped in the cage of marriage in this novel; it is a story where the suffering that permeates the different facets of the plot cannot be blamed on any one particular character. If there is any blame, it belongs to the entire cast of characters, including Jaya's husband, children, uncles, aunts, grandmothers and, importantly, Jaya herself.

In the *Critical Essay on Post-Colonial Literature* (1999) by Bijay Kumar Das, Shashi Deshpande is quoted as saying that, "self-revelation is a cruel process. The real picture, the real 'you,' never emerges. Looking for it is as bewildering as trying to know how you look. Ten different mirrors show you ten different faces." (85). This novel stands out among other works with a similar theme because of how it ends. Instead, she presses on with a newfound vigour to give it a new life. In Jaya's opinion, finding oneself and getting familiar with one's own self does not entail seclusion from the outside world. Through this book, Deshpande argues that solving relationship issues does not involve breaking up with someone; Rather, it consists in rebuilding connections in a way that leaves little room for problems to arise.

All of Shashi Deshpande's works address the struggles and dilemmas faced by women. Her main focus is on women's absence of identity in traditionally minded institutions or societies. The reality of the modern Indian woman is that she is subjugated even in terms of the most fundamental need of life, such as love, marriage, and sex. She observes a disparity between social norms and her new requirements. She struggles, wonders, and seeks solutions throughout this process.

In the novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), a middle-class woman's marital issues are discussed in detail. The woman's search for self-discovery is the novel's central topic. Feminism is a deep awareness of one's identity as a woman rather than as an object in society and an interest in women's issues. Shashi Deshpande vividly depicts a woman's battle for survival in a world devoid of simple answers in *The Dark Holds no Terrors*. Vijay Sheshadri, in his book *Women in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande and Margaret Laurence* (2003), says

The Dark Holds No Terrors contains a powerful indictment of male irresponsibility and abuse of powerful charge of male irresponsibility and abuses of power, along with women's willingness to collude with them. The novel highlights that women, while striving to achieve independence, further their oppression by supporting traditional notions of male privilege. But one of the most remarkable aspects of Saru's character is her tenacity. Sarita's fight in the novel is against the androcentric world and its norms and not against males to gain space in the mainstream of society to be considered a human being first and then a woman (64).

In this novel, Sarita explores her connection with her husband and parents and her quest for identity. This book illustrates the harsh reality that even a wealthy, educated woman today experiences marginalisation. Both at home and among friends, Sarita goes by the nickname Saru. She is incredibly sophisticated, sensitive, and modest, but she lacks self-assurance. She aspires to be a free individual with a distinct identity and a meaningful purpose in life. In addition to working as a doctor during the day, Saru helps her husband Manohar, an English teacher at a college, and free

caged animals at night. Saru is attempting to balance her new duty as a doctor and her more traditional roles as a daughter, wife and mother.

The heroines of Deshpande are contemporary, literate, and married women. They are cautious and timid due to years of enslavement, hardship, and repression. But, after fifteen or seventeen years of marriage, they desire to be independent and free from socio-cultural constraints without severing their marriage ties. Sarita, the protagonist, aspires to be recognised in society. She makes an effort to speak up so that she can establish her identity. Saru desires to be liberated from the traumatic events of her early life. Deshpande is fascinated by interpersonal interactions, particularly the bond between husband and wife. Her female lead desires a strong social identity in society. Her portrayal of Indian hardship issues and struggle constitutes her true contribution. The women in Shashi Deshpande's novels are described as follows by Mrialini Sebastian in the introduction chapter of her book *The Novels of Shashi Deshpande in Post-Colonial Argument* (2000) says:

Woman occupies a central place in Shashi Deshpande's novels. The novelist subtly analyses conflicting phases and underlying reasons, and someone suggests a way out. It becomes more interesting to analyse the image of women in the novels when a woman portrays it. (15)

Sarita is a person her family doesn't want from the moment of her birth. Her mother never loves her. Her brother's passing makes her an even more unwanted child in her mother's eyes. Her mother said she only murdered her brother, "You killed him. Why didn't you die? Why are you alive when he is dead?" (21). Mother and daughter are forever resentful of each other due to this tragedy. She makes fun of her child. She tries her hardest to save her sibling. Yet she is unsuccessful.

Saru denied her mother by moving to Mumbai to get a medical degree. The hostel life is like a rebirth into a completely new universe where she does not want to spend those three days outside. She is no longer untouchable; she cannot even talk about it. Again, Saru defines her mother's rule when she falls in love with Manohar, a man from an untouchable class. Saru's marriage is a method for her mother and her house. Her mother tells her,

you will never be good-looking; you are too dark for that ...looking at yourself in the mirror! I'll give you a certificate to say that you're beautiful. Will that satisfy you? ...A wedding in the midst of approving relations. Bowing down dutifully to all of them (25).

The protagonist's separation from her mother is the primary process towards self-exploration because her mother is the first person to put a limitation on her. Saru returns and sees male clothes hanging on the wall in her room, making her realise she lacks space. The protagonist aspires to break free from the sensation of containment connected to the mother's home. The idea of the closed-off walls conveys a sense of drowning. Saru experiences both their parent's houses and the homes she has selected as a haven. Her father is an impersonal, cowardly puppet. When her daughter needs parental love and care, her mother never shows it to her. In this novel, the author never refers to her by name, except when her father refers to her as Kamala. The author wants the reader to know she is writing about a particular woman. Sarita's life has been sad. She is a victim of the conditions and norms of traditional and conservative culture. Her parents, brother Dhruva, and she comprise her four-person household.

Sarita is no exception to the general trend that sons are always treated preferentially in middle-class Indian homes. At the same time, daughters are occasionally subjected to harsh discipline and considered a burden. In favour of her brother, Saru is consistently disregarded and ignored. She can recall the name given to her brother. "They had named him Dhruva. I can remember, even now vaguely, faintly, a state of joyous excitement that had been his naming day. The smell of the flowers, the black grinding stone." (168).

She had a strong belief that education is the most effective way to abolish gender discrimination because of her early experiences perceiving it in her own life. She wants to work as a doctor to explore herself in a profession equal to men. She puts a lot of effort into pursuing her goal. She never gives up on her dreams, even when love comes her way. She then experiences love at first sight with Manohar. She never predicts his fast reaction to her feelings. On their first two encounters, she is captivated by Manohar's beauty and abilities. She is adamant about becoming a doctor. She enrolls in medical college with all courage and diligence. Her goals are to become a doctor and lead a fulfilling life. Yet she suffers a horrible twist from fate. She does not create the occasion for her continued encounters with Manohar and approves of their marriage once he learns she shares his feelings for him.

Finally, they were able to get married without her parent's consent. She consequently surrenders herself to him. Her marriage starts on a happy note. Therefore, she needs love, which she first finds in Manohar. "I was insatiable, not for sex, but for love. Each act of sex was a triumphant assertion of our love. Of my being loved. Of my being wanted"(40). She is ecstatic when she learns that Manohar is loyal to her and loves her purely. The main theme of the novel is the female journey for self-exploration. Sarita's marriage has been beautifully orchestrated by fate, and as a

result, she cannot live in peace. Her joy doesn't last long. Manohar feels humiliated by Sarita's increasing popularity: Manu and Saru harbor professional resentment for one another. Saru is too exhausted from her hectic schedule to return Manohar's affection.

Since coming home, she had almost ceased to think of herself as a woman with the attributes of attracting a man ...I was tired, always too tired after my long days at the hospital. He was the same, still not eager to love me, so disappointed when I refused him that I nearly had the heart to do so. (123)

She is more warmly greeted by everyone, including her husband when a neighbour comes to know she is a doctor. Manu felt it intolerable when others welcomed her and disregarded him. He can't say it out loud, but he says it out of frustration. Love seems to be fading away slowly for Saru. Manu started to dislike her because this hurt his sense of masculine pride. As the days go by, Manu starts acting irrationally. She seems so defeated right now. She completely surrenders and controls fate and begins to experience physical and mental pain from Manu. He turns sadistic and torments her. He discovers his strength in Sarita's fragility, his power in her helplessness, and his manhood in dominating her. She moved to her parent's house and stayed with her father. Manohar thus suffers neglect both in public and private. She becomes who she is. Yet, she is not in her husband's love. Sarita only understands Manohar's remarks to her much later. "I am strict of this place. Let's get ours of here soon." (42). She is unsure of what to do at that point. She had decided to flee from him.

After fifteen years, she returns to her father's home, reflecting on her past and discovering that she has the resilience to confront anything. She decides to see Manu again and decides to keep working. She does not desire to flee from life. She is

prepared to tackle life. She is ready to tackle life head-on. The women of Deshpande are always eager to learn about themselves. She conquers her psychological anxieties because there are no dangers in the Dark. Saru understands that marriage is a commitment to one another and not another's slavery. He has given her the information she needs to face Manu. In Indian society, women are required to lead essentially a female servant's existence. Is this a fault of men? No, another lady plays a huge role in this suppression most of the time. Sarita's mother makes Sarita and Dhruva dependent on her. Sarita is a perfect representation of how contemporary women view their identities. She obtains her MBBS degree through dedication, determination and hard work.

She firmly feels that education is the only way she can achieve her identity as a woman. She had foolishly moved away from her husband while acquiring her identity. It means that she departs from the feminine persona and the essence of women. The remorse she finally feels shows that women can only completely come into their own when they manage both their work and personal lives. Three stages are experienced here. She starts as an angry lady questioning, rebelling, and resisting all forms of dominance. After marriage, she adopts a meek demeanour to uphold social and cultural norms. She can finally develop a sense of selfhood to live a more secure, fulfilling and independent life.

Saru is a role model for contemporary women who are diligently pursuing the objective. She came to self-realisation through her search for identity. Saru discovers her inner universe on her own. She never holds anyone accountable or passes judgment on them. Modern women are very different from traditional ladies who take everything as fate. They start to wish for the best possible life. To combat the

challenges, they acquire courage. They present us with a fresh perspective on independent Indian women.

Like many other authors of popular fiction, Anita Nair has chosen self-exploration as the main theme for her novel. Ladies coupe refers to the women's second-class seating area. Every woman in the compartment is in her mid-forties. These women get there to talking about personal experiences and traded anecdotes nonstop. The main character, Akhilandeshwari, has seen her mother glorify her father as she and the other children were manufactured and presented to him first. The kids were allowed to sample once they had finished eating. She knew that in a patriarchal culture, women are subordinate to men. They consequently felt the urge to leave this type of culture. But being the oldest kid, she assumes her father's role as the family's primary provider after his passing. She receives a different level of significance. Although the family can only live because Akhila brings home a respectable salary, she may have received equal compensation for equal work. Still, she most definitely does not earn equal respect. She cried all the tears she was supposed to call for the rest of her life.

Akhila cried every night when she looked at a bowl of rice and placed it with a jug of water so that Appa's soul, still hovering in their house, wouldn't be hungry or thirsty. Appa, Akhila cried; as a provider for you tonight, I must provide for the family you abandoned so callously. How can I do it? (59)

Akhila saves the family members, yet her act of saving them indicates a sacrifice on her behalf. She works quietly and fully behind the scenes, letting the smaller kids take centre stage. Even her mother takes care not to inquire about her desires. Akhila empathises with and understands her mother, but since she has long

internalised ideological frameworks, her mother finds it convenient to disregard Akhila's womanhood. Akhila makes decisions based on the expectations she senses rather than her preferences. Akhila provides her mother and siblings with everything they needed for 26 years because of her work at the Income Tax Department. The deepest cultural cues that appealed to the position she had to perform rather than her identity says that her behaviour is perfect. This accommodating self-denial was often an unpleasant experience for her and cost her a lot of emotional energy.

Akhila wonders if a woman can live without a guy forever or if she is missing out on something essential to a woman's fulfilment. The fact that her father disapproves of the cheeky humour baffles Sheela. Akhila and Sheela are puzzled, but with assistance from Karpagam, a childhood friend, and eventually the other passengers in the coupe, Akhila understands she must live for herself. We may observe Akhila's development and her finding of a voice and a will through the provided story pieces about her.

There was no time to clean her up. She had always wanted to die in her bed, and they had a long drive ahead before they reached home—her home. Through a haze of pain and humiliation, Sheela watched the brothers and sisters get into the van and huddle around their mother's dying body. Daddy stood by Sheela's side, stern with disapproval and disappointment. She didn't care. She knew Ammamma would have been pleased. (74).

After a lengthy absence, Akhila finally ran across Karpagam, a friend from school. Karpagam can inculcate in Akhila a sense of self-exploration that helps her realise that she should live her life on her terms and not be dictated to by other family

members who are genuinely dependent on her. Akhila begins to consider the word "Happy" She recalls the verse on Catherine's greeting card that she had sent,

Happiness is being allowed to choose one's own life
 To live the way one wants
 Happiness knows one is loved
 And having someone to love
 Happiness is being able to hope for tomorrow (200).

Karpagam persuades Akhila to focus just on herself and ignore everything else. Ironically even at the age of forty, the woman who long ago assumed care of the entire family is not regarded as capable of taking care of her. Akhila leaves her traditional Tamil Brahmin life behind and takes a train to Kanyakumari, where she meets five other women: Janaki, Margaret Shanti, Prabha Devi, Sheela, and Marikolanthu. The voyage on the train becomes a metaphor for a journey of self-discovery for each character. We get a glimpse of society through these six people's journeys. Six women from various social backgrounds reflect on their circumstances in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* and draw certain conclusions that aid Akhila in drawing her own.

After the formal introductions, Akhila starts the conversation as the train moves forward mechanically. Akhila, who is 45 years old, has never spent even a single day apart from her family. She is on her first solo trip, hoping to meet other women who can assist her in finding a solution to whether women need men. Akhila declares: "As far as I am concerned, marriage is unimportant; companionship, yes, I would like that. The problem is, I wish to live by myself, but everyone tells me that a woman can't live alone. What do you think? Can a woman live by herself?" (21). Akhila wonders if a woman can live without a man indefinitely or if she is missing

out on something essential to a woman's happiness. As the other five women try to answer her question, she disappears into their lives.

Janaki is a spoiled wife and befuddled mother with a long marital history. Janaki is thus completely consumed by her married life, raising her children, and performing her domestic chores. But, like a traditional Indian Hindu wife, she sacrifices herself to fulfil what her husband desires. Her story inspired a woman to start a family, but she was not sure how she could apply it to her life. Janaki's husband is present, and the story reveals they adore one another.

Margaret's story about gaining independence from her domineering husband and Margaret received a gold medal in chemistry as part of her M.Sc. degree. She wishes to pursue her PhD and travel to America. Her dream was to conduct her research, but she fell in love with Ebenezer, and her husband had thwarted her ambition to become a teacher at his school. As a result, her autocratic husband crushes all her desires and dreams. She is unaware of this because she is deceived by herself. Her devotion to him blinds her. Her husband treats Margaret like a doormat. She is well-eligible and a school teacher, but he becomes the head of the school and accumulates a group of sycophant teachers who boost his ego around him. He turns Margaret into a house-enslaved person by forcing her to discard the maidservants. Margaret is sorely disappointed by her husband's subjugation of her to his desires and thoughts. Margaret's story helps Akhila's learning by showing her how to fight the family's autocratic situation. Margaret shows Akhila how her husband attempts to destroy her by expelling her chemistry subject, ruining her baby, and sabotaging her plans to pursue a doctorate abroad. Margaret discovers that her husband has killed her self-esteem.

Prabha Devi was already primed to be a good wife under her mother's tutorship. She was currently in a relationship with Jagdish and lived in the lap of luxury. She functioned as a daughter, then as a wife, and finally as a daughter-in-law. Her perceptions and aspirations followed, but her calmness was disturbed when she travelled to the United States with her husband to observe how women enjoyed their liberty and cared for them. She aspired to be like these New York women who understood precisely what they sought and continued living accordingly. Prabha Devi is the ideal daughter of wealthy parents and a daughter-in-law in charge of the household. Sheela had witnessed her grandmother's death as a child. She is sensitive and sees things in society that others do not. She desired the same opportunity to express herself, freedom of dress, and trust. She even decided to accept what she was given and pull back from public life. Her capacity to remain afloat in the swimming pool represents her self-actualization, glorious victory over her anxieties, and boldness. Her mother consciously raised Prabha Devi to be a good wife. This is typical of patriarchal family structures.

In Prabha Devi's story, the author shows how Prabha Devi accomplishes self-actualization and overcomes her timidity. Her discovery of how to remain afloat in the water pool tends to make her very happy. What Akhila can learn from Prabha Devi's story is the question. Even though Akhila is not married, she acknowledges that a woman must exercise extreme caution in her behaviour, which could otherwise lead to further misinterpretation.

Sheela boards the train at midnight. Sheela is a teen who is attending school. Anita Nair's portrayal of Sheela highlights the issue of child abuse. When Sheela goes to Hasina's house, her friend's father, Naazir, comes forward to wipe the sweat from her lips with his forefinger. Naazir's focus on Sheela has caused Hasina and her

mother to suffer. Sheela is powerless to object to Naazir's unwanted touch. Sheela is a fourteen-year-old liberated girl, and her grandmother deserves credit for this. Her affection and respect for her grandmother made her ornament her dead body. In this way, she represents a break with tradition. Akhila, looking for psychological confidence and self-worth, learns how to claim her identity and obtain the spirit of selfhood from Sheela's story.

All these women, young and old, come from upper middle-class families. Marikolanthu, who comes from a low-income family and has worked as a maidservant, is the last person left in the compartment with Akhila. She initially responds briefly to Akhila's personal questions but gradually opens up. She states, "I'm not telling you that women are weak. Women are strong. Women can do everything as well as men. Women can do much more. But a woman has to seek that vein of strength in herself. It does not show itself naturally." (209-210)

Marikolanthu comes from a peasant family, and her story is pathetic because she has been treated unfairly by men since she was sixteen. Marikolanthu, the last passenger, was dressed poorly, but her expression said it all: "She had seen it all, human fickleness and fallibility, and there was very little that would take her by surprise" (18).

Marikolanthu's father died when she was only nine years old. Her mother, a wealthy landlord, was required to work at the Chettiar House. Marikolanthu's education was ended prematurely due to a lack of income to send her brother to town after the fifth grade. She had to go to Chettiar's House to assist her mother. She admired, almost loved and respected him. She also had to revert to Chettiar's House to pick her up. Amma's kitchen is where she cooks. Marikolanthu was assaulted by a man here during the Holi festival: Murugan, the Chettiar House's poor relative.

Marikolanthu's life is altered by sexual assault. Marikolanthu's story is about her schooling through self-sacrifice and self-realisation.

Finally, she affirms herself and decides to go with her instincts, as evidenced by her final decision to live independently and raise her son, Muthu. Her story is about social and financial suppression. As a result, she witnesses how she is exploited and thrown off. Because she struggles for emancipation, she emerges as a great woman. Her subjugation and enslavement teach her to be self-sufficient in a difficult way. Marikolanthu's story teaches Akhila that, in the end, a woman must be self-sufficient. She must decide how and why she wants to live. Marikolanthu makes this decision after much suffering and disappointment. Akhila must examine her own life and decide how she wants to shape it.

The passengers had let go of their inhibitions and talked freely because they knew these words would never be repeated negatively because these women were unlikely to meet again. All of these women shared their deepest feelings. Their experience teaches that women can survive and find their identity and space not by isolating themselves from a male-dominated society but by working with them. Akhila puts her newfound confidence to the test in Kanyakumari by taking a lover. She is abused by her ability to handle the brief encounter entirely on her terms. She beams. "She will have the courage to pick up from where. She left off and begins again" (275). She schedules a phone call with Hari. He could be married, or he could have moved on. The stories of Akhila's fellow passengers in the coupe fairly emerge, revealing each woman's need to speak to a sympathetic heart. The novel concludes by associating Akhila with Durga, implying the power of women.

As a result, the novel is a direct visual depiction of the feminine psyche and passions. Anita Nair expresses the minutest details about her female characters, bringing their everyday dilemmas, desires, and thoughts to life. The study delves deeply into the characters' search for identity and self-discovery.

In ancient India, women were treated equally to men and respected. Women have contributed to the welfare of the families and communities. At that time, there was no gender discrimination and male chauvinism. During medieval India, there was a complete changeover in Indian society. Women were treated as enslaved people; only they could look into domestic chores, take care of the family members, and participate in agricultural field work. They were not allowed to educate and get into jobs. Sati system was also practised during the time. But in modern India, in the beginning, women could participate in small businesses individually, like sewing, toys and pottery making, and pickle and masala productions from home. Nowadays, there are many entrepreneurs in various fields equal to men. Women are more highly educated than men. Women are greatly embedded in the teaching field. Gender doesn't matter for knowledge, innovations and power. Now, women bravely analyse them and search for their identities by breaking all the hard situations. If man got educated, only it would be beneficial for man. If women get an education, the entire generation will be educated. Famous authors like Shashi Deshpande and Anita Nair prominently focus on self-exploration.

The novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* by Shashi Deshpande portrays how a woman in an Indian society struggles with a family situation. Though the protagonist is a highly professional doctor, she suffers in marital life and is dominated and never considered by her parents before the marriage in her parental home. Even in the current scenario, few people in some families are treated as enslaved, though she is in

a good position in society. This novel completely shows the parental home and marital life struggles and how the protagonist, as a doctor, balanced the family life and career with her male hegemony husband, Manu. Finally, the narrative concludes with the realisation that Saru won't be the target of Manu's frustration any longer. She chooses not to feel bad for somebody else and takes joy in her achievement.

The novel *Ladies Coupe* by Anita Nair talks about the life of six different women in different age groups. The protagonist was Akhila 45, year old lady who sacrificed her life for her family without getting married. All these six women with various family and social class backgrounds were taught about self-exploration through their personal life stories. Though few were rich, middle, and poor, they faced the struggle in the family, sexual abuse and sacrifice. Akhila pays attention to the women's tales.

Janaki, Prabha Devi, and Margaret are married women; they are victims of the Pygmalion effect. They serve as an example of modifications. Janaki understands that she is quite traditional and lacks an identity. Prabha makes an effort to have sexual freedom. Akhila is seeking answers to many of the concerns that have been bothering her, but she has realised that there are no easy answers, no one who can teach her how to live her own life, and no one who she can model her life after. She immediately realises she is going about it all wrong. She reads through other people's lives as if they were books that would provide her with clear instructions on what to do next. She also understands that all ladies are normal people bound by the ties of family life and desire the stability of married life. A married lady should never take the lead. From the perspective of society, the same is true for spinsters.

After reading *Ladies Coupe* one notices that Indian women are changing. Akhila is intelligent and financially independent but lacks the courage to start a relationship and must deal with the repercussions. She first lacks the bravery to challenge the social convention forced on her. But after carrying out her responsibilities as the family's head, she decides to live for herself. She is now mentally prepared to deal with the effects of her choice. The work leaves the reader with the strong impression that women like Akhila should be treated as human beings first and foremost rather than as sexual commodities.

Even though there are a lot of female characters in *The Ladies Coupe*, none of them supports equality. Many personalities represent various facets of Indian women. If Janaki Prabhakaran represents the one extreme, Akhila represents the other. Since the novel is open-ended, Akhila's journey might continue, showing fresher interpretations of Indian womanhood. The personality of Akhila can develop into an equitable woman. This novel, *Ladies Coupe*, in other words, is the story of Akhila's suppression, uprising and conclusion. At last, everyone gets to know their own self. Akhila also found her self-identity through the story of these women. In both the novels, the protagonist struggles and attains self-realization.

Chapter 4
Conclusion

Chapter 4

Conclusion

The main objective and purpose of the thesis is to portray the familial relationships in the Indian society, especially the struggle of women and how they self-explore themselves by overcoming all the familial conflicts. Ultimately, it depicts how the female characters self-realise and shine. The first chapter is an introduction to Literature in general and Indian English writing in particular, Indian women writers, the role of women in Indian English literature and Indian society. Introduction to familial relationships in the Indian community is discussed, and the self-exploration of women is also portrayed. The summary of selected novels, such as *The Dark Holds No Terrors* by Shashi Deshpande and *Ladies Coupe* by Anita Nair, is also mentioned. At the end of the first chapter review of the literature is included.

Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is the tragedy of a failing marriage. Saritha, the main character, is a successful female doctor. The premise of the tale is the conflict and frustration of the educated lady in an "Indian Society" that is ruled by tradition. After a difficult mental situation and a protracted period of contemplation, the last realisation arrives. The main focus of this book is women's pursuit of self-discovery. According to the author, all her characters grow to be honest with themselves. The self-searching and striving of women to break free from the constraints placed on them by society, culture, and nature is the subject of Shashi Deshpande's works. The doctor in the story is dissatisfied with her mother as a daughter because their relationship is somewhat strained.

She cannot recognise herself as her mother's loving daughter, and as she grows up, she will never be gorgeous enough to be a young woman with ecstatic power. She then understands that what makes her is not what she is as a female. She knows what she will eventually become will offer her the identity she seeks. She chooses the path of medicine because she understands that becoming productive entails making others' lives possible, enjoyable, and comfortable. She is a very curious young girl.

Anita Nair wrote the novel *Ladies Coupe*, which was released in 2001. In the novel, a middle-aged Indian woman named Akhila travels to Kanyakumari for freedom. While on the train, she meets five other women and exchanges experiences with them, inspiring her to live her own life. Akhila was a single woman. She was not married. She is a financial provider for her family in her father's absence. So, she did not think of her own life and working for her family. In this novel, the rest of the five women belong to different categories, ages, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Through all the characters, Akhila self-explores her journey.

Chapter two of the thesis deals with the portrayal of familial relationships in Indian society and women's struggle in the family. This chapter talks about the female characters of the selected novels. Though they are in the professions and well-educated, they have plenty of struggles inside the family. It includes battles between mother and daughter and marital conflicts between husband and wife. This chapter analyses the domestic issues and brings out the solution to how these characters understand and overcome the conflicts.

Chapter three follows the relationship in the family and deals with the self-exploration of the women characters in the selected novels. This chapter portrays the male hegemony in the family and the lack of importance to the female. It gives awareness to women's life and how women get influenced by other women in society.

This chapter teaches us how self-exploration is crucial to every human being, especially for women in contemporary society. Through self-exploration, the affected characters learn about themselves and their hidden talents; they get to know who they are, why they are in such a position, and what their goal in life is other than taking care of their family members.

Chapter four is the conclusion that summarizes all the core chapters and brings out the interpretation and views of the characters in the selected novels. The portrayal of male hegemony and the exploitation of rights given to women is also discussed in this chapter.

The position of women in their community is a central theme in Indian women's literature. Women's writings are thus predisposed to consider the roles women play and are expected to play. Their work demonstrated the difficulties and challenges of the many relationships with which they deal, emphasising that a woman rarely, if ever, acts alone. Being in a system of a matrix of relationships with others has implications for every activity and aspiration. Indian women writers have long emphasised that woman is typically falsely accused concerning others, most notably their male counterparts. Indian writers have repeatedly cited women's challenges to specify themselves and obtain special autonomy while remaining committed to familial connections, conservative values, and even misconceptions of womanhood.

Most modern female writers have highlighted women's identities to give their female protagonists the ability to define themselves. At the same time, several more female writers portray their female protagonists as survivors in their communities, almost trying to equate the very position of women with marginalisation. Shashi Deshpande has been writing since the 1970s, starting with short stories in magazines and later in a collection and progressing to novels and children's books. Tracing the

modifications and movements in the trend of her writings and issues is thus informative. Besides that, Deshpande is exceptional as an author in how she is strongly embedded in her heritage and setting. Quote her own words - "My background is very firmly rooted here. I was never educated abroad, and my novels...only deal with Indians and the complexities of our lives." Deshpande is the contrary of a diasporic author, and she closely recognises the situations of Indian women whose livelihoods are completely lived in India and for whom moving out beyond India and living in another country is not part of their world.

Shashi Deshpande has illustrated the isolated and just one situation of Indian females whose personal freedoms are eroded by the conservative society. Because traditionalist society demands females to be vassals, their self-identity and independent thought are constantly marginalised. Shashi Deshpande's feminism advocates for female emancipation legitimately and socially. Ladies are unlikely to recover from their deprivation until they are sociologically recognised as human beings. Even financially comfortable women find their lifestyles torn between modernisation and cultural conservatism.

Shashi Deshpande, as an Indian, has vividly and diligently demonstrated the Indian social curriculum and the conventional social rules generated for females. She has represented advanced, skilled, middle-class Indian females who want to find their identity while reuniting with their families. All of her novels feature female protagonists who are implicated in the challenges of marriage relationships and the relationships they undertake. They have a constant desire to overcome the tunnel of their lives appropriately.

One of the crucial elements of Shashi Deshpande's story is how minutely the author describes a few contemporary educated women characters, who experience the anguish and conflicts of our society's brains indescribably. The enormous contradiction between the long-standing Indian traditions, norms and values of life and the overpowering effects of exposure to the Western way of life force Indian educated women to suffer greatly in post-colonial India, even though they look at life in their unique ways. The tension and turmoil this disagreement causes in the minds of educated Indian women lead them to become advocates for their rights and empowerment in the end.

A class of Indian women who are at the lower levels of poverty, illiteracy, and social exploitation are also included in Deshpande's minute observation. In her powerful novel, these two categories of women are contrasted. Most of these degraded women are from India's rural areas. At the same time, people also see almost photographic representations of women from lower middle-class households living in cities and semi-urban settings. Deshpande generally supports women's freedom within the socio-cultural contexts of Indian society.

Shashi Deshpande concentrates on modern Indian females and their difficult situations. Shashi Deshpande characterises the new Indian woman with the sufferings of the contemporary Indian female struggling to comprehend herself and defend her authenticity as a wife, mother, and, most importantly, as a human being. Girls constitute a sizable proportion of the family and society. Most writers and social thinkers are uninterested in what they believe or feel about their cultural occultation. The novels of Shashi Deshpande depict a cultural world of mother-complex relationships.

Similarly, in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), Sarita suffers denial and embarrassment as a child and, after marriage, as a wife. Deshpande explains parents' outright gender bias towards their daughters and their eagerness to have a male child. Saru advances in social standing after his marriage by becoming a medical doctor. Everything begins to break apart at this point. Her husband, who has feelings of worthlessness, begins to molest her physically. Saru is left to contemplate her motivations for making life decisions, her family style of living, her relationship quality with others, and her career choice. Although Saru had an ambiguous desire to go back to her old home and to her father for security, sanctuary, and assistance, she finally learns that she must encounter rather than try to escape the terrors in her life.

A thorough examination of her novels reveals her genuine concern for women. Her protagonists fully know their suffocated and constrained involvement in a traditionalist male-hegemony society. Her protagonists, captured between the contemporary and the traditional, seek personality within marriage. There is a lot of feminist content in Deshpande's novels. Shashi Deshpande's story is about the search for female identity.

Anita Nair is a direct and daring writer. Anita Nair is a writer who neglects to be labelled as a feminist. She is an attempt to demonstrate female strength. Anita Nair also tends to add that confidence isn't usually regarded as a problem for women. Her personalities eventually vary from those of other feminist writers. She has caused ripples in the society of hegemonic masculinity by treating females seriously. Her attempts to depict her female character's sufferings, anxieties, difficult situations, aspirations, and conflicts are impressive. Her primary interest is the planet of females, specifically the battle of females in modern Indian society. Her novels portray the real lives of her characters.

Her novels explore the effects of social programming on women. Society employs various methods to spread faith; literature is one of the means to further these techniques, which are enveloped by this form of interaction. They break the chains of social mores and refuse to be bound by the limitations that constrain females. So, Anita Nair breaks the chains of society by characterising female characters, which often leads to the separation of humanity. She makes us consider the advantages of reducing adultery to save family life. Anita Nair's female characters represent different religions, illustrating the variety of Indian culture, which would be difficult or impossible to generalise.

The author discusses patriarchy in *Ladies Coupe* and uses it to denote an unequal relationship. The narration of the novels attempts to illustrate how oppression and repression in real life frequently appear as affection, protection and a sense of security. Although patriarchy is a universal concept in women's lives, Anita Nair painstakingly captures the uniqueness of each woman because she didn't want to reduce women's lives to a single ideal.

Anita Nair's novel articulates the requirement for Indian female emancipation; thus, the social democratic goal of it is vastly overplayed in her novels. In her works of fiction, Anita Nair's female characters rebel against traditional society to live in their conditions, regardless of the consequences of such a revolution on their lives. They assume the position of strangers to combat and additionally envisioned her Indian sensation as well as perception through the women characters of her works of fiction.

Ladies Coupe doubts women's involvement in a conventional bound social structure that sees women solely as obedient daughters, domesticated wives, and child bearers. Women in post-colonial India quash such oppressive roles and fight for self-

esteem and individual liberty. They must write down their basic psychological and physical requirements and act uninhabitable to meet them. The train journey represents a path away from familial relationships and commitments, a journey that will eventually make them aware of their identity and integrity. It is a voyage of self-discovery. Akhila travels with the question that has plagued her since childhood. In the novel, she meets five female characters and travels with the same question.

"*Ladies Coupe*" by Anita Nair emphasises the problem of identity. Though Anita Nair is not a feminist, her stories depict a female's delicate feelings, how she perceives herself and her troubles.

In the book, *The Ultimate Book of Quotation* (2012), Michel J. Fox's memorable quote "Family is not an important thing. It's everything," should be about the concept of family. Family is everything; they are our inspiration, the ones who love us even when others don't, and the ones who adhere to each other like gum when difficult circumstances arise. Families have the most solid associations. These relationships are so strong and deeply ingrained that they can do anything. These connections enable a family to impact, frame, affect, and modify a person's life. To establish a positive association with the family, people must first believe them and then begin to listen and consider their opinion. Family relationships are vital as they impact making and help educate roles and responsibilities. Children who grow up in better and healthier families are more likely to form positive relationships from outside their families. Good relationships also aid in resolving family misinterpretation, resulting in sustainable cohesion.

Healthy relationships enable family members to communicate effectively and communicate with one another. Making time for family and supporting one another aids in developing strong family bonds. Gender discrimination is a serious problem in

Indian society. But besides a charter of rights and freedoms that assures exactly equivalent rights for men and women, as well as centuries of regulations, profound gender bias in India has a devastating impact on women's lives. Even after a period of rapid economic expansion, discrepancies are all too common; a thousand girls die before they turn five each day due to carelessness. Each family has a culture of their own. But these cultures differ from each family. Women who get married and go to their husband's homes will struggle at the earlier stage to adopt, and it will take some time to get into their culture. Men and women should treat equally at home. At the same time, people are talking about equal rights, but nowadays, women are given more privileges and liberty.

Boozie is the male character and professor in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. He shapes Sarita into a successful and elegant woman while assisting her in moving up in her work. His interest in her takes aback Saru, but she uses it to further her own goals. In actuality, she employs her feminine attractiveness to accomplish some goals. Boozie hides his homosexuality behind this friendship. He deliberately displays his love for her in front of others. Saru deliberately provokes her husband with him while doing nothing to correct his misunderstanding. Saru knows there is nothing under the mask of strong, virile masculinity. There is no physical contact in this relationship. She feels even more resentful of her husband because of Boozie's focus on Saru. As a result, Manu and Saru grew apart. She said, "I never revealed that to anyone. Not even to Manu for he asked me nothing. And they began then...the silences that grew between us. Just grew and like Jack's beanstalk." (94). From that point, Manu stagnates as an underpaid lecturer in a college for third graders; Saru continues to advance socially and monetarily. She shields herself behind her professional persona

and lives in emotional oblivion. Saru achieved success in her professional life. This character is an example of female support.

Self-exploration and self-respect are crucial in human life, especially women's. In the early days, women failed to self-realise themselves and blindly believed and worked like a slave to their husbands. Self-exploration is questioning your opinions, emotions, behaviours and intentions. It seeks the origins of who we are. Replies to our entire questionnaire about ourselves. In our stressful lifestyle, making time for self-analysis and reflection can be challenging, but intensifying our self-awareness can achieve stability and significance in our lives. In terms of dominance, the status of women in India has not changed dramatically. Women are gaining both academic and financial independence as time passes. However, they are governed by patriarchal structures and stigmas. In the book *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (1986) Kumari Jayewardene's words perfectly describe the position of women in India:

The status of women in India has varied in different historical periods and in the different regions of the country and has also been subject to differentiation according to class, religion and ethnicity. The general situation, however, was suppression and domination within the bounds of a patriarchal system. Whether the woman in question belonged to a peasant family and was compelled to drudgery in the field and home or to a high-caste family and living a life of leisure, she was the victim of a set of values that demanded implicit obedience to male domination, and of many other social practices that circumscribed her life (78).

Shashi Deshpande's novels usually feature Indian women. That is why the situation of women in our family members is so dire. Shashi Deshpande's sincere effort at breaking women's solitude has been widely praised at home and abroad. Her straightforward awareness of human relationships, close scrutiny of how the world operates, and impartial perception of belief systems and movements compelled me to make this endeavour. Throughout her works, Shashi Deshpande describes individual liberty for the Indian woman within the Indian socio-cultural system of values and organisations.

She has refused to build powerful, glorified female heroes, instead portraying the Indian woman as facing the same problem of possessing to make a decision between the contemporary and the traditional. Deshpande exposes the delicate mechanisms of subjugation and gender delineation at work within the family institution and male-dominated Indian society. *The Dark Hold No Terrors'* story shifts between first-person and third-person viewpoints. In the book, *Shashi Deshpande's Novels: A Feminist Study (2005)*, Deshpande describes the strategy she used to be successful:

The present is in the third person, and the past is in the first person. I was doing it throughout the first. But that's often a perspective used in my short stories. I wanted to be more objective. Yet I needed to distance myself from the narrative in the present. Otherwise, it was going to be far too intense. And then, I read an American novel by Lisa Alther where she uses this method. And the minute I came across her book, and I thought- let me admit it freely- Oh god. This is how I will do my novel. (78)

Deshpande's feminism does not evict the woman from her environment but attempts to reveal the different philosophical elements that influence her. Religious and cultural elements such as myths, legends, rituals, and ceremonies, as well as psychological and social factors such as a woman's subordinate status within the family and her limited sexuality, are examples of these. The protagonists of Shashi Deshpande's novels are contemporary, knowledgeable, ego women between the ages of 30 and 35. A recurring theme in their marriage is their search for freedom and self-identity. The narrative in this novel gracefully shifts from present to past and back to present. Meenakshi Mukherjee thinks that the intricate web woven by Deshpande in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is possible. In the book, *Shashi Deshpande: A Critical Spectrum* (2004), "through the superimposition of the past over the present, through dreams, nightmares, flashback, introspection and simple straightforward third person narration" (108).

While examining her novels, it becomes clear that they all depict a similar progression in the protagonist's life. In the beginning, all of her protagonists-Indu, Saru, and Jaya-are shown to be confused. As the novel progresses, they undergo a phase of self-reflection, self-analysis, and self-realisation. They arise as more confident, more in regulating themselves, and substantially more optimistic in the end.

For example, in the novel *Ladies Coupe*, Anita Nair has addressed an increasingly prevalent patriarchal notion in which a woman is restricted by custom to be dependent on men, crippling her ability to recognise her strength. Women are given some progressive ideas in this novel. She depicted her women struggling side by side due to the patriarchal system, but in the end, she gave them a rebellious gesture against patriarchy. Her women have been represented as clever, curious women who are fed up with the inequality and revolution directed at them.

So Anita Nair's women bring up the problem of their patriarchal lifestyle, seeing it not only as a site of subjugation at home and in society but also as a battleground to fight for their identity. *Ladies Coupe* dismantles what is commonly accepted as spiritual, traditional, and philosophical. Akhila's mother never takes any measures towards her daughter's marriage because Akhila is the provider for the entire family. Akhila remains a spinster because she must provide, and Brahmin traditions become flexible in this case.

Anita Nair witnessed that ill-educated, poor, and sparsely populated women, such as Marikolanthu, refuse cultures that define their lives in a relying relationship with men more forcefully than educated and urban women. Indirectly, she says that education will not be a tool for those seeking their identity. She claims that education can only encourage and emancipate women if it aims to change social perceptions. Indeed, in Nair's writing, the realignment of male-female relationships causes modifications to social and interpersonal behaviours and serves as the essential factor for feminist emancipation.

All five women characters have endured significant hardships in the male-driven society. Some of them struggle alongside men, while others do not. Akhila would have led a regular life if she had a father, but her father's exclusion forced her to fight against society. Despite having a strong academic background, Margaret Shanthi was unable to complete her PhD because of her male partner. Instead of choosing her path, society compelled her to follow the unbreakable norms to please her partner.

The struggle for independence of educated and wealthy women differs from that of an ignorant and underprivileged woman. Marikolanthu's brilliance stems from her fight for freedom despite being uneducated and disadvantaged. She could be

considered an Indian adaptation of Nora from Ibsen. Nobody can help but admire her steady development through experience from obedience to rebellion to complete confidence. She does not have a formal education from a school or college but receives a rigorous education at the University of Adversity where people can explore the human experiences of overcoming the obstacles.

She can establish her identity due to her victory against conventional assumptions about gender roles. These five ladies managed their emotions in amazing ways despite the challenges and hindrances of the patriarchal culture because of their intense desire to breathe freely. Their escape from captivity and complete independence lend some purpose to their fight. This book outlines how readers can use their determination to discover who they are from a brighter perspective. The inherent holiness, elegance, and purity of life are upheld in *Ladies Coupe* by Anita Nair's pure view.

Anita Nair explores a patriarchal idea that is becoming increasingly popular, according to which women are expected to be dependent on men out of tradition and thus unable to recognise their own power. She gave them a defiant gesture. Her female characters have been portrayed as clever, interested individuals who are dissatisfied with the injustice done to them and revolt against it. Hence, Anita Nair's female characters highlight the issue of how patriarchy has shaped their way of life and they use it as a battlefield to defeat their oppressors, in addition to seeing it as the source of their tyranny at home and in society.

Here, both the novels *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *Ladies Coupe* have similar male hegemony, gender discrimination and sufferings of women. The thesis has portrayed the familial relationships in the Indian society, especially the struggle of women and how they self-explore themselves by overcoming all the familial conflicts. The thesis has also brought out how the female characters self-realise and shine as a result of familiarization of their own self.

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