

**INNOCENCE, EVIL AND DYNAMIC: PORTRAIT OF WOMEN IN
SELECT INDIAN CRIME AND DETECTIVE FICTIONS**

Thesis Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Master of Philosophy in English

By

Souparnika M C

Roll No. 19MPENF008

Department of English
Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for
Women
Coimbatore
December
2020

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “INNOCENCE, EVIL AND DYNAMIC: PORTRAIT OF WOMEN IN SELECT INDIAN CRIME AND DETECTIVE FICTIONS” submitted by me for the degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) is the record of work carried out by me during the period from July 2019 to December 2020 under the guidance of Dr. (Mrs.) Aananthi Ballamurugan, Assistant Professor, Department of English and has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship, Titles in this University or any other University or other similar institution of Higher Learning.



Signature of the Supervisor



21

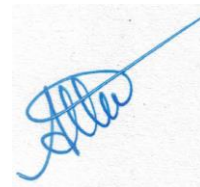
Signature of the Candidate

CERTIFICATE

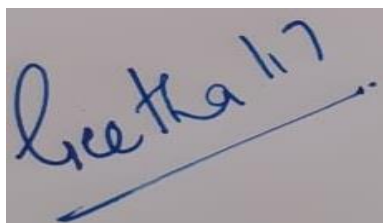
This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “INNOCENCE, EVIL AND DYNAMIC: PORTRAIT OF WOMEN IN SELECT INDIAN CRIME AND DETECTIVE FICTIONS” submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) by Souparnika M C is the record of research work carried out by her during the period from July 2019 to December 2020 under my guidance and supervision, and this work has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship, Titles in this University or any other University or other similar institution of Higher Learning.



Signature of the
Head of the Department



Signature of the Supervisor



Signature of the Dean

Acknowledgements

The researcher expresses her gratitude to Padma Shri Dr. P.R Krishnakumar, Revered Chancellor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for all the good wishes towards the successful completion of the study.

The researcher would like to acknowledge her heartfelt thanks to Dr. (Mrs.) Premavathy Vijayan, Vice Chancellor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for her constant motivation towards academic performance. The researcher would like to thank Dr. (Mrs.) S. Kowsalya, Registrar, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for extending full support for the successful completion of the study.

The researcher would like to express her thanks to Dr. (Mrs.) K.T. Geetha, Dean, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher education for Women, Coimbatore.

The researcher would like to thank Dr. (Mrs.) S. Chitra Sivasubramaniam, Professor and Head, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for extending her full support for the successful completion of the study.

The researcher wishes to express her heartfelt gratitude to her mentor, Dr. (Mrs.) Aananthi Ballamurugan, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for her meticulous guidance and valuable suggestions towards the successful completion of this

Study. The researcher extends her thanks to all the members of the staff of the Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, who rendered help whenever required.

The researcher would like to thank all the staff of the library of Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore for their support and help for the completion of the work. The researcher would like to thank all the co-scholars for their support in carrying out the work.

The researcher records her special gratitude to her beloved parents, my understanding husband Sundaresh and friends for their continuous encouragement and support in carrying out this work. Finally, the researcher thanks the Lord Almighty for the abundant blessings showered on her during the period of study.

Table of Contents

S.No.	Contents	Pg. No.
I	Introduction	02
II	Chapter 2	27
III	Chapter 3	51
IV	Chapter 4	72
V	Conclusion	93
VI	Works Cited	99

Chapter I

Introduction

Crime and detective fiction illustrate, detection of a crime by a detective or police officer or any other enthusiastic person who decides to reveal the mystery behind a murder. There are 'whodunnit' as well as 'whydunnit' kinds of stories. 'whodunnit' stories focus on the person who is responsible for the crime. The story revolves around finding out who is the murderer. But in 'whydunnit' stories, the reason behind the murder is important rather than the murderer himself. The main factor that most clearly distinguishes crime and detective novels from the rest of the mystery novels is that there is no mystery, only unknown clues.

Initially, the crime story is about a Robin Hood character or a thief. But detective fiction is a novel genre in which detectives, whether amateurs or professionals, expose a crime or a series of crimes. Except in rare cases, these crimes involve one or more murders. Because detective stories are based on logic and supernatural elements are rarely used. The more realistic the story is, the more people can understand it. Detectives can be private investigators, police officers, elderly widows or young women, but he or she generally has nothing materialistic to gain from solving the crime.

Several elements define good crime fiction: Conflict is the main factor. Uncertainty arises from conflict. Before a writer can effectively create curiosity through a detective novel, the writer must understand the central conflict. Perhaps the author's main question is to answer who

is the character's killer. This question is also a starting point for creating tension and creating uncertainty. There may be minor conflicts that cause tension based on the underlying conflict.

Time is another important factor. Having the novel on a tight schedule is one of the best ways to arouse curiosity. Putting the protagonist on a ticking clock will increase the curiosity of the reader. However, time is rarely effective in keeping the highest level of intense anticipation consistent throughout the novel. Allowing the protagonist, a short time to solve a problem is a great way to arouse curiosity, but the writer must create a contrast. Downtime gives the reader a chance to breathe. The writer can even calm them down with a false sense of security as he/she prepare for the next surprise that may be of more interest.

Clues are the third factor. Clues are deliberately misleading readers and can be used very effectively when writing crime fiction. Authors should design their clues so that there are several possible alternatives. If there is only one clue in the story, the reader can easily predict, but including multiple clues can keep readers guessing. The clues are not related to the murder suspect. It can be related to almost anything, including a piece of information or evidence. The clue can work with other elements to increase suspense.

Prediction, atmosphere, and moods are the other important factors in detective fiction. Prediction involves guessing what could happen. It can be direct or indirect. they can also take other forms. For example, the protagonist can discover that a character has been sentenced to a long prison sentence for a crime, which can be the key to distracting readers from the perpetrator. Another direct sign is that one character finds out that the other has a terrible secret. The author uses atmosphere and mood to create excitement.

What is at stake must be of paramount importance. It can be a character's life, livelihood, old dreams, etc., but it has to be important. Also, throughout the novel, the stake must remain the same, it should not fall apart. For example, a crime novel can start with a police detective accused of murder. As the novel progresses, the detective's job may become at stake so that the detective's life depends on solving this single crime, or the detective's marriage may begin to suffer. The stake goes beyond the original motivation to solve the crime.

Authors can only arouse curiosity if the reader trusts him with fair play. Hence, authors must earn readers' trust by fulfilling their book-wide promise. This means that the author must complete all basic conditions. This means that the clues should always provide different explanations so that the reader is not fooled. While many writers have used Counter Climax effectively, writers should take into account the expectations of the reader while reading a novel.

Another important factor is a strong character. All these predictions and the creation of ambiguity have little effect unless the reader cares about what happens at the peak of the novel. The best way to keep the readers interested is to create a strong character that suits the novel. When the character feels real, readers worry about what is happening to them and what kind of annoying situations they may face. The character's actions must be credible to the reader.

Suspense is another crucial factor. The suspense requires the writer to master several writing skills. He/she also needs to make sure that they have an interesting character whose challenges are important to them and their readers. To grow, suspense requires conflict and drama. Limiting the time or limiting the character's freedom can create suspense. It is also effective to plant false evidence that makes readers and characters unsure of whom to trust. Crime writers should motivate their readers to follow up on their intense productions.

Detective and crime stories are one of the most popular novel genres. Numerous detective novels are in literary form, so publishers allocate full labels to this genre and publish hundreds of them a year. Detective novels are an integral part of the contemporary literary scenario.

Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes is the most famous detective in the history of literature, but Doyle's author is not the first writer of crime and detective fiction. This merit should be given to another 19th-century writer, Edgar Allan Poe. Not only did Poe make a huge contribution to the literary tradition of Gothic horror and romance, but he also created detective stories with his character C. Auguste Dupin. When the character first appeared in *The Murder in the Rue Morgue* in 1841, the word detective didn't even exist.

Many of Dupin's character traits had a strong influence on detective images from the 19th and early 20th centuries. His fabulous, logical, or emphasis on problem-solving methods, upper-class experience, and intensive reading for problem-solving has remained the same in his portrayal through Poe's two other stories also.

But Arthur Conan Doyle reinforced detective fiction as a popular literary genre. The first noticeable difference between the two authors is the release in the volume of writing. Unlike Poe, who produced only 3 short stories with Dupin, Doyle worked with Sherlock Holmes to produce 56 short stories and 4 novels. Doyle wrote four novels with Holmes as the detective, they are *A Study in Crimson* (1887), *The Sign of Four* (1890), *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1901), and *The Valley of Fear* (1914). The first short series appeared in *Strand Magazine* in 1891, and the character's popularity increased dramatically.

One of the biggest differences between Doyle and Poe's detective story is that Doyle uses an assistant character to help Holmes. Dr. Watson has an undeniable loyalty to Holmes, although

he is in stark contrast to Holmes. His problem-solving methods are popular and simple, but Holmes' methods are complex and sophisticated. He sees the crime on the surface and Holmes tries to dive into the psychological depths of the criminal. He is emotional and Holmes is a researcher. Also, the Holmes stories are one of the earliest mystery series to have film adaptations produced.

Sherlock Holmes's story continues to be popular to this day, and many adaptations have been made for film and television. Undoubtedly, the continued popularity of Conan Doyle's original story and the many open-source that have already been made kept the character popular even in the 21st century.

With the success of the Sherlock Holmes stories and the growing popularity of ghost stories and horror novels in the late 19th century, a new subgenre, psychic detectives, appeared. Psychic detectives solved cases connected to supernatural elements or assumed to be the doing of the supernatural. The most popular character in this subgenre is John Silence's *Psychic Doctor* by horror writer Algernon Blackwood.

Famous detectives in the twentieth century include Sir Peter Wimsey, created by Dorothy L. Sayers, and Ger Baspen, professor at Oxford, created by Edmund Crispin, or the real name is Bruce Montgomery. The Biennium Crispin is one of the last great exponents of the classic detective novel.

Early crime and detective stories witnessed the presence of a charming creature we call the 'femme fatale', a hard woman who attracts sad men into their doom. However, with time, when the popularity of crime and detective fiction increased, more and more female writers appeared. This increase in female writers also improved the character of women in these novels.

Most of the popular new crime fiction has been written by women. These writers came from all around the world: America (Megan Abbott, Deborah Adams, Alison Gaylin, Carolina Aguilera, Susan Albert, Laura Lippman), England (Alex Marwood, Jane Adams, Paula Hawkins, Joan Aiken, Sophie Hannah), Scotland (Val McDermid, Margot Bennett, Denise Mina), Ireland (Tana French), Norway (Karin Fossum), Japan (Natsuo Kirino), French (Christine Adamo), Australian (Goldie Alexander).

The female authors do not believe in heroes. There are no gunfights or emotional abuse in their books. Murder in the genre is common, but in many of these writer's works, the killing shot is so quietly struck that it seems almost unintended, it happens in everyday life. The death in these novels is often unbelievably casual.

This perception of this kind of internal violence distinguishes contemporary female writers from the best of the men. The story of a woman's murder has always been a bit more heartbreaking psychologically than the other gender. Even in the 1920s and 1930s, a famous golden age that focused on complex puzzles, the motives of Christie and Dorothy L. Sayers' criminals are more reliable and more hidden. Later, when male writers fought with the image of rogue 'femme fatale' in their works, women dealt with the mystery of identity and the lethal pressures of everyday life.

The publisher has encouraged writers to design the same detective throughout a series. So, the next generation of women writers who began writing in the mid-60s to early 90s wrote stories with the same detective in more than one book. These stories are about private detectives, medical experts, and Compassionate Police Investigators. For some time, the feminist's attitude toward the old fantasies of male empowerment seemed to fade enough to write a crime story.

Some of these novelists have done solid work in their traditional form, and many continue to do so.

Compared to male writers, modern female criminal writers seem more accustomed to criminal novels in the struggle for supremacy. Words are often unkind, images can be completely rude, and the story is not exaggerated. Women writers seem to know crime fiction better than men, even if they aren't raised from crime fiction.

In the Golden Age, they did this by putting too many suspects and too much physical evidence into cozy murder scenes such as crazy relatives, shady servants, cigarettes, dining boxes, and stopped clocks. Now the effect is achieved only with the help of the language. In a great oral presentation of a modern thriller, each sentence can be a clue or distraction.

Novels written by women have a sense of loss in their stories. All these women seem to know this feeling. There is an overwhelming sense of loss in many of the crime stories they have written. There are sad books about youth confusion and the fascinating emptiness beyond, and what allows these novelists to engage in fascinating ways of dealing with the subject. This is the crime genre itself-a form that can a simple clue a turn into bodies, into terrible behavior. Investigation for these writers is something undiscovered and painlessly unresolved.

The 'femme fatale' style may seem buried, but it may have been internalized by a generation of criminals who use tricks for other purposes of literary appeal. That's how the emergence of female villains as a concept came into these works. They have become so successful that they can beat their male counterparts in evilness.

The publisher of crime and detective novels has had great success in the commercial markets of Western countries. This genre is introduced in eastern countries like India during the

translation period. With immediate commercial success, Indian writers began translating Western criminal literature from English into local languages such as Bengali, Hindi, Telugu, and other languages in the late 19th century. This led to intense writing and publishing activities.

Western detective novels are introduced to India in a ready to read state without changing their social, cultural, and historical background. Cultural discoordination has raised many questions from Indian readers. In translation, the author has to adapt the cultural concept to the Indian context. Detective novels are a very useful text if the authors are exploring the dynamics of cultural translation. In translation, authors need to explore social issues, topics, and functions.

Crime is also working on a cultural basis. Indian writers began writing crime and detective novels in local languages with a touch of the nativity. In the 1880s, Calcutta's popular literature commercial market reached its peak. Songs, plays, and novels have been published, especially detective literature. Many authors from Calcutta have tried to write novels in local languages.

Crime and detective literature appeared in its primitive form in Bengali and Marathi in the 19th century. Arthur Conan Doyle's translations have been very popular. Bengal writers Panchkadi De (1873-1945), Saradindu Bandyopadhyay (1899- 1970) and Dinendra Kumar Ray (1869-1945) deserve special mention. their novels became very popular in Bengal during the first decades of the century and are widely translated into various Indian languages. They have naturalized foreign characters, attitudes, and terrain to suit Indian society. They sustained the essence of the detective and intelligence in these stories.

Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay is the creator of the 'truth-seeker' Byomkesh Bakshi. Bakshi appeared first in his novel *Satyanweshi* (1934). Bakshi has used forensic skills to prove his cases.

Bakshi's companion was Ajit Kumar Banerjee, who accompanied him on almost all cases.

Bandyopadhyay wrote all the stories about Bakshi from Ajit's perspective. Bakshi was the first Indian detective to wear a traditional attire.

After independence, detectives deviated from the old pattern of focusing on the social and cultural values of life. Indian detective novels, influenced by modern Western novels, began discussing terrorism, sex, violence, serial killers, revenge, and rape in the 1980s. The concept of commercialization made the writer think about the subject of violence and gender. State-of-the-art detective novels, science fiction, crime thrillers, serial killers, honor killings, hospital murders, prison kills, paid killings, and illegal killings became major themes of criminal literature in the 1980s.

Due to the great success of the local language, Bengal writers have planted criminal genres and detective novels in English on the Indian land. The first name that comes to mind in India's attempts to write British detective stories is Satyajit Ray.

The golden age of Bengal detective literature is the era of Feluda or Prados K. Mitter. Feluda is a fictional private detective who starred in the Bengal novel series by Indian Bengal film director and writer Satyajit Ray. Ray wrote 35 Feluda story series, which became nostalgically popular in children's magazines all over Bengal in 1965.

Bengal's influence is so strong that many novels have been translated into Hindi as 'translated literature' in the 1890s. A new concept is launched as the Hindi-Detective Fiction Monthly Magazine. The most well-known figures in translated Hindi detective literature is Kishorilal Goswami. His *Paranayini Parinay* is a historical novel of horror. He translated 107 British detective stories. His readers have had the experience of visiting France and England.

Banaras writer Ramlal Varma (1885-1930) published Prem Chand novels in Hindi. In 1910 he founded the Hindi detective monthly, *Daroga Dafter* (Hindi Prosecutor's Office), which translated mostly South Panchkadi De's detective stories. In Lucknow, Burmese publications published several translations of G. W. Reynold.

Kokila Wa Pap Ka Bhi Shan Pratifal (Kokila or Horrible Fruit of Sin) from Ishwar Prasad Sharma is a milestone of crime and detective fiction in Hindi with the stormy night, 16 shots fired in the dark, blood splashes, mysterious voices, anonymous letters, dark prisons, and the new detective equipment. Ishwar Prasad uses detective tools such as fingerprints, interrogation, camouflage, surveillance, interpretive theory, and the ability to decrypt clues. Popular Hindi detective literature is fascinated by Ian Fleming's James Bond novel translated by Surrender Mohan Pathak, who started a crime novel by translating the works of James Hadley Chase into Hindi.

Kannada opened its detective genre by N. Narasimhaya who is known as the Arthur Conan Doyle of Kannada. A new genre of detective thriller has opened up thus. He has written over 550 detective novels and over 50 social novels. TK Rama Rao (1929-1988) is the first Kannada writer to write a thriller. M. Sivakumar along with M.S.K. Prabhu published an anthology of Kannada detective stories by several authors.

Telugu detective literature began in the 1920s. It began with translations of Bengali, Kannada, Marathi, and English detective novels. But Telugu detective novels stand out in the development of detective novels in India. Popular poet Venkata Parvatishwara Kavulu is the first to translate detective stories from other languages into Telugu. Lanapurapu Somaswara Rao and

Tata Krishna Murthy are prominent writers of the 1930s that should be mentioned in the Telugu crime thriller genre.

Educated young people and experts influenced by English literature have a constant interest in reading detective novels in the Telugu language. This is because most of the detective novels then translated are adapted from English. Only place names and character names are changed during the topical dyeing process. However, it is far from the Indian scene. Recently, Telugu detective stories have become mysteries, diplomatic curiosities, secret social stories, or criminal stories. Yandamoori Verandara Nath, Kommuri Sambasiva Rao, Madhu Babu, Yadana Pudi Reddy, Viswa Prasad, Sita Devi, S.V. Nagireddi, and Madhu Babu are renowned Telugu modern crime and detective fiction writers.

Tamil crime and detective stories are borrowed or adapted from 19th-century British novels. Tamil detectives are influenced by western writers such as Doyle, Chesterton, and Poe. The early writers of the Tamil detective novel are Aarani Kuppusi Mudaliyar, Vaduvur Duraisami Iyengar, K.R. Rangarajan, etc. Early writers have no progress in forensic knowledge or discovery, but they strongly believed in fate. Among the writers of the 1950s, the most successful writer Mahadevan introduced the delightful detective *Tupparium Sambu* to the world of popular literature. His stories contain crimes such as anti-theft, brutal murder, addicted murder, and property theft. Prostitution, alcohol, black money, and illegal relationships are also closely related to crime. Morality, social values, education, and women's rights are the most important topics in the Tamil detective stories of the 1950s and 60s.

In the 1970s, influenced by Conan Doyle, the famous Tamil detective writer Tamilwanan produced *The Shankarlal Series* and played his detective closely resembling Sherlock Holmes.

The Tamil crime and detective novels of the 1980s are decorated by the famous author R. Rangarajan (1935-2008). He has written under the pseudonym Sujata. Ganesh Vasant, a pair of imaginary lawyers, is very famous among the readers. The famous Tamil writer Sri Venugopalan wrote in the 1950s under his pseudonym 'Pushpa Tangadorai'. His detective is Tulasingham. Indhumati, a prolific Tamil writer, wrote horror and crime novels under the influence of the Hollywood films *The Exorcist* and *The Omen* in the late 1970s. She shows how social problems lead to crime. Rajesh Kumar is considered the most published criminal writer in the world. He has written 1,500 crime novels in Tamil.

Ini Illai Idai Velai (No More Intermissions) is a crime novel dealing with the social problem of unemployment. His detectives Bharat and Susila appear in most of his novels. Indra Soundar Rajan's *The Mystical Romance* tells the story of a strange mix of crime and myth.

With the continued success of criminal and detective literature in the local languages, Indian writers have attempted to write criminal literature in English. Also, Indian English writers wanted to prove their ability to write detective stories like Western writers. It has been originally opened by veteran writers from northern India in the 1960s. Indian writing in English influenced novels of all genres. British writers in India have had an undeniable liking for criminal writings and detective novels in English using their Indian social and cultural background.

The plot is the true hero of a crime novel, but there is no doubt that the author can introduce a three-dimensional character and make the projector more accurate. That's where the importance of female writers come in the genre of crime and detective fiction. As a community that is known to be the sufferers of oppression throughout history, women have been able to express their opinions and portray a true picture of their oppression through these works.

Earlier there had a perception that women cannot write crime novels. This assumption has grown from the belief that crime and detective novels call for more violent scenes and characters than a romance novel or any other such novels. But violence is very much a part of women's lives today and also their writing. Perhaps women can add more depth and reality to the novel than men do.

Whether written by men or women, techniques such as weapons, courage, and fame are most realistic when they come from writers with experience. This does not mean that female crime writers do not study or grasp the exact terms used in military operations or similar fields. The difference is, perhaps, the details of how the story is distorted into the story and sometimes the technical details.

Interestingly, it is the women writers who have pioneered the unknown territory. In India, where college romance and historical legends dominate bookshelves, people are trying new styles of writing. They undermine the culture and take on the taboos that exist in society. So, it's no surprise that female writers experiment with genres or sub-genres. People who wrote love stories are now writing about weapons and chasing cars, and vice versa. The main reason for this change is the reader's interest in change. Also, services like Amazon Kindle Publishing and other free publishing services help the writers to publish their work without the approval of a publisher. Even if they don't like what the writer wrote, the writer can always bring it to the reader directly.

However, the fear of how readers will react to crime novels written by women cannot be eliminated. It is called market reality. Unlike male writers, female writers are not afraid to

threaten their loyal readers a little. After the first moments of disbelief that women also can write this dark and terrifying book, they read it with joy. So, it is safe.

The author's gender as women inevitably ceases to play and dive deeper into the fictional realm of crime, murder, and bloodshed of all kinds and give readers more choice of storytelling. Any writer can write in any genre if they wish. It is completely the choice of the writer. As long as readers are ready to accept the change women are free to experiment with their writing. Crime and redemption coincide in modern crime fiction. When the reader reads these texts, we find the top of some sort of terrifying catharsis and find the confidence that things will eventually go well.

The Indian English crime literature has been expanded and categorized in various directions, such as spy thriller, science fiction thriller, noir and psycho-thriller, serial killer fiction, forensic and suspense fiction. The 21st century has made a major contribution to the growth and development of criminal and English detective literature, with active writers with the potential to compete with Western writers. The writers who became famous in Indian English Literature with their crime and detective fiction are:

Satyajit Ray (1921–1992) created the legendary detective, Pradosh K. Mitter, better known as Feluda, which immediately became popular with Bengal children in 1965. Feluda is often followed by his cousin Topshe Mitter, and his friend Jatayu in his cases. Feluda investigated cases through fascinating places like Jaisalmer, Kathmandu, Kailash, Hong Kong, etc. Ray has written 35 stories about Feluda. His stories are full of mystery and action, mysterious crimes, and dangerous rifts.

Ashok Banker (1964-) became the first Indian writer of British peasants in the 1990s. He wrote his first successful detective novel *Iron Bra* (1993) with female researcher Sheila Rae. Her efforts protect her family's fame and are triggered especially when fighting gangsters in memorable shoots. His other famous crime novels, *Ten Dead Advertisers* (1993), *Murder, and Champagne* (1993), discuss crime and the shadow world of Mumbai. His novels use advanced detective tools to solve murder cases. Fearless murder became the central theme of his novels. His latest work, *Kali Rising* is a radical feminist thriller featuring only women protagonists.

Jamyang Norbu (1949~), a politician and diaspora writer, resides in the United States and previously lived in India as a Tibetan exile for more than 40 years. In 1999 he published *The Sherlock Holmes Mandala* in the United States. The original title *Sherlock Holmes-The Lost Year* is an attempt to fill the void when Conan temporarily killed Holmes in 1891. In this book, Holmes joins Hury Chunder Mukherjee, another fictional spy who most recently worked for the Englishman Kim Rudyard Kipling. The story follows Holmes's journey from 1891 to 1894. Norbu is awarded the Crossword Award for English Novel, equivalent to the Indian Booker Award in 2000, for writing *The Sherlock Holmes Mandala* in a combined style. Norbu, a Holmes fan, expresses his respect for him in this novel.

Mukul Deva (1961-) is a popular British writer known for his spy thriller against terrorists in Kashmir-occupied Pakistan. *Lashkar* (2008), *Salim Must Die* (2009), and *Return* (2010)-his three novels, titled *The Lashkar Series*, opened new horizons in the genre of crime novels in an Indian context. The story is about Iqbal, a spy infiltrating a Pakistani terrorist camp and monitoring a plot against India in Pakistan. The novel includes a detailed description of the weapons, along with his amazingly vivid description of what the terrorists will think and how the

terrorist attacks are planned. The Lashkar series tells how he is sent undercover to destroy the group and save millions of lives. *Tanzeem* (2012) is the next novel of his war spy thrillers. Other than that, he has written four more detective novels with Ravinder Gill as the investigative officer. They are *The Dust Will Never Settle* (2012), *Weapon of Vengeance* (2014), *Assassins* (2015), *Pound of Flesh* (2016).

Shashi Warriar (1959-) is the author of the Indian crime thrillers. He began his writing career with *The Continent Hidden* in 1994. Like many of Kashmir's family, *The Home Coming* (2008) is the story of a Kashmiri family whose life has been torn apart by decades of violence and uncertainty. He wrote three crime novels: *Night of the Krait* (1996), *The Orphan* (1998), and *The Sniper* (2008). He talks beautifully about the rescue operation in India by the military during the kidnapping of the defense minister's nephew. Lieutenant Colonel Rajan Menon is the leading officer. Kashmir's terrorism and infiltration are being seriously discussed in terms of real events and causes.

Bangalore National Law University graduate Aditya Sudarshan is best known for his Locked Room Mystery *A Nice Quiet Holiday* (2009) and tragic murder mystery, *Show Me a Hero* (2011). In 2015 he completed his third novel, *The Persecution of Madhaw Tripathi*, which followed a successful and elite official, faced with conscience crisis due to nightmares. He has written two more novels: *The Outraged Times of Ferment* (2018) and *The Outraged Times of Strife*.

Joygopal Podder (1960-) is an Indian writer from Gurgaon who published most of the books on criminal literature within a short time from 2012 to 2014. For that, he has also appeared in Limca Book of Records. His popular books are the crime novels *The Deceivers* (2010),

Superstar (2011), *Millennium City: Death comes Uninvited* (2011), *Beware of the Night* (2012), and *Vanished* (2013). His fictional works fall into the category of crime and thriller novels that reflect the realities of the modern era, such as murder, crime, conspiracy, shootings, and explosive situations. Criminals are based on Bollywood characters. The crimes people commit are the result of resentment and a lack of a good lifestyle that others see. His first novel, *The Deceivers* (2010), is a shocking collection of social thrillers.

In his second novel, *The Last Deception*, Joygopal describes the state of a poor and helpless tribal society in the dense forests of the Satna district of Madhya Pradesh, tortured by politically strong entrepreneurs and foreign organizations. *Superstar* (2011) is inspired by the life of late film legend Dev Anand. His latest book is *Cancer* published in 2016. Most of Joygopal's work deals with serious social and environmental issues.

Ankush Saikia is a journalist who became famous in the literary world with his Arjun Arora Series. *Dead Meat*, *Remember Death*, and *More Bodies will Fall* are his famous detective novels. Uday Satpati is an Indian thriller novelist. He is the author of India's first crowd curated novel, *Brutal*. Crowd curated novel means a novel selected by the public. It is published in 2015. *Brutal* is selected for publication based on open reviews, and popularity.

Abir Mukharjee is another crime fiction author. He is the author of the Sam Wyndham series of crime novels set in Raj-era India. For this work, he is named as Times bestselling author. His debut novel, *A Rising Man*, won the CWA Endeavour Dagger for the best historical crime novel. His second novel, *A Necessary Evil*, won the Wilbur Smith Award for Adventure Writing.

Ravi Shankar Etteth is Kerala's political cartoonist. He has written the thrilling crime thriller *Village of Widows* (2004). This is the story of the four murders and the face of evil in his many incarnations. He is influenced by Satyajit Ray's *Feluda Series*. Vikram A. Chandra (1961-) is a crime writer who wrote *Red Earth and Heavy Rain* (2000), *The Srinagar Conspiracy* (2000), and *Mumbai Mafia Queen: Stories of a Woman from the Gangland* (2011).

Indian crime and detective fiction arena are not ruled by male writers alone. Women writers have equal popularity and fame among readers. The most important female writers of Indian crime and detective fiction include writers like:

Anu Kumar, a contemporary author of Indian criminal literature has written the crime thriller, *It Takes a murder* (2012). The story is based on the political events of the 1980s and is told from the perspective of detective Charlotte Hyde. Many ghosts from the past interfere with her. She reveals the secrets of Gautam Dogra's violent death.

Anita Nair (1966 -) is a prolific crime writer in the Indian pulp fiction scene today. She makes her heroes against the realistic backdrop of the city's darker sides. Her crime novels are social commentary. She has made her crime novels with the fully-formed detective characters, Bhuvana and Inspector Gowda. Her crime fictions, *Cut-like Wound* (2012) and *Chain of Custody* (2014) reflect a contemporary society with its darkness and ills.

Kiran Manral is a freelance writer and media consultant based in Mumbai. She is also the founder of *India Helps*, a volunteer network that works with victims of natural disasters. The mystery novel of Manral is *The Reluctant detective* (2011). She is a great talker who uses difficult murder plots to seduce us. The title of this book is very appropriate. A wealthy fashionista, a housewife in her thirties, Kay Kanan Mehra reveals the mystery of two murders

that took place in her neighborhood, Sheetal Jaiswal and Rohit Sharma. She found their bodies along with her husband and detective friend Runa Bhattacharjee. Manral has published the novel, *Presumed Dead* in 2018 which is a psychological thriller. Her latest novel is *Kitty Party Murder* (2020).

Crime writer Reeti Gadekar is born and brought up in New Delhi. She holds a Ph.D. in German Literature from JNU in New Delhi. She has worked as a German translator and teacher. she has written *The Bottom of the Heap* (2002) and *Families at Home* (2008). In *the Bottom of the Heap*, she discusses the harsh reality of a world where rape and murder are very common. *Families at Home* talks about patriarchal crimes against women in the name of honor killings. Additionally, police chief Juneja playing the detective role is a lovely combination of family feelings and crime. Reeti Gadekar uncovers the harsh reality of rape and honor killings common in the Kashmir Valley.

Swati Kaushal is the author of *Drop Dead: A Niki Marwah Mystery* (2012) and *All that Glitters: A Niki Marwah Story* (2014). She believes there are no gender walls. She finds it fascinating women write about crime. She points out that female writers tend to focus more on relationships and subplots than male writers. When it comes to discovery, Kaushal believes that women see things better than men. A man noticed the beauty of a woman passing by, but a woman noticed her purse, clothes, shoes, and jewelry. A woman's perception of detectives is completely different from that of a man. So, she believes that women turned out to be better detectives than men.

The modern crime writer and narrator Madulika Liddle (1973-) has a remarkable immersion in the past, especially in the 17th-century Mughal era. Historical crime literature is

generally more concerned with the distant past, which studies and explains past behaviors of past cultures than criminal literature. This genre has evolved into one of the fastest-growing criminal novel forms. From a safe distance, the reader experiences the same excitement they get from the modern and direct threatening real crime literature. Readers also experience a new general interest in the story. *Eighth Guest and Other Muzaffar Jang Mysteries* is a collection of short stories written by her in which Muzaffar Jang plays the detective. Muzaffar, a young Mughal nobleman who has lived in Delhi in AD 1656. It's all about solving various riddles during Shajahan's reign. Stories can be read independently of each other, but there is a continuity between them.

Madulika Liddle's two detective novels, *The Englishman's Cameo* (2009) and *Engraved in Stone* (2012), testify to her deep knowledge of history and her desire to combine fictional characters and historical events. Calling herself a writer, Madulika excels in this genre of historical crime. Readers can immerse themselves in the sights and smell of Agra as they explore with Muzaffar. Detectives who acted in the historical past attract readers to historical information. It has a dynamic connection with a broader historical endeavor that exists outside the story itself. Crime, characters, evidence, probation, and even the crime scene are closely related to the past, especially the Mughal era.

Madhumita Bhattacharya is an Indian writer of detective novels. Her *The Masala Murder* (2012) is the perfect combination of food, murder, romance, and discovery. Breaking gender stereotypes, her detective Reema Ray reveals a complex murder mystery in the role of Patricia Cornwell. A good murder mystery requires a body and blood. Ideally, women should be more sensitive to legions and places of crime. Reema Ray, an anxious young woman, goes fast with

miraculous powers. Emotions and intuition play a bigger role for women than men. Female detectives have the unique qualities that make her a great detective while being challenged to make her feminine. Bhattacharya published her second novel, *Dead in a Mumbai Minute* in 2014 with Reema Ray as the detective. Her third book in the trilogy is *Goa: Undercover* (2016) where Reema Ray goes to Goa to investigate a government conspiracy. Modern criminal writer KK Mina (1957-) discusses gender and sexuality in *Dying for the Dying* (2009).

The most famous contemporary detective writer Smita Jain has written six novels. She introduces Kasturi Kumar or Katie, an active and attractive private detective who reveals the murder mystery of actress Urvashi in the novel *Piggies on the Railway*. *Krishna's Confessions* (2008) is Jain's latest work on the murder of the tv serial's screenwriter, the ambitious woman Krishna. Smita Jain's detectives are models in the day time and private detectives at night. Her private detectives also work as - models, journalists, reporters, etc. The women figure in her novels are seemingly sedentary, maniac, depressed, split personalities, and alcoholics. Her Mumbai based stories reveal the dark side of the film industry and the world of fashion designers.

Kishwar Desai (1956-), contemporary writers of the Punjabi diaspora, use criminal literature as a tool for social protest. In her first novel, *Witness of the Night* (2010), she describes the position of a female victim in a patriarchal society. It is the story of the mysterious deaths of thirteen people in the Punjab family. Young Punjabi girl Durga is in a big house where 13 people died. she is beaten, insulted, and treated as a murderer. An unconventional social worker Simran Singh, convinced of her innocence, is investigating the circumstances of the case. She faces a horrific web of prejudice and fraud where childbirth threatens women's lives. She uses logical

and logically detectable methods to solve the murder mystery at Jullundur. Desai emphasizes the issue of gender discrimination and the way women are treated as weak sex in society and the media.

Her second novel *The Origins of Life* (2011) is famous for its conspiracies, including female murder, surrogate motherhood, and adoption. Kishwar Desai describes the inhuman unforgettable and unfortunate incident of a Delhi paramedic student, Nirbhaya who is raped and killed by six antisocial people. In the novel *Sea of Innocence* (2013). Social worker and criminal investigator Simran Singh accidentally saw an unpleasant video on her phone where a group of men on the beach of Goa strangles and harass a young British girl. Kishwar Desai reveals the shocking reality of modern drug smuggling, drug addicts, rape, and free sex at Anjuna Beach in Goa.

The Sea of Innocence is an explanatory and critical comment on the political power and greed of Goa's quiet beaches. Moral exhaustion and corruption have become obvious today and have turned out to be a danger that can get someone into a trap. The book allows readers to imagine a real threat to women through clear and fluid stories. The plot is pretty reliable. This is a real event that happens to women every day in unsafe areas.

Kalpana Swaminathan (1956-) is a Mumbai-based surgeon and detective writer. She also writes with fellow surgeon Ishrat Sayed under the pseudonym Kalpish Patra. She is the author of more than 12 novels and short stories. In her novels, she deals with complex subjects. Her first novel *The Adventures of Prince Teentang* (1990) is an adventure story for children. In *Ambrosia for Afters* (2003) she talked about how emotional a natural process such as growth can be. Personally, Kalpana likes to write for children. *Bougainvillea House* (2006) is a psychological

thriller dealing with topics such as adultery, sex, and death. *Page Three Murder* (2006) is a crime story.

Monochrome Madonna (2010) is her detective novel with Lalli as the detective. A bit odd and retired, 60-year-old police investigator Lalli is a witty and flawless collector of curiosities which leads her into the world of crime. Swaminathan's next novel *I Never Knew It Was You* (2012) is a detective with a very independent worldview. Sita, Lalli's nephew and sometimes Watson, solves the murder of ex-classmate Anisa in Mumbai. As a surgeon, Swaminathan believes that writing greatly expands medical practice because the condition of people is the subject of both. She believes that writing makes people more attentive and empathetic. Kalpana Swaminathan's 2013 novel with Lalli as the Detective is *The Secret Gardener*. This is a murder mystery, an attempt to solve the mystery of fingers of the murderer.

Swaminathan creatively mixes the latest fashion trends with murder. In her *The Secret Gardener*, Swaminathan combines criminal elements such as blood, corpse, distorted mind, fear and also adds a fascinating detective journalist with skill and intelligence. She has also won the 2009 Vodafone Crossword Book Award (fiction) for *Venus Crossing: Twelve Transit Stories* (2009). Her latest novel in the Lalli series is *Murder in Seven Acts*.

Deepanjana Pal is a Mumbai-based author and journalist. She is the author of the police procedural crime thriller, *Hush A Bye Baby*. She studied English Literature at St. Stephen's College; and postcolonial theory and literature at the University of Warwick. Her non-fiction writing on culture and gender has appeared on various internet platforms. At present, she is an associate editor with the Mumbai edition of Hindustan Times.

Hush a Bye Baby is the story of how the police force tries to piece together evidence in a case that seems impossible to crack until Sub-inspector Reshma Gabuji comes to the scene. The story revolves around Dr. Nandita Rai and her Hope fertility clinic. The case starts when the ‘Crime Against Women’ (CAW) cell of Mumbai police receives complaints saying that Dr. Rai is doing illegal abortions in her clinic. Reshma Gabuji is the assistant police officer who finds out about Dr. Rai's online presence in an online platform called Kalisthenics.

These are a few of the many writers of crime and detective fiction in India who have tried and succeeded in winning the hearts of the readers. Their writings were realistic, creative and highly imaginative.

In sum, this chapter has traced the beginnings of crime and detective fiction to the nineteenth and twentieth-century and the entrance of women into crime and detective fiction. The chapter traces this entrance and its effect on female characters in the novels. The popularity of crime fiction immediately influenced the Indian literary arena which inspired several writers in the Indian regional languages. This generated a lot of translations of western crime fiction with slight modifications to suit the Indian socio-cultural fabric. In course of time, these works inspired many female authors to try and succeed in the crime and detective genre in the Indian literary world. Today the English reading Indian public in India is being flooded with more and more crime and detective fiction written by women.

Chapter two, **From Innocence to the Wounded Women**, deals with the victims portrayed in Indian crime and detective novels written by women with a special focus on Kishwar Desai’s *Witness the Night*. Chapter three, **From Innocence to the Perpetrators of Crime**, analyses criminals and female evil figures in Indian detective fiction written by women.

The chapter gives special focus to the novel *Hush a Bye Baby* written by Deepanjana Pal. The fourth chapter, **From Victims to Agents**, is about the female detective figures in Indian English literature. The chapter emphasises the qualities of a detective through the fictional detective Lalli from *Murder in Seven Acts* written by Kalpana Swaminathan.

The next chapter, **From Innocence to the Wounded Women**, closely examines female victims in Indian crime and detective novels and the changes that have happened after the popularity of women authored crime and detective fiction. The chapter studies the nature of female victims in Indian novels especially in Kishwar Desai's *Witness the Night*.

Chapter – II

From Innocence to the Wounded Women

Indian constitution gives equal rights to all the citizens of India despite gender, caste, and class. India's constitution assures all Indian citizens including women, children, and old people equality - socially, economically, and politically. But they are facing discrimination in the house, workplace, and all walks of life. Economically and socially vulnerable women are treated worse than animals. Women do not feel protected or safe either within the four walls of family or in public spaces. They are objects of entertaining all. They are constantly ridiculed, bullied, assaulted, and even burnt to death by their family members in the name of honour-killing. Female victims of crime and violence are denied justice in a patriarchal society.

Indian Judicial system classifies crimes against women as rape, kidnapping, abduction, dowry violence and deaths, physical torture, mental torture, molestation, sexual harassment, forced prostitution, eve-teasing, forced foeticide, and trafficking of girls, etc.

In recent years, crimes against women in India have escalated alarmingly. The gang-rape and murder cases like Nirbhaya and Unnao, have turned the attention of the world towards India to think about the unsafe condition of Indian women in public. Man uses his might to abuse women and such offenses doom the life of the woman.

The position of women in India has been weak since ancient times. The woman has been defined simply as an object that man can exploit. Looking at the long history, women have always been portrayed in association with men. They did not have an individual existence. For

the same reason, women have been exploited by men. Classical works like Ramayana and Mahabharata are also not exceptions to this fate. Practices such as female foeticide, female infanticide, dowry system, child marriage, and the prohibition of widow remarriages, have had a long duration in India, and have proved challenging to remove entirely from the society.

Women have served in various powerful administrative and governmental positions in Indian society. They include the President of India, the Prime Minister of India and the Speaker of Lok Sabha, numerous IAS, IPS, IFS officials, great artists, social reformers, and so forth. Women in India now actively participate in areas such as education, sports, politics, media, movies, art and culture, agriculture, service sectors, science, and technology, etc., and make it a success. However, this progress doesn't reach the common society. Many women in India continue to face substantial difficulties within their families and from society. Violence against women, especially sexual and domestic violence, has reached a dangerous level in India. Female foeticide, female infanticide, dowry deaths, and domestic abuse provide a gruesome background of primitive savagery.

A poll conducted by the Thomson Reuters Foundation in 2011, placed India among the five most dangerous countries for women along with Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, etc. according to the poll conducted in 2018 by the same foundation, India tops the list ranking no.1 as the most dangerous country in the world for women, 4th in health-related issues of women, and 3rd in discrimination against women. India also ranks first in sexual violence.

Regardless of all the reformist principles significant to India as a nation, women still undergo sufferings from such social attitudes. The reason lies within the unit of an Indian family. The status of women in India is strongly connected to family relations. India is inherently a

patriarchal country where a male voice is heard loudly and a woman's voice is suppressed by submission. In India, the most basic institution is the family and in most parts of the country, the family unit is male-oriented.

In the Indian society, if the family has a girl and a boy child, parents taught the girl to be homelier, timid, submissive, and obedient, whereas the boy enjoys greater freedom to lead his life and pursue his goals. He has the freedom to achieve whatever dreams he had. Parents teach the girl mainly to dream only of being a good wife, mother, and homemaker. Education and a job are not an easy venture for a girl.

A family's finance is spent more on the boy's career and more on the girl's marriage. It has deep-rooted in the minds of these people that women are born to get married and go to their in-law's place. As the woman is to be married off to another house and eventually become their property, as per societal norms, the family naturally makes it a point to make the son the heir of inheritance and not the daughter.

In the Indian social scenario, the birth of a girl child is a burden on the family. Family accept a male child gladly but express unhappiness and anguish when listening to the birth of a girl child. When it comes to a girl's marriage, her parents are bound to give the dowry, which weakens the economic condition of the family putting a huge financial burden on the shoulders of parents. Thus, parents don't prefer having girl children, instead, they adopt different means to avoid the birth of a girl child. Parents regard bringing up a girl child as a wasteful expense and a financial burden. In most parts of India, the parents choose abortion and find different methods to execute it when the foetus is detected as a female. This discrimination has led to a widening of

the sex ratio in India. It is a matter of great concern as it is continuing to widen resulting in 924 women per 1000 men.

Life after marriage results in a different kind of security issue for women in India. For most cases, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, marriage is a social ceremony with the joining of two families, where the prestige of families plays an important role. Most of the time, it is also an economic contract between families where the family of the bride asked to give jewellery, a huge amount of money, vehicles, and other expensive things as dowry causing a huge financial burden for the family. Dowry and family status play a more important role than the consent of the bride and groom. The wife in the family lacks the status of a fellow human being and this gives the wife a submissive role in the household. It is been deeply taught to a woman that the husband has full right over her. After marriage, the woman has often been controlled by the in-laws. She has to seek permission for everything, even to visit her parents.

“For young girls, security again becomes the basis on which they are most often forced to drop out of school. The idea of women symbolising the honour of the family makes the distance of the school from home a factor ‘threatening’ the honour”. (Jana np) As a preventive measure, the girls are forced to drop out of school by family or they are married off early. Here the oppression of girl children does not end. If the girl child goes to school, she faces the problem of sexual harassment.

A woman’s suffering doesn’t end there. “Most of the time women are the convenient and easy prey of men because of their economic and social dependence. Severe incidents of wife-beating cases are seen in our society which is mostly in connection with the dowry.” (Mohapatra 34) This sometimes leads to the death of victimized women. Women in the name of religious and

socio-cultural practices have been denied growth opportunities. To think equality of sexes is an illusion. Women historically have never been given the required importance in India be it in the field of agriculture, production, construction, politics, and education. “History is full of stories of exploitation, humiliation, and suppression. Oppression, rape, humiliation, disrespect are rewards for women. We are torturing women from cradle to grave.” (Mohapatra 35)

The novels of Indian English women writers consist of the latest burning issues related to women as well as those issues that have existed in society for a long. Indian women writers have been exploring feminine subjectivity and deal with themes that range from childhood to complete womanhood.

Women speak on sufferings in the patriarchal manner, that these sufferings are part of their life. That is why culture prefers them to be silent. Women should be able to differentiate the hierarchy between male and female and come out and speak about the injustice she faces in society. Through literary works, she should articulate the hurts she received in an insensitive and largely man-dominated world.

A crime and detective novel written by a woman in India is not just a female-oriented novel. It is written by those women writers who have understood a woman both as a woman and as a person pressurised by all kinds of visible and invisible, external, and internal forces. These women do not write about their sufferings because they are feminists but because they are aware of their problems.

Crime novels are prominent genres. They not just discuss the day to day sufferings such as marital disharmony, sex violence, extra-marital affairs, problems of working women, but along with it discuss how a patriarchal society creates women victims and criminals and the nature and extent of female victimization by the perpetrators of crime and violence.

They play a wider role in the social frame of work than an average woman as a wife, novelist, or journalist. They are depicted as having the capacity to understand the role of society in creating female victims and criminals. They blame society and patriarchal attitudes for such incidence.

Most of these women write about the enclosed domestic space and women's perceptions of their experience within it. But women crime writers depict both the diversity of women and the diversity within each woman, rather than limiting the lives of women to one ideal representation. The novels emerging from "such writers furnish examples of a whole range of attitudes towards the imposition of patriarchy, some offering an analysis of the family structure and the caste system as the key elements of this diversity." (Sims 38)

This chapter takes up the victims of the crime fiction, *Witness the Night*, by Kishwar Desai, and examine them to find the female victims and their role in representing the society from their part. The first part focuses on the important issues. Patriarchal domination, the judicial system, Nari Niketan, female trafficking, female foeticide, and use-and-throw mind-set of men to commit crimes and violence against women in India. The chapter further analyses women victims in these novels and how they are treated by society. It captures the difficulties they endured inside the family and in society. The second part evaluates society's approach to such victims and the exploitations faced by the victims in the novel, the role of other fellow human beings in becoming support to such victims. The last part of this chapter analyses the author as a female crime writer and the role she plays in exposing the inequalities women face in society.

Witness the Night is Kishwar Desai's debut novel which won her the Costa Book Award in 2010 for Best First Novel. According to the judges in the panel, "Desai has fearlessly blown the lid on the problems that simmer under the surface of modern-day India." (Agencies np) The

novel was also shortlisted for the Author's Club's First Novel Award and was longlisted for Man Asian Literary Prize. Her novels focus on a social issue that shows the culture and tradition of prejudice that still exists towards women in India.

This novel explores a serious problem arising in modern India. In the plot of the novel, Durga, a 14-year-old girl who was found barely alive, was raped in her house and tied to a bed, where all of her family were found dead. As the only person living in the crime scene she is convicted and imprisoned. Her life was dangerous until a social worker, Simran Singh, came to help her and tried to prove her innocence with the help of her daughter-in-law. In the course of her investigation, she discovers a systematic network of corruption and violence against women in India. The police believe Durga committed the murder. Simran Singh is the only one who thinks she's innocent and finds out what happened on that terrible night.

The book attacks the subject of female infanticide and female foeticide. While researching the book, Desai was horrified by the scale of horrendous practices where almost every state is affected, and by the public's indifference. With this book, she wanted to bring the issue to the attention of the mainstream, hoping to create more awareness and provoke debate.

Women are suffering a loss of their sense of identity and are often complicit in this suppression. By complying, they are made to feel accepted within the patriarchal system. But the author wants us to see the other side of the coin as well. By creating the character of Simran, a female social worker, Desai wants us to know, many independent, unconventional women do not accept the role of victim and are making a big difference in India. (Lapira np)

Desai has been writing a series of books with Simran as the female protagonist to address issues that are not usually discussed in the open. Simran has the courage and patience to address and work for women their problems.

With this book, Kishwar Desai has helped to increase the awareness about the incidence of hidden female repression in India, despite the many attempts from NGOs and government to try and improvise female lives. Each of her books takes up a social issue and develops a story around it. Her novels are more of social awareness inducing novels than crime and detective novel. Putting it under the crime and detective genre she has attracted more audiences than a normal novel.

Desai has written three more novels with Simran Singh as the protagonist. In the *Origins of Love*, Desai took a close look at surrogacy and adoption. Simran Singh is asked to examine the case of an abandoned baby at an IVF clinic and she traces a new-age fertility programme and surrogacy. In her latest novel, *The Sea of Innocence*, Simran Singh accidentally watches a video clip of a group of men harassing a girl and is trying to find the British girl in the video, Liza Kay, who has gone missing from the beaches of Goa. The novel is a reflection of the Delhi gang-rape case in December 2013.

The story of *Witness the Night* is set in a small-town Jullundur in Punjab, where a 14-year-old girl, Durga, is the suspect of murder and a social worker from Delhi, Simran Singh who was born and brought up in Jullundur comes to help her and work hard to find out the truth. 13 people from a rich family are killed on a rainy night, their house is also partially burned and their daughter a 14-year-old girl, Durga, is the only survivor of the macabre. She is the main suspect. Durga was found tied in one hand, raped, and was found surrounded by the corpses of her own family in a partially burned house.

The name Durga refers to a Hindu warrior goddess: the fierce incarnation of the wife of Shiva. She is a 14 years old girl. She was found tied to her bed, crying and raped, surrounded by the corpses of thirteen of her family members. The house has become a shamshan ghat with the smell of burnt flesh. The name, Durga, the fiery, armed goddess whose capacity for blood and mayhem is a known fact. The name suggests a bold and courageous woman who can make choices by herself; however, the Durga in Jullundur's jail is insecure.

Through Durga, Desai portrays the difficulties of being a victim and the trauma that Durga faces. She can't talk properly. Durga was found among the corpses, which means she must have spent one night with the dead bodies of her family. For a fourteen-year-old girl, that itself is a punishment. She spent three months in the hospital. She has nobody to go back to now. From the hospital, she was shifted to a room near the jail because she is the most possible suspect the police could find.

It is a quick conclusion the police made because it is also the easy one. By making Durga the suspect, the police could easily conclude the case with ease and receive the appreciation of the higher officials, media, and people of Jullundur.

The judicial system in India is so tough that in a way it destroys the confidence of a person even before it is proven that he is guilty. In India, justice, even high-profile cases like this can take time. These delays hurt victims but also affect society. Police and courts take time to process all crimes, especially against women. Not only rape cases, but all the cases with women as victims consume time. And since law enforcement is a state subject, the time is taken to process these crimes, which include acid attacks and dowry deaths, which can vary significantly across India.

In this case too, once the police have finalized their case, Durga could, of course, be under trial for years as some cases in India takes years to appear for court hearings. By that time, she would be thirty-four years old and would probably be immune to any sort of reform. As in many cases in history, such systems create more victims and more villains than the normal case.

No one cared about Durga. From Desai's account, it is clear that Durga's situation wasn't much different when her family was still alive. They never cared for or accepted her as their daughter. In the present scenario, everybody views her as the murderer even before it is proven. No one sympathises with that 14-year-old girl. Were it not for her large inheritance, the 'case' may not even have attracted the kind of publicity that it has attracted.

Durga was kept in jail because the Juvenile home turned out to be no longer safe. Many children were sexually exploited and used for prostitution in Juvenile homes. Nari Niketan, a reformist institution for fallen women was also ruled out as unsafe because of the high risk of exposure to drug and prostitution racketeering. Desai gives a clear description of the jail and juvenile system in India.

Across India, juvenile homes have a terrible reputation. They have become India's torture chambers. Child sexual assault in juvenile justice homes has become a continuous stigma for society. "It will not be an understatement to state that juvenile justice homes have become India's hell holes where inmates are subjected to sexual assault and exploitation, torture and ill-treatment..." (Desai 12)

Nari Niketan is established to provide shelter to widowed, abandoned, destitute, virgin mothers, and women persecuted by society. Women and their children up to the age of 7 years are kept in these 'Nari Niketan', and arrangements for their rehabilitation are also made by

providing them vocational training. But nowadays these shelter homes have become a shelter for criminals.

The detailed description of prostitution in India seeks the attention of the reader. There had been cases reported of women being bought for a few thousand rupees from rural parts of India into the cities to serve wealthy landlords and other men. They were usually lured in by pimps who professed love to them, but eventually, they will end up in the hands of slaves of some wealthy landlords. They will be drugged to make them silent. Instances of human trafficking and illegal prostitution often come to light throughout the novel.

Durga's family is well known in the town. They are socially very prominent. They have done a lot of charity in hospitals and schools. They were devotees of God especially her mother. Every year during Gurupurab, they would conduct big langar, and the singers used to come and sing in their house for days. But they were crazy for boys. Despite having their own two daughters, they adopted two of his brother's son. Everybody knew that they were not their real sons but they got more importance in that house than their daughters. The boys got all the attention even from their mother.

Durga loved her family. Even though they were cruel to her and her sister. She was affectionate towards her family. The memory of each of the persons that died that night is remembered by her. She was a normal and perfect student until her sister disappeared.

In her own words, she was meant to be the 'Kala tikka' of their family. It is said that if everything goes well, the wrath of the gods descends on them, so they have to put a black mark somewhere on their body to deflect misfortune. She was like a black mark for the Atwal family. They kept a strict watch on her. She wasn't allowed anywhere. She was a good student who did very well at school but she wasn't even allowed to attend the school functions.

Durga was obsessed to become a boy. In her mind, that was her only drawback. If she was a boy, her parents would have loved her, cared for her. So, she always wanted to be like boys. She was always climbing trees. It caused injuries; sometimes she broke her bones too. But that doesn't stop her. But she never got the same sort of respect the boys got. She tried to do everything they did, including horse-riding and cricket. She even learned the bad things the boys did- to smoke and abuse like them, but she never got the love and praise like them. They didn't even look at her. Even their smoking was shrugged off as a childish prank.

She was always jealous of the boys. They trained her to stay inside the house, but she wanted to go out and play. They went to a convent school, unlike boys who went to a co-education school. Unlike the boys, they were taught to get ready for marriage.

Durga and her sister were very close. They found love in each other, cared for each other. For Durga, Sharda was her mother, brother, lover, and all of the relationship that she yearned for. They understood that to survive they should depend on each other.

Things got worse for Durga after Sharda's disappearance. Her family thought of Durga as an accomplice to Sharda. So, she was treated cruelly. Durga also changed a lot. She lost the one person who loved and cared for her. When Sharda was missing, they erased her belongings with the hope that everybody will forget about her and now they have done the same with Durga. All belongings have been wiped out from the house with the hope that by the passing of time people will forget her too as they forgot Sharda. In a sense, they were successful too because people forgot Sharda. She was remembered only by people who loved her not even her parents remembered her anymore.

India is a country where most families consider their girl children as Parayadhan, wealth that belongs to someone else. They don't belong to the household to which they were born since

they will be married off to another family eventually. Their home is ultimately that which they are married off to.

Dowry is a social evil that has destroyed the lives of many women and girl children in India. Desai portrays several incidents of dowry death and violence in the novel. Harpreet's wife is a dowry victim. Also, Durga mentions a girl who came back as a corpse from her in-law's house.

Next door, the girl who had gone away as a bride had come back as a corpse within a month. She had been burnt because her dowry had been insufficient. We cried to Amla that we did not want to be Parayadhan. Couldn't we become boys? Boys were safe, they got shares, and they did not have to leave their homes.

(Desai 54)

Our country is obsessed with sons. Desai claims how Punjab is famous for missing daughters. Desai mocks society and the government about the way to treat the issue of missing girl children so lightly.

The headlines on television announced that saplings were being planted in memory of all the 'disappeared daughters'. Punjab is known for murdering its daughters. The sex ratio here is the lowest in the country- less than 850 girls per 1000 men- and despite all sorts of dire warnings from social scientists and demographers, girls are still considered inauspicious. In Chandigarh, the uber urban capital that Punjab shares with Haryana, it is now 777 per thousand males. In some villages of Haryana, it is a miserable 370. Delhi is also fast reaching those dismal figures... (Desai 55)

In the novel, Desai gives a detailed description of how people tried to kill their newborn child. They have found out several methods to do it without any legal issues. Desai has accounted for the cruel methods by which the fragile tiny human being has been wiped out from the earth and their memory.

not so long ago, the midwives used to take away newborn girls from their mothers, seal them in earthen pots and roll the pot around till the baby stopped crying. Or they would simply suffocate them. Or give them opium and then bury them. For a large farming community, girls were a burden. (Desai 55)

Girls face similar problems all around the world. We can't avoid it by saying that it is only happening in Punjab or other parts of the country. This may be happening in your neighborhood or in your house itself. "It doesn't matter where you live, or how old you are. You can be educated, middle class, British, but your longing for a son will never leave you...bloody murderers." (Desai 55)

The protagonist of the novel Simran Singh says,

I could not stop thinking of all the insecurities of being female. Hadn't things changed...we had had a woman prime minister, we had a woman president, and we had women representatives everywhere. But had things changed? This morning I had yet again read about a woman being branded a witch, then stripped naked and paraded around a village in Uttar Pradesh. (Desai 56)

Durga compares what she saw and what she has understood to assume her own story. The story of a child who was nearly killed by her parents.

...I imagined myself- a tiny child, as yet not even able to suckle- being fed opium. I probably went to sleep, and they may have thought I was dead. It was only when

they began to bury me in the ground that my sudden shriek made Amla run because she thought I was a ghost. I can still feel the earth being shoveled onto me. (Desai 157)

That memory still haunts her. Even though she was too small to remember the details, the feeling of abandonment still lingers in her mind. In her subconscious mind, she still remembers that night.

I can still feel the earth being shoveled onto me. Sometimes in my nightmares, the mud descends on my face; handfuls of dirt are shoved into my mouth and in my eyes. Breathless, I gulp for air and fight the bedsheets. When Sharda was around, she would strike my face and calm me down. She brushed the imaginary earth from my face and blew breath into my struggling mouth with her own. (Desai 157)

She or Sharda was not the only one. Durga had found out more about the cruelties of her family. The novel describes how she slowly found out the most savage part of her family history, perhaps a part of many families in India who doesn't want a female child in their family.

...A great tradition of culling out girl children that we maintain till today for ourselves and others through the clinics we run, where tests are conducted and babies are aborted. They are buried without fanfare in the fields around the house. Occasionally, while tilling the land, tiny skeletons are turned up in the earth, but the loyal family retainers never let anyone know. The bones are quietly ground into dust or thrown into the river beas. Grateful families are only too glad to help cover-up. (Desai 137)

Durga was searching for a shelter. A shoulder to lean on. She seeks relief in books. Books keep her company. She tried to replace Sharda with those books. She hid her sorrow and loneliness through books. She had to deal with it. Sharda was her relief, so she started to feel emptiness after Sharda left. But more than books, Harpreet gave her relief. Through him, she regained the love she lost when Sharada left.

Simran Singh also justifies how Durga was exploited by Harpreet Saar as she called him dearly. How he got her complete obedience is directly related to her yearning for love. Had her family loved her or cared for her happiness, things would have been different.

From my experience in the Delhi jails, I knew that this happened quite often if a child from a disturbing background met someone they admired and fell under their spell: a mentor, or a cult figure with whom they could identify. Someone whom they idolised and who could easily groom them for any sort of crime, even murder. (Desai 70)

Durga also could have seen a mentor in Harpreet; he was a mentor and role model for her. He gave her the protection and love she wanted from her family. Harpreet was her sister's relief and after she has gone, he was the only person who cared about her existence.

In Durga's mind where there was so little hope, Mandakini's birth was perhaps a small glimmer of joy. It gave her hope to survive. That's why Durga was so happy about Mandakini's birth. At least one baby had been saved. "When I heard about the baby, I thought I would die of happiness. At least one child has been saved..." (Desai 137). But like us, she also thinks that it is not enough. More children should be saved. That is why it was a great achievement to save one of their own.

Durga and Sharda have a lot of similarities, beginning from the way they were tried to be killed and they decided to survive by sharing their secrets and finding love in each other. Durga gives an account of how Sharda was found.

Actually, the dogs had found her, she was only a week old at that time, but they thought she was a witch because she just wouldn't die. At first, they gave her opium and put her in a pot of milk, and twirled it around. Miraculously, the milk turned to butter and the crying child still lived. The opium did not put her to sleep. The midwife got worried and ran away because she thought Sharda had inverted feet, the sure sign of a witch. (Desai 82)

That's when their grandmother decided to bury her in a clay pot in the earth. But the dogs dug her out.

But unlike Durga, Sharda had to go through the same experience twice when against her family's wishes she fell in love with a man from lower economic status.

It was to do with our high caste and stature and the low caste and status of the man she wanted to be with. It was to do with her being a witch and a snake child and disobedient...It was to do everything they had done to her when she was born. The same Jitu who had saved her life now wanted to extinguish it. How is it that a girl can, in sixteen years, go through the same experiences twice over.

Except that they couldn't put her in a clay pot, she was too big now. (Desai 82)

Her story followed a common enough pattern as she had also become 'inconvenient'. Her family had found out that she was having an affair with Harpreet and the only way to teach her a lesson was to make her 'disappear'. In the patriarchal sense, she had crossed the Lakshman Rekha. In a tradition-bound small town like Jullundur like the majority of India, sex outside

marriage was taboo. Only the male family members could decide who a woman could marry and sleep with.

She was admitted to a mental asylum. She was falsely diagnosed with schizophrenia and severe depression, given some drugs. They didn't even consider the fact that she was pregnant. They took her baby and brought her back after the child was born. By that time, she was completely lost. The older Sharda was nowhere to be found, physically, and mentally. She has become a painfully thin woman, with a scar across her forehead, and short-cropped hair. Her mouth drooped on one side and her eyes were glazed over as she stared vacantly ahead.

The police and the people in Jullundur also tried to make Durga an abnormal one. But Simran prevented that from becoming a serious thought in the minds of the perpetrators who trapped Durga. "I know you are trying to help her but now that we know her sister had a history of mental illness, could it be possible that she is also perhaps a little unbalanced." (Desai 107)

But the treatment or ill-treatment in the asylum had made her condition worse. In Harpreet's words when he went to meet her, she was unrecognisable. "She was completely gone by then, those electric shocks, the beatings, had destroyed her completely. She was very ill...she used to be beautiful. Now she was all skin and bones, with no hair, and boils on her body from the malnutrition and the burns and beatings..." (Desai 118)

The reason for Durga's anger is that she knows most of the things about her household, the cruelties there; about what they did to her and Sharda what they have done to Sharda and her child. She knows all of it. It created a rage in her mind. "She knows most of it... you can understand her anger. This is a sister she adored." (Desai 124)

Desai gives incidents that she heard of about female foeticide and infanticide. As she explains the reader understands the dangers of such cruel beliefs and it is not confined to a place or places but this evil has spread into all parts of India.

I remembered the story of a woman in Tamil Nadu who confessed that she tried to kill her daughter by not nursing her. Then, tired of the sound of the baby crying, she took some poisonous juice from an oleander flower, mixed it with castor oil, and forced it down the child's throat. Eventually, the crying stopped. The crying had bothered her more than the act of killing. (Desai 128)

There are other methods too that will ensure the death of the child without making it a crime like pushing paddy husk down a baby's throat would rupture the windpipe. Or there was suffocation.

Other women who witnessed the birth or the killing were invariably on the side of the mother: they knew the taunts and troubles that would follow the birth of a daughter. And now, in the twenty-first century, female children were also being killed as part of a package deal, while within the womb, during the prenatal check-up. This way no one would ever find out. (Desai 128)

Desai gives an account of the dreadful impact of female infanticide in Indian society. When Durga and Sharda found out about the small skeleton from the backyard of their house, it may have affected them deeply that they could also have been lying there. They are not there but suffering alive only because they decided to survive against all the adversaries.

Carefully, Sharda took out a paper envelope from which she drew out a tiny white skeleton hand. She made me hold it... This hand was buried deep in the vegetable plot. There was also a tiny skull and other limbs but they have all been crushed by the tractor, this is the only thing that I managed to dig out. I would have been

there too if Jitu had not found me. You too, because like me, you refused to die. Why were we so stubborn, Durga?... She held me close, while I held that tiny hand, and we both cried. Something in those little helpless splayed out little fingers seemed to beckon me. The white spidery fingers were like small pieces of chalk, but they seemed to speak to us. (Desai 138)

They felt the baby. In that skeleton, they found themselves and that revelation has grown as hatred towards her family, the cruelty of her father and Beeji, the inefficiency of their mother.

... Did she have a name? I asked Sharda. No, she said, there were too many of them and most of them died unnamed. Id likes to pretend she had a name, and a chance to grow up. The poor thing. We can only pretend, Durga. Will they do this to your baby? I asked. Only if it's a girl, she said, holding me even closer. (Desai 138)

The revelation that they could have been their sisters made an undesirable connection to them. "These little babies...no one even remembers them. Why should they bother? They could have been our sisters." (Desai 139)

The terrifying thing is that the education or the love of a father towards his daughter couldn't overcome the illogical traditional rules that were laid by some uneducated ancestors.

Three daughters... ultimately the number was revealed when I stumbled upon an ultrasound report hidden in my father's desk. My great grandmother's curse. The fear of a second wife had snatched away all her arguments. But my mother was even more unlucky: two of her daughters survived so that she could be humiliated daily by her mother-in-law who kept up a litany of lament and abuse. Two of the lost children had been early abortions, but where was the third? I took out the tiny

hand from the pencil box in which I had kept it and stroked it. Somehow its determination not to disintegrate into the earth seemed linked to my own survival.

(Desai 156)

Sudha is also a victim of the cruel patriarchal society. Sudha is Harpreet's wife. It's her second marriage. She even had a daughter, but her in-laws tried to burn her because of the dowry. The dowry given was not enough for them. So, they tried to kill her, but somehow, she survived. Harpreet married her because everybody deserted her, even her own family. They thought of her as a burden. Once a woman is married off, she is the property of her husband and family.

Also, Durga explains the incident of a girl from her neighborhood who was murdered by her in-laws. She was married off. But the dowry was not enough. So, she was murdered. After one month of her marriage, she came back as a corpse. This incident has shocked both Durga and Sharda. They were terrified of their fate.

Mamiji, Durga's mother was also a victim of the patriarchal society. She was silenced by her husband. She was afraid of her husband, so she couldn't save her daughter. Even when she protested, he silenced her.

Shanti, whom Manubhai brought to work in their farms was brought from Bihar. Manu Bhai brought her to Jullundur saying she is his daughter. But it is not sure if he is the real father. His actions can't be read as an act of a father. She cared more for Jithu than Brinda. Became a mother at a very young age.

The novel critically questions the preference of bearing sons over daughters. It gives many examples of the practice of killing female embryos and newborns.

not so long ago, the midwives used to take away newborn girls from their mothers, seal them in earthen pots and roll the pot around till the baby stopped crying. Or they would simply suffocate them. Or give them opium and then bury them. For a largely farming community, girls were a burden.” (Desai 55)

The novel deals with a very important subject - female infanticide. The novel also discusses other issues like female education, human trafficking, forced prostitution, etc. the novel exposes the truth about the place of women in a conservative society and how vulnerable they are. The book is an eye-opener towards the way Indian society treats our women. It tells how a woman is exploited due to her gender from her mother’s womb itself. The novel questions the unethical views and customs that endanger the entire womanhood in India.

Durga and her older sister, Sharda, represent every unwanted daughter from every Indian family. In the novel, the reader encounters the dark secrets of infanticide, gender inequality, domestic violence, and thirst for money, impolite servants, human trafficking, corrupt politicians, a corrupt system, and a lot more issues in Indian society.

In her ‘Author’s Note’ Desai claims that,

while the characters and places in this book are entirely fictional, the events which take place are not. There is the complicity of corruption between the police, the judicial system, politicians, media and uncivil society... gender issues are still treated with contempt. (Desai np)

This novel helped the issue of female infanticide and other violence against women to be brought to a wider audience. With the success of this novel, Desai brought this issue to the mainstream. According to her, the book formed by two incidents. One in which a woman she

met who has been given opium in her childhood by her parents and the other incident in Bengal where a girl was accused of murdering her family.

According to Desai, she wrote *Witness the Night* as an experiment, but the subject matter is very relevant to contemporary Indian society. Also, Simran's increasingly desperate attempts to untangle the layers of deceit make the novel a successful crime and detective novel with a socially relevant cause.

Witness the Night exposes the true nature of India: one of the most vibrant and fast-growing economies in the world and yet also one in which women often had seen as both second-class citizens and ruinous economic liabilities. Despite painting such a dark picture, she's sticking to her view that she wrote the story because she loves India. The book received very good reviews in India itself, with many commentators saying it should have been written years ago.

The fact that women are not particularly seen as evil is a matter of evolution. Men have always been regarded as the strong gender in contrast to women, who were seen as the weaker ones. Thinking of a female antagonist trying to harm the victim and the female hero that wants to protect peoples from the villain; that is a very unlikely picture. It is an unusual picture because patriarchal society always viewed women as something that should be protected.

Women protecting someone is an impossible picture for a patriarchal society like India could ever imagine. Then the man would seem weak, an image that is not accepted by society, by the film industry, by writers, or by men. Indian society doesn't just create female victims; they also create female villains who against the flow, try to take revenge upon society. There are women in India who took the form of a villain to react against society. The next chapter

discusses the creation of female villains- reasons, growth in Indian crime novels written by women.

Chapter III

From innocence to Perpetrators of Crime

It's been profoundly believed that a crime story and its success only depend on its portrayal of villainy which is practically its antagonist. A villain is a twisted mirror to the protagonist. He is perfectly built to oppose and attack the hero whether it's a man or a woman. It covers deeper than the conflict between the hero and the villain. The conflict is between their ideals and goals. The hero's weakness is the villain's strength. Whatever the conflicts hero is against, the villain will be at the top of it and surrounded by those conflicts. Whatever the hero's weakness is, will be the villain's strength. These are the basic ideas for creating a good villain that properly brings forward and uplifts the theme of the story.

Villains and heroes are the first examples of good and bad. Through stories from childhood itself, we come to know first about the good and bad character. From ancient texts itself villains and heroes were present. They introduced the reader to the lessons of morality and sincerity. From that period, itself, heroes were persons with good qualities and villains were persons who rejected social order of living. Villains always symbolized villains. These texts taught the readers to judge their character based on their approach to the society. These were the ancient way to categorises villain and hero.

The evil figure, the villain is portrayed as the incarnation of immoralities whereas the good man or the hero embodies truthfulness and virtue. Conventionally, all texts in history are centered around the hero, because he was the role model whom people wanted to imitate. The

narration has circled the deeds of the hero. But gothic fiction brought a change to it. Gothic era works gave villains a place in their narration. Rather an equal and important place in their works compared to any other works of literature. Gothic fiction restructured the narration and created a villain the actual hero of their works.

In s story, the author uses the villain or antagonist to create a conflict with the hero, who is usually the main character. The use of a villain in the story, also allows the reader to explore two opposing views of the same situation, from two different points of view. This helps the author to give more exposition to the concept, which can help to make the plot more interesting.

Throughout a story, the hero is often set out to interrupt the evil plans of the villain to help innocent people who are the victims of the villain's evil acts. In some other stories, an evil character is necessary to set up the story and also helps in the progression of it further. It can also be said that it is the presence of a villain that makes a hero 'a hero' in the story.

When first introduced in the story, they are usually given more importance than the hero, which makes the villain seem unbeatable in a way. Villain's character is portrayed more dramatically giving evil descriptions. This results in creating tension in the minds of the reader as defeating the villain now seem like a more problematic mission for the hero. It is the romantic period that created beautiful and wicked women villains in literature.

In other words, the villain "is a creation of society itself. While villainy has been attributed to both genders, female evil has been particularly portrayed as a rejection of traditional female norms and as a menace to men, masculinity, and patriarchy." (Guerrero 8) The fear of women has been manifested in a variety of ways throughout time, from the biblical portrayals of unfit women, such as Eve and Jezebel, to the mythological depictions of female monsters, such as Medusa and the sirens, to the historical representations of threatening women, such as

Cleopatra. “While the fear of women has been perpetuated throughout time, the representation of wicked women has changed following their changing roles.” (Guerrero 8)

The figure of *Femme Fatale* is arguably the most popular creation of female evil. It has been successively portrayed in literature, film, art, and history as the evil version of women. It comprehends a diversity in the portrayal of feminine wickedness. Regardless of the form(s) they take, female villains are for the most part portrayed as imitators of masculinity and as a creation to destroy morality and virtue. They articulate the societal intolerance for women who reject female values.

When these wicked women take part in criminal activity, whether a murder or any such heinous acts, she not only disrupts the social order but also is doing something abnormal in society’s eyes. Pleasure and crime are united in the criminal act, this forms the reason such woman becomes horrific and monstrous.

The figure of the malicious lady or the wicked woman is found in works of fiction across time. But nineteenth-century fiction shows a specific consideration towards them. the image of a deceitful lady is not found in works of present-day fiction. As time passed, their image got changed.

Their barefaced evilness is notwithstanding, but they are appreciated for their decisiveness, autonomy, dedicated soul, and their capacity to perform unpleasant assignments. They speak somewhat like a liberated lady and who had outstanding characteristics, be that as it may, but in the society’s viewpoint, she was a long way from being an appropriate development of womanliness, for she also incorporates present-day shades of ruthlessness and the classical types of female wickedness.

Repulsive ladies have existed in fiction however long there's been fiction, but they can be easily categorised into different types: mean young ladies, malicious royals, harping spouses, and jealous mistresses. Frequently, they all offer the same quality: they are unsympathetic. This is anything but a general articulation in all cases. even though, female characters of flawed ethical quality and wickedness are not generally approved by their male partners. Men can be contenders, but ladies aren't permitted that luxury. This is because these men see it as a threat to their development. They have the impression that these wicked ladies and their prosperity will reduce the popularity of male villains.

These women are not our acceptable young lady leads, and that gives them both the opportunity to carry out their actions and punishments and find their joy in that. They decide their ways, create ideas, and execute them with or without the help of men. The characters of these wicked women show unacceptable independence, and courage in them.

This goes deeper than the widely recognized coding of good girls as virginal and bad girls as sexually promiscuous: good girls are selfless, doing things for others even at the cost to themselves, and bad girls are selfish, saving their skin first.

This is seen as a bad quality, despite the instinct to survive is very human and very understandable. (Walsh np)

Nobility has an immense impact on plenty of female accounts. Simply think about all the ladies who sacrificed their life all through TV and film, young and innocent ladies who sacrificed their lives just to give the male saint something to struggle for; enduring moms who quit any pretense of everything for their kids; spouses who disregard their fantasies to reinforce their husbands; each one of those great ladies who show the image of a good woman by putting every

other person in front of themselves. We even observe it in real life through magazines and television shows.

This good fair image versus narrow-minded contention happens in another type of fiction celebrated exclusively as for insidious ladies: dream and fantasies. A large portion of those has a youthful, lovely woman standing face to face with a more established, calculative, wicked lady who needs glory and power most importantly.

These fantasies create a false image of being able to sacrifice their life for others is the epitome of virtue and a symbol of good women.

There are princesses, who are tolerable and innocent who fight for other people, and there are shrewd queens, who battle for themselves. It is not necessarily the case that battling for the other is bad; obviously, it isn't. However, in a general public where each progression you take towards balance is a fight, at times it doesn't generally apply. Helping other people is something to be thankful for, however, helping yourself isn't wrongdoing.

Movies take a renowned, mainstream lowlife and transform her into a saint. It doesn't happen like this in normal life. She needs to fight for her way. When evaluating the all-time cliché of this nominal character as a fearless good lady who is violated sexually, often it ends up in the same conclusion. The good lady will decide to get revenge upon her exploiter. But suddenly something happens to the villain that he decides to repent for his misdoings. By bringing repentance, the villain becomes a hero for her. It has become a most loved discipline for fictional ladies who try to act whimsically and look for retribution. Yet it's an irresolute, best-case scenario, and she's influenced to go back to the side of doing good. There is another example for it,

This rejection of society towards wicked women has something to do with the male domination prevailing in society. The possibility of a lady dismissing something that should be so profoundly established makes the male gender weaker. It is believed that serving the man should be a woman's purpose behind her existence. All ladies need to have children and love their children and thoroughly take care of their children. Men and society as a whole don't have a clue how to deal with the awkward hazy situations of that job or ladies who reject it altogether. people think that it is difficult to give an excuse to those ladies who fall flat at such a feminine act where all ladies should be normally experts.

Unusual ladies, ladies who don't satisfy conventional cultural jobs, can regularly be faced with disgust or disheartenment inside the society. Though male characters are frequently advocated for contradicting some common norms, striking out, and for the most part revolting, it isn't so natural for ladies. Wickedness and cruelty are terms instituted for men who don't have the customary credits of a hero. It appears we're attempting to get up to speed to the possibility of ladies as saints at times, ladies as wicked and cruel are still out of the norms of the society.

It is also quite interesting that in fairy tales the villainous women are often older, perhaps less conventionally attractive and share another common characteristic: bad mothers.

Indian culture regards a lady as a Goddess. Lady has been given correspondence in varying backgrounds. She assumes a transcendent part in building the way of life of a country. As Indian culture is overwhelmed by the male-centric set-up, clearly crimes and villainy are exclusively related to the male. Ladies are not liberated from carrying out violations or including in hostile to social exercises. But due to this social set up, they are sometimes compelled to carry out violations to ensure their virtue and life. Social impacts cause a lady to get a criminal.

In a customary, strict, and multi-social nation like India, society sees a lady as a paired companion of men, average mother, and spouse, worker, and maid. She lives with her straightforward philosophies, sufferings, and duties. She dominates in the troublesome surroundings of family life. She forfeits her fantasies, wants, selfhood, and becomes an assistant to her family. An obedient lady in India is envisioned as an image of perfection, perseverance, and love. According to society, her purity should be her main excellence. Indian ladies are compelled by the temperance of society. However, a similar lady is compelled to stray from the alleged social, cultural, and customary lifestyles either by instinctual shortcomings or by the impact of deteriorated society.

Social conditions make a lady criminal. She is compelled to perpetrate wrongdoings to satisfy her social just as an actual need. At the point when she perpetrates wrongdoing for sexual delight or any other worldly pleasure, she is treated as an outcast. But for Indian men, they are still acceptable.

When she indulges in criminal activity, especially, a murder, she not only subverts the social order but also does something unusual. When pleasure and crime are united in the subversive act, the woman becomes satanic and monstrous. Agatha Christie views that women “also now a day’s feature in the role of the criminals, adding to the first fascination of the mystery of a woman’s desire beyond the pale of societal expectations. (Sathiavel 54)

Criminal men are viewed as masculine, yet criminal ladies are viewed as tainted or even corruptive. Lady is exemplified in a philosophical outlook from which she can't get away. Her violations and misconducts break the whole society.

Twentieth-century Indian English fiction could be called the Golden period of fiction. This golden period gave an ideal spot to women characters. They have become either casualties or criminologists. In any case, these twentieth-century crime fictions move its influence from witnessing women as objects to women as the subject of character examination. Ladies perpetrating wrongdoings in the post-present-day society by the impact of social degeneration and social pollution are on the expansion.

The misconduct and sexual criminalisation of ladies have become an additional danger to society. As a lady assumes an accommodating function in her family, she cannot fiercely show her dissent. She endures through verbal and actual brutality from her family, she is uncertain of acting against the horrendous mishaps and the heartless forceful exercises of men against her. Thus, society thinks that it's hard to acknowledge the picture of a lady as a lawbreaker. Society keeps up its social ethos that lady is mindful, delicate, fragile, and resilient; though man is brutal, forceful, and intense. Expanding social changes, segregation and inappropriate behaviour make a lady oppose the social mayhem. She at this point could not stand to be quiet. In the post-current time, the oppressed female voices get a platform for expressing their rage. “#MeToo and #TimesUp was right around the corner. But now the rage is everywhere – in cinema, television, and entertainment. Women are furious and they want you to know, from *Handmaid's Tale* to *Big Little Lies*, that they won't take it anymore.” (Bamzai np)

This chapter takes up the topic of female villains in Deepanjana Pal's novel *Hush a Bye Baby*. The novel is an eye-opener regarding the suppression a woman faces in society and how helpless she is in helping fellow beings. This novel shows the rise of a female villain or villains from the oppressions they suffer from society. The first part of the chapter discusses the villainous acts of women portrayed in this novel. The second part looks into the setting of a

society portrayed in the novel in creating these villains. The last part discusses the role of the author in expressing the role of society in creating such villains.

Dr. Nandita Rai, a South Mumbai socialite, a celebrity gynecologist, a gregarious woman with a powerful bearing, is a feminist icon. She spoke on a radio show in which she spoke about women's rights and empowerment and does not hesitate when she has to give back to patriarchal chauvinists. She is known as a pillar to many women who visit her Hope Fertility Clinic. She is a goddess figure to those who come to her clinic. Her husband, Mr. Navin Rai, is a construction magnate and has influential friends. Everything is perfect in her life for Dr. Rai, until one day, the tables turn against her.

The Crime Against Women (CAW) cell of Mumbai Police, in a span of a few days, receives over 25 calls accusing Dr. Rai of sex-selective abortions. The latest call by one Mrs. Seema Punjabi is when the police decided to act on it seriously because they have firm evidence in place now.

An investigative team of three police officers including a woman police officer found a lot of discrepancy in Dr. Rai's hospital records and her alibi. The further investigation brings them to the conclusion that she did commit foeticide.

But Reshma Gabbuti further digs into the matter and finds out that she committed female foeticide until a certain period but suddenly she changed her mind and started to do male foeticide. This change was due to her guilt. Her son committed rape of her friend. But his father was influential, so the case never saw light. But that girl committed suicide due to society's pressure. This caused a breakdown in Dr. Rai.

Reshma found about Kalisthenics, an organization to bring the fallen people. But behind those were an organization that tried to correct the wrongdoings of the society against women.

The novel deals with various social issues like abortions, women's safety, feminism, etc. talking from the villain's perspective gives a new outlook to these issues. There is a rape, a cover-up, a suicide, and consequences which explain quite a twist in the tale. Nandita makes us rethink our approach towards her in the first place.

For a woman who champions women's rights, it is a particularly terrible violation, and sure enough, she is arrested on the complaint of one of her client-one of the women she treated – rich south Mumbai types.

At the end of the novel, we are stuck in the question that Is Nandita Rai a monster or is she a saviour. We couldn't conclude that because as a product of the patriarchal society we are forced to believe that she is wrong when our inner self keeps on saying us to reevaluate our conclusion.

Deepanjana Pal says that all the patriarchal male posturing comes from a deep-seated, reptilian knowledge that men are weaker. Because they are. She says that she doesn't mean psychologically, but physically and naturally. She says that it's only when society comes into play that women and girls become weaker.

She explains this in detail. According to her at the stage of conception, usually, there are more male embryos than female embryos, but research has shown that the male embryo is more delicate than the female. It's a greater risk of death and damages from pretty much every disaster that can strike embryo- brain damage, congenital deformities, premature births, cerebral palsy, even stillbirth. All these happen more to male embryos naturally than they do to female embryos.

Even if the embryo is completely normal and healthy, when it is born, there's a difference between new-born girls and boys. New-born girls are the psychological equivalent of a four-to six-week-old boy.

She is mainly trying to point out two things: when people kill a new-born girl, they have got to work much, much harder than they would have to get rid of a boy. Because a girl is born stronger, better developed, more likely to fight and survive. Two: boys are just not as resilient as girls, naturally. Girls and women are made weaker as they grew older, by society. Because patriarchy works very, very hard to make up for the natural advantage that a girl is born with. Let's not forget that the female is built to survive. That's what nature has willed.

Nandita rai is bold, courageous, and unruffled on situations making her the best-known gynecologist in the city. She supports pornography saying that watching pornography is not something to be ashamed of. Dr. Rai is something of a celebrity in the city. She has donated lakhs for orphan girls and all sorts of charity. She is present in news every day going on and on about the rights of women and girls. People say vendetta and Nandita just don't go together.

She is one of the most famous faces in Indian medicine and has been in the limelight. She has a list of high-class clients which include celebrities, politicians, and other influencing people of Mumbai. She also has a popular radio show on sex education and women's health. She has actively campaigned for the rights of girl children for many years. She supports two orphanages and has been a champion of girls' right to education and women's health. She is married to construction magnate Naveen Rai who has in the past generously donated to the causes his wife supports.

You've seen her on TV, making misogynists look like fools with her arguments.

You've read her columns, in which she doles out helpful advice for everything from foreplay to menstrual cramps. You've heard her talk about the importance of

education for girls at conferences. How can this woman, the same Dr. Nandita Rai, be guilty of female foeticide? (Pal 28)

She is a mother, a wife, a friend, a columnist, a radio show host. So many roles, so many functions. Popularity at its top. She was a very influential image in society.

The city has been in shock ever since news broke that eminent gynecologist, columnist, and women's rights activist Dr. Nandita Rai has been accused of conducting sex-selective abortions. The crime in itself is horrible enough, but it is dreadful to think that Dr. Rai, who has been such a champion feminist, could be killing unborn girls. (Pal 32)

Under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, a doctor has the right to terminate a pregnancy if it is likely to harm the mother, if there's a fatal abnormality, if the mother is a rape survivor or if the pregnancy is the result of contraception failure in a married couple. When abortion is conducted in the second trimester, two doctors need to sign it.

There are a lot of cases in which the law is used to allegedly victimise doctors. With sex ratios looking terrible, there's been a crackdown on abortions in general and doctors are increasingly unwilling to conduct them because this attracts unwanted attention from Health Ministry officials. Pal mentions this situation in her novel.

According to doctor Poonwala, secretary-general of the federation of obstetric and gynecological societies of India (FOGSI), doctors are regularly harassed and questioned for conducting abortions: 'I get letters from doctors at least two to three times a week, saying they were visited and put through the wringer by the Health Ministry for conducting second-trimester abortions. 'There are whispers of some doctors being found guilty of sex selection because they carried out

abortions that the mothers had wanted. Another popular complaint is that doctors are often implicated because of incomplete paperwork, which is not necessarily an indicator of sex selection. (Pal 29)

People had all kinds of doubts regarding the case of DR. Rai. Whether she was victimised by someone's paranoia or has she been unfairly accused, or whether it is a joke on all those people who cheered for her when she spoke so passionately and eloquently for the rights of the girl child.

When a man commits a crime, it does not make much of an influence on society. Criminal men are considered manly, heroes also do criminal acts, but criminal women are seen as corrupted or even satanic. A woman is captured in an ideological mindset created by society, from which she can never escape. She is forced to believe that her crimes and disorderly behaviours shatter the entire society's framework.

Her voice was like honey, it was richer, each word glistening with charm and warmth. She was cunning, filled with common sense, intelligent, and smart.

She is blunt and fearless. She committed all those crimes with her right mind. "That's not true. I've aborted at least fifteen. In the past three months I mean... I can tell you the exact number. I'd need to look at my files." (Pal 44)

She was also keeping track of her murders like a serial killer. "Not in the sense of a file labeled 'illegal abortions 2017-2018', obviously. I'm not a fool, Shravan. But there's got to be a code. Otherwise, how would I keep track?" (Pal 44)

She is very well aware of the crimes she had committed. It's just that she is not guilty because she has justifications for everything she has done. "Yes. Of the foetuses I've aborted

because of their gender if we're going to be precise, and I do think we should be precise. This is a legal case after all.” (Pal 45)

Doctor, wife, mother, socialite- she was accomplished at being all of these. She made the right noises, she showed up at the right places, and all the while, behind this façade, she'd been doing terrible things. That's something difficult to digest. Social work, yoga, attending parties, buying designer clothes, being gifted diamond jewellery... there was nothing in here to suggest a troubled mind.

But everything changed after she was arrested. She was compared with Hitler by society due to her acts. Media called her Dr. Death. People believed that Hope clinic is like an apple, shiny on the outside and, but rotten within, and Dr. Nandita Rai is a monster.

Her life coach noted her as insecure, vulnerable, depressed, and prone to acting out. According to him, she needed careful handling. The incident with her son must have shocked her. How the society, people surrounding her must have accused her of his behaviour had a great impact on her conscience. It was always like this with the patriarchal society. When your children do something wrong, society immediately accuses the mother's upbringing of those children.

Every mother does her best to raise her child to be good, Rashida. I promise you, your doctor tried her best and I'll tell you why I know this. Because as a woman and a mother, we know that while only some people will praise us for raising a child well, everyone blames the mother when a child behaves badly. Especially if the mother is a working woman (Pal 182)

Reshma's aunt was correct in pointing out how society treats a mother when their children do something wrong. Everyone points their fingers towards the mother. It is ultimately and completely the mother's fault.

I'm sure when her son did those things, everyone from a friend to enemy said that her son had turned out the way he had because she hadn't paid enough attention to him or because she hadn't been a good enough mother and a working woman, society is just looking for a reason to point fingers at you and criticize you for wanting independence. And what could she have said or done? After all, her son had proved society right. (Pal 183)

But Nandita had no choice. There's nothing she could have done about it. Her husband was so influential that the case could have never brought into public.

You just apologise and wear your shame and wear your guilt on your sleeve in the hope that someone will sympathise, and forgive you. The worst is when you start believing what they are saying – that it's your fault it happened. Because what can you do to make it right? Nothing. (Pal 183)

In Nandita's own words Pal expresses the guilt that a mother bears for their child's fault. Because that's how society taught her to be.

...this shame and guilt are overwhelming. My son, the boy that I gave birth to after hours of painful labour, the child for whom I have sacrificed and tolerated so much, that boy has proven to be the worst kind of human being. My son raped a girl...she filed a complaint at the police station and what should have happened is that my son, my husband, and I should have been dragged through the mud. But that didn't happen. My husband was able to pull strings and make sure her

complaint disappeared... a young woman's life had been brutally torn apart and my son was back to normal because we'd been able to pay for normalcy... (Pal 207)

It was the incident that broke the inner shame. She felt the helplessness of a woman in society. Until then she spoke of women's rights. But when the time for action came, she realised how vulnerable she is despite her social status.

Until this incident, I didn't know just how painful shame can be. Shame burnt me, like acid. I couldn't look at my son, I couldn't look at my husband, and they couldn't understand why I was 'overreacting'... I carried the guilt that should have been his along with my own, and I carried the shame of knowing that despite being a woman, I had not stood by the girl whom my son had attacked. (Pal 207)

Nandita exposes many Indian women. She loves her son because he is her son. But at the same time as a woman, her conscience doesn't allow it. Because he has done something wrong to a woman, one of her kind.

This is not my confession. These are facts. My confession is that I think I hate my son now. I can't look at him without remembering what he has done and I have dreams in which I am hurting him, killing him violently. I hate my son and the only person I hate more is myself. I'm telling you this because this is a circle of trust and I've carried this secret for so long that its weight is crushing me. I don't expect you to offer me comfort or forgiveness. I just want to share because the pretense that there is nothing wrong is killing my very soul. (Pal 207)

She justifies her actions as revenge. She wanted the world to realise the wrongs they are doing to the girls.

When she aborted Sara Lakdawala's baby boy and all those other babies that supposedly had anencephaly, Nandita Rai was changing the world. She was taking revenge for all the girls who had ever been killed in the womb. She was avenging them, one abortion at a time. (Pal 210)

The guilt that Nandita Rai had felt at her son's crime being hushed up had turned her into Doctor Death. But this hadn't happened spontaneously. She had been turned into this killer by Kalisthenics. Kalisthenics have an unavoidable role in turning her guilt into a rage.

Nandita Rai was deeply traumatised by her son's squashed rape case, she started going to a life coach. Then, she joined Kalisthenics. It was feeding her anger. Kalisthenics picked her guilt at not being able to do anything about her son and made sure she didn't get over it. Then, when she was primed by their manipulation, they presented her with a suggestion of how to make up for her son's sins: male feticide.

The real proof that Kalisthenics is behind the feticides is that Dr. Rai reported every one of her abortions to the members of this group. She posts two lines of poetry that are something like a motto for Kalisthenics- "when you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you" (Pal 94)

Then in February, the girl her son raped committed suicide. This made Rai flip. Her concept was that 'when you have sight, you never know the value of your eyes'. It is when they are not there that's when you realise the value of them. She started to commit abortions in girl feticide from then on.

Nandita points out the story of Ganga and Shantanu from Mahabharata to justify her acts. The story explains infanticide in Mahabharata and how it was necessary. She says that just like the story she was freeing them from the cycle of life. She says that for generations, millennia

perhaps, we've passed down this legend to make sure we don't forget the horror of killing seven baby boys. Yet, for the millions of girls that we've killed in the womb or as new-born babies, just because they were girls entering a world of men, not even one story.

She killed baby girls. Maybe as many as twenty-five girls.

When she asks Inspector Hadpode about why he choose her to take revenge upon her husband, that's when the reader realises the conventional belief of women being the property of men.

Tell me, inspector, when you wanted to attack my husband – justifiably I might add – why didn't you pick a colleague of his? Or an employee? Why did you pick his wife? She raised her eyebrows. I'll tell you why. Because you think I'm his property. You never saw me as a separate person. I was only Naveen rai's wife.

(Pal 247)

Through Nandita, the author shows the hero in the novel is patriarchal. The one the reader thought is a good character is also a spoke person of the patriarchal society.

Did you ask your wife if she wanted to have a child before she became pregnant with your daughter? Did your wife want a daughter? By the way, what is your wife free to do without your permission? How many years did it take for your wife to be able to tell you she didn't want to have sex? And the last time your daughter did something you didn't like, how did you react? Did you raise your voice? Slap her? maybe use the belt? ... You have no idea of the life your wife has lived, of the world that awaits your daughter, but look at you – ready, willing, and able to speak for them, to decide for them. Didn't you say I horrified you? That's good. It means we're even. (Pal 248)

It is the revengeful suppressed mind of women in Indian society that led to the emergence of an agency like Kalisthenics. And look at how successful and influential it is in the novel. Institutes like Kalisthenics gives women a hidden power without bringing their true self to society. Because once society finds out the true side of her, she will be judged.

Kalisthenics has been my life for the past two years... that board has been my everything. And you just took all of that away from me? Without any explanation?... I've shared every moment with you. Every hope, every triumph, every dream, every sadness. (Pal 254)

According to Rai the only way this society will realise the value of women is when there aren't enough of them. She reacts, if you don't want a boy to be born in a house that doesn't respect equality, similar to that, I don't want a girl born in a household that wants to know the sex of a foetus. I don't want a girl to be brought up in an atmosphere where she isn't cherished. And one day when there aren't enough women to go around, the society of men will reverse women.

It is important to tell about the female villains in this novel as ultimately, they are also the creation of a patriarchal society that denies the freedom and existence of women. When the society restricts their freedom they take immeasurable actions to regain it which result in destroying the society's equilibrium.

Women often turn as an accomplice in all the crimes committed by men in the name of family honour. Despite being a woman, she doesn't want a female child in her household. She controls the household. She thinks it will destroy their family honour. Having a female child in the household was considered as a threat that disturbs their financial security. Their existence also lowered their social status.

In some parts of India, the head of prostitution gangs is women head who was lured and forced into prostitution themselves as young girls. But later as they found out the profit of it and started to buy and sell girls herself. The pimps will lure these girls to profess love and were then handed over to the head. she then sold them to wealthy landlords. She had bought many lands from earning money like this.

Society has a crucial part in creating such ruthless creatures. They speak to those section of women who feel oppressed and want to react against such oppressions from the society, they choose rather act out against than to be silent and feel it.

Their indomitable strength comes from their ability to react. Many women in Indian society couldn't able to do that. They believe themselves to be helpless or rather the society forced them to believe it that way. But these women, they are different. But not in an acceptable way because one way or another they cause harm. Society believes that these evil women destroy the harmony of the society. They threaten the balance of its structure. So, they are more dangerous.

We can never rule out the possibility of the presence of Kalisthenics or a similar organisation as imaginary because there is an end to every suppression and patience has its limits. Freedom is valuable for everyone. Restricting a person's freedom can cause the person to take ultimate actions to regain it.

This chapter has summoned up the reasons behind a woman becoming a criminal. Society has a very crucial role in making a female villain. When an individual feels that he/she has been wronged by society, he/she creates a hatred towards the whole society and tries to avenge the wrongdoing. This novel clearly shows how dangerous that person can turn into.

The next chapter analyses the novel *Murder in Seven Acts* by Kalpana Swaminathan. The first chapter analyses the role of detectives in crime and detective fiction. The second chapter focuses on the qualities that make a detective more productive and successful. The third part analyses the female detectives in Indian crime and detective fiction giving special emphasis to the novel and the prime detective in the novel, Lalli.

Chapter IV

From victims to agents

Detective fiction is an exceptional part of crime novels that center around investigating proof that will prompt the disclosure of the mystery behind a secret, toward the finish of the story. Based on the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "Detective" was first used in printing during the mid-nineteenth century.

Detective novels were distributed at a languid and intermittent movement until the success of Sherlock Holmes. He is regarded as the world's most famous fictional investigator. Arthur Conan Doyle is the creator of Sherlock Holmes. Holmes investigated crimes in nearly four books and more than 50 short stories. Doyle once even decided to kill him by throwing him off a cliff, in one story. But he had to bring him back because of his notoriety and solicitation from the fans.

The great success of the Sherlock Holmes stories among readers become an inspiration for many crime and detective fiction writers. Numerous creators subsequently embraced the essential procedures from Doyle's setting up a character. a large number of them were impersonations of the investigator.

While these mysteries have brought elements of the classic detective novel using repetitive heroic charms, in a whole new direction, the pure abstraction interest typical of

detective fiction's golden age has evolved. New sub-genre: police proceedings, a type of fictional documentary that is often claimed to be inspired by real cases has emerged thus.

These stories explain the life of police investigators, the process of collecting the evidence and bringing them into criminological research centers, and depicting complex compound testing of the proof. Dedicated cops talk with suspects, victims, witnesses, shadow individuals, spies and research their findings. There may have a significant figure or a group of individuals who are accountable for the situation, but, regardless of that, the examination unmistakably involves cooperation, with standard subject matters and duty. These stories were a reasonable portrayal of real police techniques.

A crime and detective story are the section of a crime story in which the plot centers on a criminal act that the main characters, a police officer, a detective, or any other concerned individual, investigate and challenge to crack. These stories are also called “whodunnit” stories or crime thriller stories. Most crime and detective stories were written from the point of view of the main detective, and many of these detective-story writers feature the same detective throughout a large body of work or several series of detective stories.

There are a few subgenres that are popular among detective story readers, they are Police-department procedurals that focus on police station-based crime investigation. Such stories often feature murder investigators, the narcotics bureau, and other departments of a local police force. The second one is Hardboiled detective stories. These stories contain more violent content than the usual crime and detective stories. They are usually dark and obvious. An ideal hardboiled detective story features an experienced detective who treats violent crimes with his experience and the data in his hand. Thrillers are the third category. They are suspense stories.

These stories often feature chasing and running. They usually happen as the criminal tries to escape from falling in the hands of the detective and the detective follows his trail and keeps chasing him.

An Unsuitable Job for a Woman written by P.D. James portrays the viewpoint of both the society and the fictional world towards the female investigator. Literary world in general views crime fiction as a sort of man-centric fiction. For a long time, these male writers dominated the genre too. The women detectives of these eras fill in as below average variants of their male partners.

There were female detectives in crime and detective fiction from the beginning of the genre itself. Many of these detectives portrayed the real image of women of those times too. But this type of real women who competed with men, and always emerged victorious, was very short in number. A feminine detective was the theme of many of these collections of books featuring women detectives. But these earliest implicit women detectives were all created by male writers.

Most women detectives in fiction were too young, too beautiful, too interested in marriage, and too often prone to walk into physically dangerous situations and interfere with men trying to solve crimes. While acknowledging some exceptions to these deficiencies, Dorothy L. Sayers believes that a “‘really brilliant woman detective’ was yet to be created. When Sayers wrote these words, women had been detecting in fiction for more than sixty years. Although many fictional female detectives do exhibit the undesirable traits that Sayers noted, others have represented impressive achievements by their creators.” (Rollyson 1)

The first female writer to introduce such a bold female character was Anna Katharine Green, through her book, *The Affair Next Door* published in 1897. Amelia Butterworth, the

protagonist of the novel was bold, defensive, and independent. Her male companions dismissed her abilities as a detective, but she solved cases through careful observation.

Madelyn Mack was another famous detective created by Hugh C. weir. She was introduced in a crime novel published in 1914 with her name as the title. In many ways, she resembled Sherlock Holmes. She liked to consume drugs for pleasure in her leisure time.

Mildred Wirt, under the pseudonym Carolyn Keene introduced another famous lady detective, Nancy Drew in the 1930s. She was a sixteen-year-old amateur detective. She was capable of handling speedboats, roadsters, and aeroplanes. Even though she was young she was able to defeat her opponent easily in a fight. She was fearless and rational. She feared no one that she rejected all the supernatural warnings and solved her mysteries logically. Nancy was told repeatedly that being a detective is an unsuitable job for a woman, but she endured it and competed successfully with men.

Judy Bolton, another female detective created by Margaret Sutton was only 15. Her career continued to solve mysteries from 1932 to 1967, beginning with *Vanishing Shadow* and ending with *The Secret at the Sand Castle*. She was peculiar in her way of solving cases. Her character was the only female character at that time, who married halfway through the series.

Most of these lady detectives choose their work as a detective over other conventional works. In many ways, they take after their contemporary, Sherlock Holmes. Like Holmes, they frequently utilise disguise to help enter the camouflages of others. These detectives make observations in a manner that resembles Holmes and conclude what they observed. They often feel unproductive when they are not doing their work because settling in a household is not

suitable for them. But these lady detectives always outwitted both the criminals and the police in their ability.

The single detective, either male or female, remains the more common and accepted type, for example, Edgar Allan Poe's Sir Auguste Dupin and Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes himself, were all solitary workers. Although Holmes had a companion he was used as the narrator who explained the findings of the detectives to the readers with an explanation. But the most famous female detective as a solitary detective appeared in Agatha Christie's *The Tuesday Night Club*, Miss Marple.

These female detectives have always been noble and feminine in their profession, even when engaged in things men do not consider feminine. Miss Marple and other female detectives dating back to the beginning, act equal and as competent as their male opponents. But the society and the fictional world always considered them inferior to their male counterparts. To overcome the stereotypes of this partnership between men and women, they emphasised more on the rational side of the discovery and focused on the physical side of their appearance. The majority of female detectives from the nineteenth century were in their mid-30s are single, independent, well-educated, and intelligent.

Detectives like Miss Marple, Nancy Drew, Judy Bolton, etc. popularised female detective fiction among the readers. These names instantly come to the minds of the reader when asked about female detectives in literature.

This chapter discusses Kalpana Swaminathan's crime and the detective novel, *Murder in Seven Acts* which is a crime investigative thriller in which a detective solves seven different types of crimes with her expertise. The chapter explores the different methods the detective used

to solve the cases in the story. The first part of the chapter closely analyses the peculiarities of female detectives in the history of crime fiction. The second part discusses the influence Lalli had on these popular female detectives. The third and last part analyses Lalli as a detective from various cases she solves.

Female writers have burrowed into the enigmas of identity and the deadly stresses of everyday life. Their plots are light on gunplay and heavy on emotional violence. Death in these novels is often chillingly casual and unnervingly intimate.

These books have brought murder and confusion to intimate spaces and family relationships. Female writers often reveal the dangers lurking in immediate and often dangerous places such as family, marriage, and friendship. And one thing that stands out is that violence or threats against women are very real.

Kalpana Swaminathan's Lalli, the retired police officer, first appeared in the novel *Death Mystery* in 1997. An attentive detective full of elegance and style, she is often accompanied by her nephew Sita on criminal adventures. These adventures often include murder, robbery, mystery, or violence.

She has every quality of a good detective--she is flexible, has a detail-oriented mind, very observant, and her deductive skills are the best in the industry. A lot of factors make her resemble the legendary Miss Marple. But what makes them different is Lalli's ability to protect herself and her flawless shooting skills. Lalli is the last resort of Mumbai police. "Lalli L.R. It is the moniker given by the Police (Homicide Department) to our 60-year old detective. L.R. is "Last Resort," which roughly means that when the department is at its wits' end to solve a case, she is the one who is consulted to tie up the loose ends." (Swaminathan "Secret Garden" 25)

She works more closely with the police than in other novels. There is more freedom of friendship and mutual recognition than the archetypes that conflict more with the power of law enforcement in uniform. Like others, she has a very high moral standard, and little is known about her past and family, except for her nephew Sita, who is also her companion. She is the only source to know more about Lalli. Sita resembles Watson of Doyle or Ajeet of Ray.

The novel unfolds evil that humans are capable of. For sure, the writer has a very strong command of the language. Being a doctor, Swaminathan's usage of words only goes to show that she has a depth of understanding of practical physics and police procedures.

It's all about following detective stories, conspiracy, good language, and everything. Effort can be both psychological and physical. The detective controls the detective and vice versa. So, in this genre, if the writer writes with skill and dexterity, then ideally the book cannot be put down. The desire to find out who did this is driving readers further into where the phrase 'whodunit' comes from. This book by all its means is the best read for those who love mystery because the book contains seven different types of mysteries. The novel uses attractive language to better describe the character and fosters the deep and dark elements of the criminal character.

The novel is divided into seven different parts with seven different stories from various sections of society. The first story is about Aunt May who is an old spinster living alone. The challenge in *Infront of Lalli* was to find out the mystery behind a face that aunt May was seeing wherever she was going. It made her on the verge of a nervous breakdown. So Lalli had to find out the evil mind behind it. The next story is about Savio and his physics professor Dr. Bhavnani. Bhavnani's daughter died in a fire accident. But years later Dr. Bhavnani and his six favourite students receive a letter of invitation from Rupa, the daughter, to meet her at her home where the

fire accident has happened. Lalli had to prove that it was not an accident but a murder. At the end of the story, she also proves that not one but two persons were murdered on that day.

The third story is a political one. Swaminathan takes this chapter to express her political views. A book called “The Sixth Pandavas” which agonized the Hindu minds was published. So, a book-burning event was conducted to soothe those hurt Hindu minds. But the author of the book falls into the burning pile of books and is murdered. Lalli predicts the incident and reaches just at the right time to pull out the dead body of the writer from the burning pile of books. She digs to the roots of the incident and finds out the murderer.

The fourth story is about a man whom Sita thought was a serial killer but turned out as a dead body in a famous designer’s dressing studio. What follows is a thrilling and heartbreaking story of an illiterate man’s exploitation and his son’s sacrifice for the appreciation of his father. The next story, ‘Suicide point’ is about a mystery well in the outskirts of Bombay. Once in a while, the well starts to smell like a dead body but there was no sign of a dead body. The mystery behind the well was a headache for the police for a very long time. Lalli discloses the actual reason behind the smell and catches the culprits.

The next story is about a beautiful desk ornament which valued millions. A murder has happened to stole that ornament. Lalli foresees the murder and tries to prevent it. But before she could find out the owner of the ornament, the owner Motiben was murdered. It was assumed as a heart attack by her relatives, but Lalli proves that it is a murder. The last story, ‘Threnody’ is about a mystery that happened in London in the 1960s. the story begins with a story that was told by Vedavalli, a friend of Lalli. She talks about a mysterious incident of a man and a woman being poisoned and his wife rescues them both. That woman whom Vedavalli introduced as

Mary gives a bundle to Vedavalli to create a story about it. Lalli proves the mystery and reveals that the woman whom Vedavalli met in London was Mary Westmacott i.e.; Agatha Christie.

What unravels in the novel is a tale of human greed, lust, and things that are ugly in life. At times the suspicion directed at the characters is baffling and too quick; fingers are pointed and retracted as the plot unfolds unexpectedly. Swaminathan could easily bring a foreigner into the story without feeling the distance.

Her curiosities recount the grotesque nature of the crime committed by ordinary individuals. From Agatha Christie's Miss Marple, Swaminathan borrows the deceptive appearance of an elderly spinster, a disguise that both adopt to fool others. Swaminathan describes through her novels the cloistered and diverse Indian realities.

Like Satyajit Ray's Ajeet or Doyle's Watson, Sita is a narrator for most of the cases. She participates in solving the case too. It is through her novels that the world came to know about Lalli's expertise. Sita functions as the narrator, participant reader, and amateur detective who attempts to find the murderer based on her knowledge of reading detective fiction-making apparent the connection between Miss Marple's novels and Lalli's detection.

As narrator, Sita is not just a Watson to Lalli's mysterious leaps of imagination and reasoning, but a character with her voice and a way of seeing, who allows Swaminathan to open up every story to voices of the city, musings on films and literature, and objects of beauty, even when they are unrelated to the plot. Many Lalli mysteries are often solved across the dining table, and good, delicious food is often near at hand, for nutrition as well as solace. (Dutta np)

Swaminathan familiarises Lalli to kick off a debate about the issues facing women and the middle classes in India. Lalli, who has a fairly similar appearance to Miss Marple, is reading the characters described in the novel. She is a spokesperson for all the members of the society but she is particularly fond of women and their characters. Lalli runs the risk of becoming stereotypes that support Western thinking. The transfer of privileged women from the first world to the third world highlights the contrast between third world women presented by Western readers and Indian women presented by Indian writers.

Many parts of the novel symbolises the post-colonial Indian realities like the apartment which symbolizes the urban Indian realities. The novel is a mirror to the modern Indian lifestyle of society. The novels create a dialogue about the intrinsic violence practiced both within and without organised institutions that undermine the agency of women.

Lalli refuses to let her marital status define her identity. The police detectives' conjecture Lalli's history. She is introduced as the narrator's distant aunt. The absence of an organized familial structure re-aligns the reader's imagination fixing her as an individual choosing to privilege her identity as an investigating expert.

Lalli interrogates the hidden realities of the progressive middle-class family unearthing different feminisms. The 'cultural other' or here the third world woman has a past of her own; a collective memory passed through generations which makes itself explicit in the attitudes, social modes of behavior, and crimes committed against them. This inherited communal memory indicates the shift towards an Indian audience for whom dowry deaths have become the norm and need no introduction. However, to club all women as being universally oppressed is to take

away from their narrative voices, where their experiences vary but a shared understanding helps them to tackle the problems.

Lalli's occupation as a former police officer and her disguise as an elderly spinster allows her to come in contact with different Indian women. As opposed to Miss Marple, who is largely acquainted with people belonging to the aristocratic class, Lalli by the virtue of her profession as a detective is engaged with the castes, class-based and patriarchal structure of the Indian society. In the story 'Threnody', we are confronted with urban middle class educated women capable of some agency of their own. Through seven different stories, Swaminathan creates diverse characters who belong to the fringes of society. The action moves to a less crowded textual universe escorting in characters who act as the eyes and the ears of the society.

Lalli becomes synonymous in the imagination of female characters with security enabling them with a voice away from repressive family structures where they can narrate their problems. Different Indian feminist approaches emerge within the textual universe. It's the engagement with the silent struggles of female characters that mark the transition from the beginning to the end of the novel. Swaminathan breaks away from the structure of the conventional detective novels by following up only one mystery as here the novel is divided into seven different parts providing us with the characters from seven sections of society. Lalli is collecting evidence for the concerned characters and provides solutions for them.

Lalli fears that Indian society is full of deadly crimes from the inside while pretending to be a respected society on the outside. An elite middle class or a decentralized label of low living standards means nothing to her. Lalli is worried about the psychopath hiding behind a person's

normal self. She has enough contact with society and criminals to believe how in-depth the growth of evil in society.

Swaminathan reacts critically to Miss Marple and adapts the character of Lalli perfect to portray Indian reality. She pursues new perspectives and innovative strategies to enrich her character, Lalli, and the genre of Indian detective fiction, which she shaped by the reality of western fantasy and Indian dialogue.

In an interview conducted by Huzan Tata, Kalpana Swaminathan stated that Lalli is a real person whom she met on a bus back in 1994.

‘I noticed something which puzzled me, and suddenly there was this voice in my head that thought it curious too. I had to get on with my day, but she — the voice — got on with the mystery. On the way back home, she had the solution. I liked her. All I knew about her then was her name, but she was intelligent and non-intrusive.’ (np)

Lalli’s observation is way beyond the capacity of a normal person. It is the best quality of a detective. Without the power of observation, a detective is incomplete. It is the best quality that makes them differ from the common people. Lalli is so keenly observed towards things happening around her, it’s like these things talk to her. Such sudden discoveries make her laugh because these proofs are so easy to be neglected that she is so happy she found it.

She believes that it is part of her job to know things that other people aren’t so curious about. She instantly catches up with things that she had to be known. Lalli like all the famous detectives in the history of literature is a keen observer. “‘May gasped ‘How do you know?’ ‘it’s my job to know things’” (Swaminathan 25)

Lalli's victory doesn't come as easy as the readers think. She works hard to earn it. Once a case is unsolved, she couldn't rest until she solves it. She is aware of the fact that someone's life depends on her, which makes her work hard until she succeeds. "I hardly saw Lalli over the next two days. She came home late, wolfed down dinner and then was on the phone till all hours. Finally, on Saturday morning she told me we could visit May." (Swaminathan 23)

Swaminathan's 60-something Lalli is a compelling mix of intellectual agility and empathy. As her creator says, Lalli is more interested in crimes that happen within the four walls of the house and always ready to consider its sociological implications.

She is dedicated to her job. Once a victim is with her, she thinks it's her responsibility to take care of them. She believes she shouldn't be resting until the problem is resolved so that the victim will be safe. Lalli's quality makes her differ from all the other western influenced detectives. Unlike her, these detectives are indifferent to their victims. But Lalli is different. "I am going to ask you if you'll come home with me, May, just for today? It may not be safe for you to go home, just now. But you can call Sister Jacob tonight and arrange for her to be at your place tomorrow afternoon." (Swaminathan 27)

Lalli's former job as a police officer gives her access to several contacts outside of her acquaintance circle, which gave her access to the notorious criminals and wanted list of criminals. For her junior officers and her successors, she was like a role model. They admired her ability and achievements. "she took Lalli's hand in both hers. You must be The Family. Savio used to carry your picture in his wallet, very smart in uniform. That's what he called you. The family" (Swaminathan 48)

A detective should be able to observe the minute details. This intense meticulousness is the thing that makes investigator work so monotonous, however, all analysts realise that the littlest, most apparently immaterial detail could be the way to settling a tremendous case. Lalli was a clever and observant person. Her job as a police officer gave her the ability to listen to her intuitions. She is a very clever detective, but her experience as a police inspector gave her the aptitude to read through the abnormality.

Devotion is one of, if not the main traits of a police detective. For one thing, criminal investigators must function as a cop for quite a while out in the field before they can turn into a Bonafede investigator. At that point, whenever they've been advanced, the occupation requires difficult work and extended periods. Numerous detectives end up working straight as the night progressed with their eyes wide open.

Investigators have an eye for the subtleties; the minuscule snippets of data that may somehow or another be disregarded. They are specialists at drawing an obvious conclusion, and if one little detail is off, they'll be the first to perceive and follow up on it. In the novel Lalli says:

‘so, you built this shell of wood and laminate. Curious, very curious. A labour of love. Or of despair.’ Lalli was being needlessly harsh. ‘took you almost a year to finish it, I see.’ ‘how on earth do you know?’ he drew back as if stung. ‘from your hands.’ With no ceremony, my aunt reached forward and held his open palm, tracing the callosities with a fingertip. ‘more than a year. And today is the first time you’re entertaining visitors here. You still find it difficult to live here.’

(Swaminathan 52)

Asking questions leads to conclusions and for those questions which the detective couldn't find an answer leads to new findings. These findings will lead to more facts and these facts will eventually give the detective the ultimate answer which concludes the mystery at hand. When a case comes to her hand Lalli asks questions: "what did the sender of those letters want? What did she or he expect of you Bhavists, and you, Professor Bhavnani? Now that you are here, what do you want to do? What do you want professor?" (Swaminathan 53)

A true detective doesn't wait for the approval of the audience. The detective's ultimate aim is to conclude the problem at hand. The experience as a detective gives Lalli an upper hand compared to other many detectives. She has seen so much murder and crime in her service that she is not affected by it nor draws a quick conclusion. In the novel: "watching a body being cremated and sifting the ashes afterward is no evidence at all," Lalli said. 'especially in this case, where cremation was an overstatement. The body was charred beyond recognition, wasn't it?" (Swaminathan 61)

She talks like an expert in every subject she encounters. She knows a little bit of physics, history, art, if any area she is lacking she has experts to verify her doubt.

The walls of the house enclose a circular space. But you can see immediately that the perimeter of the space in which we stand is not circular at all. The old house was a circle. The new house is egg-shaped. Granville's egg, actually, but never mind that. An egg-shaped space fitted inside a circular space. (Swaminathan 62)

Lalli believes the audience has a right to know how she concluded. Unlike many western detectives like Holmes or Poirot who had their sidekicks to explain details to the reader, Lalli explains her findings to the audience.

Swaminathan's detective Lalli does not just observe the minute details but she points that out to the readers too, so that the reader can also investigate the case along with her. At the end of each story, she explains how she concluded as to who is the murderer. Like in the second case Lalli says:

'I knew before I entered the house. Savio described Rupa just as we arrived. A lively little girl, brave with dreams, who could never be the docile home body her father wanted. Such a child would never attempt to make a cup of tea for herself. If the cook wasn't home, she would wait for papa to do it. The cook's sudden trip to the village was also too convenient for comfort. A charred body? I've seen too many to believe in them! Then, once I entered the house, the egg that Pradeep described was immediately apparent. A new oval space within the older circular one. I asked myself, why? What lies in the space between? The answer was obvious. Schrodinger's cat.' (Swaminathan 68)

The code of conduct for the detective says that a detective should be emotionally objective. But Swaminathan's Lalli is emotional. she feels the victim. Oppression or wrongdoing makes her angry and she responds to it angrily. "he felt remorse", Mohini decided. "you helped him repent, Lalli." "like hell did" Lalli's voice was harsh with bitterness. "I just beat him at his own game." (Swaminathan 68)

With regards to the criminal investigator's work, diligence is likewise critical. A criminal examination could take weeks, months, or even a very long time before the case is at last unraveled. In this way, investigators need to continue pushing through, even now and again when it appears as though an examination is at a halt.

She was courageous. As an Indian woman, she was unbelievably courageous. She disregards all the images of an Indian woman we read or watch in our daily life. “Lalli was bent double at the edge of the conflagration, tugging at something heavy and unyielding. I couldn’t see what it was, for all that smoke. With a tug that almost toppled her, she pulled out something. At that instant, the pall lifted and I saw what it was.” (Swaminathan 73)

She is a perfectionist detective carrying all the necessary things in her bag. She understands the urgency of it. A detective should always be alert. She should be ready to call on duty. “that’s when I noticed she had piled up a stack of plastic bags on the counter. The bags, I recognized. Lalli’s handbag was never without these thin polythene sleeves, so convenient to bag evidence. (Swaminathan 83). Swaminathan explained about the plastic bags because she wanted her detective to be clear to the readers. One doesn’t have to wonder where she got the plastic covers or why she has plastic covers in her bag always.

Numerous individuals may believe that detective work is about the rationale and assembling current realities, however, the employment requires a lot of imagination. During an examination, crime investigators are given a tremendous measure of arbitrary snippets of data, and their responsibility is to discover approaches to come to an obvious conclusion to comprehend the wrongdoing. This expects them to get inventive with the data they have before them, and to think outside about the case.

Lalli used her ability to adapt to get more familiarised with the characters. She blends with them so that they can open their mind to her. She is friendly, whether to Aunt May, the victim in the first story, or to Mrs. Joshi who killed her husband. “Lalli sighed heavily.

‘everything was different then.’ I hate my aunt when she takes on this martyred identity, but Mrs. Joshi grew fonder of her every minute.” (Swaminathan 85)

The quickness in her achievement proves how intelligent she is. Lalli’s style of detection is very peculiar. As soon as she enters the crime scene, she could identify the things that could reveal to her the murderer.

Investigators are profoundly instinctive, and they're frequently guided by their premonition during examinations. This trademark proves to be useful when they need to acquire suspects or observers for addressing because they're ready to get a feeling of who's coming clean, and who may be attempting to conceal insights concerning the current case. They should go about as human falsehood identifiers, and for that task, instinct is critical.

Yes, if I could use it to name my murderer. But he didn’t do that for two reasons- he wouldn’t have been familiar with a Scribble board, and he had a pen, didn’t he? If he had wanted to write his last words, he could have. His hands were free. He could have written on the table top, on the board itself – instead of this elaborate effort... (Swaminathan 108)

A detective does have the ability to know the insight of human nature. They get into the innermost feelings of a person that he tried to hide so hard. Lalli’s observation is the key element that helps her to attain the surprisingly fast closure to her cases. She is knowledgeable in many areas of life that give away the answer she wants. In the novel, Lalli recognizes the victim as a music instrument player by looking into his nails:

Index and middle fingers, ring finger too. Sarod or Rubab, I’d say. Sarod players often have grooved nails. Rubab has a more staccato note, no meend, so the string

doesn't cut in. usually, the left hand stops the strings, and a plectrum is used to pluck on the right, but some players don't use a plectrum. They prefer the nails.

(Swaminathan 116)

Lalli believes that it's her responsibility to correct the wrong. This way of thinking is related to her former profession as a police officer. A detective may be the only one who exposes the mystery but a police officer is someone who corrects the wrongs of the society. "and then I caught sight of Lalli. She joined them on the ramp and addressed the hall. 'ladies and gentleman, it's my privilege to introduce the designer of the marvelous collection we've just viewed – Hussain Mohammad Afghani.'" (Swaminathan 120)

She had clear eyes to observe the unusual. In the process of her investigation, she notes down who is suspicious and who is not. As the case progresses and more data in hand she adds or removes people from the list. In the end, she concludes and finds out the culprit.

Much the same as an appointed authority in court, police investigators must stay objective consistently during an examination. Regardless of whether a case hits near and dear, they should take the necessary steps to not let their emotions get included. At the point when feeling turns into a factor, an investigator's judgment could be slanted, which might lead them to bogus suppositions or decisions about an examination. If an investigator turns out to be genuinely connected to any part of a case, almost certainly, they'll be removed from the task to hold objectivity.

A detective's intuition is the most powerful thing. They can foresee the danger. Swaminathan uses in many of the stories, this ability of Lalli's to solve the cases. In the novel, Lalli foresees a murder of a person whom she doesn't even know personally:

‘Lalliben knows. As usual, she is correct,’ he said bitterly. ‘Motiben died five days ago, just as you expected it, Lalliben, don’t deny it. It was a heart attack. How did you know?’ ... ‘I didn’t know for sure, Maheshbhai. But I can tell you straight away it was not a heart attack. It was murder. Now tell me everything you know about Motiben so that I can find her murderer. (Swaminathan 176)

Working in law implementation requires hard skin since it's an incredibly troublesome work and these people see frightful crimes submitted every day. Police investigators can't permit this part of the occupation to influence them intellectually, and they should figure out how to isolate their work from the remainder of their lives. Without this work-life detachment, the impacts could be genuinely harmful.

Swaminathan concludes the novel by mentioning Agatha Christie. One of her characters narrates an incident that was happened in London in 1960. Although the narrator couldn't identify Christie, Lalli could easily identify her. “then she came over to me and took my hands in her. ‘Mary didn’t mean Fox when she said “he’s family”. She meant the sculptor. I remembered his name just now. Richard Westmacott.’ ‘Ohmygod! ‘Mary Westmacott’. ‘*Agatha Christie.*’” (Swaminathan 224)

Swaminathan reminds us through the character of Sita that a woman can have her voice. Sita has a very important role in the novel. She is not like Watson or Ajeet. Sita narrates more than what Lalli wanted her to explain. She has her voice, opinions, and findings.

A female detective is as competent as a male counterpart. Indian English Literature has many female detectives who solved powerful mysteries and crimes. These characters are proof of how strong and intelligent Indian women are. They show us that they are in no way inferior to

men in society. Their body or identity is not keeping them away from achieving what they are good at.

The chapter successfully analysed the presence of female detectives in the crime and detective literature. The chapter discusses the famous female detectives and their achievements. The chapter also discusses Kalpana Swaminathan's Lalli as a detective character and her various abilities that she uses to solve a case.

The next chapter concludes the findings of the three chapters. The first part of the chapter summaries how society plays a role in creating female victims. The second part summaries creation of women as a villain and the women's helplessness that lead to it. The third part concludes with the achievements of a female detective that Indian society can utilize. The last part discusses women as a writer and their contribution to society.

Chapter V

Conclusion

Crime and detective stories are one of the most popular novel genres. Numerous detective novels are in literary form, so publishers allocate full labels to this genre and publish hundreds of them a year. Detective novels are an integral part of the contemporary literary scenario. The first widely known detective story was the *Murder on Rue Morgue* by Edgar Allen Poe in 1841. Poe's story is not the first to include riddles or murder, but it is the first to introduce a detective as a character. It is also the first story entirely involved in solving the murder mystery.

Sherlock Holmes, the most famous of all fictional detectives, who have been invented in 1887 by Arthur Conan Doyle, and he first appeared in *Strand magazine*. The 1920s and 1930s are famous for their golden age of mystery, including Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, Josephine Tay, Ngaio Marsh, and more.

Early crime and detective stories witnessed the presence of a charming creature we call the femme fatale, a hard woman who attracts sad men into their doom. However, with time, the popularity of crime and detective fiction increased, more and more female writers appeared. This increase in female writers also improved the character of women in these novels.

Novels written by women have a sense of loss in their stories. All these women seem to know this feeling. There is an overwhelming sense of loss in many of the crime stories they have written. There are sad books about youth confusion and the fascinating emptiness beyond, and

what allows these novelists to engage in fascinating ways of dealing with the subject. This is the crime genre itself - a form that can turn nose complaints into bodies, into terrible behavior.

Investigation for these writers was something undiscovered and painlessly unresolved.

In recent years, crimes against women in India have escalated alarmingly. The gang-rape and murder cases like Nirbhaya, Unnao, have turned the attention of the world towards India to think about the unsafe condition of Indian women at night and in public. Man uses his might to abuse women and such offenses doom the life of the woman.

A poll conducted by the Thomson Reuters Foundation in 2011, placed India among the five most dangerous countries for women along with Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, etc. according to the poll conducted in 2018 by the same foundation, India tops the list ranking no.1 as the most dangerous country in the world for women, 4th in health-related issues in women, and 3rd in discrimination against women. Based on the data collected, India also ranks first in sexual violence

The novels of Indian English women writers consist of the latest burning issues related to women as well as those issues that have existed in society for a long. Indian women writers have been exploring feminine subjectivity and deal with themes that range from childhood to complete womanhood.

The first chapter, **From Innocence to Wounded Woman**, discusses the victims in the crime fiction, *The Witness the Night*, by Kishwar Desai, and examines them as the representatives of the many female victims present in Indian society. The chapter discusses important issues like patriarchal domination, the judicial system, Nari Niketan, female trafficking, female foeticide, and the use-and-throw mind-set of men to commit crimes and

violence against women in India. The chapter further has analysed women victims in these novels and how they are treated by society. The chapter gives a clear picture of the difficulties they endured inside the family and in society. It further points out the role of other fellow human beings in becoming support to such victims.

The novel criticizes society's approach to such victims and the exploitations faced by the victims in the novel. With this book, Kishwar Desai has helped to increase awareness about the incidence of hidden female repression in India, despite the many attempts from NGOs and the government to protect and empower women. Each of her books has taken up a theme or social issue and developed into a story around it. Her novels are more of social awareness novels than crime and detective novels. Putting it under the crime and detective genre, she has attracted more audiences than a normal novel.

Witness the Night has exposed the true nature of India: one of the most vivid and fast-growing economies in the world and yet one in which women often have been seen as second-class citizens. Despite painting such a dark picture in the novel, Desai believes that she wrote the story because she loves India. She portrayed the dark side of India so that people can improvise it.

Indian culture regards a lady as a Goddess. Lady has been given correspondence in varying backgrounds. She assumes a transcendent part in building the way of life of a country. As Indian culture is overwhelmed by the male-centric set-up, clearly crimes and villainy are exclusively related to the male. Ladies are not liberated from carrying out violations or including in hostile to social exercises. But due to this social set up, they are frequently compelled to carry out violations unavoidably to ensure their virtue and life. Social impacts convert her into a criminal.

Social conditions make a lady criminal. She is compelled to perpetrate wrong deeds to satisfy her suppressed desires and needs as a social being. At the point when she perpetrates a wrong deed for sexual delight or any other worldly pleasure, she is treated as an outcast. But for Indian men, these crimes are still acceptable.

The second chapter of this thesis, **Innocence to the Perpetrators of Crime**, discusses the topic of female villains in Deepanjana Pal's novel *Hush a Bye Baby*. The novel is an eye-opener regarding the suppression a woman faces in society and how helpless she is in helping their fellow beings. The novel shows the rise of a female villain or villains from the oppressions they suffer from society. The chapter discusses the villainous acts of women portrayed in this novel and the role of society in creating these villains.

Society has a very crucial role in making a female villain. When an individual feels that he/she has been wronged by society, he/she creates a hatred towards the whole society and tries to avenge for the wrong deeds. This novel has clearly shown how dangerous that person can transform into.

The novel shows a well-known figure like Nandita Rai who has felt so much oppressed by society, no need to mention the situation of a common woman. Women despite their caste, class, education, or culture endure the same treatment from society. Deepanjana Pal shows through the novel that such endurance could end in destroying the balance of the society as a whole that's why Indians need to treat their women with love.

An Unsuitable Job for a Woman written by P.D. James portrays the viewpoint of both the society and the fictional world towards the female investigator. Literary world in general views crime fiction as a sort of man-centric fiction. For a long time, these male writers dominated the

genre too. The women detectives of these eras fill in as below average variants of their male partners.

These female detectives have always been noble and feminine in their profession, even when engaged in things men do not consider feminine. Miss Marple and other female detectives dating back to the beginning, act equal and as competent as their male opponents. But the society and the fictional world always considered them inferior to their male counterparts. To overcome the stereotypes of this partnership between men and women, they emphasised more on the rational side of the discovery and focused on the physical side of their appearance.

The last chapter, **From Victims to Agents**, discusses Kalpana Swaminathan's crime and the detective novel, *Murder in Seven Acts* which is a crime investigative thriller in which a detective solves seven different types of crimes with her expertise. The chapter explores the different methods, the detective uses to solve the cases in the story. The chapter closely analyses the peculiarities of female detectives in the history of crime fiction and the influence of these popular female detectives on Lalli. The chapter also analyses Lalli as a detective based on various cases she has solved.

Kalpana Swaminathan's Lalli, the retired police officer, first appeared in the novel *Death Mystery* in 1997. An attentive detective full of elegance and style, she is often accompanied by her nephew Sita on criminal adventures. These adventures often include murder, robbery, mystery, or violence.

A female detective is as competent as a male counterpart. Indian English Literature has many female detectives who solved powerful mysteries and crimes. These characters are proof of the intelligence and courage of Indian women. They show us that they are in no way inferior to

men in society. Their body or identity is not keeping them away from achieving what they are good at.

The chapter has successfully analysed the presence of female detectives in the crime and detective literature. The famous female detectives and their achievements are accounted for. The chapter also discusses Kalpana Swaminathan's Lalli as a detective character and her various abilities that she uses to solve a case.

To sum up, crime and detective fiction in the Indian literary scenario is a reflection of Indian society and its treatment towards the woman. Women endure oppression and violence from society. Some women take it as their fate and endure it till the end. But some women protest against and start to take revenge on their own. Such women become villains in the eye of society. But some women fight against these partialities with their knowledge, skill, and ability and to find their own space in society. They protect not just women but the whole society from crime and other injustice. Our society needs to give more importance to women.

It is indispensable for society to acknowledge that women are the vital half of society. Rejection of and disregard for this inevitable part of the society makes the society crippled. Gender equality and empowerment of women are the sensible solutions to put an end to the crime and victimisation of women as well as to create a civilized society that cherishes its women counterpart.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Desai, Kishwar. *Witness the Night*. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers, 2010.

Pal, Deepanjana. *Hush a Bye Baby*. New Delhi: Juggernaut Books, 2018.

Swaminathan, Kalpana. *Murder in Seven Acts*. New Delhi: Speaking Tiger Publishing Private Limited, 2018.

Secondary Sources

Abouddahab, Redouane and, Josiane Paccaud Huguet. *Fiction, Crime and the Feminine*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011.

Acharya, Nitin B. *Feminist Sensibility in Autobiographies of Five Indian Women Writers*. 1 Jan. 1970. Shri Jagdishprasad Jhabarmal Tibarewala University, PhD dissertation. Shodhganga, hdl.handle.net/10603/6880. (16 April 2020).

Agency. "Kishwar Desai's Novel Won Top UK Award". *Indian Express*. New Delhi. 6 Jan. 2016.

Ahuja, Ram. *Criminology*. New Delhi: Rawat Publications. 2000.

Allen, David L. *Detective Fiction*. Nebraska: Cliff publishers, 1978.

Atal, Yogesh, editor. *Violence against women: Reports from India and the Republic of Korea*. Bangkok: UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. 1993.

Bamzai, Kaveree. "These Novels Explain Why Women are Still Angry". *Dailyo*. 6 April 2018. <https://www.dailyo.in/arts/novels-peach-lullaby-hush-a-bye-baby-metoo/story/1/23308.html>. (12 Mar. 2020).

- Bell, Ian, and Graham Daldry. *Watching the Detectives: Essays on Crime Fiction*. London: Macmillan, 1990.
- Bhattacharjee, Ritwik. "Performing Murder and Metaphor: Red Herrings and the Knowledge of the World in *The Hound of Baskerville* and *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*." *Language, Literature, And Interdisciplinary Studies LLIDS*, Edited by Deeksha Suri, Nikita Goel. vol. 1, no. 1, 2017.
- Bhattacharya, Budhaditya. "Driven by Anger." *The Hindu*. New Delhi. 13 Aug. 2014.
- Breines, Ingeborg, et al., editors. *Male roles, masculinities and violence: a culture of peace perspective*. Culture of Peace Series, Paris: UNESCO publishing, 2000.
- Canton, Naomi. "Thomson Reuters Survey: India Most Dangerous Nation for Women". *The Times of India*, 26 June 2018.
- Chacko, Richa. "Are Women Actually Free in Independent India". *MIIM Vibes*, 29 Oct. 2020. vibes.miim.ac.in/are-women-actually-free-in-independent-india/. (4 Dec. 2019).
- Chandler, Reymond. *The Notebooks of Reymond Chandler*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers. 1976.
- Chandra, Jagriti. "Global Poll Says India Most Dangerous Country for Women." *The Hindu*, 26 June 2018. www.thehindu.com/news/national/global-poll-says-india-most-dangerous-country-for-women/article24260750.ece. (12 June 2020).
- Crrlstaff. "Literary Origins: Sherlock Holmes and the History of Detective Fiction". *Librarypoint*. 26 April 2018. <https://www.librarypoint.org/blogs/post/history-of-detective-fiction/>. (17 Feb. 2020).
- Erdmann, Eva. "Nationality International: Detective Fiction in the Late Twentieth Century." *Investigating Identities: Questions of Identity in Contemporary International Crime*

- Fiction*, Edited by Marieke Krajenbrink, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009.
- Foundation, Thomson Reuters. *The World's Five Most Dangerous Countries for Women 2018*. 2018. 30 Dec. 2019. poll2018.trust.org/. (8 May 2020).
- Gandhi, Diya. "Running in the Family". *The Hindu*. 3 April 2016.
- Gnanabai, Mercy B. "Human Rights Issues on Suchitra Bhattacharya's the Burning". *Women in Literature, Research Journal of English (RJOE)*, Vol. 3, Spl. Issue 1, 2008.
- Goldsmith, Belinda, and Meka Beresford. "Exclusive: India Most Dangerous Country for Women with Sexual Violence Rife - Global Poll." *Thomson Reuters*, 26 June 2018. www.reuters.com/article/us-women-dangerous-poll-exclusive-idUSKBN1JM01X. (24 Jan. 2020).
- Guerrero, Barbara. *Representing Modern Female Villain: On Feminine Evil, Perverse Nationhood, and Opposition in Rómulo Gallegos' Doña Bárbara and Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children*. The University of Western Ontario. July 2016.
- Gupta, R. K. "Trends in Modern Indian Fiction." *World Literature Today*, vol. 68, no. 2, 1994, *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40150154. (3 Feb. 2020).
- Horsley, Lee. *The 20th Century Crime Fictions*. New York: Oxford University Press, Aug. 2005.
- Jackson, Elizabeth. *Feminism and Contemporary Indian Women's Writing*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Jagtiani, Anushka. "Opinion: Time for Indian women to rise and restore their status as 'Devi'". *The Week*. 14 Oct. 2020.
- James, P. D. *Talking About Detective Fictions*. New York: Faber and Faber, 2002.
- Jana, Sohini. "Gender Roles and Status of Women in Indian Societies." *Poverties*. Jan. 2017. www.poverties.org/blog/status-of-women-in-india. (21 June 2020).

- Joseph, James and Sr. Celine E. "Retaliation of Domestic Violence: A Study on Kishwar Desai's Witness the Night". *Mukt Shabd Journal*. vol. 9, no. 4, April 2020.
- Karat, Brinda. "Rape, impunity and state of denial". *The Hindu*. 5 Dec. 2009.
- Klein, Kathleen Gregory. *The Woman Detective: Gender & Genre*. New York: Illinios Press, 1995.
- , editor. *Women Times Three: Writers, Detectives, Readers*. Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1995.
- Lapira, Rose. "Book Review: Witness the Night". *Maltatoday*. 14 April 2012.
- Male roles, masculinities and violence: a culture of peace perspective*. SAGE publications, 2019.
- Masoodi, Ashwaq. "Inside a Juvenile Home." *Livemint*, 15 May 2015.
- www.livemint.com/Leisure/X4DChvj7KCXVjegttegBI/Inside-a-juvenile-home.html. (14 Mar. 2020).
- Mohapatra, Harapriya. "Status of Women in Indian Society". *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*. vol. 3, no. 6. 2015.
- Natarajan, Kannamma. "Women writers & education". *Front Line*.
- <https://frontline.thehindu.com/books/article25273356.ece>. (30 Dec. 2019).
- Negi, Mohita. "Writing by Women in Indian English Literature!". *Your Article Library*, 20 Feb 2014, www.yourarticlelibrary.com/media/writing-by-women-in-indian-english-literature/24404. (7 Feb. 2020).
- Pearson, Nels, and Marc Singer, editors. *Detective Fiction in Postcolonial and Transnational World*. New York: Routledge. 2016.
- Priestman, Martin, editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*. Cambridge University

Press. 2003.

Refferty, Terrence. "Women are Writing the Best Crime Novels". *The Atlantic Daily*. July 2016.

www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/07/women-are-writing-the-best-crime-novels/485576/. (25 Jan. 2020).

Rollyson, Carl, editor. *Critical Survey of Mystery & Detective Fiction Women Detectives: An Overview*. Baruch College: CUNY. vol. 5, Jan. 2008.

Sarma, Ramya. "Murder, She writes!". *The Hindu*, 3 Mar. 2013.

Sathiavel, J. *Stories Uncovered: Approaches to the Study of Select Indian English Crime and Detective Fiction*. Oct 2016. Kanchi Mamunivar Centre for Postgraduate Studies. PhD Dissertation. dspace.pondiuni.edu.in/jspui/bitstream/123456789/2790/1/T6469.pdf. (4 Dec. 2019).

Scaggs, John. *Crime Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Sims, Caroline. *Detecting Gender Images of the Contemporary Woman in Crime Fiction by Patricia Cornwell and Peter Robinson*. May 2010. PhD Dissertation. (14 March 2020)

Sen, Gita and Pirooska Ostlin. "Unequal, Unfair, Ineffective and Inefficient Gender Inequity in Health: Why it exists and how we can change it". *WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health*. World Health Organization. Sept. 2007.

Sengupta, Ishita. "Cracking the Curious Case of the Detective Fiction Genre in India". *The Indian Express*, New Delhi, 8 July 2018.

Shukla, Ankita. "Depiction of women in literature through ages". *The Times of India*. 21 Dec. 2016.

Singh, Ravindra Kumar. "Indian Women Writers and Its Feminism in English". *Journal of Advances and Scholarly Researches in Allied Education*. vol. 16, no. 5. April 2019.

Ignited Minds Journals. <http://www.ignited.in/I/a/211084>. (18 May 2020).

Srijani, Ganguly. "Authors Weigh in on the Future of Crime Fiction in India." *India Today*, 2 April 2017.

Startup, Radojka. *Damaging Females: Representations of women as victims and perpetrators of crime in the mid nineteenth century*. London: University College London, Feb. 2000.

Sultana, Abeda. "Patriarchy and Women's Subordination: A Theoretical Analysis". *The Arts Faculty Journal*. Dec 2012. DOI: doi.org/10.3329/afj.v4i0.12929. (9 May 2020).

Swaminathan, Kalpana. *The Monochrome of Madonna*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2010.

TNN. "Murder in the Womb". *Times of India*. 11 Jan. 2006. Web. 24 Dec. 2019.

Varghese, Dawson, E. *Reading New India: Post-Millennial Indian Fiction in English*. New Delhi: Bloomsbury. 2013.

Worthington Heather. *Key Concepts in Crime Fiction*. Palgrave Macmillan. 2011.

Xalxo, Jessica. "Day2: Women Crime Writing. Do They Go Hand in Hand?". *Mumbai Women Writer's Fest*. Feb. 2018.