



“Feminist perspectives in Anita Nair’s novels “Ladies coupe’ and Lessons in forgetting”.

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ABSTRACT

Anita Nair is famous postmodern Indian English writer, her novel ladies coupe explores the experiences of different women by journey. This novel main theme is self-discover from the subjugation of Indian male dominated society. Here *Ladies coupe* means reserved compartment of ladies in train. In post-colonial period most of novels written about women’s emancipation and their issues in Indian society. In Indian society male believed to them superior and inferior to ladies and overwhelm to them. Indian English fiction is the reflection of society. This paper focuses on women’s suffering, emancipation and at last their self-discovery. Her novels explore the freedom of woman to fulfill herself basically as a human being. The present article intends to explore the searching for Feminist perspectives in Anita Nair’s *Lesson in Forgetting*.

CHAPTER-I

Introduction

Anita Nair is the eminent writer who was born in Kerala. She is novelist, journalist, short story writer and famous poet also. The majority of 20th century novels depicts the women’s issues and related their status in Indian society. In Indian English fiction great women writers like Anita desai, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa lahiri, Anita Nair who depict feminist picture of Indian society. In Indian English Fiction, women writers analyzing issues of women, complex relationship of man and woman, made a victim

of society etc. She is the bestselling writer whose two novels Lesson in Forgetting and Ladies coupe who translated into many languages in the world. Her other recognized works, Magical Indian Myth, Mistress, Adventure of Nonu, Living next door to alive. Ladies coupe is the best novel whom gave her status of creative writer and feminist spark. Literature is the mirror of our society. Anita Nair shows to us Social realism of condition of women in Indian Patriarchal society. Before women know by identity of relationship of mother, daughter and as wife but now she become conscious about her identity.

Anita Nair’s Ladies coupe has the voice of women in contemporary post-colonial India. In this novel have different women characters and their life event. They share their story to each other how they exploited in male dominated society. Ladies coupe is the journey of self-discovery. It is a discourse of womanish. She depicts the plight of women which she has seen. Once she was travelling by lady’s coupe then she feels it.

CHAPTER-II

A journey from innocence to self- realization in Anita Nair’s *Ladies Coupe*

Anita Nair’s Ladies Coupe deals with the concept of patriarchy and signifies inequality in family relationships. This novel contains different stories of women who are from varied communal setup and family backgrounds. The central concept of the novel is the protagonist

Akhila search for self-identity in order to find her own self; she goes for a train journey. This novel presents the life of six women travelling together in a ladies compartment, narrating their life stories and experiences. These women, with flash back, recall their experiences and narrate their life stories, their typical experiences as women in the contemporary Indian society. Every one is the protagonist in her story. Each of these six women faces different problems in their family. They all accidentally together in a ladies coupe and like Chaucer's *Pilgrims*, narrate the stories of their own life.

The novel *Ladies Coupe* opens with "a sense of escape" for Akhila 45 years old spinster an escape from the inevitability of her life, which demands her to do "what is expected of her". Unfortunately Akhila's father died in an accident. After her father death she got the job of her father. She takes all the responsibility of her family. But nobody in the family understood her feelings and emotions. As only thing is she is only as a provider and earning machine for them. Akhila falls in love with Hari, younger than herself, who loved her. She also loves him a lot but she came away from him because she was afraid to face the society, and for the sake of her family. Akhila met karpagam, her school friend, her husband died and she lived alone with her daughter with self confidence and courage. The meeting of karpagam gave Akhila a kind of inspiration to face this competitive word alone. One day Akhila realizes that she has got nothing from life not even memories to look back to. Akhila is tired to leading life, to change the course of life. At one stage she wants to free from all the responsibility of her family. She decides to do something, she had never done before.

Akhila takes a train journey to go to kanyakumari. On her way to kanyakumari she meets five different women in the ladies compartment. Her fellow passengers like Janagi, Sheela, Margaret Shanthi, Prabha Devi, Marikkolanthu. Each with a story of her own but

all of them have one thing in common and that is their search for the real denotation of life. They are all in one way or other devastated in their life under it cruel rule of the society, though these have different stories. They are connected with one another, and the victims of the male dominated society.

Janaki is the oldest woman in the coupe with a story that many women of her age will identify with. She has friendly relationship with her husband Prabhakar. She has always someone to protect her in her life. She was first protected by her father, then by her brother and then her husband, and her son Siddharth. She believes that a woman's duty is to be a good wife and a good mother. She makes her home as her kingdom. It is too late to amend her life when she realizes that even a strong and independent woman can make a good wife and a good mother.

CHAPTER-III

Breaking the traditional taboos in Anita Nair's *Lessons in Forgetting*

Lessons in Forgetting is a depiction of characters, which shows such characters who failed in their marriage because of psychological conflicts. This novel portrays the life of upper middle-class families of 90's against the backdrop of the southern Tamil Nadu and Bangalore. This novel is about the disintegration of marriage among the middle class. Every woman in the novel undertakes a painful and endless journey to make painful choices to assert and retain their sense of self. This novel is also a story of forgetting, forgiveness, redemption and second chances. It revolves around the five stages. Cyclogenesis of Despair, The circus canopy of Denial, The spiral bonds of Deceit, the eye wall of Devastation and The Eye of Calm.

In *Lessons in Forgetting* Nair describes a tale of two individuals, Meera, the protagonist and J.A. Krishnamoorthy, cyclone expert, who manages to work through all the odds. The two

stories connected with each other. Meera lives in Lilac house with her grandmother Lily, her mother Saro and two children Nayandara and Nikhil. Her father Raghavan Menon a native of Calicut works in Calcutta. He falls in love with Charo a Bengali woman and marries her they had a child Leela. He lives in Lilac house on ninety-nine years lease, he is not the owner of the house. As soon as the lease is over he has to quit the house. His wife dies early, Meera sends her daughter Leela to Shantiniketan for studies. The brothers of Raghavan do not like him coming back to Calicut. At that time a Bengali Director spots Leela and motivates her to work in Hindi Cinema by changing her name Lily. She becomes a famous actress with the name of Lily. She marries Sandor, a Hungarian Painter. She comes to live in Lilac House which Raghavan took for ninety-nine years lease. A girl child Saro is born to them. Saro grows independent and became a woman of unique taste. She falls in love with her best friend's brother and marries him. They have a daughter by name Meera the protagonist of the novel.

Saro's husband dies earlier when she is thirty-nine years old and so she takes shelter in the Lilac House with her nineteen-year-old daughter. After her father's death Meera leads a simpleton life. She finishes her post graduate degree in English language and Literature. She describes as Hera, a Greek goddess. She never aspires big dreams, she has no desire for expansive clothes and adornments. She is the goose girl of the Lilac House. There occurs a change in her life when the Lilac House is chosen for the photo shoot of coconut kisses. Her life seems to be normal until she meets Giri, one of the shooting crew.

Giri, is a son of a poor man yellowing banian and dhoti in Palakkad. He lives in an old decrepit house and relatives as stingy and penurious as his father. He has been fortunate in his brains and his maths teacher Sivaraman Iyer sends him to REC and then IIM in Ahmedabad. He gets placed in the campus recruitment and

finds a job in the corporate world. He is a good planner, he makes plans about where he would be by the time he will be 30, 40, 45. Thereafter he will have the playing fields of life. He is in search of an opportunity to reach the Zenith of life. He wants to forget the reminiscences of his father in his yellowing banian and dhoti and the old decrepit house and relatives. He is longing for polished life style, a man for higher aspirations for social status. He meets Meera, who leads a modest life without any high dreams in her life.

CHAPTER-IV

Conclusion

In the realm of fiction, Indian writing in English has heralded a new era in which women writers have come out boldly to raise the question of the prominent age old patriarchal domination, traditional customs, gender inequality in Indian society. The works of great writers like Kamal Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Arunthathi Roy, Meena Alexander, Anita Nair and other women writers have left a deep impression in the minds of readers of Indian writing in English. Anita Nair, a living postmodern Indian woman writer in English is one of the greatest Indian woman writers. Her novels mainly deal with the experiences of the women protagonists who face traumatic situations in the family life.

The women of the household are required to prepare the meal for the men, who eat most of the food. Only after the males are finished eating, can the females eat. Typically the leftover food is meager, considering the families are poor and have little to begin with. Even though the constitution guarantees free primary schooling to every one up to 14 years of age, very few females attend school. There are several reasons why families choose not to educate their daughters. One reason is that parents get nothing in return for educating their daughters. Another reason is that all the females

Works Cited

in a household have the responsibility of the housework. In addition, even if a woman is educated, especially in the poorer regions, there is no hope for job. Most jobs women perform are agricultural or domestic which do not require a formal education. Another reason girls are not educated because families are required to supply a chaste daughter to the family of her future husband.

India has mandatory reporting of any sexual offence against a child, child abuse, in its various forms can be found everywhere in India, in cities and rural homes, in the rich home and the poor, and in the streets and schools. Wiping out child abuse in India requires a complex strategy that will require multi-stakeholder support. This abuse can be of several organizations (WHO) like physical, emotional, mental, psychological or in the form of neglect or exploitation. Parents must educate children about sexual advances or threats and protect them from abuse through the concept of unacceptable "bad touch." This communication must be constant, friendly, and frank and teach children how their sexuality works so they don't unknowingly harass others.

In India, male dominance is everywhere. It is found superiority of men in every phase of our lives. When women are born, they have their fathers to look after, their brothers then share the responsibilities of the father when they enter their teenage years, then they have their own life partners who decide everything in their married lives, lastly their sons enter the bandwagon in our old age days. To a very large extent, lives of women in our country are decided and controlled by the men in their lives.

Today India offers a lot of opportunities to women, with women having a voice in everyday life, the business world as well as in political life. Nevertheless India is still a male dominated society, where women are often seen as subordinate and inferior to men. The society has to treat men and women equally.

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