



# Feminism: Man – Woman relationship in Anita Nair's 'Mistress'

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**Abstract :** Feminism is a belief that women should be socially, politically and even economically equal to men in all most all spheres of life.

This expression is not new. It is as old as English. Anita Nair is a successful Indian women writer who regards feminism. Her novel 'Mistress' deals with the Women's quest for freedom and their position in male dominated society. It is a question whether women should be restricted only to play the roles of wives and mother. In this regard, woman's life is limited only for reproduction regardless of her own desires and needs. Hence, I have made a sincere effort to preview Indian feminism and attitude through the novel, 'Mistress'. All her novels have a talent for probing the insular world Anita Nair's powers for the delineation of the deeper layers of the woman's relationship.

**Key words:** Feminism, desires, power, chances, domination, sensitive, resistance, men and men.

**Introduction :** Feminism is a belief that women should be socially, political and economically equal to men. They are equal in all chances and rights. For centuries, women were merely portrayed as dependent. This is witnessed by Manu's saying, a Hindu codifier, in these lines :

Duteous girl obeys her father;  
Husband sways the duteous wife,  
Son controls the widowed mother,  
Never free is a women's life. (23)

Neither men nor women can claim any superiority over each other. But in human civilization, women are allowed to play a secondary role. Though they are the embodiment of love, affection, endurance, affinity and foresight which lead to the happiness of others.

Feminism is a global phenomenon which speaks of various issues related to women is applicable to various cultures and society. When we consider humanity both men and women are equal, it has no sex, mind recognizes no sex, life and death, pleasure and pain harmness and miseru. Both are abide by natural laws.

Beginning from the inception of the universe, there has been a fascinating myth with the creation of woman by Lord Brahma. He created man and \_\_\_\_ created woman stating.. “She will serve you life long and if you cannot live with her, neither can you live without her”. (Genres in Indian Lit. 2012).

**Objectives:** The main objective of this paper is to prove the power of women in our daily life. And she is one who cares and helps to lead a peaceful life. Moreover it is an attempt to assert that women are always superior to men and their contribution is a previous one for the development of a family and even the whole universe.

### **Contribution of Women writers in Indian English Writing:**

Women writers in India are moving forward with strong and sure strides matching the pace of the world. Our Indian women writers portray their women who live with real of flesh and protagonists who adjust themselves to the existing surroundings, their societies and their families. Our women writers consider feminism as a rapidly developing critical ideology with a major segment of the contemporary writing in English. Indian writing in English has a rich source of bestselling women authors like Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur, Anita Desai, Kannada Markandayya, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Nair, Kamala Das and Kamala Nambism. When we take up Anita Nair, she is the best author of fiction and poetry, with her famous novels ‘The Betler Man’ and ‘Ladies Coupe’ which are translated into 21 languages. Anita Nair was born in Kerala and raised in Chennai. At the early age, itself she had developed an affinity towards writing and the courage to pursue it under all situations. She started writing her first novel without any hope of being published. But today she is the author of ten books. They all contain the different roles played by women in their lives. Nair strongly believes: “You are the person who holds your destiny in your hands. Even if the whole world conspires against you to push you down and rub your face into the dust, at some point that foot will be lifted off and you will stand up again? She has bagged many awards for her enormous contribution to literature. In 2006, she is one of India Today’s 30 power women in India. Her award JFW for literary Excellence (2010) is a pride of Indian women writers. The Kerala Sahithya Academy (2012) and the Arch of Excellence Award (2012) by the All India Achievers’ conference, New Delhi, for literature. For her contribution to children’s literature. She was presented the central Sahithya Academy award. She is a novelist, travel writer, essayist, poet, short story writer and writer of stripes for children. She is working as a creative director in an advertising agency in Bengaluru.

## **Achievements of Anita Nair:**

Anita Nair's admirable writings have got innumerable awards like Kerala Sahitya Academy award. Her name is in the finalist for the 2007 PEN \ beyond Margins award in the U.S.A. Even in Germany during 2007. She's been nominated a finalist for Liberaturpreis. She was proud to be listed on the Orange prize long list in the UK, She won the FLOFICCI Women achievers award in 2008 for literature and her novel "Idris Keeper of the light" was also shortlisted for the Hindu Literary Prize in 2014.

Nair attracts the readers to enjoy a wonderful journey through her ability of presenting the stories with colourful and unique characters she knows the heart of the human psyche. So that she evokes the experiences of day-to-day life. Let me restrict myself to focus on her third novel, 'The Mister'. The novel talks about the human relationships, man-woman relationship and analyses pre-marital, marital, extra marital relationship and estrangement between husband and wife. In this novel, Nair holds revolutionary ideas about marriage and man-women relationship. Throughout the novel, she stresses on the development of personality and genius which are remarkable. According to her, economic independence is incidental and not important in man-woman relationship, what matter most is the importance of surroundings and environment. Anita Nair is interested to explore the theme of man-woman relationship in 'The Mistress'. Nair highlights the pathos of modern woman in a male dominated society and her destruction at the altar of marriage. Now-a-days, marriages seem to be unions of incompatibility than compatibility. Men choose to be rational whereas women are sentimental and emotional. They won't match each other on their attitudes and interests. Even their reactions are quite different. In the "Mistress", Anita Nair depicts the changing relationship between husband and wife in the society. A sense of alienation arises between the two due to the lack of communication and temperamental compatibility leads to theme of the novel.

Anita Nair proposes a new philosophy in the relationship between husband and wife by affirming the social and conventional basis of marriage which is being eroded and this may not be solemnized. Recently the Supreme Court of India accepted the live in relationship which can be continued as long as their emotional bonding subsists.

## **The Mistress:**

It is her third novel in which Anita Nair depicts the changing relationship between husband and wife in society. She opines that woman's freedom lies in her mental and emotional attitude even in her wellbeing. The novel includes several themes like art and adultery, excitement of new found love, equator and ugliness of love, abuse, dashed hopes and dark family secrets. In this novel, we come across the infatuation and obsession over the rift of religion, marriage, legitimacy and conventions. It also deals extensively with pre-marital and post-marital Sex. The novel revolves around the author's binding if with Kathakali, a popular and rigorous dance form of Kerala. It holds the pre-marital, non-marital and extra-

marital sex. The main protagonist of the novel is a kathakali artiste of international repute. Very importantly Anita Nair has believed strong faith in new humanism where there is a space for woman's equality with man rather than woman being treated as a mere sex toy. In her view, a free woman is not only to enjoy the better economical or social

privileges but also develop emotional as mental attitude. In the addition, on one hand, Novel looks at the dependency which breeds strong emotions through shyam, a self-made entrepreneur has been humiliated by his uncle, Radha's father who brings a marriage proposal with his daughter.

“What is wrong? Shyam asked as gently as he could”?

She has been involved with a man

So why don't you get them married”?

Incidentally Shyam is in love with Radha. He dreamt of Radha to be his possession at any cost knowingly about Radha's pre-marital relationship with a married man feels happy to marry her if she agrees. His mother approves their marriage. His sister, Rani Oppol doubts that Shyam has been forced to agree.

### **Recognition of Women :**

In olden days, women were merely portrayed as dependent souls on men. They were meant for the happiness of others. They were the embodiment of sacrifice and dependency. They were almost dumb. Nowadays, these concepts that changed at various levels shaking the convention of dependency. They try their level best to undertake the journey of self-discovery to be recognized. Majority of modern women have reached their destination remaining percentage is on the way to reach their successful destination.

Through Radha knows that wring another man is a sin. Yet continues to have illicit relationship with Chris, a foreigner, writer and a Journalist. Chris is a lover of music too. He wants to know whether Komam wan his father even Radha, herself has to grapple with the question whether her uncle, who had an affair with her mother, was her father.

Radha meets Chris secretly. As a wife, she is a symbol of the glory and prestige of her family and transmitter of tradition from generation to another. Radha does not set right her life even after her marriage with Shyam. She never cares for the reputation of her husband. Her illicit relationship allows other to comment about her husband.

She always busy fulfilling her sex desires with Chris. At the same time she has no o gratitude for Shyam, who gives her a life in her ruins and in her family cross roads. Though Shyam feels deceived but yet loves her so much. This is the evidence of his good nature and true love for her. In this regard, Nair makes a successful attempt to throw a light on different aspects of human relationship and the factor for changing attitude of a man towards another man she feels that men are succeeded in suppressing woman for centuries.

Feminists are happy that they had the issue of women empowerment through education as a means of challenging patriarchal ideology of male domination and women subordination. Empowerment entails life-long struggle for survival and transforming the structures and institutions that seem to reinforce gender discrimination and social inequality. According to Graham-Brown (1991), for the individual, empowerment through education promises an escape from poverty, oppression. It promises greater social prestige, job mobility and better future prospect. Education empowers through.

A tripartite between or among languages, literature and culture has been well established and documented (Olaoye, 2002, Isyaku, 2004). They declare that without language literature is unthinkable and the trios are intricately interwoven. Their role is significant in moulding man's education and nation development.

### **To Conclude:**

Anita Nair declares that the social and conventional basis of marriage that social and conventional basis of marriage is being eroded and this would ultimately lead to a situation where marriage may not be solemnized or performed at all. Recently the Supreme Court of India has approved the live-in-relationship without getting married in mutual understanding to be continued as long as the trust each other till their basis emotional bonding subsists. Neither man or woman is superior to one another. But in human civilization, women are often allocated a secondary role. However, women are the embodiment of endurance, forgiveness, love, affinity and foresight which are helpful to the happiness of others.

Anita Nair's "Mistress" focuses on the issue of self realization. Though Anita Nair is not a funniest, her stories take depth into the expectations of Indian married women and their choices of relationships. They are entangled in their suffering and rebellion born of that pain, and convey a message of hope, through the change that is out there and can become possible through one's courage and initiative.

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