



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

A Study Of Themes And Attitudes In The Novels Of Anita Nair

Shashi Singh¹ Dr. Shilpi Bhattacharya²

Research Scholar¹ Professor²

Department of Arts and Humanities ^{1,2}

Kalinga University, Naya Raipur (C.G.)

Abstract: Social factors like as caste discrimination, subjection of women, female infanticide, prostitution, lesbianism, and rape were witnessed differently by Anita Nair. All of this is the result of the author's self-examination of the characters in her novels. Controversial issues and sensitive societal conditioning are depicted by novelist Anita Nair's protagonists. Her writings reveal her as a landscape painter through their graphic depictions. Also, throughout her novels, she employs the use of internal monologues. She has a way of capturing the essence of life, family, society, and human beings in a way that few others can. She is ultimately an observer of the world and its people. For example, as a Keralite, she describes the "navarasas" in Kathakali forms. Simple, clear, and acceptable are just a few of the words she uses. She is a fast writer based on the spontaneity of her language. She has a unique ability to convey the human condition to her readers by integrating their feelings into their viewpoint.

Keywords: Anita Nair, Novels, Themes, Attitudes, Literary analysis, Indian literature

Introduction

In her writing, Anita Nair takes no prisoners. Anita Nair is adamant that she is not a feminist writer. It's an attempt to show the power of a woman's character. Anita Nair goes on to say that women's strength isn't generally regarded as a feminine quality. Ultimately, her writing approaches are different from those of other feminist writers. As a result, she is described as a "feminist with difference." She explores the real place of women in society and in their families. Taking women as women seriously has caused waves in the male-dominant society that she has helped change. Her effort to depict the plight, fears, dilemmas, contradictions, and ambitions of her female characters is impressive. " For her, the world of women and the battle they face is of utmost importance. Her characters' lives are described in depth in her novels. In her novels, she explores how social conditioning impacts women's lives. Literature is one of the numerous ways society uses to spread its ideas, and it is surrounded by these messages. Social norms do not hold them back, and they do not allow themselves to be constrained by the restrictions placed on women by society. Because of this, we may say that in depicting her female characters, Anita Nair breaks the norms of society and causes it to disintegrate. She makes us consider how vital it is to keep infidelity at bay in order to preserve the stability of our families. It is difficult or impossible to generalize about Indian culture because the female characters in Anita Nair's novels come from a variety of religions. Nair has written on the difficulties that Indian women face in her current Indo-English novels. This book explores the tension between Indian tradition and modernity. A woman's subservient position in Indian society has been illustrated by Anita Nair. Among the topics she has addressed are gender discrimination and societal conditioning of women, the husband-wife relationship, and the suppression of women and sexual exploitation of women both within and outside of the marital contexts.

Her assertion that the characters are little more than props for the plot can be argued against. Everyone will begin to think about other great authors and their works after reading her novel. They'll realise that most of them stay in the same place and lifestyle. Anita Nair's characters aren't flat since they're products of their upbringing and environment; rather, she's reflecting life and human nature in her writing. In a radio interview, Anita Nair has disclosed that she used to plot some scenes and the narration happened while she writes longhand. Then, after she's through writing, she'll add a few more details. She took inspiration for her characters from a variety of sources, including novels, films, and even people she met at the railway station. She had a hazy memory of meeting a woman with a sorrowful expression like Akila some time ago. The author's curiosity about their lives led him to pen a story.

When it came to Anita Nair, she had a firm sense that the world would one day want to hear what she had to say. She was unfazed by the rejection letters that arrived on a daily basis. Poetry Society of India included a poem called "Happenings in the London Underground" in their anthology in 1992, and that was the beginning of it all. Then, over time, stories began to arise in the media. Her stories have been heard on the radio several times. She also started writing for the Times of India on a regular basis. Even though *Satyr of the Subway* was published by a modest firm in June 1997, it drew the attention of critics and readers alike. The cover of *Satyr of the Subway* (1997), designed by a design agency, was one of the reasons for its success. Anita Nair began working with India's first literary agency around this period. In 1998, she finished her manuscript and signed with Laura Susijn, a literary agent in London, in a single week. *The Better Man* (1999) followed, and it was picked up by Penguin India and Picador USA practically immediately. Picador released the first book by an Indian author based in India, and it hit the shelves in 2000. Today, countries including France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, and India publish *The Better Man*. The novels, out of all her creations, are her most beloved by fans all around the world. Her first novel *The Better Man* (1999) is about the story that is set in the little, imaginary village of Kaikurussi, in Kerala, and the state where Nair was born and that saturated her poetic and reminiscent writing. Malabar was a territory that included Kerala in the past.

It is impossible for a writer like Anita Nair to separate herself from society, the violence, the system, and the injustice she sees all around her. By asking concerns, urging re-evaluation, and rethinking, the novels of these women writers might contribute in the formation of consciousness that can ultimately lead to a positive and healthy change in society. A wide swath of society is shown in Anita Nair's novel *Ladies Coupé*, where the women of the *Ladies Coupé* share their feelings and thoughts in a private conversation. An unforgettable cast of characters and their psychological states are introduced in *Cut Like Wound*, which is set in Bangalore, India's largest city. *Lessons in Forgetting* is a heartwarming narrative of redemption, forgiveness, and second chances. Speaking of writing in urban India, she discusses the book's focus on the role of a corporate wife. On the fringes of society, she focuses her attention. People she writes about rise up in revolt against the structures of society. She is a skilled negotiator and manipulator who advocates for the interests of the middle class. A minor cultural shift has been seen throughout the course of this journey.

In Anita Nair's second novel, *Ladies Coupe* (2001), the protagonist is Akhilandeshwari alias Akhila. She is a 45-year-old spinster. After her father's death, she is given the position of income tax clerk. She comes from a conservative Brahmin Tamil family. She's now a daughter, sister, aunt, and bread runner, all at the same time, balancing the responsibilities of all of her family members. When she finally gets the need to travel, she buys a one-way train ticket to Kanyakumari, a beach resort town. She meets five other ladies on the train to Kanyakumari, where they share their stories in the compartment with her. To show how patriarchy affects a woman's life, the novelist uses six women as examples. Cultural values confine people to the boundaries of the social order that has long been in place. Every aspect of their lives is riddled with injustice and inequity. Discussions regarding women's empowerment are held on one hand, but a question mark is cast on India's education system and social structure.

Anita Nair's journey of social reformation begins at home with her own family. For example, she shows how the social development of a human being is tied to the development of his or her own family. Her depiction of the traditional values held by the Brahmin family of Tamil Brahmins is convincing. In her novel *Ladies Coupe*, she defies numerous social and moral conventions by questioning the position of women in a tradition-bound

societal order that sees women only as an obedient daughter, a docile wife, and a mother. She reveals the dilemmas that women face in their relationships with their husbands, mothers, friends, employers, and children in modern India. She portrays the awful plight of Indian women in a patriarchal society where the rate of female foeticide has soared. Throughout her life, she is forced to go through a lot of difficulties. Once married and in old age, she is expected to rely on the grown-up male child of her husband, who is her father's legal guardian when she is born. She will always be a burden to others.

According to Robert Fraser, "Indian woman's identity is usually related to and defined by the social and cultural norms of a practicable structure" (44). Psychologically and physiologically, she has been constrained by the cultural expectations, rooted in the individual's and society's memories, and astonished by patriarchal temperament. She has been unable to break free from these constraints.

Anita Nair's protagonists are forced to reflect on their lives after experiencing marital strife or disappointment in her stories. Despite their contempt for marriage as a societal institution, her characters nevertheless turn to it for answers to their marital issues. Problems should be approached with a practical and well-balanced approach. They have the courage that comes from being honest with themselves about their situation. They don't blame others or their husbands, but they also blame themselves. After a brief period of separation from family, they are able to objectively evaluate their situation. Their quest for identification and self-realization can lead them to follow a more traditional path, since they adhere to social norms and institutions in the approach. They are women who are conscious of who they are as individuals, who have rights and obligations, who have valid passions, and who demand a free and independent life. As a result of their circumstances, they have matured as individuals and now see their relationship as something that should be maintained. When it comes to being a wife, many women are constrained by society norms and rules that impose limits on their capacity to thrive and be satisfied in their roles as wives.

Anita Nair rises from a social thinker to a social reformer in her work. There are several types of social crimes that she exposes: female foeticide and gang rape as well as stalking and acid-throwing as well as honour killings, rapes, and other forms of female mutilation. She focuses on the male-dominated culture of social norms and social expectations. If the poor and oppressed women have to marry and have children, she sees this as a financial burden; if the children are girls, she sees this as a sin; if they leave their families, she sees this as provocative; and so on. Women are still seen as a man's property that must be kept under control. Men are frightened that they may lose that control. Further, Nair's work *Idris* depicts a caste-based traditional social system. The rigid caste laws in society have a negative impact on her high-class characters. To put it another way: through her writings, she seeks to free herself from caste-based social systems.

Anita Nair has depicted the various aspects of human interactions and explains why a man's behaviour towards a man changes. She believes that men have been able to dominate women for centuries. She is unwavering in her vision of a better future in which men and women may live and work together harmoniously, developing a higher level of consciousness via a deeper sharing of significant concepts relevant to the current and prevailing conditions. The study concludes that all of the novelist's works show a disregard for women's rights. She has portrayed the fracturing of relationships between men and women. She tries to go into issues like spousal rape, male dominance, and betrayal. Among the topics she tackles is the right of women to be self-sufficient, as well as the roles of a woman as a wife, daughter, and mother. She also talks on women's quest for self-reliance and living without a man. They suffer, yet the women of Anita Nair use their pain to fight injustice, inequality, and discrimination. A beautiful fabric of female household ties has been created by her.

Author Anita Nair shows her interest and commitment to family life and writing by balancing her time between the two. A travel writer, she brings her readers in the furthest corners of the world. Anita Nair's travel journals are filled with tales of heart-pounding adventure and the discovery of fascinating new cultures all over the world. Her travelogues may be said to be records of her experiences in touring places. The Moroccan explorer Ibn Battuta has motivated her to travel the world, and she wants to do the same. It was in her early twenties that she realised that travel had taken on a new meaning for her. In those days, she didn't see herself as a writer gathering experiences every little episode to be marked and filed as grist to the mill for some future day. As a result, she turned to travel as an outlet to deal with the restlessness that is a part of her character. She was no

longer her mother's daughter, her sister's wife, or her own wife. She became this anonymous person soaking in every new sensation, thought and word. She felt her senses bloom and her mind open with charming enthrallment of words and the description of the places, she gives a full outlook of places to her readers.

Conclusion

Anita Nair is a writer who writes on the contemporary Indian middle class and their quest for individuality. When it comes to exploring the minds of women, her meditative and psychosomatic settings set the bar exceptionally high. As one of the most talented artists of the twenty-first century, she has become much more outspoken in expressing her fears about the state of women in uncongenial surroundings. It is clear that her female characters are sensitive and self-aware as well as clever and creative. Her characters are eager to break out of the roles society has assigned them. She has chosen to focus on Indian women, especially those from the south, because of the difficulties and tensions they face in today's Indian society. The 'new women' emerge from her being a feminist in the setting of her socio-cultural ethos and values prevalent in the culture. Image of woman and her roles as mother, sister, provider and grand-mother also affects her predicaments and adjustments in the relevant world.

References

1. Pauwels, Heidi. "Is Love Still Stronger than Dharma?: Whatever happened to Sita's Choice and the Gopis' Voice." *Playing for Real: Hindu Role Models, Religion and Gender*. Eds. Jacqueline Suthren
2. Hirst and Lynn Thomas. Delhi: Oxford UP, 2004. 117-40. Print.
3. Rao, Vidya. "Seeing Radha, Being Radha: Singing Ashta Chap Poetry and Thumri." *Re-searching Indian Women*. Ed. Vijaya Ramaswamy. Delhi: Manohar, 2003. Print.
4. Nair, Anita. *Ladies Coupe*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2001.
5. Desai, Anita. *Voice in the City*. New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 1982.
6. Nair, Anita. *Mistress*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2001.
7. Nair, Anita. *The Better Man*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2001.
8. Stoller, Robert J. *Sex And Gender: The Development of Masculinity and Femininity*. Karnac Books: London, 1974.
9. Nair, Anita. *Cut Like Wound*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2001.
10. Nair, Anita. *Chain Of Custody*. New Delhi: Harper Black, 2016.
11. Jain, Jasbir. *Gendered Realities, Human Spaces: The Writing of Shashi Deshpande*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2003.
12. Nair, Anita. *Ladies Coupe*. India: Penguin Books, 2001.
13. Kapur, Manju. *A Married Woman*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2002
14. Das, Kamala. *The Old House, The Old Playhouse and Other Poems*. Mumbai: Orient Longman, 1973, 2004.
15. Rao, Raja. *Kathapura*. New Delhi: Oxford, 2001.