
ENVISAGE A WORLD OF 'MACHO POWER' THROUGH LADIES COUPE

JAYASREE K

Abstract: The human relationships are better understood through the writers of today's phase. Women in Indian society have various roles such as a mother, daughter, sister, wife, homemaker, teacher, social activist and other unimagined roles. Since the novelist Anita Nair, is a women she dealt with gender issues, female subjectivity, exploitation, oppression, sexual predicament, psychological exploration and emotional inequalities in a male dominated society. Though patriarchy is a common concept in every woman's life, the novelist depicts carefully the diversity within each woman, as she does not want to put the lives of women to one ideal. An individual's journey in search of her life and self and a victimized women is portrayed here. It is an attempt on the part of the writer to show how the Indian women are reflected in the novels of both the men and women. There is a confined thinking and confined lives through the changing attitudes with their quest for identity, inner self, individuality and existence which is not so real in this modern world whereas men are subjected to such circumstances.

Keywords: Male Power, Women Empowerment.

Introduction:

Envisage a world of 'Macho Power' through Ladies coupe

Relationship plays a vital role in human encounter. It is the music of life. Without it no physical or mental aspect can be given a name. It moves around the world to keep the lives enriched with feelings. Anita Nair has presented in her novels, modern Indian women's search for revival of relationships that are central to women. Her own struggle as a writer is equally symptomatic of the resistance to feminist expression that prevails in India in the middle of the twentieth century. As a women writer her dilemma was either to give voice to women's concern and be branded as a 'women writer: removed from the mainstream of literary scene: or, to deny her feminist and write like a man either with male name or male narrative voice. Anita Nair reveals that her concern is with the exploration of human psyche. She explores the emotional ecology of her protagonists.

Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* has a journey motif. With a narrative that journeys backwards and forwards into the past and the present to determine the future, it deals with the diverse experiences of women as subalterns and exposes the diversity within and among women. It is about the chance meeting of six women of different age, class, and experience- Akhila, Janaki, Margaret, Sheela, Praba Devi and Marikolanthu in the Ladies Coupe, a second-class compartment of Indian Railways. The Coupe is symbolic of their existence and the space they occupied in life and in society. They narrate their stories in an attempt to help Akhila, the protagonist,

find an answer as to whether a woman in a male-dominated society could lead an autonomous life, independent of man. They approach the problem of sub alternity of women from different perspectives, and suggest to Akhila equally different yet successful strategies appropriated by them in life.

Nevertheless, the one theme that underlies Anita Nair's novels is the question of finding, and then asserting the identity, then a constant search mainly by the protagonists, for the answer to the question like "Who am I?", "Do I have a personality of my own?" or "Do I have just to be what others want me to be or what I imagine myself to become?". Moreover, we witness a conflict, internal and external, in this process of defining, discovering and affirming their selfidentity, once they realize what they actually stand for. Although the degree may vary, the female protagonist of Nair's novels exhibit eventually an assertion; a direct or indirect statement of they being self-styled, self motivated and independent thinking individuals, geared up for facing all the consequences of that assertion and never give up. This quest for assertive identity has been a continuous process evolving with each novel Anita Nair has come up with.

Anita Nair chooses family as a complete contrast of Akhila's family to interpret how the moral dilemmas of women are trapped in social and emotional circumstances, struggling against oppression and destiny. Listening to the lives of various women in the coupe Akhila gets down at Kanyakumari as an empowered woman to rediscover her "self". The more she wants to get rid of her life she had lived for

others, she desires more of her life, that is more of Hari and executes her decision to get reunited connected him over phone. Finally she succeeds in her defiance against patriarchy. She subverts the repressive forces of patriarchal ideas that have chained her not letting to discover her "self". Thus, in the novel, *Ladies Coupe* Anita Nair has presented an increasingly common concept of patriarchy in which a woman is constrained by tradition to be dependent on men, crippled to realize her own strength. She has presented her women struggling side by side because of patriarchy but at the end has given them a gesture of defiance against patriarchy. Her women have been portrayed as intelligent, questioning women who are not contented with the injustice and rebellion against them. So Anita Nairs women raise the question of their way of life consolidated by patriarchy, and see it not only as the site of their oppression at home and in society but also make it a field of battle to vanquish their oppressors.

Men have all the power, rights, property, etc. is a myth that commonly prevails in the contemporary era. Do our culture really empower men? The real fact is that men are marginalized, oppressed as per the words of Spivak regarding women empowerment. Men are just participating in the family whereas women became the heads of the family with their demand to empowerment. Western culture tones down the mere culture of the Indians. In the ancient past women are worshipped as gods and goddesses without seeking the right to empower or in demand whereas the society is reversible today. But in the present century women raising their voices in the name of feminism eradicating their motherliness, coming out of their homes in search of identity, losing themselves in the midst of westernized society, missing their families, replacing the male position with their unconscious attitude towards money and finally destroys the feminine quality within them. Do they really prove to be Indian women?

In the historical past, women with good health doing their household chores being a protector and backbone of a family with a spiritual concern in them made the society and culture, supporting men in all they do. Any random person in power would be men with his manliness, being a loving partner with

ambitious dreams to protect his family. Women in the name of feminism and giving the voice of feminist overtones lost their identity, in search of individuality on their own making stressed themselves. Women are not constrained in the name of tradition but in the name of westernization women spoil the culture and tradition making a predominant matriarchal society which paves women to destruction.

If such women as Anita Nair's protagonists exist and emerge in the society the country loses its tradition more than a woman loses her identity, the nation loses its wealth more than the woman loses her health, a unit of a society i.e. family is lost paving way to destruction of human mankind. Both genders are creations and gifts of god, to err is human but if the err lasts forever humanity needs to search for its individuality and identity. Women can do everything as that of man.

Gender relations in India involve influence dynamics. Woman's distinctiveness is constructed by gender, social class, caste, religion etc. Colonialism had rendered the doubly colonized identity of woman as a fixed and unchangeable one. Patriarchy, tradition, and Hindu religion had endorsed this inequality and injustice by legitimizing the control and oppression of women. Confined in the 'pativrata' ideal of Indian wifehood set by the images of Sita, Damayanti, Gandhari, Savitri etc., the Indian woman finds herself silenced. In the post colonial period, the decolonized male continued oppressing the female. Yet many Indian women have shown resilience and revolted against their positioning on the periphery. They have dared to defy the patriarchal image of woman as a silence and as an absence by confronting it, by challenging it to assert and appropriate their voice. They refused to be cocooned in the repressive ideologies.

Life is fulfilled only if one makes a persistent effort to assure themselves that they are doing the right and one mean nothing against the creator, not withstand the painful reality of Oedipus that those who attempt to know or scrutinize the unknown. The beauty of life is experienced in living through it with all human weakness and strengths to meet the destined will. In short, *Ladies Coupe*, is a fine women's world.

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Jayasree K/Assistant Professor/Department Of English/
Velalar College Of Engineering And Technology/
Thindal/ Erode- 638012/ Jayasreearuna@Gmail.Com