CHAPTER - 1
INTRODUCTION

What is family?

What is family? The word family is derived from the Latin word ‘Famulus’ which means a group of people comprising of parents, children and their servants. This is the literal meaning of the word ‘family’ but the meaning of family as a concept is much deeper and universal. The concept of family forms the backbone of the society. Hence, various socialists have tried to define family according to their point of view. For instance, Berges and Lock view family as:

1. A group which is made up of marriage, blood – relationships, and adoptions and which creates a family where husband – wife, mother – father and brother – sister perform their social duties and create their own culture and follow it (p. 17).

Dr. Majumdar observes family as:

2. A group of people who live together, who have a blood – relationship, and who know their responsibilities for each other and are wholly united (p. 17).

While, according to Macwire:
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3. *Family is a group which is very steady and small and are determined on the basis of sexual relationships which form the basis of satisfaction of physical needs and proper formation of reproduction again* (p.17).

Family system can be mentioned as an important social group which forms the society. Its acts as a pillar for the society. It is a fact that the very concept of society is unimaginable without the concept of family. The most important factor about family is that it is not only a group of people but also a special group of social relations. This system, based on relationships which are formed on the pillars of love and affection, builds the personalities of members in a natural way.

In this sense, family system can also be called a system of nomenclature ie. a system which is based on permanent and steady marital relationships. It helps in forming permanent mating relations and also helps in avoiding free sex. Without marriage, family cant be formed. Though in some societies, pre-marital relationships have some existence, it is ultimately, the relationship after marriage which forms the family and is able to give a steadiness to it. Hence, when a marriage breaks, family also breaks.
On studying every human society, it can be said that family is the only group where attachments to each other are on the basis of emotions. While, a husband and a wife live together due to mutual love, respect and sympathy, there is a cord of love between parents and children which make them live together. The very common aim of all for one and one for all is the very speciality of family system.

As already mentioned, family is a group of husband, wife and children. Through marriage, acclaimed by society, man and woman come together, live together and the sexual relationship between them is accepted by the society, thus allowing their off-springs to become its permanent members. There can be a variation of permanence of husband–wife relationships according to different societies but marriage still enjoys a special position in society since without marriage, the growth of family members is next to impossible.

**Characteristics of family**

A permanent family system has certain rules which can also be stated as its characteristics. Some of these characteristics are:

1) Family system is a system which essentially helps in forming the personality of an individual. In a person’s life, he or she spends most of the time following the traditions and culture of his or her family and
hence, this tie lasts forever. Personality development is mostly affected by family. Hence, Mr. Kale says: 4. *Family is a nursery which nurtures an individual* (p. 17).

2) Family is a group of limited size or members because the members of the family are only formed through birth, marriage and adoptions. Due to this, the most important specialities of primary group or the ancestors of the family can easily be formed and inherited.

3) Almost every important function such as birth, growth, social status, etc is a part of family system hence family system enjoys the most vital status in society.

**Types of family**

Family can be divided into two types – joint family and nuclear family. In India, society is largely dominated by joint family system. Hence, the reference of joint family system is seen and defined by many books and scholars. In the book, *Hindu Law and Custom*, Jolly says:

5. *Joint family not only contains mother – father, their children, real and step brothers and their equal rights on property but also in a joint family, members of different generations, their ancestors and relatives live together* (p. 21).
Dr. I. P. Desai says:

6. *Joint family is a family where various generations (at least three) live together with their children and have equal rights and duties* (p. 21).

Dr. Iravatibai Karve says:

7. *People living together at a same place, eating in one kitchen, having equal claims on property, taking part in religious functions due to the blood – relationships, is the group of people which is called joint family* (p. 21).

Here, Dr. Desai differs with Dr. Karve since according to Dr. Desai, generation depth and mutual understanding are the most important things. He emphasises on the feeling of unity and awareness of duties for one another.

Universality is a speciality of family. Family system is evident in every era, decade and society. Whatever might be the situation and condition of social progress, this system exists because the very
imagination of human society without family is impossible. Some scholars have considered family as the first stage of society but in countries like Israel, Russia, etc. a lot of criticism is done. In these countries, the genuine attraction between a male and female is the only consideration. A lot of experiments are done on looking after the children, their education and social status but their failure shows the importance of family structure.

In order to identify every member of the family, individually, there is a system of naming the family or carrying the names of ancestors. This system is either based on matriarchal generation or patriarchal generation. In father-dominated families, the family carries the name of father's generation, while, in mother dominated families, mother's generation name is carried. In India, there are two types of family- the one in which mother is the head, while the other has father as its head. The former is found in South India and North - Eastern parts like Assam, Nagaland and Manipur while, the later is common in rest of the country. Khansi, Gare, Nayar, etc. are the tribes where mother is the head of the family and where, after marriage, husband goes to his wife's house to live. In patriarchal families, husband's home is the place where family members live. However, in modern society, husband - wife make their own different home. As Dr. S. C. Dubey calls it: 8. *A newly formed family* (p. 25).
The change in family structure

1) Previously, the responsibility of social security of the members was with the family. Today, this work has been done on a large scale by government. Different types of policies, pensions, social security laws, insurance and various funds have been provided by the government. Hence, social security is now a joint responsibility of family and government.

2) In traditional family system, the family was dominated by father and in spite of many changes, it is still dominated by the same but the rights of father have changed. Previously, every right was in the hands of man but now women enjoy equal rights. She is an active participant in important issues. She also expresses her views firmly which definitely depicts her confidence and talent. In property distribution, wives and daughters have already ensured their share which is already been accepted by the government. Previously, they had their share but they never used to get it. In modern society, due to going outside for work, women had become economically independent and are getting equal payment for their energy. The modern woman is a much confident and independent woman which is surely an important change from the point of view of family.

3) In older age, the base of traditional family system was the consideration of every member of the family. There was a feeling of one for all and all for one but the modern society emphasises on individualism. This indicates that the concept of family system has destroyed and every member is getting self-conscious. The very thought, *Me – Myself – My
wife – My kids is getting dominant with the changing times. In western and progressive countries, this feeling has even shrunk to merely Myself. Every person has started thinking of himself. The decreasing relationship of parents and relatives is a major change in family structure.

4) The traditional and natural process of child birth has also witnessed some changes like awareness in child care, mother care, size of family, reduction in number of children and their development. Various organisations and government are working hard in providing different facilities in this area.

5) Child care has always remained an important part of family structure but these days, this work is assisted by the government and several institutions. Because of working parents and the absence of any elderly person due to the reduced size of family, kids are taken care by crashes, nurseries and kids’ schools.

6) Social restrictions is an inevitable part of society and family structure helps in absorbing the rules and restrictions. Due to the expansion of modern society, social restrictions no more prove to be effective. Hence, today, family system has given this work to government and institutions in the form of various bans and prohibitions.

7) In ancient society, due to limitations, education was considered important and was entirely the responsibility of family. The modern society provides infinite fields in education. Formal education has become essential and
various institutions like colleges, schools and universities have taken over the things. It is again an important change in the area of family.

**Factors affecting the change in family structure**

There is a great change in family structure in this century. The factors responsible for this change are:

1) The first factor, in this regard, is the greater quantity of industrialisation. In India and other Asian countries, the economy was based on agriculture before the arrival of industrialisation. Hence, the family structure, then, was also agriculture based. With the arrival of industrialisation, many professions came into existence and the need for new talents started increasing. As a result, in search of good opportunities, people started moving away from the families to industrial fields and started ignoring their traditional profession, agriculture. Due to modern agricultural equipment, the need for man power decreased. Hence, many jobless people started going to city.

2) The upside down of various kingdoms and revolutions affected family structure, strongly. Due to French Revolution and American freedom struggle, new values dominated the world. Various reforms of social change also came into existence. The very concept of social and economic justice came ahead. Considering the change, the government made certain rules which affected the traditional family system.
3) Education is an important factor in changing family structure. Previously, due to less education, people were not aware of the happenings around. The modern education has helped in changing this world into a global village. As a result, the sacrificial attitude is diminished and the traditional family values are getting destroyed. The worst victims are the traditional beliefs and culture which formerly, kept the family united. Education has opened new areas and in these areas, the traditional family structure is getting affected.

**Impact of change in family structure**

Due to the new system of industrialisation, a drastic change came in status and role of family. Several new concepts like individualism and women's liberation came into existence.

The impact of revolutions and a drastic change in education resulted in the form of growing self – consciousness. The increasing percentage of divorce, parent less children and extra marital relationships became a part of life. The concept of nuclear and reduced members' family is now common even in a traditional country like India. Personal ambitions and up - gradation of economic status are an obsession in modern society. Though, it is not much dominant in Indian society, we are leading to it, rather fast.
Thus, it could be said that society never has a steady form. It always keeps on changing. While, in some societies, change is rapid, in others, it is slow. According to K. Davis: 9. This is a social change in consideration of formation of society and it's duties (p. 34).

In this context, Macwire and Pej have stressed on change in relationships. Hence, it can be said that if any change takes place in any formation and duty of an institution then that change naturally proves to be that institution's change. It happens because various institutions are attached to each other, culturally. Thus, the change in one institution proves to be the change of another. Similarly, when the changes comes in other part of society, family system also gets affected, to a certain extent.

Indian society is a society which has a great value for family structure since it is still dominated by the ideals and values practised by traditional Indian joint families. However, this structure broke and due to this sudden change, the society got deeply affected which in return, affected the family structure, again. The process of destruction is inter-related in this context and is also constant. It is also a viscous circle.

Literature and society have always remained dependent on each other. Thus, if there is a change in society, literature gets directly affected and vice-versa. Thus, when the traditional Indian joint family structure broke and society got affected, again affecting the relationships, Indian
English literature, also, witnessed some major changes and the changing values of family system became a dominant theme in Indian novels in English.

Novel as a literary phenomenon is new to India, since, it came almost a century late in to this country. The novel is that form of literature which is complex, multi-layered, rich, many-stranded, episodic, loose, meandering, unconventional having original metaphors, fantasy, surrealism, stream of consciousness and audacious disarranged syntax. It takes all the qualities from the Moghal miniature style *Humsa Nama* where seven to eight painters make one picture. Similarly, all these techniques give novel a force – flowing, unbound, unrestricted and unshackled quality.

In the Indian society, the real beginning of novel was with the works of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838 – 1894), who, effectively threw light on the age old problems of Indian families such as seclusion of widow from the family, marriage and child marriage in *The Poison Tree* and *Krishnakanta’s Will*. Then followed Tagore, who wrote about the deteriorating family values, love stories and family structure in his various works like *The Wreck, The Home and the World, Binodini* and *Char Adhyay*. 
In Bengal, Romesh Chander Dutt followed the same of family structure in his works like *The Lake of Palms*. The same theme can be seen in the works of Nagesh Vishwanath whose literature aims at giving pictures of Indian life and human portrayal like that of a Parsi girl and her mother — in — law in one of his works. While, in south, T. Ramakrishna Pillai composed *Padmini — an Indian Romance* in 1903, which is a love story of the 17th century. *The Love of Kusuma* in 1910 by Balkrishna followed the theme of love after *Padmini — an Indian Romance*.

1909 to 1960 is a period of time, which saw a number of novels on the changing family structure. The same period proved crucial to the country, since, in the same period, the country witnessed many major incidents like the departure of British. Ironically, the impact of British culture intensified in their absence. Before the arrival of British, joint family system was dominant in society and the rules and regulations practised by the members were considered the most vital. These regulations and restrictions imposed a certain discipline on society and they were directly related to culture, religions and ethics. Hence, they provided a sort of security for all the members. With the arrival of British, new religion and culture in the form of Christianity entered into this country. The freedom and the liberation of this culture attracted specially those people who were the victims of social evils and customs. Hence, there were a lot of conversions. These conversions not only affected the social structure but broke completely the coherent fabric of family structure. The feeling of individualism started dominating the society, widening the gaps even in traditional relationships like that of husband and wife, mother and
daughter, father and son, brother and sister and between friends. This increasing individualism and the shadowy relationships became the theme of most of the Indian novels in English in the light of the changing family structure which was changing but not necessarily for better. Similar theme is seen in *Athewar House* written in 1939 by S. Nagarajan which covers a period of 15 years in the history of a Maratha Brahmin family in South India. Similarly, *Vedantam: The Clash of Traditions* by V.V. Chintamaní is a study of the impact of western culture upon a traditional South Indian family.

This was the scenario of a period which saw so many changes at every level. The social conditions of the country were changing drastically. Though, the power of British was losing its grip, at the surface level, the mental presence has always dominated the Indian minds. This is clearly visible in the works of R. K. Narayan such as *The Bachelor of Arts*. which is the first novel to deal with the theme of love and marriage. The nucleus of the narrative is the infatuation of a youth for a pretty girl which he calls love at first sight, but its depth is clearly visible from the universal fact of juxtaposition of infatuation and reality i.e. the obsession leading the main protagonist to come to terms with the hard realities of life. Similarly, *The English Teacher* by R. K. Narayan, is a nice presentation of man–woman relationship on two different planes – the temporal and the spiritual. The sweet and sour relationship of Krishnan – the main protagonist, who is a teacher in English with his wife, Sushila, basically presents a perfect domestic picture of a family which is entirely complete with only one daughter.
However, the thread breaks with Sushila’s death leading Krishnan to loneliness from which, he comes out, ultimately, by establishing a close companionship with his dead wife and understanding the real meaning of life and death. While, in *The Vendor of Sweets*, there is a conflict of two generations in the form of the tussle between a father and a son due to the son’s relationship with a foreigner girl, *The Guide* depicts the obsession of the main protagonist, Raju, with the dancer Rosie which results in the ruin of their career and family life and his, ultimately, becoming a *sanyasi*.

Contemporary to R. K. Narayan, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala is a major name in Indian fiction in English. Like Narayan, Jhabvala is obsessed with family structure. Love and marriage and Indian family life are the favourite subjects of Jhabvala and she returns repeatedly to the themes of joint family, arranged marriages, romantic love affairs, children, parents, divorce and the presence of mistress in so called rich families in her works. In her maiden novel, *To Whom She Will?*, she concentrates her attention on the foolish lovers Amrita and Hari who fall in and out of love with equal ease with ultimately, Amrita falling in love immediate with the guy of her mother’s choice thus, indicating that the system of arranged marriage is not at all problematic and burdensome. Similar is the case of Nimmi in *The Nature of Passion* who falls out of love with one guy to fall in love with the guy who is her parents’ choice to be her husband. The novel is also a beautiful depiction of the clash of old and new in the form of Nimmi and her parents who, at the end, are successful in convincing her their values. Jhabvala strongly believes that
romantic love is ephemeral and comic. Thus, the working of the marriage doesn’t depend on love but on the individuals. Hence, according to her, arranged marriages are similar to love marriages since both include risks. According to her, even a love marriage can be bad and disastrous like the marriage of Esmond and Gulab in *Esmond in India*. This novel features the clash of an English man with his Indian wife along with depicting his extra marital relationship with two girls. There is also a depiction of a traditional Indian joint family whose members in spite of having clashes come together in vital issues like marriage. In this relation, Jhabvala, in her essay, *Myself in India*, says:

10. *It is the family or clan members who gather together and enjoy each other’s company* (p. 76).

Similarly the theme of *Get Ready for Battle* by Jhabvala is the failed marital relationship of Sarla Devi and Gulzari Lal. This novel is the story of once united family, now in disarray, on one hand and on the other, it talks about the life of a fast living set of young people who eat, drink, dance and have affairs.

While, *The Householder* by the same novelist is a beautiful story of a young professor, Prem, craving to have his own privacy with his newly married wife, Indu. This novel effectively deals with the effect of other people in marital relationship since, in this novel, it is the presence of his mother, that prevents Prem from having the desired privacy.
However, he gets it by sending her to his sister. An even more sympathetic though, much less, extensive picture of the undivided family is seen in *A Backward Palace* where Judy, an English wife of an indignant actor, rejoices in the cocoon like comfort of an undivided family basking in the warmth of aunt Bhuaji’s love and her devotion to God. For unsecured Judy, the undivided family is the womb she has been seeking and hence, in the resolution of the conflict, Judy’s marriage to Bal remains secure. Apart from this successful relationship, in the same novel Jhabvala chooses classes of the Indian community where adultery and divorce are not unknown in the form of Etta, one of the central characters of the novel, who is the mistress of several men after the break up of her failed marriage.

Due to her European origin, Jhabvala’s consuming interest has always been the nature of the joint family system in India. While, in Europe, the family is a small unit and the very idea of three generations, living together under one roof for more than thirty years is an impossible idea. In India, it is very common. Thus, Jhabvala with her own exile and expatriation, comes with great curiosity to such an immensely secured and complex institutions like marital relationship which are the centres of tension and rebellion. Thus, she depicts exquisite comedies of urban middle class life in very simple and attractive plots which are highly dominated by family values and the impact of family members on each other.
While, Jhabvala represents Indian woman, in Kamala Markandeya, the mother image is glorified in the Indian tradition. Females with a son are more valuable and fulfilled than the mothers of daughters who, only, feel a sense of loss. But it is noteworthy, that with daughters, the role of mother becomes vital. In this regard, Markandeya’s observations are worth noting. Her acquaintance with Indian life is as authentic as her understanding of the English men and their characters. The major theme of Markandeya has always been the cultural clash of the two modes of life, she has seen so closely.

The maiden novel of Markandeya, *Nectar in a Sieve* deals with the husband and wife who are entirely opposite of each other. Along with their depiction, there is a descriptive depiction of their children specially, their daughter, for whom, they try to find a good match, without dowry. The marriage of Ira, their daughter, has everything such as music, happiness, noise and celebrations to ensure happiness and satisfaction to everyone, which exactly happens in Indian traditional marriages, but the above mentioned things unfortunately, don’t ensure happiness to the bride herself. In a few days, she is badly rejected by her husband due to her barrenness. If there is a failure of Indian traditional marriage, there is also a depiction of western failed marriage in the form of Kenny’s divorce from his wife.
In her other novel, *Two Virgins*, Markandeya emphasises that in Indian society, marriages can take place only in same caste and when the stars of both girl and boy match. In the novel, she says:

11. *The stars you were born under had to be in harmony with your husband's. If they were inimical, the marriage was doomed...you couldn't have been allowed to marry in the first place* (p.205).

In *Some Inner Fury*, by Markandeya we find the depiction of inter-racial romance and marriage through the relationship of Mira and Richard Marlowe and Roshan, the liberated woman of the modern India, full of confidence and vigour. Thus, it could be said that Markandeya emerges as a successful writer in depicting the trials and tribulations of Indian family structure and its changing roles, and the social realism.

The theme of conflict of inter-racial romance and marriage is also visible in the works of S. K. Ghosh such as *The Prince of Destiny*, which is a story of the ruler of Bharatpur Estate wishing to marry the niece of an English resident in order to unite East with West and change the conflict into concord.

Another major writer in Indian fiction in English is Bhabhani Bhattacharya who is a great social reformer, winner of *Sahitya Akademi*
Award for his novel Shadow from Ladakh (1967) and a recipient of the Universities of New Zealand's prestigious award in 1962. Almost all the novels written by Bhattacharya are set on the background of the Indian social scene in the perspective of world shaking events. In his novels, he depicts the conflict of traditions, superstitions, and ignorance, effectively. Women is the main centre of his novels and he depicts her capacity and tolerance, her adaptability and suffering as well as her power of sublimation. In this relation, in a public speech, Bhattacharya says:

12. I think the women of India have more depth, more richness than the men. The transition from the old to the new, the crisis of value adaptation, strikes deeper into the lives of our women than of our manfolk.

In his works, Bhabhani Bhattacharya brings out the portrayal of Indian female as the pure woman who is just perfect. In this relation, in his essay, Krishnaswamy comments:

13. Bhabhani Bhattacharya's woman is pure with exuberant vitality and high ideals, only to be victimised, ultimately. Her vitality is crushed, her ideals dig her own grave and she is invariably victimised. Yet Bhattacharya makes the readers feel that She is the ray of hope for mankind. i.e.
the pure woman who though victimised, gives form to an unjust life and informs us and the world we live in with love. The concept of the innocent victimised women is in a continuous thread in his fictional output (p. 53).

The women in the novels of Bhattacharya are generally hailing from economically independent families and are well educated. Bhattacharya pleads for intelligent exercising of vote, advocates widow remarriage and rebels against child marriage. That’s the reason, his women are strong, though extremely feminine like Mohini in The Music for Mohini, written in 1952. This novel is an attempt of a synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures, which discusses the problems of a city bred girl being wedded in village. It is a clash of modernisation and traditionalism. While, the main protagonist, Mohini stands for modernisation, her husband and her mother – in – law stands for traditionalism. The story is very simple which is of an arranged marriage and the adjustment of the young bride. In the novel, the forces of traditions are at their best. Mohini, a modern girl, continually emerges as a revolt against the strong forces of tradition. The novel is a depiction of the situation of an Indian girl in an Indian society and her adjustments before and after marriage.

With Music for Mohini, the Indian English literature saw various novelists coming with the theme of family structure specially women novelists, who, perhaps, depicted the various cores of family, much
effectively. They also succeeded in portraying the real situation of Indian women in a family and also the depiction of various communities. In this context, Iqbalunissa Hussain proved quite successful with her novel, *Purdah and Polygamy: Life in Indian Muslim Household* in 1944. This novel is a beautiful representation of the currents and cross currents in a typical Muslim family living with all it's traditionalism. Like Ms. Hussain, various novelists have depicted different families in various castes and communities and the drifting trust between the relations. There are also some portrayals of unusual relations apart from the traditional relations such as the depiction of father – in – law and daughter – in – law relationship in Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haweli*. In the novel, the new bride finds herself totally stuck with the traditional customs of the haweli in which she has come after her marriage. The atmosphere is entirely sickening and suffocating due to her autocratic father – in – law and his infinite rules. However, it is the same girl who had once tried to come out of the webs of her father – in – law's rules and regulations, takes the charge of everything and carries all the customs in the similar manner like that of her father – in – law after his death. In this relation, Dr. Srinivas Iyyengar points out:

14. *Inside the Haweli* very effectively points out the absorption of an Indian girl after her marriage with her new home and her in – laws and moreover the customs and traditions of the new house (p. 201).
Another impressive contribution in this area is the novel, **Delinquent Chacha** written by Ved Mehta, which talks about the relationship of uncle and nephew which is at once both sweet and sour.

Mrinalini Sarabhai returns to the same old theme of the adjustments and the problems of a girl coming from a good family in her novel, **This Alone is True** in 1977. This is a story of a girl who is trying to choose a comparatively different career. The main protagonist of the novel is undoubtedly, the representation of millions of young girls who are considered feeble, even in the modern society, and thus are prevented to do something different apart from getting married and giving birth to children. In this context, Dr. Nambari comments:

> 15. **This Alone is True** is a pathetic tale of all the sufferings and obstacles which become an inevitable part of a girl's life, trying to do something different and be someone in this contemporary world (p. 26).

In contemporary women novelists, Shashi Deshpande is a very respectable name. Ms. Deshpande's fictional world, like most of her contemporaries is women centred. Like other women writers, her attention is mainly on the theme of meaningless and sexual confusion suffered by females in tradition oriented institutions like marriage. In this relation, Dr. S.K. Jain comments: 16. *For Shashi Deshpande, marriage is a serious conflict situation* (p. 24).
In her maiden novel, *Roots and Shadows* written in 1983, Ms. Deshpande figures the identity crisis of her heroine, Indu who is a sensitive and intelligent female who longs for her freedom from the barriers of the tradition bound institution of marriage only to find it impossible to leave. In her search for identity and individualism, she discovers that relationships are the roots of a person and they follow him like his shadow till the end. The fruitless relationship which she shares with her husband, makes her discover the fact that a marriage that suppresses her femininity and human demands, denying her individuality, is of no use. In this relation, Dr. S. K. Nair comments:

17. *In Roots and Shadows, Indu’s love marriage with Jayant is a degeneration of a mere psychological affair which makes her feel ashamed of the total commitment* (p.p. 119–120)

Her extra marital relationship with Naren and her hatred for her husband, Jayant are her efforts to depict that she is merely a human in her distaste for love that is non-real and absurd, lacking human influence in the context of an essentially masculine civilisation which perpetuates myths created by male oriented societies and makes marriage for the females utterly dissatisfying at both physical and spiritual level. In this relation, Dr. S.K. Nair says:
18. *Indu's struggle for selfhood and towards liberation of the mind, her struggle for an emotional and intellectual definition of herself as a self-actualising person is in a sense of fight against womanhood* (p.121).

How to reconcile a female's human demand for her freedom with her need for love, nurture and how to maintain a balance between her wifehood, motherhood, career and spiritual development are some of the issues raised by Ms. Deshpande. In the novel, Indu’s refusal to be the mother of a child which is an outcome of her marriage and which makes her feel trapped, is her feeling of being entangled entirely in a negative situation. As Dr. S. K. Nair comments:

19. *Indu's refusal is basically her positive struggle for independence, for selfhood and her effort of intellectual liberation* (p. 121).

Similar is the situation of Jaya in *That Long Silence* who is an intellectual, modern and sensitive wife of Mohan who is a traditionalist rooted in customs. The difference of outlooks is huge enough to make their relationship drift. In a competitive society, in order to have a well balanced conjugal life, it becomes essential that husband and wife should be in perfect harmony with each other. As Ms. Deshpande points out:

20. *They (husband and wife) should supplement not supplant each other.*
Further there should also be a perfect understanding both at physical and mental level. It is this harsh fact that Ms. Deshpande depicts through her female protagonists who, at the end, choose to break their submissive attitude like Jaya in *That Long Silence*, who is able to break her silence of the past, at the end. Apart from difference depicted in marital relationships, the novel also depicts the huge distance in the relationship of parents with their children. In the novel, the children are absolutely unaware of their parents’ rift and have gone to picnic. But now, due to the infinite questions of the people around, Jaya, their mother, wants them to get back to home soon. Thus, the novel, very emphatically shows that how in some situations, children become a mere status symbol for their parents.

While, Jaya is dissatisfied with her marriage in *That Long Silence*, the marriage of Sarita or Saru is on rocks in *The Dark Holds no Terror* by the same novelist. Sarita is a woman living two lives simultaneously. While in the day time she is a confident doctor, in the night, she is a terrified trapped animal in the hands of her husband Manohar or Manu who is a teacher in English in a third rated college. The inferior status of Manu provokes him to behave in a barbaric manner with his wife. The gradual change in Saru towards Manu directly corresponds with her changed attitude towards sex. In this relation, Dr. S. K. Nair comments:
21. *Though Saru had loved Manu, she was quite reluctant to the very thought of marriage. The reason of this reluctance was perhaps the fear of sex, the unknown commitment, responsibilities or loss of freedom* (p. 134).

Apart from marital discord, the novel also covers the siblings’ rivalry in the form of Sarita and Dhruv. Sarita hates her brother in the novel, because her brother had drowned to death in an accident and thought it was merely an accident, her parents have always accused her for killing him.

**The Dark Holds no Terror** is about society going through transitions where at least, economically independent women could have some choices in life. basically, the novel is a protest, especially in the Indian context, against the traditional concept that says: 22. *Everything in a girl’s life (is)... shaped to that single purpose of pleasing a male* (p. 148).

Thus, it could be said that the culture that created Sita and Gandhari has denied the existence of woman except her acceptance in the form of a mother, wife, daughter or sister. Man’s relationship with woman is mostly the bond that exists between a master and a slave. In this
context, Shashi Deshpande’s works are concerned with a woman’s quest for self. As Dr. S.K. Nair comments:

23. Her (Shashi Deshpande) novels are an exploration to the female psyche and an understanding of the mysteries of life and the protagonist’s place in it (p. 95).

Another important novelist in the category of the depiction of family structure is Raja Rao who returns to the traditional family system with *Kanthapura* which is essentially author’s *Ramayana* and *The Serpent and the Rope* which is author’s *Mahabharata*. The next work by Rao is *The Cat and Shakespeare* which takes the simple theme of a clerk, his seclusion from his family and his extra marital affair. This novel tells us that the change in family structure is so dominant and rapid that the luxuries like mistresses and extra marital affairs are no more confined to the upper class, reaching widely to every class. Pointing out the reasons of these extra marital affairs and dissatisfaction, Dr. Joshi comments:

24. *The very feeling of individualism and loneliness is quite universal, hence, the dissatisfaction and incompatibility are becoming dominant with the changing society* (p. 38).
In this regard, Vikram Seth proved quite effective with his novel, *A Suitable Boy* which is a beautiful tale of a Punjabi girl, Lata falling in love with a Muslim boy, Kabir but later succumbing to her mother’s wishes by marrying *The Suitable Boy* of her choice. Indian society is perhaps the most weird and diplomatic society of the world. At one hand, we feel the impact of western culture by the shrinking size of the families day by day while, on the other hand, the prejudices and beliefs regarding marriage and women still are unchanged. That’s the reason even an educated girl like Lata, in the novel, cannot oppose her family by marrying the guy of her choice who is not only her love but also her dream guy. On the other hand, she gets married to an entirely mediocre person, Haresh Khanna whose only qualification is that he is her mother’s choice.

*A Suitable Boy* is a beautiful depiction of a traditional Punjabi family and their various customs. Along with the description of Indian festivals like Holi, there are various occasions which depict the Indianness in the form of the noisy and traditional marriage of Lata’s sister, Savita with Prem Kapoor who, in spite of looking inferior to his wife, at the surface level, does prove ultimately, that he is the most logical and ideal husband and son—in—law of the novel. Through Savita and Prem Kapoor, Vikram Seth has depicted a happy marriage. The novel is a beautiful mixture of tensions, light moments, celebrations and various healthy relations such as the relationship of lovers (Lata and Kabir), mother—daughter relationship (Lata—Mrs. Khanna), husband and wife relationship (Prem—Savita), mother— in—law and son— in—law
relationship (Prem – Mrs. Khanna), brother-in-law and sister-in-law relationship (Lata – Prem) along with the relationship of friends, brothers’ relationship, father and son relationship, illicit relationship, professional rivalry and an individual’s relationship with society. Thus, it could be said that **A Suitable Boy** is a beautiful depiction of the real nature of Indian society. As Dr. N. K. Gupta comments:

25. **A Suitable Boy** is the gist of India covering all the specialities and short comings of this country (p. 67).

Similar is the theme of **Men and Rivers** which is a maiden novel by another major poet, critic and philosopher, Humayun Kabir. This novel is a gripping saga of young lovers. The outcome of this young and feverish love is the tension which is the beauty of the novel. It is the story of a boy and girl, in love with each other, unaware of the fact that they are the children of same mother. Apart from the theme of love, this novel also talks about the complicated relationship which a Muslim woman has with her first and second husband and her children.

An equally impressive plot, though with a different theme, is of **Seasons of Jupiter** which was written in 1958 by Anand Lall (better known as Arthur Lal). This novel covers the whole life of the main protagonist, starting from his birth, childhood and marriage. Marriage is the most interesting part of the novel since, it turns into complete disaster
after the birth of a child, indicating the fact that even trivial things can prove fatal in personal relationships. In this relation, Dr. Rizvi comments:

26. *Seasons of Jupiter* is an impressive tale of how trivialities can become the most fatal things of life (p. 87).

Just an year later, after *Seasons of Jupiter*, the Indian English literature saw another impressive piece of literature in the form of *The Dark Dancer* written by Balchandra Rajan. This is a maiden novel by B. Rajan in which the theme of the tragedy of an unhappy marriage easily mingles with the tragedy of partition. In this relation, Dr. S. K. Shah comments:

27. *The Dark Dancer’s* theme is a very unusual theme since the writer is successful in establishing a harmony between social crisis and personal crisis (p. 29).

While another novel by the same novelist, *Too Long in the West* deals with the theme of modern *swayamvara*. The custom of *swayamvara* is renewed in this novel when Columbia based Nalini, on returning to India, gets a bunch of matrimonial proposals and she chooses one of them and gets married. This is a beautiful story which depicts the traditional method of marriages. As Geeta Ray comments:
28. *In India, most of the marriages are fixed with the help of matrimonial ads in news papers. Same thing is depicted in this interesting yet highly simple novel* (p. 58).

Apart from Balchandra Rajan, writers like Dhan Gopal Mukherji with an engaging presentation of Ramayana in his novel, *Rama, The Hero of India* (1931); D.F. Karaka, with his novel, *Just Flesh* (1940) which is a depiction of the generation gap between a father and a son; S. Krishnaswamy with his maiden work *Kalyani's Husband* (1957) with a plot of drifting marital relationship and M.V. Rama Sharma with *The Stream* (1956) which is a haunting saga dealing with the futility of relations along with criticising the contemporary society and its values, are highly significant writers.

Continuing their tradition, one of the major recent writer Arun Joshi came out with his maiden novel, *The Foreigner* which is a story covering almost all the themes related to family structure. In this regard, V. S. Pathak comments:

29. *The novel covers the theme of attachment, detachment, involvement, indifference and commitment. All these factors are vital in the structure of family which, Arun Joshi, mingle so beautifully in the novel* (p. 39).
Thus, it could be said that all these writers have proved successful in their own respective ways in depicting the changing family structure, but as stated earlier, it is the women novelists who proved much effective perhaps because a female psyche is more sensitive towards the relationships. Hence, the discussion of family structure is found more in the novels of women novelists. In this relation, Torulata or Toru Dutt could easily be called the first woman novelist of Indian fiction in English. In the late half of the nineteenth century, Toru emerged as a powerful poetess. However, she later turned towards fiction by writing a couple of novels – one in French, while another in English. *Bianca or The Young Spanish Maiden* is perhaps the last work written by Ms. Dutt which is highly autobiographical. This is a story of two sisters, Marguerite and Veronique but it also depicts the sister love and bereavement. Apart from sisterly love, the novel has the depiction of romantic love motif and the feelings of a young girl. For instance, when Bianca is kissed for the first time, like any other girl, that moment becomes very special for her. The kiss leaves her deeply intoxicated and disturbed.

Hence, it could be said that Toru Dutt is immensely successful in depicting all these delicate emotions might be due to her young age. The relationships presented in *Bianca or The Spanish Maiden* tells the readers that how strange they could be at times. As Dr. K.V. Ramamoorthi comments:
30. The fluctuation of sweet and sour relationships is so beautiful that it simply captivates the readers and leaves them highly mesmerised and spellbound (p. 98).

From Toru Dutt to Shashi Deshpande, Indian English literature saw a series of literary works and novelists. In this category, the recent renowned name is of Ms. Arundhati Roy whose maiden work, God of Small Things, won her the most prestigious Booker Prize for the year 1999. This novel is a haunting tale of a South Indian family of Kerala. In this novel, there is a family comprising of three generations. There are parents, one spinster aunt, one brother who is incompatible, sister who is a divorcee and her two kids who are twin brother and sister and servants. The traditional joint family picture is entirely complete in this novel since the portrayal of Papparachi family satisfies the definition of joint family which has three generations living under one roof with servants. Ammu, whose divorce has made her answerable to every member of the family, bends to her untouchable servant to satisfy her physical desires. When this relationship is revealed, the results are too harsh since for an upper class Brahmin family, even the very idea of a physical intimacy with an untouchable is beyond imagination. Apart from Ammu, another physical relationship which is highly unusual too, is the relationship of her children who are physically intimate to each other which is indeed an abnormal thing. While a single parent is always appropriate for the growing children, the attitude of relatives and society further crush their personalities which exactly happens with the kids of Ammu who pay a
very heavy cost of their mother’s blunder. Thus, it could be said, that **God of Small Things** is a beautiful depiction of personal and universal themes such as communism along with the depiction of family relationships. As Menhas Chandra comments:

31. *God of Small things* is an impressive tale mingling the theme of universality with the theme of family structure.

Thus, it could be said that the theme of family structure has wholly dominated the Indian literary scene for the last one century. The earlier period saw problems related to family structure like widow remarriage, inter-caste marriage and child marriage. This is also a period of drastic change in society. The social evils like child marriage and *sati* were gradually diminishing from the society due to the continuous efforts of political leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and many more. At the same time, due to the emergence of foreign culture in Indian society through the medium of education given by missionaries, there were new openings for the people specially the victims of evil customs. The same change was effectively reflected in the works of Bankim Chandra and Rabindranath Tagore. The writers of this era proved successful in planting seeds of change in the traditional form of family structure. The tiny plants which were the outcomes of these seeds were clearly visible with the works of the writers of mid-century. This period tasted the different flavours of relationships by adding certain new things in the traditional family structure. The most dominant change in this category is the portrayal of extra marital relationships. Marriage always
enjoyed a higher place in Indian society and thus, to break the very institution of marriage was a next to impossible idea in the last century. Indian society is a society where marriage is considered a synonym to adjustments which starts even before marriage when both the bride and groom are not supposed to see each other till they get married. This custom remained dominant till the later half of twentieth century. Hence, it gave rise to incompatibility between the couples and the growing dissatisfaction led to traditions like keeping mistresses. With the advent of westernisation, personal ambitions intensified giving rise to individualism. While, on one hand, it destroyed the old customs like the one earlier mentioned, on the other hand, the materialistic approach even in marital relationship of husband and wife resulted in a complete disaster. Due to the same western influence, nuclear families came into existence. This was also the time when the females of this country were opening their feathers gradually in order to fly high in the sky of professional field. New opportunities and an entirely new world were emerging like a tiny morning star with all its twinkle. In this new world of technology and opportunities, everything was positive and at its peak but what completely left behind were the feelings and the mutual love for each other.

At the same time, this is also noteworthy that in spite of all the westernisation and the arrival of women in the work fields, their situation in the society and the relationships remained same.
Hence, today, though, the new Indian woman is aware of her individuality and has also absorbed new ideas, tastes and manners which she tries to bring in practice because she finds them attractive, she is held back by the dictates of her parents, brothers, male friends or husband who make it a point that in spite of being educated and modernised, she must stick to her old and traditional image of Sita and Savitri. Right from birth, she has been taught to seek fulfilment in her duties to her family members specially her duties towards her husband and accept no other man’s love apart from her husband though her husband has full rights to go to any other woman of his choice, in the presence of his wife. In case, she cannot abide her commitments due to some reasons, she must seek repentance by spiritualising and sublimating her feelings. The dual fidelity to her own wishes and that of her family results in clash of cultures. The girls try to assert themselves but finally succumb to their elders. What they have seen of the alien culture is superficial and lasts only till some crisis or experience in their lives jolts them back to the inherent culture with which they can identify easily and without much trouble.

Another important aspect is the role of woman as mother and mother-in-law. In most of the Indian novels in English, Indian wife is a silent suffering woman and becomes a vulnerable figure only on becoming the mother of a son. And therefore, as a mother-in-law she is never willing to allow her daughter-in-law to gain a hold on the feelings of her son. The young bride who finds the adjustments difficult suffers her bitter and unhappy frustration silently.
In such a situation, which though modern, is entirely traditional and diplomatic specially in the case of women and relationships, writers like Ms. Anita Desai and Ms. Nayantara Sahgal emerge. These two novelists are the novelists whose depiction of the Indian family structure is perhaps the most strong depiction in the entire Indian fiction in literature.

In order to understand Anita Desai and Nayantara Sahgal in a better prospective, it is essential to see them along with their contemporaries who have more or less the same concern. Both of these writers belong to a group of chroniclers of the tension in the wake of India’s emergence as a developing nation. One of the major themes of this period is the treatment of an individual’s nostalgia in his or her adjustments with the joint family. In most of the works written in this period, as stated earlier, we find the theme of joint family like *Music for Mohini* by Bhabhani Bhattacharya which depicts the main protagonist succumbing which indicates that the concept of joint family is a synonym of group human behaviour which symbolises a pre – industrial way of life and is deeply attached with the orthodoxy form in which an individual feels helpless and tries to break away in order to seek his or her own identity.

Viewing the treatment of theme of joint family in this light, it can be concluded that it’s a three facet concept where a personal story
develops into a wider conflict of an individual’s struggle for the supremacy of his identity with the society. Hence, here the personal story becomes a medium of exploration of social change in India in all its complex manifestations which also examines the change from a traditional society to an urban industrial metropolitan society in its comprehensiveness. Thus, in this context, Ms. Desai and Ms. Sahgal achieve a greater importance than their fellow writers. In this relation, Dr. K. Gopal comments:

32. There is no doubt that the contribution of both Desai and Sahgal are the greatest contributions in the field of changing family structure (p.p. 91 – 92).

These two writers have concentrated their attention much on the troubled sensitivity which is a typical modern Indian phenomenon and which basically is a psychological reality undergoing a huge change with the rapidly changing world. While, writers like Ms. Attiah Hussain prefers to depict their protagonists as the observers instead of being the active participants, both Desai and Sahgal make it a point to depict their characters a part of the whole action. In their fiction, there is a shift of identical focus from outer to inner part of human existence. They emphasise on the climate of sensibility such as the reaction of Sita in Where Shall We go this Summer when she discovers that she is pregnant for the fifth time:
Physically so resigned, she could not inwardly accept that this was there was to life, that life would continue thus, inside this small, enclosed area with these few characters churning around and then past her, leaving her away in this grey, dull – lit, empty shell ( p. 54 ).

Thus, it could be said that in spite of the fact that almost all the novelists of Indian fiction in English have taken the theme of family structure somewhere in their novels, both Ms. Anita Desai and Ms. Nayantara Sahgal stand away from the crowd due to their sensitivity and depiction of characters for instance, unlike Mohini of Music for Mohini who becomes the favourite of her husband and her mother – in – law after crushing her own identity for their sake, Monisha of Voices in the City by Anita Desai and Rashmi of This Time of Morning by Nayantara Sahgal don’t react in the same manner. Though, they do pay a heavy cost for their refusal of adjustments, at least their identity is saved which is entirely lost in the case of Mohini. In a modern society which essentially talks about the liberation of woman, the identity becomes a major factor which is given the primary importance by both Ms. Desai and Ms. Sahgal. Like Lata of A Suitable Boy or Sarita of Some Inner Fury by Kamala Markandeyya, their women rebel. This rebellion may be destructive but it certainly proves helpful in saving their identities and their hyper sensitivity at the end. As Dr. K. Gopal points out:
34. To understand Ms. Desai and Ms. Sahgal, one has to make a deep study of the reaction of their main protagonists since, that is the aspect which separates the two novelists from their contemporaries (p.100).

This research deals with the works of these two novelists and their novels which have the changing family structure as their main theme. The following chapters of this thesis will be analysing both Ms. Anita Desai and Ms. Nayantara Sahgal individually and then comparing them with reference to their depiction of the changing family structure.
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