CHAPTER VII
Conclusion

The last chapter of my thesis is “conclusion” which requires drastic study to figure out what has been studied and noticed, and what my thinking is concerning this outstanding feminine novelist, Mrs. Anita Desai’s women characters and her literature. No doubt that she has given a splendid literature especially on feminine world. The depiction of the inner world of women characters and their actual pathetic condition in the male dominated society of India is really marvelous and admirable. In her study and portrayal of women, she enquires depth psychology. In all of her writings, she depicts successfully “what is the real state of women in Indian and other societies?”, and with it she also determines “what should be their existence?” Almost in all of her novels, we find a conflict which is sometimes between the inner and outer world of her protagonists while sometimes it is between their choices—yes or no.

Her manner of revealing the predicament of present-age women is really praiseworthy as she has thrown light on the inner predicament of old women, of young ladies and even of small girls in a very elegant but in quite an unsophisticated language. It is veritable that the protagonists especially women protagonists in Mrs. Desai’s novels are absolutely incongruous from those of others who are not stodgy but renovated in their contemplations and response to the circumstances of their life. They decline to admit the present norms and make up their minds to protest and struggle against the general norms and accepted
traditions and customs. The eclectic aspect in them is that they are prompt to tackle the consequence of their rebel.

The author has proved with flying colors that not only in Indian society but also in Western society, the woman wants to launch her identity. She wants to know on every cost “who is she?” and tries to prove before others “her actual identity” which has been lost for a long time. On one side, she picks up her characters from Indian society like Maya, Monisha, Sita, Nanda Kaul etc., on the other; she includes Western women like Sarah and Melanie. A similarity in their feminine outlook can be observed in characters from Indian and Western culture. Both sort of characters suffer from alienation and face same feminine problems. They turn alone, alienated and sometimes neurotic, and finally the end of the novels is somewhat turning from nihilism to positivism.

In the novels of Mrs. Desai, we observe that presently the women are modern and educated who don’t want to be known as mothers, wives, daughters and housewives only but want to prove their identity, their selves in this society. We notice a continuous quest for their selves in their lives, and this makes them sometimes alienated and sometimes broad-minded. For a long time, woman has remained only parasite in her house but now she has wish to come in social system practically and to know the true meaning of her existence and her life. She is ready to participate truly in the social, economic and religious activities of the world.

Mrs. Desai has somewhere made an effort to demonstrate that the women can improve their plight and remove violence and oppression which are done by
the males of the society only if they are self-assured and economically self-sufficient. Through Bimla, the woman protagonist of *Clear Light of Day*, she represents the women who are educated and contented with their financial freedom in spite of being single. Like Bimla, Amla of *Voices in the City*, is also an independent artist who is always ready to face pain and difficulties and to struggle in life. With example of Raka, a small child of *Fire on the Mountain*, the novelist gives an indication of modern women’s rebel against our male-dominated society.

In her complete literature, this feminine novelist has depicted some similar truths like almost all of her women protagonists feel unwanted and neglected by their husbands. Their male-partners have not enough time to be familiar with their inner problems. They are extremely busy in their hectic lives involving business, job or any profession that although they take care of them physically, they can’t notice their mental suffering and woes. The actual state of females’ minds is generally ignored by their mates, and their hostile behavior turns them upset, frustrated, alienated and neurotic to some extent. There, we find some difference that some women like Maya seek physical attachment and want to be loved while others like Monisha dislike physical attachment and don’t want to be treated as a sex-object only.

Even in the present male-dominated society, the female is required to be an object and other but the “new woman” of twenty-first century is not prepared to be an object, other or a parasite in her home. Instead of accepting the accepted
and general norms, she rebels against them. She dare say the great "no" to her conditions and circumstances. She just refuses to live in the way, she despises.

The concept of woman that she is subservient to man, alone she is nothing and she is man's property, is deep-rooted in Indian tradition. But due to this fact the women can't sit idle and they are making all possible efforts to make their identities alone. They don't want now to be recognized as his daughter, his wife or his mother but they want everyone know them as their own selves.

Now-a-days we see that women want to work and they are also being successful in the different fields they are working. They have realized that it is only gainful employment that can traverse the distance that separates them from the men and besides employment and economic independence, nothing can impart them liberty in practical lives. After a slavery of a very long period the woman of today is perplexed to get her identity and real existence in this world.

Indian feminine has faced the challenges of animus and with intense desire and studious work, has learnt how to meet its demands. Now she is not ready to accept whatever comes to her but wants to achieve whatever she wants in her life. It is she who knows that she has ability even to change her fortune and she doesn’t feel the need to give her existence in the hands of her husband.

In the literature of different writers, we find a different picture of woman. In other words, this image of the writers is completely apart from the past as in the past woman was viewed as a weak vassal. But now woman has recognized her position and now she is refusing to submit to her husband. The present day picture of the woman is a pole apart from that of the past.
The progress of women doesn’t mean that they should be away from their married lives. In fact education tells them how to adjust in their families also while doing their own works. But to say frankly, unfortunately these women are not supported by their family members in any way. All these things affect the marital lives. But we should know that if there is proper understanding, desire for adjustment and love for each other, there will be no problem between husbands and wives, and the conjugal lives will always be successful. It is only an imagination, and the fact is that in our patriarchal society it is expected only from the women to make adjustment in their families.

The term “New Woman” actually means the woman of this new era who is conscious of her rights, place and position in the society. The women who come in the category of “New Women” are making all possible attempts to assert their rights as human beings which have not been enjoyed by them for a long period. They are prepared to struggle for their equality with men that had been snatched from them many years ago.

Since the beginning, the Indian women have been taking pride in self-sacrifice. It is doubtless that they feel satisfaction while doing service for others. Indian woman is considered a living statue of suffering and sacrifice, patience and devotion and love and affection that is always selfless. She is thought to be a respectable being but has anyone considered anytime if somebody has really given her revere and honourable place? Nobody has ever thought about this. Our society is male-dominated, and if women wish to improve their condition, they
have to think themselves for it. If they are not prepared to struggle, nobody else can help them.

As a result of the introduction of Feminism in India, encouraging literature on feminine and hard work of social reformers, women have got a place where they want to know the fundamental truths of life. They are trying to find out the solutions of their problems and being confident, getting success in overcoming their perplexities. They have realized that it is none but they themselves who have to fight for their betterment.

The facts of present day have taught the women that it is nothing but education that has ability to transform their characters and strengthen them intensely. Education has the power that makes the women understand their potential power and the strength hidden inside them. It makes them confident and self-sufficient. After achieving all these qualities through education, a woman becomes ready to face any kind of problem and fight with the animus.

The women writers have stressed on the education of women and their activity in each and every field of life. The time has come when the females don’t want to be parasite and live on the help of others, now they want the living strength of their own. They wish to provide help for others and not to be provided help.

In the words of Simone de Beauvoir, we find a very positive note on women’s place in society.
It seems almost certain that sooner or later they will arrive at complete economic and social equality, which will bring about an inner metamorphosis.¹

This statement by the famous writer signifies that though we have come forth in the development and progress of female-status, we haven’t achieved our aim completely. It needs some more efforts because the women have been chained before several years and to break these chains is not so easy as our society that is male-dominated, doesn’t want the breakage of such chains but wants the women chained even today.

But in spite of sundry attempts of men to keep the women subordinate, women of present have become aware of their low position in family and society. They choose to fight against the general and accepted norms and to claim for their every right. The male of even today is not content with the changing behavior of the female. In fact he presses her to be like her elders. Till now he wants her to be an idol or to be a slave before him. But she has been encouraged due to Feminism that she is getting education, participating in sports and devoting herself to the works of every field.

With the above facts related to woman-life, we should not ignore that although woman has progressed and got her identity back, in other words she is trying to search her self, even today her silent screams, her frustration, her depression and her suffering are neglected in our modern world. And to be frank, it is not a good sign in the Field of Feminism. Not only some but also all the
women have to understand that there is nobody to support them and they have to be support for their own selves.

Though the women are educated and employed, and this has made them financially independent, they should comprehend that financial freedom isn’t enough, and they need to be dependent entirely. Women’s education and the change in their social status have changed their way of thinking. For last few years, an enormous change has been observed in their attitude towards love, sex and marriage. Now they find them able to take the decisions of their lives. They have asserted the capability by which they can solve the problems of feminine-lives so easily. Their opinion, their outlook towards life and their attitude towards the problems of life—everything has changed just because of education.

Even in the present age, the condition of women in low stratum cannot be said improved. They are in the same situation as they were before some years. They are unknown to Feminism. There is no arrangement of education for such kind of women, and if we want the progress of the feminine world, we can’t leave any group of women behind. Each and every woman has to come forth to get involved in the movement of Feminism. If the power of women comes forth collectively, it is certain that any power of the Universe can’t defeat them.

The effort of a handful is not so effective, what the time needs is the togetherness of all female beings. If all the women make effort together, the superiority of males will get disappeared. Women have to break their silence now and they must develop the qualities of firmness of aim, unity, courage and self-determination in their lives.
As women have lived in the protection of somebody else like her father, husband or son, it has made her life safe and secure but to look closely we find that with this safety and security, this pattern of life has made the women slavish and dependent on others. But gradually they came to know the emptiness of their lives due to some wrong notions, they have started opposing and breaking them.

The “New Woman” has waged a war against the general norms and wrong notions knowing that this war is not so easy and short-lived but a difficult endless war. The education has awakened the women’s real selves because of which they have become aware of their social, political and religious rights.

Due to education and introduction of Feminism in our country we have got control on many problems that affect the females. Now-a-days people know the ill effects of child-marriages and avoid the marriages of their daughters in early age. The destiny of the girls is not the marriage now, and they also want to study, choose and make their career and finally be self-dependent. They are not interested or they don’t get married till their education is completed. The educated and upper-class families support their daughters, most of middle-class families arrange education for their daughters and get them married an proper age but unfortunately even today the girls of lower-class families don’t get proper education and get married at an early age which is not good at all. This is the mockery of our society

The ‘Purdah’ system has also disappeared especially in urban areas. The aim of this system was to keep the women in veils, away from the world but now as the women are being involved in all the fields, they can’t do their work in
veils. They are out of their veils now searching and proving their identity before others.

Though dowry cases are heard even now, we can notice that the number of these cases is lessening now. It is only in illiterate families or in the families of lower standard specially where the dowry cases come from. As the girls are educated and capable of earning money, people have started ignoring the dowry. Government has also made strict rules against dowry system.

Polygamy or bigamy is also being controlled for the women are conscious today and they are not ready to tolerate their husbands’ faithlessness. And if they see the practice of bigamy in their houses, they take help from law and women-organization. Sati system and Jauher system has become totally unknown to the people of present world.

Mrs. Desai has portrayed all these facts with a crystal clear picture of modern and confident woman. We notice an evolution in the characters’ observation of life, a change in the thinking and response of her women protagonists to their plight, predicament and worries. This change is absolutely positive.

Mrs. Desai has described in her earlier novels how the women stoic and therefore, get frustrated and alienated in their inner predicament. When they find them unable to tolerate the mental pain and sorrow, sometimes they become mad and commit suicide and sometimes they kill their husbands whom they immensely think to be the basic cause of their worries and miseries. In simple words, they become neurotic. But in her later novels, we see an absolutely
opposite fact that the female characters despite suffering the same pain, facing the
same problems and struggling in the same circumstances don’t lose hearts and
take positive decisions. They have a positive thinking and they are quite
optimistic with a broad and clear outlook. Their inner confidence strengthens
them to take appropriate decisions at right time.

With the help of her various characters, both male and female characters,
the writer has made us understand completely “who are the victims and who are
the survivors of our society?” Yes, some women become the victims of our
unjustified social systems, they lose their control over themselves and bearing a
lot due to our immoral systems turn insane or neurotic, and some of them have to
face nervous breakdown. Their mental balance becomes so uncontrolled that their
own movements and lives aren’t in their hands. The novelist, Anita Desai, as
“victims”, has portrayed this kind of women.

Maya, woman protagonist of her first novel Cry, the Peacock falls a
victim for whom to bear the pain of physical detachment and ignorance of her
husband becomes unable and she becomes neurotic. The astrologer’s prophecy
that either she or her husband will die in the fourth year of her marriage, also
plays an important role in her neurosis. Firstly, she stoics everyday and then
being insane, she murders her husband, Gautama by pushing him down the roof
in a frenzy of fits and coming in the state of mayhem, she ends her own life by
committing suicide in her father’s residence. On the other hand, we find Monisha,
female character in Mrs. Desai’s next novel Voices in the City. She is also ruffled
by her circumstances. Both Maya and Monisha are childless, having no hope or
totally desperate in other words. Monisha becomes frustrated when her privacy is disturbed by mauldering of her sisters-in-law in her room on the topic of Monisha’s blocked tubes. Nobody cares of her feelings and avocations, and all these things make this convent-educated girl, Monisha feel alienated and alone in the house full of numerous members. Her marriage with Jiban appears to be anathema for her. To end her continuous tension and suffering, she commits suicide. She ends her own life by burning her alive without any blame on anyone.

Anamika of *Fasting, Feasting* is a genius and efficient girl who gets an attractive scholarship to study in Oxford University but unfortunately nobody thinks about sending her abroad for studies, and in spite of doing this, her scholarship letter is misused to find a suitable match for her. And in the end, we become familiar with the fact that as her in-laws are so rapacious, they agonize her mentally and physically and one day burn her alive in order to get more wealth in the form of dowry in her husband’s remarriage. This terrible end of an able girl seems to be a very disgraceful paradigm of Indian society. She also falls a sufferer of our false coordination. The characters of Mrs. Desai, depicted above, are the dupes of our wrong notions and social systems whose lives end due to different hurdles.

In other novels, we come to know that the characters like Sita, Sarah, Nanda Kaul, Uma etc. also face the same critical situations as the characters above but because of their positive attitude and optimistic perception, they remain alive and never intend to end their lives. Though Sita is perplexed due to the violence of her city, Sarah is struggling in her identity crisis, Uma is cheated
in marriage by her in-laws, Nanda Kaul is woeful to know her callous husband’s extra-marital affair with Miss. Davidson, they try to live their lives completely. Yes, all of them react differently to their problems but still exist. The same writer, Mrs. Desai, has delineated such type of characters- survivors also.

Here Anita Desai emphasizes the financial freedom and economic independence which are delighted in by the educated and employed women, there she stresses on the inner suffering, mental agony, calm screams, woes and frustrations which are being ignored even in our modern world. The women of today are making endeavor to understand the fundamental or basic truths of life after all they are human beings and have reached a stage of understanding. Although the state of women is not equal to that of the men even in Western countries, their position is much better than that of Indian women. In her novels, Mrs. Desai has depicted patient and obedient women who become rebellions due to varying factors.

Through her characters, the novelist presents the women who are striving hard now-a-days to establish a separate identity of their own. A deep and detailed study of Mrs. Desai’s novels make it evident that most of the women have to suffer due to their emotional attachment with their houses and families. But now with the introduction of education, the woman has become aware of her identity and individuality. She refuses today to lead a life of passivity and sacrifices and wants to get satisfaction in whatever she does. She is not prepared to accept everything and to do everything she is commanded. In fact, she wants to live according to her own will. Mrs. Desai clearly points out that education has
changed women’s feelings, thinking and attitudes towards all social, personal, religious and financial matters, and thus, women’s personal status is changing rapidly.

In Mrs. Desai’s literature, we come in contact with some women who are modern in their outlook and clearly discard saying “No” to the rules of our male-dominated society. Instead of handing over their existence in men’s hand, they want to take their future in their own hands. They lead troublesome and horrible lives as they struggle for self-realization with mental, sentimental and sexual conflicts. We can observe in our society and in Mrs. Desai’s novels that none of her family members supports or favours her.

An interesting fact concerning Mrs. Desai’s literature is that the factors that cause pain, tension and suffering in the characters are sometimes exactly opposite in two characters. Whereas childlessness is a cause of loneliness and alienation in Maya and Monisha, Sita becomes alienated in spite of having numerous children, and to our surprise; she is ruffled by her fifth pregnancy. Maya craves for physical attachment while Monisha thinks sex as an act of animals. On one hand, Maya requests her mother-in-law to stay with her and wants to live with members of her family, on the other, the main cause of Monisha’s mental tension in the disturbance of her family-members in her privacy. She complains that they don’t care about her interest of reading books and are always busy in discussing her blocked tubes. Thus, where a protagonist craves or demands for something, the same thing becomes a reason of perplexity and predicament for the other.
The study of Mrs. Desai’s novels exhibits that the writer emphasizes on
the serious requirement of women’s role and activity in all areas of life. In the
view of Mrs. Desai,

Privacy and silence are unnatural conditions to Indian women, intensely
social as they are. Without silence and privacy, no two consecutive and
comprehensible lines can be written. The social system, from long has
been opposed to independent work and intellectual exercise by women.
Why do we not have an Indian Mrs. Carlyle or a Scishonagan or a lady
Murasaki? There was no literary tradition at all that women writers could
follow even if only as camp followers. ²

She has given an optimal and ultimate solution of all the problems of
women and that solution is “education”. If the girls are educated, they become
self-confident with strong will power to break the shackles and handcuffs of this
male-dominated society. It is only education that can transform their character
and strengthen them both internally and externally. By having proper education
on one hand, they become broad-minded and optimistic, on the other they
become able to earn their living and now they can have financial freedom and
economic independence. To my mind, Mrs. Desai stresses on education as it
makes the females aware of their rights – social, religious, political and
economical and duties towards family, society and country. Education makes
them perfect to manage every situation and to struggle with all their conditions
heroically.
Anita Desai leaves a feminine imprint on the readers in the form and content of her writings. She is actually one of the famous Indian feminine novelists who have written the literature based on women and their problems. Her feminine consciousness is considered noteworthy as she has championed the cause of females in almost all of her novels. Through her female characters, she has depicted feminine psyche, feminine personality and feminine outlook in an innovative manner. She pictures the mental state of the females of all age-groups, and most of her novels are designed around female characters. She has discussed woman’s oppression and predicament in all her works and Mrs. Desai has touched all the components of feminine psyche in her literature.

She portrays the feminine issues of her female characters. She has written a lot on different kind of women through whom we become familiar with the feminine sensibility of various kinds of women. Being a contemporary female writer, she discusses the conflicts and dilemmas of the women in our current society. Although she has depicted some male characters also, the primary importance has been given to the female protagonists. She explores the women’s emotional world and a feeling of understanding in her works. In challenging the female repression, she has her own technique. Thus, Mrs. Desai is one of those Indian female writers who have made an attempt to understand the inner predicament of women attentively.

Mrs. Desai has depicted her women characters with their neurotic anxiety in an influencing manner. It is remarkable that most of her women characters seem to be restless due to some factors of their lives and very susceptible also.
They are so solitary to the point of being neurotic. Sometimes they even suffer from mental diseases and have an anxiety always in their minds. They look so sensitive and psychologically dependent on others that the opposite circumstances of their lives make them neurotic. The main protagonists of most of Mrs. Desai’s novels suffer from ambiguity and become psychotic, abnormal and crazy, and there are several factors that make them so. Being neurotic or suffering from neurotic anxiety, her women protagonists don’t react in an analogous way.

The ignorance of their male-partners, childlessness, sometimes loneliness and sometimes disturbance in their privacy, the atmosphere of violence in the city, the feeling of being unwanted and unaccepted, lack of harmony in marital relationships and other opposing situations of their lives are the factors that cause neurotic anxiety in Mrs. Desai’s characters. They react differently in neurosis as Maya becomes crazy, murders her husband Gautama and commits suicide herself. And Monisha being neurotic ends her life by burning herself alive. Sita retreats to Manori Island and Nanda Kaul to Carignano to escape from their situations. Sarah becomes perplexed after losing her identity and a disease of fits affects Uma. Thus, most of Mrs. Desai’s protagonists turn neurotic and psychotic due to varying reasons and being neurotic response dissimilarly to their problems.

In her literature, she has mentioned that in Indian society the women are emotional and have longing for a harmonious relationship with their husbands. But the males are too busy in their own tasks to disburse a little time leisurely with their better-halves. It is expressed in her novels that though the male
characters take care of their wives bodily and notice their psychic problems, they don’t reach to the expectations of their wives as they need to be understood mentally. Their spouses are unable to know what is going on in their minds. They can’t satisfy them emotionally and mentally. The women protagonists desire for love, support and mutual understanding with their husbands but feel unwanted and ignored by them. Mrs. Desai feels the theme of man-woman relationship fascinating as in most of her earlier novels she has mentioned it with her pen.

Maya longs for emotional and physical attachment with her engrossed husband Gautama but her longings are not fulfilled. Sita requires emotional understanding from her husband Raman and avoids sex. Monisha also seems to be perplexed in her loveless marriage with Jiban. Nanda Kaul’s husband has deceived her all over her life as he has kept a life-long affair with Miss. David whom he has not married due to their religious difference. Though Adit seems to be the reason of Sarah’s tension, he never soothes her while she takes care of him extremely. Uma and Anamika are cheated on the name of marriage. Thus, we find that Mrs. Desai has written a lot on the broken marriages and disharmonious husband-wife relationship.

Many writers have noticed a strong sense of alienation in Mrs. Desai’s female protagonists which leads them to the way of search for self. Most of her characters are victims of alienation who experience disintegration. Passing through the stages of estrangement, the characters reach a platform where they make attempt for self-identification and self-realization. It is certain that the women in Mrs. Desai’s fictional world feel lonely even in a crowd or a house of
numerous members. They feel alienated from everyone— from their family, from their society, from the world and even from their own selves. Actually their state of being alienated and their feeling of alienation motivate or promote them to their quest for identity. They turn alienated from their selves and search for their identity through self-discovery.

The women in her earlier novels like Maya, Monisha, Sita etc. suffer from alienation excessively but the women in her later novels like Bim, Sophie, small girl Lila move from alienation to acceptance. Their alienation is also a cause of their neurotic anxiety. As they feel so estranged from everyone, they begin to live in their own imaginative world where they don’t have any connection with the outer real world and don’t want to be interrupted by any external factor. Living in their own world, they start their journey to search for their identity. They want to know their real identity now and want to prove it before others. They feel themselves lost in the past but now want to get their selves back. After alienation and quest for self, some of Mrs. Desai’s characters begin to think positively while some of them become so alienated that they finish their lives or escape from the situation.

The deep study of all of Mrs. Desai’s novels reveals evidently that her own attitude towards various factors of life turns into affirmative from negative that has been shown through the women protagonists who are actually pessimistic in her earlier novels and become quite optimistic in her later novels. By studying her novels in sequence, it can be understood easily.
First of all, Maya of *Cry, the Peacock* is a childless woman, suffering from alienation and neurotic anxiety due to lack of physical and mental attachment with her mate Gautama and continuous remembrance of albino astrologer’s prophecy about death of Maya or her husband in fourth year of her marriage. She becomes so frustrated that in a fit of frenzy when her husband comes between her and the moon, she pushes him down. After Gautama’s death, she commits suicide, and thus, the novel ends on a negative note.

Secondly, Monisha of *Voices in the City*, also a childless woman becomes alienated because of her husband Jiban’s ignorance. She gets disturbed when her sisters-in-law, gathering in her room maunter about her blocked tubes. Her self-respect, feelings and interests are trampled. Being neurotic, she commits suicide by burning her alive. The end of the novel with the end of Monisha also seems to be a negative end.

Sarah of *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* is a Western girl who marries an Indian Adit and this becomes an imprecation for her. Her own countrymen don’t accept her as she becomes spouse of an Indian, and she can’t hope to be accepted in India as she belongs to West. She loves Adit and does everything according to him. When Adit takes resolution to leave for India, she accompanies him in spite of her grief of leaving her native-land. The end of this novel doesn’t give a negative note but a note of acceptance.

Sita of *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* is a mother of four children. As she comes to know about her fifth pregnancy, she becomes restless as she has already been frustrated to see the violence of the city. She elects neither to abort
her child nor to bear it. This shows her neurotic behavior. Due to busy routine of
his hectic life, her husband Raman doesn’t impart his time to understand her
mental condition, and she retreats to Manori Island, her native-land, thinking it
to be a magic land where she can keep her baby unborn. But when Raman comes
there to take them, she goes back with him without any complaint. Thus, the
novel gives an affirmative note in the end.

Nanda Kaul of *Fire on the Mountain* is an old lady, living in a lonely
house in Carignano. All over her life her husband has cheated her and now
though she has several children and grandchildren, she prefers to live alone in her
sanity as she has wished all through her life. Living in her husband’s house she
has performed all her duties well as a mother and as a wife but now this spry lady
is contented to live alone and doesn’t want any interruption. At the end of the
novel, she dies due to some shock, and thus, the end of the novel gives a
confusing note.

Bimla of *Clear Light of Day* is a virgin and educated working-woman.
She remains unmarried to perform the responsibilities of her mentally deficient
brother Baba and alcoholic aunt Mira Mausi. A conflict comes in her relationship
with her brother Raja. Sometimes she feels alienated especially because of her
resentment for Raja. But in the end of the novel, we find that she pardons
everyone including Raja and accepts everything as it is. Now she can see all the
things clearly and thus, becomes quite optimistic, and the very novel ends with a
positive point of forgiveness and acceptance.
Lila of Village by the Sea is a girl who has to perform her responsibilities of her family as her mother is sick and her father is drunkard. Though she has to work hard and look after everyone, she doesn’t lose her heart. In this way, though this novel is based on small children (brother and sister), it ends with a positive prospect as Lila’s brother Hari comes back from Bombay with a wonderful planning, and the whole family members celebrate Dipawali together.

Uma of Fasting, Feasting is a young girl, sacrificed on the altar of marriage. She is cheated by her in-laws and her scoundrel husband for the man, she marries has already been married. She is rejected by the society and lacks permission from her parents to do what she desires. In spite of numerous shackles and alienation, she manages all her household works and never intends to end her life. Thus, this novel also ends with a note of positivism.

Not only Mrs. Desai’s women characters but her male protagonists like Adit, Deven, and Baumgartner also have a changing attitude. Though they are alienated, frustrated and dissatisfied in their lives, they don’t end their lives themselves. Adit returns to India, Deven starts his job as a lecturer again and a young boy murders Baumgartner. Thus, the novels based on male protagonists also end with a note of acceptance.

In this way, in the form of conclusion, to my mind it is concluded that Mrs. Desai is an outstanding feminine English novelist who has given an immense literature on feminine world. Her novels are written on different themes like alienation, man-woman relationship, neurotic anxiety etc. She has touched almost all the feminine aspects including feminine psyche and feminine
personality. She depicts the females of almost all the age-groups. The inner world of women and their mental predicament have been delineated in her novels with the depiction of women in our male-dominated society. Through her female characters on one hand, she reveals the picture of women’s plight; on the other, she provides the solutions of their problems and the ways of improvement in their condition. Mental state of her women protagonists has always been a field of interest for this admirable novelist. She has given the only solution of women’s all problems and it is education that can make the women economically independent and self-confident.

The writer’s thinking can be seen and considered through one’s writing, and by the study of Mrs. Desai’s novels, we get that at the time when she worked on her earlier novels, she had some negative thinking. But with the time, there came a change in her thoughts and in her attitude towards life and its problems. At the time when she has written her later novels, she becomes quite optimistic having positive attitude towards life. Thus, her outlook, her attitude or her perception turns from negative to positive. This change from nihilism to positivism is evident in her novels orderly. Through her different female characters, Mrs. Desai has shown the real plight of women in India and the whole world but with it she has also guided the women by giving them the possible ways to come out of their problems and according to her the best way is education which makes the women not only economically independent but also optimistic and confident.
Through her varying characters, Mrs. Desai has revealed that living only for aspirations isn’t enough for women. Instead of doing so, they should make an attempt to make a suitable balance between their homely duties and aspirations. They have to make an adjustment in which they ignore neither their duties nor their dreams. They should struggle for their rights but they shouldn’t ignore their duties also. If a woman runs her household well and looks after her family well but ignores her wills and dreams, she can’t be satisfied. On the other side, if she struggles for her liberty, achieves her goals and fulfills her dreams while ignoring her homely duties, she is nothing but a failure. Women’s lives can be called ‘successful’ only when they make a perfect balance between homely duties and aspirations, and Mrs. Desai has made sincere efforts to reveal this fact through the women protagonists of her novels.
Notes and References
