Chapter - IV

CHANGING EXPRESSOINS

“English is not really an alien language to us, it is the language of our intellectual make-up like Sanskrit or Persian was before—but nor of our emotional make up we are all instinctively bilingual, many of us in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not; we can write only as Indians… our method of expression will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful.

(Rao, 1938)

Indian writing in English is the language surface as the visible stratum of the native Indian thought super imposed. Indian women writers have grappled with complex issues like sensuality, sensitivity, subjugation and society. They have handled with a sense of balance without disregarding Indian traditions. They also re-interpret mythology by using new symbols, which subvert the canonic versions. Their works are significant in making society aware of women’s demands. They take novel as their tool to examine the society’s claims and practices. The novelist has the perception and analytic mind of a sociologist, who provides an exact record of human life, society and the social system. The contemporary women novelists are closer to the earthly reality, to the subtle
nuances of social behaviour, to the complex structure of man and woman’s inner life and the use of language that varies from pedestrian and prosaic to the poetic and ornate. Their writings are made by freshness and originality, cultural vigour and sensibility that are recognizably Indian – Indian women writing in English is notable for the extent to which it has challenged patriarchy and the state opened numerous ways of questioning and interpreting social life. These writers play the role of social critic as no writer can isolate herself from society. By giving voice to the discontent among middle class women, and creating characters, which move from victimization or self-assertion, these writers provide a pattern for the consciousness of the contemporary Indian women. The characters in their novels have often become the mouth piece to voice the writers’ own self thoughts, attitudes, ideologies and at other times experiences incidents and problems that they have seen in social milieu.

Women writers subvert the old norms and system and create a new language. Language is a tool in their hands that has equipped them with a capacity to act and inspire and it makes them empowered. Due to this empowerment they successfully deal with burning social issues. They have been successful so far because they do not imitate men writers. They write in a unique manner and coin new language. They use devices of literal translation coining of proverbs, new compound words, single phrases, idioms or a number of sentences which follow
each other to resemble the sequence of vernacular conversation. When these writers use certain idioms consistently in a novel, these illuminate the sentence with vividness. This is how they convey through English, situations, moods and expressions that are essentially Indian. They use literal translation of Idioms, direct use of Hindi words and mis-spelling of English words. The secret behind the success of novels written by contemporary writers is their simple and life-like characters. They use these techniques and subsequently the novels become quite interesting and absorbing. Indian feminists began to step out of shadows and rewrote mythology which was written by men. This was and is necessary because male discourse elides women, makes them invisible. A central aspect here is the revisionist, remaking of mythology from a female point of view. The activity of writing, together with the story telling is pedagogic discourses that can contribute to promote dominant patriarchal ideologies. When these two activities serve this function they become the targets of Hariharan’s critical perspective. This reasoning is an instance of Hariharan’s intelligent deconstruction of certain common sense notions embedded in story telling and in some patterns of narrative craft which requires critical re-thinking. Hariharan’s creation of alternative women characters and the design of a plot around their unconventional choices embody a form of writing closer to sexual difference theories and their search for women’s solution and priorities. Hariharan’s novel projects again an old-myth but with a feminist adaptation, myths are symbolical narrative containing role models and
inculcating a set of values on its audience. They are example of what Homibaba called ‘the pedagogic strategies to narrate collective identity’ (22) in order to bridge the gap between urban and rural consciousness between the past and present. A trend which is very much visible in the post-modernist writings is the use of mythology. Myth is now accepted as the meaningful sub-text of the literary text. The writers have made an effort to retrieve, rediscover and redefine elements of culture in a creative way, by a return to pride in one’s roots. The women writers in India are in the process of identifying a pattern of problem solving within the traditional system, vigorous enough to generate and sustain an indigenous process of modernization.

Women of Hindu mythology, both goddess and human is in no better condition than other myths, in all cases they are followers, obedient to male counterparts and as mentioned in the introduction these myths became an instrument to shape attitudes to women in Hindu societies. Thus the women in Hindu mythology are portrayed in many forms bringing out the various emotions and feelings they undergo while performing their different roles.

In Thousand faces of Night Githa Hariharan very effectively tells mythical stories through the grand mother, and Devi compares herself to the princess in those stories and expected a prince to hold her hand. Hariharan used two main
strategies first re-defining female subjectivity in the critical juncture of caste and gender and second by re-interpreting history. Devi recapitulates her grandmother’s stories in every occasion in her life. She immediately switches to the stories told by her grandmother and compares it with her own life. Thus when her mother arranges for the bridegroom to visit her she recalls the story of Damayanti told by her grand mother but in mythology Damayanti listened to her heart and married Nala, whereas Devi listened to her mother and married Mahesh a complete stranger.

“In my grandmother’s stories, there was room only for heroes and heroines. Princesses grew up secure in the knowledge. You too will live like princess, she would say fondly to me between her kisses and I listened, rapt, my seven year old mind thrilling at the splendours awaited me.” (TFN: 20)

The stories told by the grandmother were not ordinary stories. They were very much related to the situations happened in her life. Each story had reason decoded with an illustration discovered and a moral drawn out, each story relevant to the incidents happened and it took circuitous route and equivalent for the puzzling experiences faced in the life by the women. When Devi asked about the photograph of her mother, “Pati, I said, wriggling my way on to her lap where I
was always welcome, did amma play the veena when she was a girl? \(TFN: 28\), her grandma started Gandhari’s story. Devi wondered how Gandhari’s story related with her mother’s photograph. She understood that amma stopped playing Veena, when she was scolded by her father-in-law. Hindu mythology always depicts women as powerful and Hariharan’s women characters had the same strong determination to face the hurdles in life and their courage and patience made them come out of the Maze.

Hariharan intelligently depicts three generation women Mayamma, Sita and Devi and how they vary from each other through subtle allusions, myth and legends and the narrative acquires the desired intensity to mirror the agony of the crisis of identity. Devi visualized her life with the stories told by her grandmother. “I lived a secret life of my own; I became a woman warrior, a heroine I was Devi, I rode a tiger and cut off evil, magical demons heads.” \(TFN: 41\)

“Her writing pulsates to the soft sound of an unusual life force— hitches the most unthinkable of ideas into a graceful are of images … sunny and well-lit prose which conceals nothing, reveals everything.” \((The\ Times\ of\ India,\ 1993)\)
Hariharan handles the novel with psychological realism and grace and binds us to the past, present and to the future with proper plot structure, she even gives justification about the characters and such a character is Devi, as she has no initiative, no urge to do anything and waits passively for others to arrange her life. Hariharan hints Devi’s character developed as it did as a consequence of the many mythological stories told to her in her childhood by her grandmother, so stories after stories are told in this novel, and such stories deeply entered into her sub-conscious mind as very clearly explained in her dreams.

“Because your weapon is fragile, you must learn to be willy and clever; the giantess said and showed me how to shoot the arrows straight and unwavering, so fine that they were invisible till they pierced their target.” *(TFN: 41)*

Like the stray branches of the jasmine plant she prunes in her garden, she prunes the stray branches, thoughts and actions in her life to achieve what she wants to. As a grand daughter she transfers her mind to the stories of her grandmother and the same continues as the daughter-in-law as her father-in-law has his own stories to appease her.
“My grand mother fed me this story with her bony fingers just as she fed me the grey medicinal potions she brewed when I was ill she sprinkled it with powdered jaggery and pretended it was sweet. I played the game by the rules and pretended to get better immediately.” (TFN: 89)

Hariharan used mythological stories to explain the state of mind of Devi to explain, petty fear, bold strokes, her humiliation, marital vows. They are very clearly explained by the stories with the abrupt endings.

“Like sati you must burn yourself to death, like sati you must vindicate your husband’s honour and manhood
Like parvati you must stand neck-deep in cold turbulent waters the hungry, predatory fish devouring your feet
Like Haimavati you must turn that black skin on your sinful body into a golden sheen of light and beauty
Like gauri you must reap the bountiful harvest that will be yours if you embrace the lingam on the sacrificial altar” (TFN: 94)

Psychological impact of the stories about the goddess gave courage to Devi, and every now and then she compares herself with the character and story
explained by her grand mother. She thinks herself as the typical wife for her husband, even as Sita stops playing Veena for the sake of the life she held on to.

Hariharan has structured her novel with the delicacy and precision of a piece of music. It falls into a natural structure with the first part dealing with Devi’s marriage and introducing the themes of Devi and Sita’s conflicting desires and expectations, then a long, slow central section as Devi finds herself trapped in loveless domesticity and finally a faster-moving closing section which brings resolution. Hariharan writes beautiful prose – laconic without being spare, poetic without being flowery. There are relatively few concessions to western readers in terms of explaining some of the cultural nuances and unfamiliar vocabulary, but it richly repays the reader’s effort.

The Techniques used in **Difficult Daughters**

Manju Kapur published *Difficult Daughters* in 1998 which was located primarily in the India of the 1940’s, Manju Kapur speaks with great narrative eloquence, of the idea of Independence and has earned her very substantial success, both commercially and critically, both in her native India and on the world market, set around the time of partition, *Difficult Daughters* is the story of Virmati seen through the eyes of her daughter Ida, from whom her mother’s past had always been kept a secret. ‘The one thing I had wanted was not to be like my
mother’ the opening sentence of the book has the reader hooked. The story telling is poetic, but without the frills of poetry. The style of description is refreshing, it is impossible to recreate it, it has to be read, be it places, things, people, or food she describes them in a way which is inconspicuously different and yet realistic and life-like. When she describes pakoras, jalebis most of the readers feel the sense of taste. When she describes people she does it three dimensionally, not even the protagonist without faults, when she describes dilemmas, from the first to the last page, the sensitivity threads and the book is an aroma to be breathed in, a taste to be savoured, an emotion to be felt. Sensitivity threads the events that form this book, it is so naturally written; that along the way one forgets it is a work of fiction, it feels more like a life time unraveling in front of our eyes, with real people in it, experiencing happiness, sorrow, pleasure and pain. Sensitivity is reflected even in the other issues that she addresses, and all this comes across with such sensitivity that one is compelled to nod and understand even the forbidden love affair of Virmati and the professor. The book deals with the idea of education for a girl for her sake, not just to enable her to find a suitable match. *Difficult Daughters* is the story of a freedom struggle, while India fights for freedom from the British raj, Virmati fights for the freedom to live life on her terms. Like so many other Indian girls she wants to decide what to study and where, whom to marry and when. In the end it appears that she might have achieved all that but it ceases to be important. For in the throes of the struggle she loses a part of herself,
she is torn in two halves, one of which is on the side and she is to fight against *Difficult Daughters* compels one to think along these lines. We all know about women’s emancipation and the serpent called communalism, but Manju Kapur has dealt with both these relatively stale issues in such a manner that makes the reader to realize not just with the eyes, but also with the heart.

Manju Kapur has given the book a high readability that lie in the extensive use of Hindu/ Punjabi words in the novel. In fact the English used by Kapur is geared towards expressing a distinctly Indian Sensibility she voices her joys and hopes by using colourful words of colloquial Punjabi and create a wonderful cultural context for her novel. An example of this linguistic creation can be witnessed in the writings by Manju Kapur about the food, she describes in her novel. The novel appears to be lucid and readable. These words have been devised from different areas of experience Her English has definitely a local flavour. The term ‘Indian English’ refers to the variety of English which is learnt and used by a large number of educated Indians as a second language and it serves the international role of communication with the global community of a nation’s and Intra-regional roles of link language among people of diverse linguistic backgrounds. Manju Kapur’s novel is full of instances of Indianisation of vocabulary, loan translation, use of repetition and linguistic creativity as discussed above with regard to Indian English she voices her joys and hopes by using
colloquial Punjabi and creates a wonderful cultural context for her novel. An example of this linguistic creation can be witnessed in “the devotion with which the native Punjabi extorts the soul-satisfying virtues of ‘butter and lassi.” “Special feasting things like dhingri and guchchi to put in the rice and paneer were ordered from the Kashmiri agent in Sultanpur.” (DD: 65)

Dhingri and guchchi are the lexical words directly used in the novel, without translating it to the English as there is no alternative for such in original and compelled to write to tell about the custom of the eating habits.

“The Kasturi was standing over the kadhai at the one end of the kitchen, wielding a long black-handled, some children were on the floor on their pattris with small tables swallowing, fighting pakoras.” (DD: 69)

The same has been explained without any change, like kadhai, pattris, pakoras as these are very famous eatables in the north side. “The milk had a thick layer of malai, yellow not white, like nowadays. And when food was cooked, ah, the fragrance of the ghee.” (DD: 4)
Manju Kapur has used the code switching and code mixing device, to express herself extensively at the lexical and syntactical levels in a satisfying way. In the sentence ‘A woman’s shaan is in her home’ Kapur’s choice of shaan instead of pride lends this expression a homely and realistic touch her use of Hindi/Punjabi words represents vast area of experiences. Kapur used code mixing in her novel by using the words like ‘thickened milk’, ‘with papad’, ‘dal’, and ‘potato’, ‘sabzi’, ‘phenji’, ‘mati’, ‘praji’, all these words are taken from Hindi and are used in a more frequent way but these words have peculiar speculation that don’t need any clarifications and almost feel that we belong to the family. . Her use of these devices seems to be governed sometimes by the non availability of an equivalent word in English and at other times to make the context or narration more realistic. Here concrete words refer to the objects normally perceived by our sense organs.

“Kasturi’s brother came to Suraj Prakash in his shop with a silver bowl of mishri a gold guinea, sweet morabbas in huge jars containing carrots, amla. His godown was now ransacked for the best it had to offer. There were to be at least four varieties of barfi in different colours.” (DD: 66)
Further ManjuKapur uses invocations, exclamations and compounding etc. The following two extracts illustrate the agreement.

“Don’t you ever go out? Virmati asked the woman. They were quite friendly now. Arre where to go? He is so busy and there is much to do in the house.

Bas, bas said Kasturi, rubbing her on the back.

Oh, bhenji! It is my unlucky kismet that has brought me here.

‘Indu just see the sabzi doesn’t burn put the dal on afterwards, start making the roties use the fresh butter in the dhoti, the old one is for ghee.’

‘Han’, said Indu, stopping paro from following her another.’ (DD: 80, 81)

You’ve destroyed our family, you badmash you randi! You’ve blackened our face everywhere! (DD: 197)

“After the pugri was tied on Kailashnath and the pollution of her father’s death wiped away by religious ceremonies.”(DD: 240)
Kapur extends the use of code mixing to phrases and sentences “puris and parathas wrapped in Britannia bread waxed paper, aalu ki sabzi in mithai boxes” *(DD: 2)*

Here, this way commanded one of the women, ‘now stop, stop, and the tonga clattered to a halt. While they haggled with the tonga-wallah, They.. skirted the zenana angan. *(DD: 180)*

In the above examples we get excellent use of code-mixing. Two Hindi words (puris as well as Parathas) have been combined with the help of an English conjunction. Further two phrases (like aalu ki sabzi as well as Mithai boxes) are connected with the help of an English preposition in fact the whole noun phrase (further sub divided into a noun phrase) and a prepositional phrase (in mithai boxes) looking closely at many code-mixed noun phrases in *Difficult Daughters*, we notice that the Hindi/Punjabi words sometimes are used as head words (eg. Sweet Morabbas) in huge jugs, some times they are the constituent of a post modifier (eg. Four varieties of barfi) and at times they are used as head words well as the constituents of a post modifier (eg. Sherwats of kewara) thus the code-mixing device gives a great freedom to the author to use native words in plenty and consequently make English Natives significantly. A high lucidity of *Difficult*
Daughters is also caused by the narrative technique. Ida starts narrating the tale with a very cryptic statement.

“The one thing I had wanted was not to be like my mother. Now she was gone and I started at the fire that rose from her shriveled body, dry-eyed, laden, half-dead myself, while my relative clustered around the pyre and wept.” (DD: 1)

From this very point readers get curious to explore and analyze why she did not like to be her mother and relate the answer to the larger issue of patriarchy. Surprisingly enough the book ends as it began with the angry Ida comments,

“All through, I felt the excitement of discovery the pleasure of fitting narrative into a discernible inheritance. This book weaves a connection between my mother and me, each word a brick in a mansion, I made with my head and my heart, now live in it, Mama and leave me be, Do not haunt me any more.” (DD: 280)

In this way the novel appears to form a complete circle and this circularity gives a direction, continuity and speed to readers. Ida takes over the narration of the tale at different points in the novel, but only for a very brief period and this
breaks the monotony in the reading of the novel. Ida starts the story in Chapter I wherein she talks about her dead mother just after her funeral at Delhi and then she reaches Amritsar, where she starts piecing together her dead mother’s past, but as she has been able to provide only a small aspect of life. Ida takes up the job of a narrator. She, along with Kailashnath goes to the college where her father worked for a very long time and her mother’s love affair bloomed with Harish.

‘I wonder could you take me there? If it is not too far? Too far?
What is too far in Amritsar? This is not a big city like your Delhi, Instead we have a small city, big with bombings and killings. No I can’t take you there, there is a curfew on. Don’t you read the papers, or listen to the news?” (DD: 48)

Thereafter, she again starts telling the story, wherein she meets swarnalata sondhi, the room mates of Virmati during her Lahore days, to explore some more facets of her mother’s personality.

“Swarnalata Sondhi lived in a small set of rooms on the second floor of an old house near Eden gate. She was shriveled with age, her eyes red-rimmed and watery. She walked with a stick and was delighted to see me.” (DD: 135)
Ida tries to reconstruct the story; she comes to know how Swarnalata helps her mother to get rid of the unwanted pregnancy. Ida talks to her Masi about her mother’s marriage and she is trying to pick up the loose threads of her mother’s marital life. And finally at the end of the epilogue she becomes autobiographical and bids farewell to her mother’s memory. The reader develops a bond, a trust with the author who is the main narrator in the novel. This is also realized by her familiarity with the character’s innermost thoughts and feelings, her knowledge of past and present and her presence in locations, where characters meet in total privacy. In addition, what makes this novel lucid and distinguishes it from other tales of adulterous love and romantic intrigue is the sympathy and integrity, with which the author and Ida reconstruct the past of Virmati.

*Difficult Daughters* is first rate realistic novel. A close analysis of the novel reveals that realism also promotes a high degree of readability and realism to a large extent is realized in creditability. The scene of being in the presence of actual individual things, events, people and places, is the common experience one expects to find in literature and this very aspect of the illusion of reality is called verisimilitude. The novel is full of instances where readers get the impression of being participants as well as observers. For example Virmati’s traumatic experience of unwanted pregnancy mitigates the gap between the reader and a participant.
“Quickly she calculated dates when was the last time she had surreptitiously rinsed out the old cloths that were recycled to soak up the blood. The water from the tap had been cold then, it was that far back, she was certain she was pregnant. With this certainty the nausea came again, ripping through her throat, salivating here tongue” (DD: 153)

She thought of all the hours she had spent over her practical files, her teaching charts what would happened to her BT now. Verisimilitude is closely connected with another aspect of realism called credibility. Credibility is “likelihood or believability” of the fiction as a “Potential reality” Kasturi gets surprised at the fuss that people are making in the house after Virmati fails at her FA Examination. She does not give importance to the success in the examination. Instead she strongly believes that it is the duty of every girl to get married. (DD: 13)

Her belief lends credibility to the novel because the same belief was a part of Indian consciousness till some years ago. A lot of local expressions with a flavour of local culture and customs like Hai, re beti ! (DD: 13) also make the novel lucid.
The novel is brilliant not only because it is about female desire and entrapment, about compromise and compliance, but also because of its great lucidity triggered by Kapur’s use of code switching and code mixing devices. Besides, the third person narration contributes to develop a great bond between the author and the reader. In addition, Manju Kapur’s sincere effort to make the novel realistic also makes the text highly lucid and readable.

**Anita Nair’s Fasting Feasting**

Novel form is the critical and realistic examination of a society’s claim and practices. The novelist has the perception and the analytic mood of a sociologist, who provides an exact record of human life, society and the social system. The contemporary women novelists are closer to the earthly reality, to the subtle nuances of social behaviour and to the complex structure of man and woman’s inner life and to the use of language that varies from pedestrian to the normal. For instance Anita Desai has chosen complexities between a man and woman and tried to explore the psychological aspects of the women. She has pictured a woman suffering in measurable loneliness. She very well carries her narrative through to a satisfactory even explosive end; she builds up an atmosphere of tension as torrid and oppressive as a stifling Indian summer, both in the crowded, colourful cities and the strangely beautiful countryside.
“It was a strange evening—the atmosphere was stilled, that is why.

The wind has dropped, tired of storming, there were no more flurries of dust, no whirling dervishes of burnt leaves and bones. The light on the lawn, where I had insisted on their bringing out the tea, swift strokes of warm blue shadows.” (Cry, The Peacock: 159)

Such a great narrative technique with the beautiful description makes readers feel that they are in the place where she has depicted while reading the novel.

Anita Desai looks to the past to anatomise the pain inflicted on women down history to the present in a passionate affirmation of female identity and experience. The hallmark of Desai’s fiction is to focus on the inner life. In Cry the Peacock, she has depicted the inner life of a psychic woman, where she felt alone, secluded by her husband who doesn’t listen or never try to understand the conscious of the woman, her love, her emotions and such conversations. Desai brilliantly drags reader to the mind of the woman as the reader feels bad about the woman because he is able to understand the psyche of the woman.

God! God! I cried and sat up in terror. There was no clash and clamour after that. I was aware of a great, dead silence in which my
eyes opened to a vision that appeared through the curtains of the years, one by one falling back till I saw again that shadow. Its name was not that of a demon in a kathakali dance drama, nor was it one of the limpid appellations of the moon. It was, remembered it now, fate.” *(Cry, The Peacock: 29)*

She accomplishes what many writers attempt and fail to achieve. She uses light touch, simple language, uncomplicated structure, but at the same time addresses some very big issues and makes a point.

“The cane mats, which hang from the arches of the veranda to keep out the sun and dust, are rolled up now. Pigeons sit upon the rolls, conversing tenderly, picking at ticks, fluttering. Pigeon droppings splatter the stone tiles below and feather float torpidly through the air.” *(FF: 3)*

Desai very clearly depicts the middle class life of the family and explains about the complexities and the prototypical parent found everywhere in India, who discuss, plan, plot and control. Desai describes about the state of two weak characters immediately one should not think that there are two women, but Uma and Arun sister and brother of the same family, when Desai explains the life of
Uma in India she immediately takes the reader to US to tell about the life of Arun. Uma is probably slightly retarded, she certainly has little interest her outside of her collection of old Christmas cards, holy and slightly dotty aunt and her one book of Ella wheeler-wilcox whose poems she reads over and over again.

“You are wasting your life in that dull, darkroom
As he fondled her silken folds
O’er the casement lean but a little my queen
And see what the great world holds” *(FF: 52)*

But suddenly two-third of the way through *Fasting Feasting* the reader is transported to England, to be with Uma’s brother, Arun. He has received scholarship to college, lives with an American family. Ann Howry examines “Anita Desai is the vanguard of a new generation of Indian writers who are experimenting with themes of inner consciousness she gives her readers valuable insights into the feminine consciousness through her memorable protagonist.”

A study of her novel reveals that she is interested in the exploration of psychological state of women characters. Desai uses the fiction a site for studying the role of women in society and there by indirectly offer a critique of the existential social set up that marginalize women. She explains about the
domineering nature of parents and tends to ignore the inadvertent possibility of entrapping their own offspring that is when a sudden deluge of ideas hit them and they order their eldest daughter Uma, to carry out them without delay. Uma is asked first to inform the cook to prepare sweets for her father, with neglectful impatience that she has been already asked to pack a parcel to be sent to her brother Arun in America.

“First go and tell cook, Uma. Tell cook fritters will not be enough. Papa wants sweets.’

‘Sweets also?’

‘yes, must be sweets, then come back and take dictation. Take down a letter for Arun, justice Dutt’s son take it with him, when he is leaving for America?

“Now you want me to write letter when I am busy packing a parcel for Arun? \textit{(FF: 4)}

In this manner, living under the demanding rule of mamaPapa. Uma is suppressed and is imprisoned at home. The part I of the novel tells us a flash back of how she becomes a reluctant victim of entrapment at home. The II part shows how her brother Arun who leaves his home for higher studies feels trapped by the very education that is meant to liberate him (vacuity) emphasis added. At this
juncture one is reminded of Desai’s characteristic way of making her internally turbulent protagonists find expression by association with external surroundings. Desai’s concept of escapism from the normal kind of life also witnessed in the weak character Uma she has created.

“Uma had a vision of frantic pig she had once seen in the bazaar, wriggling to escape from the butcher and a memory of the whines and cries of mating dogs behind the servant’s quarters.” (FF: 15)

For Hundred and fifty pages Desai captures for us through the simplest language, the tight, controlled world of an Indian middle class family. Thus for final seventy five pages she captures the tight controlled world for American Middle class family. She gives these two desperate worlds with such skill and insight that one cannot help but be moved by the artistry and despair. Desai is conscious about uniting language and symbol, world and rhythm and without it language would remain a dull and pedestrian vehicle. She brings vivid, surging life and story, unites inner and outer rhythms to obtain certain integrity and to impose order on chaos.

“She pushed her way through the hedge one day, her hair streaming over her shoulders because she had washed it that morning and it
was not quite dry. I am coming like this only’, she gasped as she climbed the steps to the veranda.” *(FF: 79)*

Desai portrays of domestic disharmony in traditional Indian families and the suffering of the women in a largely patriarchal world, her later novels demonstrate that she writes equally well about the world of men and about Indians abroad and about westerners in India. Her novel catches the bewilderment of the individual psyche confronted with the overbearing socio-cultural environment and over beckoning modern promise of self-gratification and self-fulfillment. She has given a new dimension to the Indian novel in English by shifting the emphasis from outer to inner reality. Desai clearly portrays different characters and demonstrates clearly- Papa as the complete patriarchal head and Mama the silent woman who finds solace in the shadow of the husband and fulfilling his wishes even in the weak and vulnerable stage.

“The words explode from him with both excitement and horror; it is what they have on special occasions, It is not good to go running, stay home and do your work – that is best’, Mama opines with an air of piety.” *(FF: 117)*
Desai refers to Uma’s parents as MamaPapa or PapaMama. She didn’t separate the two people because they do not act as two individuals. Mama is just a shadow of Papa implementing his rules at home. They are united in the thoughts and actions to colonize Uma, even though they differ in their gender. Desai hyperbolizes the unwavering nature of roles within the family as she emphasizes, one could be forgiven for thinking Papa had chosen the role of scowling, Mama scolding, since every adult had to have a role and these were their parents the children did not question their choice. Desai’s English is stylistically different and less conservative than colonial Indian literature and concerns such as hybridity, shifting identity and about ‘imaginary homelands’ are perceivable. Many reviewers have praised her intellectual rigor and vivid portrayals of India, particularly her insistence on the multicultural dimension of contemporary Indian society. Desai’s urban middle-class characters represented that the un-spoken gendered and imperialist premises of colonial culture inhibit the potential growth and artistic expression of the formerly colonized. Feminist critics have assessed the psychological development of Desai’s female characters in terms of the patriarchal Indian family structure while evaluating Desai’s representation of the Indian feminine within the context of other Indian literature written by women, although most of these critics have praised the complexity of the family relationships depicted in Desai’s novels, several have objected to their resolution as either too simplistic or perpetuating patriarchal values.
For some reason about half through the book, Uma is suddenly abandoned and attention is turned to Arun. It is the part devoted to feasting.

Desai explores the effectiveness of escapism as a coping mechanism. After a life time of dutiful servitude to the family, Uma frustrated by the service she has done to the family turns out to be a silent spectator to the happenings of the family and watches PapaMama Desai’s probe into Uma’s inner mind brings out not only her keen observation but also her artistic ability.

**Anita Nair’s Ladies Coupe**

‘Ladies Coupe’ tells the tale of a train journey through Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu and the intertwining life-histories of six women who meet in the ladies section of a second class. They tell each other their stories. They are represented as telling these tales in English, except for one who uses Tamil. The successive stories are framed by the larger narrative of the main character, Akhila, whose departure from Bangalore and arrival at Kanyakumari on the Tamil Nadu coast mark the book’s beginning and end. Her late father was a bookish clerk whose favourite newspaper was an English-language publication, The Hindu; Akhila educated in English and Tamil, is at ease in both languages and is an avid reader of women’s magazines in Tamil. In the opening sequence of the novel, Akhila is at the Bangalore Cantonment station, waiting for her train. The
terminology that sets the scene, with the topographical and transport is distinctively Indian, despite the English words employed. The title phrase (“coupe” is actually of French origin, thus incidentally pointing up the hybrid nature of English as such) refers to a gender-segregated convention, The first sentence itself, however is in a round, unvarnished International English, with Akhila’s name as the sole Indian indicator: “This is the way it has always been: the smell of a railway platform at night fills Akhila with a sense of escape”

“Akhila was at the cantonment station by half past eight at night. It was only few minutes away from where she lived. But she was in a hurry to leave home. It was as if once she had made up her mind, she wanted to shake the dust of home off her feet.” (LC: 7)

The ‘Coupe” has been disappearing, of Indian Travel; the Raj-Inherited term “Cantonment”, scarcely found outside India, denotes an Indian city’s onetime military quarter, today generally a residential district for the elite. Both the terms call out to the translator to be glossed. The description of the station identifies lexical Indianism with an evocation of “moist gunny bags” next to the raw “green-tinged reek of bamboo baskets”
“Jasmine wound in the hair, sweat and hair-oil, talcum powder and stale food, moist gunny bags and the raw green-tinged reek of bamboo baskets. Akhila breathed it all in and thought again of escape. A swell of people all escaping into aspects of richness of which she has no notion.” (*LC*: 1)

“gunny” coarse jute sacking from the Sanskrit goni (sack), through Hindi and Marathi gon or goni, thus pointing to commerce as a source of the Anglo-Indian lexicon. Anita Nair’s impressionistic prose also focuses on Akhila’s inner life, deploying resources of language and imagery that deftly fuse International with Indian English: “so this then is Akhila. Forty-five years old.”

“so this then is Akhila. Forty-five years old. Sans rose-coloured spectacles. Sans husband, children, home and family. Dreaming of escape and space. Hungry for life and experience. Aching to connect.” (*LC*: 2)

Nair in fact uses highly idiomatic International English. “The rose-coloured spectacles” image is an interrogatory recasting of the cliché “Seeing through rose-coloured spectacles” “Sans” a French derived alternative to “without.” The most difficult challenge is the task of communicating the flavour of Anita Nair’s
eloquent use of International English, its clichés, cultural codes and idioms. Nair explores the world of women with all their overwhelming problems and challenges in her novel *Ladies Coupe*.

Nair never forgets to describe their dress and manners and that’s how she describes Akhila’s sari and their manner and we change our attention to Akhila’s family life and we learn of her conversations (Presumably in Tamil) with Padma, her straitlaced younger sister: Anna and Padma are described having break fast:”


She manages to give words in Tamil and Sanskrit. She further mentions about the food habits thereby giving a glimpse of their culture. Anna and Padma are described having breakfast: “three idlies, small bowl of sambar and a piping hot cup of coffee” here as in Narayan, both idlis (spelt by Nair as Idlies) and coffee appear as south Indian markers, alongside the very southern Sambar. She uses the regional dimension that appears as a challenge for the translator. There is information about how the eager traveler ‘searched the notice-board for the list of passengers’ this notice board being an Indian Railway custom with which again, outsiders may not be familiar and which the translator will need to get cross accurately, Akhila studies the names of the fellow passengers in the coupe, the
women whose stories will make up the rest of the narrative; beneath her name were five others Sheela Vasudevan, Prabha Devi, Janaki Prabhakar, Margaret Paul Raj and Marikolanthu” this list holds some cultural traps for the unwary: the name ‘Marikolanthu’ identifies its bearer as Tamil, while “Margaret” might, to a non-Indian, suggest a foreign origin but is in fact legitimately Indian, since Margaret and her husband will prove to be Tamil Christians living in Coimbatore. Nair uses lexical item, code mixing and code-switching in her novel. Thus she followed the fragrance of the region she has selected and belonged. Her language is active and effusive. The readers feel that they are travelling in the ladies compartment. Nair, like a rag picker with an eagle eye observes the ordinary lives of maid servants, masseurs, vendors and other women who course through daily life. It is the strength and resilience the every day woman that Nair brings out, and her women characters are fleshed out to the last detail and one can visualize their faces, their bones and their desires very clearly by the narrative style.

“I thought to myself, what a rigid looking woman, with capable hands and a stern face. I thought you were a school headmistress or a nursing superintendent. I didn’t know school headmistress had a certain look,’ Margaret said, not bothering to hide her annoyance.
Oh! They do,’ Prabha Devi butted in, ‘they have this air about them as though the whole world is a bunch of unruly school kids’ (LC: 42)

Nair is a fine writer with a great sense of character vivid knowledge of South Indian Culture and an eye for telling detail. She can move from tender compassion to sensuality to raging hatred and is a compelling teller of stories. Each story has the eloquence narrative where it never confuses the reader and brings alive the everyday thoughts and desires and doubts. The intimate setting of the novel in south India doesn’t end only with the description, style and manners but even their life styles and the food habits and daily happenings in the middle-class families in India, She uses lexical terms borrowed versions from Tamil Language and used extra-ordinarily in her own way.

‘On Sunday afternoon, they listened to several programmes. Appa wanted the boys to listen carefully to the Bournvita Quiz show. Amma and Akhila waited for the Horlicks Family show- ‘Suchitravin Kudumbam’ (LC: 46)

Nair’s specialty lies in the selection of characters and life like versions. She selects the women who are from the base and explore their life and gruels and
struggles they face in the life. She never forgets to discover the inner source of
dynamism and creative well being. She narrates her story and the life of the
women as the train chugs, twindles and troops to the destination. Nair uses
apparently simple and direct language with highly specific regionalisms and
general Indian cultural markers such as the railway terms appear in her writing
skillful and idiomatic deployment of the resources of International English.

“Did her heart skip a beat when it saw a mango tree studded with
blossoms? Did the feel of rain on her bare skin send a line of goose
bumps down her spine? Did she sing? Did she dream? Did she weep
for no reason? Of a woman like her who was destined to be nothing
more than a work horse.” (LC: 84)

She uses Tamil words ‘kolam, Vadam’ brown-pebble like cheeda, coconut
rice and puliyodhare’ and thus lends a local colour.

“Amma had a scrap book of Kolam designs put together from the
pages of the Tamil magazines she read. There was a kolam there to
match every occasion conceivable in a Brahmin house hold and a
few more. Then there was a selection of everyday kolams. Good
housewifely kolams brimming with all the house wifely virtues that made mothers-in-law refer to the daughters-in-law as the guiding light of the family.” (LC: 50)

Nair very clearly states the normal mode of life of the Indian woman in the south region and she visualized the daily happenings, the reason behind every occasion, and the reason behind the words they proclaim, the life of the middle class Brahmin and how the woman of the family dependently believes her man, and finally when he leaves her. She feels deserted and switches over to the son to inherit the responsibility. Nair explains why Akhila was chosen to look after the family. She is the eldest to take care of the family and automatically the responsibility gets transferred to her even without her knowledge seemed to work and here Nair uses the phrase “Work Horse” because she has been working for the welfare of the family without even thinking about her emotions and when the family fails to repay her she feels desolated and in the confused state she asks herself ‘Quo Vadis’. The fellow travelers experiences and sufferings mould her and slowly the narration starts with the question Akhila asks her fellow travelers ‘Can a woman cope up alone?. Answer for the question raised by Akhila is the story of the novel. It may be a single question, but the idea behind the question and the meaning behind it are enormous, each woman’s experience is different. Some fail, some swim through it, and some others learn from their experience, this
pattern is an echo of Chaucer’s mixed crowd of pilgrims traveling to Canterbury telling tales to each other.

“I was thinking of us the women in the coupe. I don’t mean the woman in the top berth or the young girl. They don’t count Not really. I was thinking of Janaki and Prabha devi. Women like you and me, and I couldn’t stop thinking of how angry I felt, no, I don’t know if anger is the word, it was more like vexation….” (LC: 94)

Nair through her portrayal traces the real position of women in the families as well as in the society; she has created ripples in the society by presenting the inner mind of women from different walks of life. Her attempt to exhibit the fears, dilemmas, contradictions and ambitions of her women characters is remarkable. Considering standard Indian English as a variant standard International English and she never forgets to specify Pan-Indian terms, or words from Indian languages absorbed into Indian English as lexical items and understood throughout India.

“A thick, viciously red tomato soup; two puris and a bowl of vegetable korma; a helping of curd rice; a helping of sambar rice; a bowl of rasam; an appalum; two pickles” (LC: 79)
Nair believes in creating true to life characters. She says,

“The art of story telling literary fiction can be written without being too academic or highbrow. I don’t think its fair to the reader to play those literary games. When I create characters they have to have a physical form, I need to touch and feel them.” (Nair, Anita. *Hindustan times* 1998)

She had made story lines and characters resonate with enough strength to stand on their part.

“Opposite Akhila sat the last of the passengers who had boarded the train with her the previous night. All the others had got off. One by one, bidding her farewell, offering her advice.” (*LC*: 206)

Language is the expression of human personality in words, whether written or spoken. It is the universal medium alike for conveying the common facts and feelings of every day life and the writers understood the validity and maintained its beautiful structure by code-mixing and code-switching and even maintained universality. Since language has come into existence mainly as the needed means of expressing material facts and conveying information about the material world, it follows naturally that such reality or truth as may be outside our experience of the
world of phenomena or matter, should find its expression in the form of symbols. Compound words, idiomatic expressions lexical terms, prepositional phrase, compound tenses are used by the Indian women writers. This results in a varied pattern of the language which gives an identity to Indian writing in English. The novelists coined a new language and used devices of liberal translation, coining of proverbs, new compound words, single phrases, idioms or a number of sentences which follow each other to resemble the sequence of vernacular conversation. When these writers use idioms consistently in a novel, they illuminate a sentence with vividness. This is how they convey through English. The situations, moods and expressions that is essentially Indian. They use literal translation of idioms, direct use of Hindi words and misspelling of English words. There is vigour in the experimentation and an eagerness to convey a certain mood. They invent new words to get the desired effect. Their artistic and literary words not only record the social reality of their time, but in several ways, transcend it to project the realm of future possibilities. Their creative imagination, even though conditioned and shaped by the entire socio-economic, political and cultural ethos is able to create a world of aesthetic, ethical and human values that can find their relevance in time to come. This resulted in the production of rich spectrum of literature that could boast of a remarkable intellectual maturity and stylistic sophistication. These modern novelists have no reason to feel self-conscious in handling the English language. It is simply a tool for them which their education has placed into their
hands and which they have thoroughly mastered with the typical Indian flair for language.
Summing Up

An attempt has been made in the previous chapters to show the changing pattern in the portrayal of women in Indian Writing in English. However the researcher confines herself to the Indian women novelist. Further an attempt has been made in the thesis to show how the women characters portrayed in the Indian English novels of the past three decades reflect the changes that are taking place in the Indian society. Four novels of four women writers belonging two generations have been taken for analysis. Anita Desai, who started writing in 1963, Manju Kapur who is her later contemporary, Githa Hariharan and Anita Nair writers of present generation have been selected. Manju Kapur’s – *Difficult Daughters*, Anita Desai’s – *Fasting Feasting*, Githa Hariharan’s – Thousand faces of Night and Anita Nair’s – Ladies’ Coupe have been taken since each of these novels focuses on the plight of women standing at the various points of the transitional period.

The Introductory chapter gives the detailed social and literary background starting with an attempt to throw light on feminism by bringing in definitions given by various feminists. The chapter has made an attempt to trace the roots of feminism. It further goes on to give expository account of various streams of feminism like Marxist Feminism, French Psycho analytic feminism, The American Feminism and finally the Indian notions of Feminism. The chapter also
throws light on Freud’s view of women which invited a lot criticism and also thus formed the basis of new feministic thoughts. The chapter has at last attempted to give in a nutshell the views of great feminist thinkers like Betty Freidan, Simon de Beauvoir and Kate Millet. There is also a glimpse of the recent American Feminist critic Elaine Showalter’s views of feminism in general; there is a narrowing down to the origins of Indian feminism. The Thesis elaborately deals with the status of woman in India starting from the Vedic period. It brings out facts like how on the way they lost their freedom due to many socio-cultural reasons. One important reason highlighted in the introductory chapter is that of Aryan civilization. The impact of Manu’s codes on the Hindu society has also been hinted at. The focus of the introductory chapter is on the fact that Indian women were treated very well in the beginning but lost their freedom and were pushed to a secondary place and lived in that state for many centuries and once again gained an awareness due to the impact of western thoughts like Marxist communist philosophies and also due to the influences of western life style. The chapter goes on to highlight the service rendered by great social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Mahadev Govinde Ranade and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and also by great political reader Mahatma Gandhiji. From thus giving the social background the chapter goes on to give literary background by throwing light on the kind of thought that prevailed during the post-independent period and then gives a detailed account of the writers
and their works taken for analysis. The introductory chapter also specifies the statement of the thesis and gives a brief outline of the chapters that follow.

The second chapter titled changing scenario focuses on the changes in the life style of Indian women. The picture is that of the transitional period where not all women had the opportunity to have education and a happy married life as a majority might have in the present day situation. The society was slowly getting geared up for the transformation that was coming about. Some women were fortunate enough to have education some were not. The society was not prepared to give the woman a freedom in spite of her education and the women themselves were not yet ready to take up challenges, to face the inferiority complex of the men when they were not equal to them. Some women suffered because of lack of education, some others suffered because they had education. The chapter focuses on such scenes presented in the novels taken for analysis. Virmati’s sufferings in Difficult Daughter can be attributed to her own inability or lack of strength to resist the comments of the society and continue in her own way. Uma in Feasting and Fasting suffers because of her parent’s negligence. Devis travails spring from an unsuitable companion, a person who could be a proper match according to the society; a man could not give her emotional support. Akhila’s troubles are due to self-centered family who exploit her but are blind to her needs.
The Third chapter “Consequences of Evolution” deals with how the characters face the challenge before them, whether they lose heart and sink in their troubles or come out victoriously. The way they face their challenges can be attributed to the consequences of evolution in the society. In some cases since they have evolved due to education and they do not adhere to social norms and tradition. Women like Virmati, but they go only half way and are not able to resist the criticism and finally lose. Devi on the other hand gathers strength from the mythological stories as well as her own education saves herself from being an ordinary woman, her husband’s ‘hand maiden’. The writers have portrayed boldly certain scenes and climax which would have never featured in the novels of the earlier generation. A character like Anita Nair’s Akhila is definitely new to Indian English novel, certainly the consequences of the evolution taking place in the Indian society.

The fourth chapter “Changing Expressions” focuses on the language and techniques of the four writers. All the four writers have been conscious about the quality of readability. They have given local colour by using words from the regional languages. With lots of illustrations the chapter highlights the use of techniques like code-mixing, code-switching and idiomatic expressions which makes their style lucid and clear. Anita Desai uses the two way of narrative thus avoiding monotony. The first part is from Uma’s point of view and the second
from Arun’s point of view. Attention has been given to Gita Hariharan’s Thousand Faces of Night, where there has been re-interpretation of mythological stories to define the womanhood. The chapter highlights on the artistic ability and aesthetic sense of these writers.

An attempt has been made in this research work to portray the changes that have come about in society through the writings of Manju Kapur, Anita Desai, Gita Hariharan and Anita Nair. This will be useful for research scholars who are interested in studying about the changes in social cultural scenes. There is a lot of scope for further study in the field. A comparative study of these women writers with one another might throw light on the special focus of each writer. A comparative study of some of these writers with contemporary writings of men would make an interesting work. An in-depth study of Anita Desai’s novel will bring out evolution in the writer. All these writers and even other women writers can be taken up even individually for analysis – for the feminist point of view and also of cultural studies.