CHAPTER–I
INTRODUCTION

Literature is one of the most interesting and significant expressions of humanity and becomes the living memory of a nation. In ancient India, literature originated from stories that were originally orally conveyed. Excellent literature is never outdated and knows no bounds of place and time. Literature is universal, in the sense that it appeals to readers across national or linguistic boundaries. Language or culture may be different but human sentiments remain essentially the same in all literatures of the world. Among the literatures of the world, Indo-Anglian literature is dynamic branch and has great inheritance commencing from the Vedas and it has continued to spread its mellow light and it is part of Indian literature, a modern facet of the glory which has ancient treasure of divine thoughts.

India was a legend in English long before the English people established themselves as the rulers of this land. One can find many authors mentioning India in their works even Christopher Marlowe mentioned the glory of India in his Dr. Faustus. India, became a kind of testing ground for the launch of English literature In India, there are different languages and literatures. India is country where the cultural root is the same though there are marked differences in regional literatures owing to the genius of respective languages in which they are written. Each of the regional Indian literatures is deeply affected in certain movements. Though, it is affected many regional literatures in India as there are languages but the essential thread is the same and they weave a beautiful organic history. The fact that Indian literatures are a product of a multilingual, multicultural and socio-historical combination cannot be overlooked. With the contribution of regional and national writers, today Indian literature reached at the pinnacle of creation.

For better understanding of the genre- novel the researcher would like to focus on the origin and brief renowned history of Indian writing in English in Indo-Anglian literature up to
the time of Anita Nair. Here, it is essential to mention the brief history of Indian writing in English and the contributors of it. Along with the list of the contributors in Indian writing in English, the rise of the new form of literature—novel in India is also necessary to focus. For that I would like to divide the history of Indian writing in English into three parts, first to understand the beginning and exploration of Indian writing in English by major contributors, second for the rise and development of new literary genre (novel) in Indo-Anglian literature and third to understand Nair as a novelist. These three parts are foundation of my research work. On the basis of the understanding of the Indo-Anglian literature and the rise and development of novel in Indo-Anglian literature, the novels of Anita Nair can be judged properly.

“The term ‘Indo-Anglian’ was first used in 1883, when a book published in Calcutta with the title ‘Indo-Anglian Literature’, which enclosed a variety masterpiece from native students. Later on, K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar adopted it as the title of his first book on this subject, Indo-Anglian Literature, published in 1943. Indo-Anglian literature contributed to the common pool of world writing in English. It is a literature which is a combination of Indian literature and Indian literature written in English. Indian English Literature refers to the body of work by writers in India who write in the English and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India.

Indian English Novel emerged as a necessary outcome of its own story telling tradition and the tradition of English novel. As Prof. M. K. Naik in his Dimensions of Indian English Literature rightly points out,

One of the most notable gifts of English education to India is prose fiction for though India was probably a fountain head of story-telling, the novel as we know today was an importation from the West. (99)
Indian readers were well acquainted with the form of short stories in the form of the didactic stories like “Hitopdesh”, “Jatakkathas” and “Panchatantra” and the narratives like “Dashkumar-Charita” and “Kadambari” long before their introduction to western novels of Hugo, Scott and Dickens. However the primary motive of these stories was to interpret life by values and to make the readers perceive the same. The expression of historical sense or of social relationships of man which has been the characteristic feature of the Western novel has never been found in Indian short stories.

The history of Indian English novel can be very much aligned to the advent and supreme reign of the British Raj upon India, resting for a good two hundred years. Leaving out the ruthless colonization, Britishers did leave their share of wondrous virtues in the literary, architectural and political sides. However, the literary and artistic sides perhaps had overshadowed all the other routine existence, with Indian literature and English education never remaining the same again.

At the initial stage, the term “Indo-Anglian” was used to describe the original creative writing in English by the Indians. It is the literature written by the Indians whose mother-tongue is not English. According to K.R.S. Iyengar there are three types of Indian writers in English,

first, those who have acquired their entire education in English schools and universities. Secondly, Indians who have settled abroad but are constantly in touch with the changing surrounding and traditions of their country of adoption. And finally, Indians who have acquired English as a second language. (11)

The significance of Indian spirit is with a rich contribution to prose, poetry, novel and drama; these writers have made Indo- Anglian literature as a matter of pride to Indians and a source of admiration to the foreigners. Besides this, Lord Macaulay’s Minutes on Indian education in 1935 and Lord Bentinck’s decision to promote European literature and science
among the Indians instigated the Indians to use an alien tongue for creative expression. Inspired by this policy, a few Indians from the English-educated elite class such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu were stimulated to use English for creative expression. They realised that by using English, they could reach pan-India and even to the world audience. Thereafter, the Indian writers in English accepted English as a medium of expression for political and cultural reasons. Some Indian writers such as Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Nissim Ezekiel and Jayant Mahapatra have adapted English to communicate Indian sensibility. From the historical perspective, Indian English literature has passed through several phases such as Indo-Anglian, Indo-English, Indian Writing in English and recently Indian English literature.

The possible literary form for a writer to keep himself always in touch with the common readers is the fiction. It is in this area we find that the Indian writers in English have made the most significant contribution. So, of all genres, the novel is the most popular form today. According to H. M. Williams,

It is undoubtedly the most popular vehicle for the transmission of Indian ideas to the wider English speaking world. (109)

India, on a greater extent is indebted to the European and English novel because it is an art form and moreover, it has been imported to India from the West. In other words, it is a gift of Western literature. Like other forms of literature, in the early phase i.e. 1864 to 1930 Indian novels in English were largely imitative and immature. They idealized the past of India by way of presenting incredibly capable heroes. Though their achievement in this phase is meager, it is not totally insignificant. Moreover most of the early novelists were not conscious of the arrival of a new genre in Indian Literature.

In the nineteenth century with the publication of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s *Rajmohan’s Wife* (1864) and Lal Behari Day’s *Govind Samanta* (1874), Indian novel in
English has grown by leaps and bounds in respect of thematic variety and linguistic maturity. Both of them have used an acquired language to comment on the Indian social context. But compared to the recent output, most early novels in English were almost imitative and faulty. It is assumed that Indian novel in English has its roots in the nineteenth century realistic tradition of English novel. The impact of English education, national awakening and the influence of European models are the chief factors responsible for the rise and development of Indian novel in English. But with the passage of time the Indian novel in English has become thoroughly Indian in terms of the themes, techniques and the human values. In this regard, Meenakshi Mukherjee observes that:

The novel in India can be seen as the product of configurations in philosophical, aesthetic, economic and political forces in the larger life of the country. Despite obvious, regional variations, a basic pattern seems to emerge from shared factors like the Puranic heritage, hierarchical social structure, colonial education, disjunction of agrarian life and many others that affect the form of novel as well as its content. (viii)

Though the first Indian novel in English was published in 1864, the Indo-Anglian novel made its first significant start in the nineteen thirties. Since the thirties, it has successfully established itself in the Indian soil. It has also acquired a status of meaningful independent existence in the main stream of the Indian literature. The second phase of Indo-Anglian novel includes the novels written between 1930 and 1970. This phase comprises both the pre-independent and post independent periods in Indian social and literary scenario.

However, such classification has its own limitations as placing an individual writer in a specific period creates several problems. Besides an individual writer practices several literary modes and values of representation at the time of writing. Hence, the whole anthology of Indian novel in English may be divided into three broad groups:

The intellectuals in India before Independence concentrated on the national awakening and the society in a realistic manner. Bengal seems to be the source of the Indian novel in English for the prominent pioneers of the nineteenth century were upper-class Bengali writers, for instance, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Toru Dutt, and Rabindranath Tagore, who dealt with the social problems within their reach. These writers were not merely the imitators of the West but they had in the words of Meenakshi Mukherjee, “direct involvement in values and experiences which are valid in the Indian context”. (19)

The pioneer novelists were trying to establish a new sense of social morality in place of the age old social values. They were social reformers and with them, the novel became an exercise in social realism. The Indian novelists in English have their roots in two traditions – the Indian and the Western. It was a challenge for them to express distinctly an Indian sensibility in an acquired language. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee laid down the foundation for the first generation novelists to record the rich heritage and social transformation in India. Both the male and female novelists who emphasized their personal and private experiences followed him. The early novels were, therefore, sketchy, domestic and secluded from the political happenings. The early novelists depicted rural and domestic life, filled with superstitions and religious whims, with an equal emphasis on morals and social ills.

Women write in a different way from men. Despite the fact that men write about affairs of state, war, business, espionage and sexual encounters, women write about themselves. The main controversy is that there is such a thing as a unique woman’s sensibility, and that it reflects itself in the literature of our times. The women writers of this century wrote about nubile romances and marital maladjustment and their male counterparts
wrote about social issues. None of the women novelists was as great as Jane Austen, George Eliot and Bronte sisters. However, their world was different from the socio-ethical world of the British novelists. The early novelists in India imitated the Western novel in respect of plot-construction, characterization and narrative technique.

Instead of Gods and Goddesses the novelists started writing about the humble and the poor and in place of symmetrical uniformity they started appreciating the strength and freedom of the individual in the society. Historical romances were replaced by the realistic novels. And then only the novel in its true sense was born. In the 1930s Indian novel became a mirror to reflect the contemporary society. The study of the Indian novels in English from 1930 to 1950 reveals that writers of this period discovered a whole new world in Indo-English fiction. They examined minutely the Indian sensibility and exposed the foibles of the Indian way of life.

The period from the 1930s to the 1950s is hailed as the period of the Indian renaissance. Indian struggle for political freedom running parallel to the struggle for social freedom inspired the Indian writers. As a result, the Indian English writers wrote their own experiences of the crisis and the tensions of the class struggle, social discrimination, communal frenzy and corruption in the bureaucracy. They made common man their protagonists and made him stand against their oppressors.

The famous Indian trio Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan made a significant contribution to the early Indo-English fiction. Their emergence in the English fiction ushered in a new era as they gave a new dimension to it. These writers attempted to explore the contemporary Indian society without distorting the reality. They were reformists and not didactic, yet, the motive of propaganda remained with them. Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao emerged on the literary scene in 1930. It was the real beginning of Indian novel in English. They were labelled as
“The founding fathers”, “the genuine novelists”, “the inaugurators of the form.” (William62).

They made their appearance in the thirties with the publication of *Untouchable* (1935), *Swami and Friends* (1935) and *Kanthapura* (1938) respectively and established the tradition of Indian English fiction. He followed the ancient Indian tradition of storytelling, but his approach to themes and events, is of a social realist. He deals with the themes related to human predicament such as protest against social and industrial evils, the status of women in India, exploitation caused by caste system, class system and imperialism.

R. K. Narayan, on the other hand, is the novelist of middle class sensibility. He is an innate story-teller. In his novels he intensely and logically portrays the South-Indian life. In the words of Alan Warner Narayan “writes admirably plain English.” (William) His is a very simple and straight-forward style of narration.

Raja Rao is another prominent Indian novelist writing in English. But he is not as prolific writer as Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan. His concern with philosophical and mythological aspects distinguishes him from Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan. His novels have the influence of Gandhian ideology on an ordinary Indian. R. K. Srivastava remarks:

Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* is a garrulous account of primitivistic, religious, political and social activities of rural people. The novel is not a two-dimensional picture of villagers but a colourful audio-visual presentation …. Characterizing the entire country. (15)

Novel became an established art form in the works of the ‘Three Musketeers’ – Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao- who were still actively engaged in creative writing at the turn of the century. The novel form further evolved and matured in the hands of scholars like Bhabhani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh, Chaman
Nahal, Arun Joshi, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande etc. in the post-Independence period.

Male authors like the Nobel Prize winner Rabindra Nath Tagore (1913), winner of Best of The Booker Salman Rushidie (2008), R.K Narayan, Vikram Seth, Amitav Gosh, Khuswant Singh, Shahsi Tharoor, Amit Chaudri and Booker Prize Winner Aravind Adiga (2008), had carved their name in the international art, established for being able to introduce various universal themes into his works. No matter how wide is the universality of the theme in the male authors works, the significance and position given to the woman characters are very small and cast aside, and no other than being a mother, wife, maid or servant, daughter, widow (whose husband is dead), widow (a divorcee) and of a low-caste. It is very rare to see the strength, empowerment and vigour of these women in the writings of male authors from India. In this connection, Showalter observes, the woman characters constructed by these male writers have not represented what the women really experience, but instead, these writers have produced and reflected their own views and perceptions about this gender. As K.Satchidanandanand observes:

Our finest writers, young and old alike, have no doubt been alive to the major social, cultural and spiritual issues… the erosion of individual liberty, the loss of identity, the corruption of public life, the communal hysteria, the diverse forms of structural oppression based on caste, race, class and gender, the ecological havoc wrought by man’s hubris and greed, the absurdity of war. The heteroglossia of post-modernism probably springs from its multi-dimensional engagement with a hydra-headed reality.

(Singh 23)

The portrayal of women’s characteristics in these male writers’ works is normally weak and passive, as pointed out by Simone de Beauvoir, ‘He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the other’ (19). For Beauvoir, the weakness and passivity of the women
characters in the works of male authors are not reasoned by the factor of woman biology but due to the social system that has long been dominated by the power of men. The patriarchal system determines that women are weak, passive and in need of protection from their male counterparts. The pressure and domination of men towards the women have evoked such strain within them, especially within those who happen to receive Western education. They begin to hate the lives of the other, whose voices have been made silent. To evaluate and present the reality of women’s position in India, women authors who are not afraid to voice up and portray these strength and power have gradually appeared in the literary scene. The world begins to hear the voices of successful Indian women who become the members of the corporate world, right to the woman beggars on the street who have their own stories to tell, to share with other people all over the world.

Indian novelists in general and women novelists in particular began to treat women as legitimate subjects for their social novels. They made them join their counterparts in their struggle against ignorance, superstitions and backwardness. Women novelists made them struggle to break through the set pattern of sexuality and sensuality to rediscover their identity. Earlier woman was not supposed to have any role of her own in the society. Women novelists portrayed her as a human being capable of playing positive role in the society. In the earlier phase of Indian English Literature Indian woman is presented as an embodiment of endurance, understanding and sacrifice, a silent sufferer, as a custodian of Indian culture. Her virtue is more valued than her beauty. But the generation next novelists i.e. from 1950 to 1970 pictured her as a victim of barbarous cruelty of men. They made her rise against the male domination and portrayed her as a free thinking woman claiming her life to be her own.

Some of the writers shifted their focus from external social issues to the exploration of the individual’s internal world. The post independent novelists began their quest for individual identity. Male and female psyche became the subject of analysis for the novelists.
The tradition of explaining the interior world of an individual was started in the later part of the second phase but was developed in the third phase of Indian English novels. In the third phase that begins after 1970, an individual’s quest for a personal meaning in life became the major theme. Their forte was the exploration of the limitless depths of mind and the hidden contours of the human psyche. They renounced the larger world in favour of the inner man. To seek and assert her identity is the greatest challenge before these writers. The dispossessed person’s search for her identity is the major theme of their novels. While seeking the identity a writer creates the national identity. Their search for identity takes two main directions - philosophical and sociological. The loss of identity often results in alienation. As a result alienation in its comprehensive sense has become a recurrent theme in Indo-Anglian novels.

Post modernist writings share the elements of modernism in breaking away from traditions, experimentation with form and a markedly different attitude towards life and its understanding yet they do not have everything in common. While modernists grieve for the loss of order and try to bring back it, the postmodernists rejoice it. The postmodernist art registers the dissolution of social and literary traditions and values. A study of postmodernist works and their analysis based on different theoretical perspectives certainly points out how modern creative writings and their studies have moved ahead to explore unexplored domain.

A number of novelists like Arun Joshi and Anita Desai have explored the psychological and sociological conflicts in the social and the individual’s life. There is a kind of shift from socio-political concerns to the inner life of human being. The modern Indian writers write about the socio-cultural predicament of the modern man. Many modern novels dealt with man’s alienation from his self, his class, his society and humanity at large. In other words, the centre of their novels shifted from the society to an individual. C. Paul Verghese’s comment in this regard is worth quoting.
Most of the novelists in their eagerness to find new themes renounced the larger world in favour of the inner man’ and continued ‘a search for the essence of human living. (25)

The year 1980s marks the significant stage in the growth and development of Indian novel in English. It is during the 80s that some very promising Indian English novelists and their novels earned great honours and distinctions in the Western academic world. The Indian novel in English “has now attained a luxuriant growth and branched off in more directions than one,” says Dr.R. S. Pathak in his ‘Preface’ to Recent Indian Fiction, 1994. It followed a definite pattern of development making tremendous progress in the eighties and nineties in the hands of old masters as well as the new talented novelists like Salman Rushdie and others. Their achievement lies in finding out the new fictional themes and techniques. In a sense they are contemporary novelists as they deal with the history of the post-Independence India, the predicament of the modern man and the contemporary reality in modern India.

Besides these makers of ‘new novel’ some other novelists were concerned with the life and the experiences of the minorities in India, for example, Pratap Sharma, Ranga Rao, Boman Desai, Mukunda Rao, Gopal Gandhi and so many others enriched the realm of Indian novel in English beyond the expectations.

A novel is a living and evolving literary genre, and is trying, in the hands of its practitioners, a ‘fusion of form, substance and expression that is recognizably Indian yet also bearing the marks of universality (Iyengar 322)

During the post-Independence period there appeared a number of women writers on the literary scene such as Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande as well as the younger generation of Githa Hariharan, Nina Sibal, Namita Gokhale, Shobha De, Suniti Namjoshi, Arundhati Roy, Anita Nair and Kiran Desai who have made a significant contribution to Indian English Novel and helped for its
development. All of them have written about their own problems and sexual politics that
defines gender relationship. They are more sensitive in describing the lives and concerns of
women than the male writers. Their novels project female experiences, social situations and
criticism. Meena Shirwadkar remarks,

feminism, free-sex, isolation, alienation, identity crisis or an individual struggling to
be oneself are some of the thematic concerns of the women novelists today. (202)

These writers not only describe the lives of women as they have been living but also
how women can live afresh with their own identity. Woman with high feelings and
aspirations makes her appearance in the novel after novel. This appearance of the new, fully
awakened woman, ready to fight against the patriarchal norms in order to live a meaningful
life, is a recent phenomenon. The female characters created by these novelists do not accept
the low secondary status in a male-dominated Indian society, that is, conservative.

Postcolonial views have also impacted the decisive and the imaginative aspects of
Indian English fiction. How the colonial rulers created a particular image of their subject
races to be responsible for their grasp on them forms an important feature of the emerging
forms of narrative. Contemporary writers are trying to summon from the past colonized
nations, particularly in India, explore formations of life that existed during the British rule
and expose the subtle strategies employed to make the colonized people take their subjugated
position as something natural and transcendental. These writers also bring out the
performance of almost the same power politics that defines the relations between the power
manipulating people and the people kept at the margins even after the end of biased
imperialism. A number of contemporary writers fictionalize these aspects of life and the
postcolonial critics analyze and expose the way colonialists disseminated built reality about
different societies and cultures as the reality.
The fictions of women’s problems and their study form another significant aspect of contemporary Indian English fiction. How women suffer due to patriarchal hegemonic structures and the way these women protest against their subjugation forms the central concern in a number of postcolonial fictional writings. The postcolonial women writing is aimed to explore the extent to which they serve the purpose of giving voice to women and support their struggle for rights. Thus the Indian woman, as appropriately presented in the modern and post-modern fiction written in English by Indian women novelists behave unlike her Western counterpart in her evolution from the “Feminine” to the “Female”. She is progressive and conscious of her rights like the contemporary Western counterpart, but she quickly, compromises to the fact that a woman’s real position lies within the family-unit which she must sustain and protect and not ignore or neglect due to the false notion of being “liberated”. There is a varied image of woman in the fiction by women: the lower middle-class as depicted in Kamala Markandaya’s *Nectar in the Sieve*: the middle-class, educated, economically independent woman as depicted in Rama Mehtai *Inside the Haveli*, Sashi Deshpande’s *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and Anita Nair’s *Ladies Coupe*; are the upper rich class as depicted in the fiction of Namita Gokhale, Shoba De & Anita Nair’s *Mistress*.

Kamala Markandaya, one of the outstanding woman novelists in her novels depicts rural economics in a South-Indian village is affected by industry and modern technology. And also she has handled the themes of poverty and weaker sex. She projects an image of the changing traditional society. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala occupies a significant place in the history of Indian women novelists in English. She writes about the interaction between two cultures European and Indian. Jhabvala is basically concerned with the analysis of ‘domestic friction’.

The novels of Nayantara Sahgal, on the other hand, realistically reflect the contemporary Indian political theme. She brings into limelight the corruption, disorder, educational anarchy and violence among the frustrated youths in the changed political
scenario in India. As a writer Sahgal does not believe in the arranged marriage, which is
devoid of love and mutual trust. On the other hand, she has complete faith in the meaningful
relationships. She does not find anything wrong in having either pre-marital or extra-marital
relations and makes a plea for women’s liberation.

Anita Desai holds unique place in the modern Indian novel in English. She explores
the emotional world of women, the problems of adjustment, depression, hopelessness and
anxieties in her novels .Regarding man-woman relationship Anita Desai differs from
Nayantara Sahgal because she believes that not only male partners but female partners are
also equally responsible for estrangements in families. For her writing is a matter of instinct,
silence, compulsion and waiting, whereas, for Nayantara Sahgal, it is a passion. Santa Rama
Rau in her novels deal with high caste Hindu families. Unlike Nayantara Sahgal, Ruth Prawer
Jhabvala and Kamala Markandaya, Bharati Mukherjee and Gita Mehta have already treated
the theme of East-West encounter respectively. The women novelists have made novel
experiments in form and technique. Their basic concern is with the issue of women’s
liberation. It seems that the Indian women novelists have taken up the demand for the
equality in the enjoyment of all fundamental human rights – moral, religious, political,
educational, legal and economic. They are the champions of feminism. Hence, Mulk Raj
Anand admits,

The women writers are more eloquent, intense, and sensitive. Few male writers can
give the same sense of intensity to their writing. (George)

From the formidable collection of Indian women writers the researcher have chosen
Anita Nair for the study because of her contemporariness, the similarity of the sensibility and
the missionary zeal with which she exposes the ignominies heaped on women. Amongst
women writers one of the best sellers in the 90’s is the Bangalore- based journalist Anita
Nair. She was counted among the renowned writers in the Indian literary sphere; she has the
honour of having her novels published in different languages. Her novel *Ladies Coupe* was rated as one of the five best novels in India in 2001. She has been associated with prominent magazines as editor and has been writing weekly columns for the dailies. During last ten years, she is also one of the most eminent Indian novelists and has published many novels and these have gone into several prints. Perhaps the most pertinent reason for her sudden rise to fame is her crisp, journalistic and imaginative style of writing like R.K. Narayan and her treatment of new themes, especially about permissive, middle-class and high-class Indian society.

A remarkable feature that the Indian women novelists of today share is that they all believe in affirmation of one’s womanhood. The thematic concern of their novels is not to deny, but to take pride in womanhood. They depict woman in the contest of contemporary world, as an individual with freedom of choices. The Indian women novelists writing in English have successfully projected the urges, dreams and desires of the Indian woman, in particular the middle class girls who refuse to be suffocated by their environments. Nonetheless, their novels transcend the Indian cultural scene and deal with complex human relationships and human predicament. These writers view life with a keen perception, sharp sensibility, an acute sense of observation and fire sensitivity.

Women writers have distinguished themselves for their boldness in presenting the status of woman in Indian society and for depicting man-woman relationship in fictional form. It is only after the emergence of women writers that we have been able to have a deep insight into the psyche of the Indian female. No longer is woman portrayed as a mare tool in the hands of her male partner. She is no more a wooden creature, subject to suppression and male domination.

Anita Nair stick together with literary area much later before her fellow citizen had discussed a lot with reference to the roses and thorns and of their submissive voices in the
village and in the city, which were often confided in custody to offer small medication. Anita Nair was born at Mundakottakurissi near Shoranur in Kerala State; Anita was brought up in a suburb in Chennai (Madras), Tamilnadu. Her family background made frequent her visits to Kerala and these trips enabled her to know the heart of rural Kerala. During her professional life in Bangalore as the creative director of an advertising agency, she wrote her first book, a collection of short stories called *Satyr of the Subway* (1997) which added feather in her cap in the form of fellowship from the Virginia Center for Creative Arts. Since then, Anita published a number of books and every creative output bears peculiar characteristic. She authored *Malabar Mind* (1997), *The Better Man* (2000) *Ladies Coupe* (2001) *The Puffin Book of Myths and Legends* (2004), also edited *Where the Rain is Born* (2003). Anita Nair’s geographical location and area has made deep impact on her writing. She has written about Kerala poetry have been included in “The Poetry India Collection and a British Council Poetry Workshop Anthology”. She has also written a few other novels such as, *Mistress* (2003), *Adventures of Nonu, the skating squirrel* (2006), *Living Next Door to Alise* (2007), *Magical Indian Myths* (2008), *Goodnight and Godbless* (2008), *Lessons in Forgetting* (2010), *Chemmeen* (2011), *Cut Like Wound* (2011) and *Idris* (2014).

Her works also include many travelogues. Thus, Nair’s writing has wide range of themes. Anita Nair is a fine writer, with a great sense of character, a 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. Anita Nair signalled the advent of a sensitive writer who could probe deep into people’s personalities and take the reader on a brilliant expedition. The first fictional village to make literally famous was R.K.Narayan’s Malgudi but in Kaikurussi, Anita Nair has created another homestead that could become just as well known. The following brief analysis of Anita Nair’s novels gives
the readers a clear idea about the problems of women and remedies they find for their problems.

Rural Kerala is much portrayed in her novels since she has a deep connection with her motherland. But she exposes the possibility of a contemplative writer as she writes on different subjects. The way she profiles her characters each one a supreme blend of emotions and heap sensitivities, the way she smoothly structures the metaphorical expression, and the way she weaves meticulous descriptions in her stories stimulates the reader’s imagination till the very last paragraph. She just clutches a mirror of the culture through her writings. Her writings clearly affirm that Anita Nair as a writer is not bound to a particular dogma which would limit her boundaries of thoughts and writing.

In 2006, she was one of India Today’s 30 Power Women in India, and has won many awards for her contribution to the field of literature, including the JFW Award for Literary Excellence (2010). *Mistress* was named a finalist for the 2007 PEN/Beyond Margins Award in the U.S.A., nominated a finalist for LiBeraturpreis 2007 in Germany and also it was on the Orange Prize long list in the UK. FLO FICCI Women Achievers Award in 2008 for Literature. Anita Nair has been awarded the Central Sahitya Akademi award for her contribution to Children's Literature. Anita Nair was awarded the Arch of Excellence Award by the All India Achievers’ Conference, New Delhi for Literature. In May 2012 she was honoured by the Kerala Sahitya Akademi for her contribution to Literature and Culture. *Lessons in Forgetting* has been selected in the Feature films section of Indian Panorama, 2012 in the 43rd International Film Festival of India being held in Goa from 20th – 30th November, 2012. *Lessons in Forgetting* win National Film Award. The movie adaptation of *Lessons in Forgetting* for which Anita Nair also wrote the screenplay and the dialogues has won the National Film Award for an English language film at the 60th Annual National Film Awards in India.
Satyr of the Subway is her first book, a collection of short stories published in 1997. The first collection of the book comprised of twelve stories. In her debut work, Nair makes a brave attempt to portray the complexity of human relationship and the futility of the expectations we have in life. It is a collection of short stories that share certain common themes. The writer looks at male-female relationships from an entirely different perspective; examining in exhaustive detail their superficiality and temporality. She addresses the idea of existence in the 21st century and portrays the lives of her characters as hollow and meaningless; stuck in a furrow from which they wish to escape. She uncovers the isolated lives of characters who are real enough to be our friend, neighbour or colleague.

Nair portrays these characters as essentially dissatisfied with their lives; whether it is Saro who is sick of her empty-shell marriage, the “satyr” who is perpetually seeking his muse in vain or Norah who is trapped in her role of an old woman. These characters all share certain characteristics: their lives are incomplete in some way, they feel plagued by loneliness and all of them are compelled to reach out a stranger to complete their imperfect lives. Her methods and concerns are equally arresting. Nair’s stories are gripping in their imagery. She uses the right words with stunning precision, evoking thousands of images in one sentence alone. Her work is rich, not only in imagery but also in rhyme and rhythm; throughout the book the reader can feel a gentle, meandering lyricism. The situations in Satyr of the Subway come alive with the help of Nair’s evocative imagery and astute observations. Writing seems like a compulsion to her; a desperate longing to understand life, society and the extent and array of human emotions.

The writer has a very unorthodox approach to story-telling. Her situations range from ordinary to bizarre to downright uncomfortable. For example, in “The heart of a gerund” she tells the story of an old woman living in a shelter for the homeless, surviving on what little she has left of her dignity. Norah’s sanity is maintained by her repeated claim of
being different from the others at the shelter; while they had no say in being left to spend the rest of their days at the shelter, hers was a conscious decision that she made herself. She clings on to this to secure her self-respect. When a young male visitor befriends her and treats her with kindness, Norah allows her emotions to get the better of her. Her tragic fall comes when she sees herself through his eyes, “a destitute old woman with no place to go and nothing to do.” Hence, like all of Nair’s characters, she is left alone in the end; disillusioned.

“The karmic cat” is one of her more unusual stories. She explores the parallel worlds of a lonely street cat, wanting to be adopted and domesticated, and a couple’s empty-shell marriage in which the wife feels her existence is meaningless. These two worlds collide when the wife takes in the cat and showers love and affection on it; the cat, in turn, gives her the undivided attention and constancy that the wife feels is missing from her marriage. A strong bond is forged between them and the husband notices a remarkable change is his wife: she seems stronger, self-reliant, and happy without him. His male insecurity instincts kick in and he begins to pay extra attention to his wife. This drives the cat insane with jealousy and it attacks the man with a terrifying ferocity, only to be betrayed by the wife and turned out on the street. It is, once again, left alone to survive the world on its own, lost and deceived. Each of these fifteen stories is completely different from the others and each contains within it a whole new world, dark and intriguing. According to Anita Nair, writing is “a heavenly carnival.”

*Malabar Mind* (1997), Anita Nair’s debut collection of poems, the real and corporeal, landscapes and mindscapes are explored with a rare fluid ease. From the eccentric symbol of toddy shops in Malabar - a full bottle of toddy crowned with a red hibiscus - to the harassed buzz of television newscasters during war time; from the apathy of non-stick frying pans to the quiet content of cows chewing cud, Anita Nair scrapes through the everyday, seizing an
unusual moment. And then she turns them into metaphors that cast a glow, suffusing ordinary things with extraordinary dimensions, capturing the strength and resilience of life.

Cryptic couplets on love, an epigram on how to cope with failure, demanding extended poems about youth and sensual existence; humour, irony, lust, hope, hurt, anguish; beaches, crows, bus journeys, hospitals, just about every aspect of the human realities finds a place in this collection of poems written over a decade. Anita Nair has a remarkable body language of multicoloured reiteration which comes through well as a plot even in very short poems giving a local habitation and a name to passing thoughts. From conserve mornings, sun dried reminiscences, cow-like grey clouds to the shy raindrop - her new medium of thought takes you to another plane, where words paint pictures and vision takes branch. The ordinary business of living takes on a fresh perspective in her hands, stringing lust, hope, anguish, joys in its wake.

Anita Nair's first novel, The Better Man (2000), there's a haunted house--with ghosts lurching around dark hallways and pushing the living down staircases. The cursed construction is in Kaikurussi in central India, and our protagonist, Mukundan, grew up there with his tyrant father and meek, apologetic mother. As the story opens, this frustrated middle-aged writer finds himself returning home, once again taking up residence in his dull, oppressive childhood village. He doesn't want to be there. He drinks rum and fears the dark.

Anita Nair's imposing debut novel leads our agitated souls back to the primitive wisdom enshrined in love, the essence of one’s being. The Better Man is the journey of a soul, the story of a retired government officer – Mukundan Nair, who returns to his kerala village. But this means coming face to face with his dead past, millions of grey shadows and ghosts of his dead mother and ancestors haunting and tormenting him. The pitch and flow of the novel is rhythmic. More than a novelist, Anita Nair comes out as an adept storyteller, because she has intrinsically woven many small stories into a striking tapestry of a novel.
Characters are introduced throughout the novel with eloquent portrayal. Gradually the characters are shown to play a role in the life of the protagonist, Mukundan Nair. All the “episodes” move in perfect tandem to reach the culmination point of the novel.

The main storyline features Mukundan Nair, who retires to his northern Kerala village Kaikurussi after years of government service. His father, Achuthan Nair, has by far the most powerful personality in the book - at 90, he still inspires trepidation in his son and the other people in the village. Combine this fear with the guilt that Mukundan feels about having deserted his mother, and you see why Mukundan was not keen to return home. At this point the story reads as though the author forced the characters into particular actions for the sake of her story their actions are not very consistent with the personalities she drew.

There is a lesson for everyone in this novel. Mukundan learns that happiness cannot be had by being the cause of someone else’s unhappiness. Bhasi learns that man cannot control and change another man’s destiny. Man cannot play God. Achunthan Nair, but for his age, would have realized that man is not an island and cannot live in isolation. When the fiery strength of youth diminishes in old age, supremacy is least useful. The story exposes a basic human predicament-each one of us has wounded corner in our personality. Rich in colour, the undercurrents that ran beneath the seemingly idyllic surroundings of the sleepy village are explored in fluid prose. Anita Nair has proved her mettle by fathoming the deepest recesses of man’s psyche and pulling it out nearly on the surface. She will go a long way.

In all of the novels of R.K.Narayan there is one or more than one female character that is out either half way or full way of this orthodox, conservative society to assert the right to live with dignity and freedom. We can conclude by saying that the same style is followed by Anita Nair and R. K. Narayan is not bigoted against women and even Anita Nair is not prejudiced against men. We find two generations of women in R.K.Narayan and Anita Nair novels: the first generation consisting of mothers and grandmothers who are loyal to the old
social system with all its tradition, customs, taboos and superstitions, and the second
generation consisting of young women, who, unlike the old women, are educated and
assertive. They speak out their voices and assert power whenever possible and necessary.
What is significantly mention-worthy about Narayan’s Women’s Lib movement is that his
process of liberating women is slow and gradual, not drastic and that he uplifts the condition
of women within India’s own tradition, not by following the western feminist trend.

Anita Nair’s *Ladies Coupe* deals with the issue whether a single woman can be happy
or is she incomplete without a man. Akhila, the main character, an unmarried woman in her
mid-forties has the eldest of four children and after the death of her father the responsibility
of Akhila is of running the family. During course of life, she experiences patriarchal Social
thinking and behavior towards women. One day, she gets herself a one-way ticket to
Kanyakumari. She gets a berth in the ladies compartment. She shares the compartment with
five women, Janaki, Sheela, Margaret, Prabha Devi and Marikolanthu. Akhila strikes up a
conversation with these women. Each of the women tells Akhila of their lives.

At forty five, she finds herself wandering, with no life of her own, genuinely alone,
and yet too conventional to grab any happiness she might have found along the way. A brief
love affair with a much younger man is firmly put aside, because of what people might think.
Akhila decides to escape and make a journey to Kanyakumari, just to be on her own, and
grasp some of the sense of fun and adventure she has not yet lost. Where the oceans meet and
the land ends is surely where some answers must emerge. But then the other women’s lives
claimed and showed other facets of the female predicament. The women are bound by their
common human experience. They are the other faces, other possibilities of Akhila.

Janaki, the oldest of the women, has been married 40 years, and like many marriages,
hers has grown into a close, happy bond. There are many shadowy corners she does not
examine, and maybe, just as well. "Friendly love," understanding and loyalty is what she has
as her reward. Prabhadevi, rather flirtatious and lively when first married, is frightened into a lifeless conformism, until she rediscover her own possibilities and learns how to float, symbolically and otherwise. Margaret PaulRaj's story has an element of black humour in it. She begins to detest her pompous husband, and takes her revenge by helping to make him fat. The story seems a bit farfetched, but the hatred is recognizable. Sheela's story contains the unforgettable portrait of the grandmother who defies and loathes the obscenities of death and age. Her granddaughter conspires with her to keep her looking beautiful even in death. But the most horrifying story is that of Marikolanthu, raped, cast out, abandoned, beyond hope.

All these lives form a kind of mirror in which Akhila may see her reflection made whole, so that she may move to grasping the happiness she has a right to. Akhila was suddenly struck by the condition of individual lives. All these women, she thought, all these women, Janaki, Sheela, and even Margaret who wears her self-sufficiency as a halo, are trying to make some sense of their own existence by talking about it to anyone who will listen. She feels that, she too was the same. She tried to define the reality of her life, justify her failures and also own sense of hopelessness by preying on the fabric of their lives, seeking in it a similar thread that in some way will connect their lives with hers, make her feel less guilty for who she is and what she have to let herself become.

Indeed, at the very end, Akhila is empowered to reclaim her lost love. Nair’s evocation of the ordinariness of a middle-class Brahmin family struggling to keep itself afloat in Chennai, hanging on to the rigid pattern of their lives, as exemplified in the patterns of kolam traced in front of their houses and expecting an unquestioning sacrifice from the women in the family to underwrite this myth, is what powers her narrative. Akhila and her friends are on the threshold of self-discovery. The manner in which Nair relates these transformations is in turn revelatory and redeeming. Her tale is light enough to relieve the
tedium of a long journey and yet filled with the incantatory power to burn up the tracks, to seek a new destination. To change.

Anita Nair’s female protagonists are sensitive self conscious, brilliant and creative. Her protagonists are desirous to revolt against stereotyped roles assigned to them by the society initially victims of self-denial, they are at conflict with their inner selves because they deny their real feelings. Through her writings Nair aims to focus on the importance of family values. The tension created in the husband – wife relationship by the lack of understanding and mutual respect affects the family relationship. Her novels based on submission and sufferings of women do not necessarily end with their reflection family values and marriage. Her bold and balanced heroines often face the challenges of life confidently. Mostly they return to their husbands with the realization that self – assertion and conformity to one’s given role are not necessarily contradictory but can even be complementary, while Anita Desai’s heroines succumb to their weakness and find solution in homicide or suicide. Nayantara Sahgal, shows her woman defy traditional novels in search of emancipation. Only Nair through her works shows women willing to take their share of the blame of their sufferings and bravely face the situation.

Nair presents human feelings which were forgotten from the pages of human history. She makes them come alive as characters that seem real and as though belonging to an own neighbourhood. Her style is lucid and the language is always kept simple and commonplace. Her attitude to her characters seems to be compassionate and sympathetic. Nair’s novels explore the quest for selfhood undertaken by women who come from such environment. They are caught between a traditional upbringing and the longing for freedom in the modern sense. Nair’s characters find freedom not in the western sense but in conformity with the society. They live in without drifting away from one’s culture.
She is one of those contemporary writers who concerns with the people and their inner anxieties and doubles rather than with the externals of life and living. Her characters are always engaged in questioning and evaluating the meaning of ideals, attitudes, actions and reactions of people in personal relations and affairs. In Indian context, once a girl is married whether it may be a love marriage or arranged one, her husband has complete control over her. Whether his wish is right or wrong the wife has to follow him blindly. A woman is never free according to old customs. In Indian society women are dependent and they are adjunct to men. Women start to lose their individuality and liberty amidst old traditions and patriarchal circumstances particularly after their marriage.

Nair’s novels present the real picture of Indian society and woman’s positions in it with no freedom or a separate status. Her novel highlights the image of the middle class Indian women sandwiched between tradition and modernity. The author shows the brutality and misconduct of the male subjugated society. Women are mercilessly deprived of their opportunities for open expression of their true feelings in the tradition of Indian society. Nair’s strength lies in portraying the uncertainties and doubts of women who cannot see themselves as heroic, but who want to make life “possible”. Responsibility and the desires for isolation are particularly a charged theme in Nair’s writing.

Nair is always aware of the individuality of experiences of women. Her works are not limited to the themes of the relationship between successions. Nair conveys her protagonists dilemmas with a freshness and charm that makes her story just the predictable feminist homily it might appear. She is particularly good on the domestic details such as lazy Sunday lunches, a family row, the sights, sounds, smells of a busy railway station, which make up her characters’ lives. These give her writing a sharpness and immediacy that lifts it above the commonplace.
Nair is engaged in creating new self-hood for her characters in all her novels. Women characters of are particularly caught in the process of redefining and rediscovering their own roles, positions and relationships within their given social world. She employs her writing as a vehicle to probe into women’s lives and experiences. In her novels, home-coming, mothers, traditions, families, appear to be woven clearly into a single corpus that it is quite often very difficult to disentangle one from the other. This is, ingeniously one of the major distinctive traits in the fiction of Nair. The theme of home coming becomes a symbolic instrument and a crucial process for Nair’s protagonist to regain inner balance, to declare their independence, to stake out their own identity.

_Puffin Book of World Myths and Legends (2004),_ work by Nair. All the people on earth get collectively to push the sky up with enormous poles because it is too low and they keep bumping their heads against it. The shrewd snake gets to know god's secret message to man and becomes immortal by shedding its skin. An emperor's sorrow ruptures forth as flames and lava and turns Mount Fuji into a volcano. These are just some of the unbelievable and magical myths and legends from all over the world-Africa to Japan and Thailand to Alaska-that have been brought together in this exquisite collection. Delightful and simple, yet profound in their wisdom, the stories encompass a diverse range. Some recount unforgettable tales of love and adventure, of dutiful sons and scheming gods, of enchanted lands and giant serpents. Others tell us how the world was created, why the sun and the moon never meet each other though they live in the same sky, how clouds appeared to save mankind from the sun's scorching rays, and why living creatures shed tears when they are in pain. Retold here by best-selling author Anita Nair, these timeless stories come alive with a freshness and liveliness that is sure to delight and fascinate.

Anita Nair, one of the accomplished Indian women writers portrays her women as seeking place of protection in marriage. Anita Nair’s women characters perceive it as an
alternative to the bondage imposed by the parental family and opt for it. Very soon, they realize that one restrictive set-up is replaced by another and new bonds replace the old. They are caught in the conflict between responsibility to oneself and conformity to the traditional role of wife. In Anita Nair’s fictional world man and woman remain only islands because their relationship lacks mutual love, understanding and adjustment.

It is not only women who fail to achieve conjugal ecstasy, men to fail miserably in attaining happiness in Nair’s fictional world. They challenge their victimized and seek a new balance of power between the sales. Yet their concept of freedom is not of western type, Anita Nair’s women compromise with their lot in life, thought not before asserting their individuality. Nair in dealing with the aspect of fear in a person’s psyche makes the characters to face it and come out of it. Therefore the philosophy that emerges from such a treatment is that fear does not exist in all. Her uniqueness is that her protagonist is not a rebel but they learn in course of their encounters with the harsh realities of life. Therefore the characters generate in themselves the power to cope with male domination. Her novel is also concerned with women’s quest for self and exploration in the female psyche.

Anita Nair’s third novel, Mistress (2005), is set in a riverside resort in Kerala, south India, among the artists and dancers of the kathakali dramatic art form. Into this intense and insular world appears an outsider, Christopher Stewart, a charismatic travel writer who has come to Kerala to interview the famous dancer Koman. As the two men converse Koman’s life and the development of his craft, Stewart is increasingly attracted to Koman’s niece, Radha, a relationship complicated by the fact that she is already married to Shyam.

The story of this love triangle is told from the overlapping first-person viewpoints of these central characters and, with its structure of three ‘books’ of three sections each, the narrative mirrors the arc of a kathakali performance, in all its colour, drama and heightened emotions. As a meditation on how the past influences our decisions and destiny and how art
is forged from personal experience, *Mistress* could have been a worthy but weighty read. It is wholly redeemed by the author's infectious passion for kathakali and its performers and her lightness of touch when it comes to intimate human relationships. This is a sensitive and nuanced work which makes a persuasive case for the continuing relevance of this ancient art form in modern India. Anita Nair deserves high praise for her willingness to tackle the big themes of meaning and desire in art and in life.

*Mistress*, a novel from one of the most exciting Indian English writers on the present day–Anita Nair–is a true work of literary creativity. In this novel culture, true emotions, real life and literary expressions merge in the background of the classical dance form, Kathakali together to make the work a true classic. Love, contempt, sorrow, fury, valour, fear, disgust, wonder, and detachment these are often indirectly, at the center of every novel. But in Anita Nair’s *Mistress*, they are the vaguest themes on which to rest surly or glorious characters. They are the Navarasa– the main facial expressions of Kathakali –and the stage on which she rests her entire novel.

The body of the novel is divided into nine chapters. Each chapter is named after one of the navarasas (expressions). At the beginning of the chapter, there is an explanation of how this expression is portrayed in Kathakali and an example from nature to portray the expression (the wrath of the monsoon rains, etc). This is the most beautiful part of the book. This is followed by the actual story. The story is not a single person narration. As in the dance, each character tells us his/her side of the story. Like her earlier works, *Mistress* too deals intricately with man-woman relationship. The difference in the present novel is its constant adherence to the rich gestures, facial expressions and nuances of “Kathakali”.

It is a story of art and adultery, passion and profession, oppression and frustration, self-abnegation and profligacy, truth and lies all woven very delicately and flawlessly using various Kathakali metaphors and myths. The author’s knowledge about Kathakali and the
time spent on research shines through each page of the book. This novel is about people making choices in their lives and they have to pay for what they have chosen. The author does not judge anyone or the choices they make.

*Adventures of Nonu, the Skating Squirrel (2006)*, Children's story by Anita Nair. The Squirrel family must move to a new neighbourhood, and Nonu is not happy. But soon he discovers that his new home can be fun. With his new friend Nicole, and his brand new skateboard, Nonu is all set to have many adventures. Nonu is vibrant world, brought to life by bestselling novelist Anita Nair and accompanied by Vinita Chands striking illustrations, will captivate children of all ages.

*Living Next Door To Alise (2007)* - *Children’s Novel* in this Nair depicts that the life will never be the same for Siddharth when he starts living next door to Alise. Nine-year old Siddharth is the despair of his parents. He does not want to run around or climb trees, and he is frightened of ants. Siddharth prefers books to friends and is the intention of his teacher's gimlet eyes in school because he asks too many questions. Then one day, when he is sent out to the garden to try and play, he finally makes friends with the fast-talking, quick-thinking, ultra-intelligent baby elephant, Alise.

Together the two friends set out on a series of exploits. From the day Alise decides to go to school wearing a checked tablecloth and ends up causing chaos to the night they attend a party and get into such trouble that they run away to the forest, there is never a tedious moment in Siddarth's life. But the friends don't stop at just having fun. The Bearded Bandit has spread terror among the elephants in the forest and someone has to stop him. A rollicking story of friendship and bravery, *Living Next Door to Alise* will have us laughing out loud and waiting for a friend like Alise to move in next door.

*Magical Indian Myths (2008)* by Anita Nair. When Surya the sun god got married his wife could not bear the heat of his rays and ran away. Surya was heartbroken and the world
plunged into darkness. A dwarf asked a king for some land, which he measured with three footsteps, and ended up claiming the earth and the sky. Sage Daksha got his daughters married to the moon, but later, in a fit of rage, cursed the moon with consumption, making it wax and wane.

These are some of the fifty myths from India recounted in this wonderfully produced book. From wise sages to demonic asuras, beautiful river divinities to arrogant kings, wayward gods to brave princes, this collection showcases the most enchanting and magical stories from Indian mythology. With over 100 stunning full-colour illustrations, this book will not only bring alive a fantastic world of gods and demons, it will also be a loved and treasured possession to be enjoyed for many years.

*Goodnight & God Bless* (2008) Novel by Anita Nair. A sparkling collection of literary essays, each one a bedtime rumination, Goodnight and God Bless is about books, writers, book events, mice, mothers, airport hotels, the wind and other such unexpectedly thought-provoking subjects, snugly interwoven with a warmly personal and anecdotal history of the author and her assorted family members. Spanning a literary career of a decade, this wise and witty book offers an ironic take on nearly everything, drawing from the experiences of the author as a woman, mother, daughter, wife and writer. Peppered with deliciously amusing quotes, footnotes and other erudite diversions, mostly unnecessary and unabashedly trivia, this is the perfect book to keep by your bedside, to dip and delve into anytime.

Anita Nair’s latest book, *Lessons in Forgetting* (2010). The cover evoked the curiosity; it showed a girl curled up in a fetal posture, nothing but a white sheet covering her, with light from outside streaming in through white curtains. It spoke of vulnerability and helplessness. Nair has done just the contrary of writing something that doesn’t command balanced or expressive engagement from the reader. An intense look at marriage, parenthood, destiny, relationships, and the book also packs in themes such as the cyclical nature of events.
in our lives and redeeming our mistakes all this along with strong representations of finely etched and far-from-perfect but specialized characters. This is the author’s first novel based in Bangalore. Large parts of its events unfold in the still-gracious cantonment area and one of its fading tribe of old-bungalows features almost as a character in the book.

Its two main characters—Professor J Krishnamurthy, Jak to friends, and Meera—enter the novel at points when their lives are falling apart. Meera is trying to cope with a marriage that seems to fail overnight and Jak is looking the truth behind an ‘accident’ that has turned his ebullient nineteen year old daughter into a vegetable. When we first see Meera, she is a carefully groomed corporate wife with a successful career as a writer of cookbooks. Then one day her husband fails to come home after a party and she becomes responsible not just for her children but her mother and grandmother, and the running of Lilac House, their tedious old family home in Bangalore. Professor J.A. Krishnamurthy, or JAK, a renowned cyclone studies expert, on a very different flight in life and in his house there lays his nineteen-year-old daughter Smriti, left exhausted after an inhuman attack on her while she was on holiday at a beachside town. A wall of silence and fear surrounds the incident the grieving father is helped neither by the local police, nor by her boyfriend in his search for the truth.

Meera must take lessons in forgetting her grief at the humiliation of being discarded like a tattered and overused garment by the man she had unthinkingly invested her entire adult existence in. Jak must train himself to cope with the agony of a daughter lost to the vagaries of violence and fate, and to end his churning restless quest of the veiled truth behind what had actually happened to Smriti the day her body was found broken and crushed by the sea in the small southern coastal town. But what he reveals is a lesson that we must not forget.

Anita Nair makes a valiant effort to present her work as a map to the minds of corporate trophy wives. In a fine insight, into the writing process, Nair reveals how finding a
metaphor for this devastation helped her centre the book. A grim tale of a brilliant, mercurial young girl crushed into a whining, trembling animal both by a stray log that comes crashing from the sea and the viciousness of men dealing in the illegal business of snuffing out female foetuses; a sorry story of a frothy corporate marriage that disintegrates like a delicate wine-glass knocked over by a careless decorated hand at a blend party; a touching chronicle of four generations of women in a family negotiating disparate yet entwined lives; a fragile vision of two lost souls swimming in a fish bowl, until they shore up against the promise of possible salvation in each other—all of it, with the expert style of a chef amazing thrashing up featherweight meringues to match the lightness and delicate sweetness of souls.

Anita Nair’s translation of T S Pillai’s cult novel Chemmeen (2011) was first published in 1956. Chemmeen tells the story of the relationship between Karuthamma, a Hindu woman from the fisherfolk community, and Pareekutty, the son of a Muslim fish wholesaler. Knowing that it was a forbidden love, Karuthamma marries Palani, an orphan from another fishing village. Palani and Karuthamma’s marriage is incapacitated by tittle-tattle surrounding Karuthamma’s past and soon Palani too has to tolerate the disgrace of that love affair. However he doesn’t stop trusting her, a trust that is reaffirmed each time he goes to sea and comes back safe since the myth among the fishermen community is that the safe return of a fisherman depends on the loyalty of his wife.

Then, one night, Karuthamma and Pareekutty meet and the past love was regenerated while Palani is at sea, persuading a shark. The immensely successful novel, known for the author’s departure from his sensible style, was adapted into a film of the same name, and won critical acclaim and commercial success. Anita Nair’s reminiscent translation brings this classic of Indian literature to a new generation that hasn’t had the opportunity to relish this tale of love and desire.
*Cut Like Wound* (2011) is a different approach from her usual literary fiction; this is the author’s first venture into the literary crime fiction genre. The psychological crime novel is drenched in the sights and aromas of Bengaluru and introduces moderately a few interesting characters, including the hero Inspector Borei Gowda. As usual, Nair’s writing style is lucid which makes the impression glow and swift. Anita Nair in an interview to *New Indian Express* said,

> For each work, I use metaphors. In ‘Idris’, the voyage, in ‘Mistress,’ Kathakali and in ‘Lessons in Forgetting,’ cyclone, (Mili)

The novel begins with the first night of Ramadan. At Shivaji Nagar in the heart of Bangalore, a young male prostitute is killed and burnt alive. It would have stayed as yet another unsolved murder, but for Inspector Borei Gowda, the investigating officer. As bodies begin to pile up one after the other, and it becomes clear that a serial killer is on the prowl, Gowda recognizes a pattern in the killings which no one else does. Even as he negotiates serious mid-life blues, problems with his wife and son, an affair with an ex-girlfriend, and official apathy and ridicule, the killer moves in for the next victim. Steeped in the lanes and atmosphere of the city of Bangalore, *Cut Like Wound* introduces to the reader a flock of haunting characters and is a atrocious psychological thriller unlike any of the characters.

> “Following the same routine and writing the same stuff is boring. I wanted to give it (crime fiction) a try,” she says. “I keep shifting roles, travelling to places and writing for two or three projects at the same time,” the author of ‘Better Man’ and ‘Ladies Coupe’ said during a short visit to the city. (Mili)

Nair intertwines swiftness, engrossing tale of suspense as Gowda and Santosh investigate. More cadavers revolve up, as do clues, sometimes unexpected. Even though there is plenty of police procedure, the novel does not appear to be an old-fashioned detective novel. And therein lays the strength of *Cut Like Wound*. It is not just a story of another smart
cop on the track of another serialized killer. It is more a story that discovers the mind of a killer, even tempts the reader to express sympathy. Through out the story, it is not letting go of the reality that Gowda is the true protagonist. Nair actually did a lot of research while she was scripting the book, to get the police station procedure right.

Kozhikode plays a significant role in *Idris*, a historical trilogy, which is also set in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in Anita Nair’s latest book. *Idris* is the story set during 1659, a Somali trader, is in Malabar to attend the Zamorin’s Mamangam celebrations. The plot revolves around the life of an East African voyager, Idris, who marries Kuttimalu from Kozhikode and a son, Kandavar, is born. The father and the son set out for a voyage from Kozhikode and cover the planet. Everywhere he goes; his jewelled eye induces a sense of wonder and bewilderment. Subsequently, by a strange curl of fate, Idris meets up his nine-year-old son, Kandavar, born of an inexplicable midnight assignation in this very land. Nervous to stay close to him for as long as possible, he joins the Nair household headed by Kandavar’s uncle, and is charged with a critical task: of disturbing the boy from his dream of becoming a Chaver, a warrior whose sole target is to assassinate the Zamorin, in a tradition whose beginnings have been lost in time.

In an attempt to stave off the predictable, Idris embarks with his son on a voyage that takes them from Malabar to Ceylon, and from Thoothukudi to the diamond mines of Golkonda, where he meets the queenly Thilothamma, as lonely a being as he is. Will the mines reward him? Will he find the strength to leave his new-found love and journey back to his son’s land – and to an uncertain future? Packed with escapade and excitement, and full of captivating insights into life in the seventeenth century, Idris, the keeper of the light will keep engrossed and starving for more.

The chief concern in Anita Nair’s novels is the self assessment of the protagonists themselves. Her novel is also anxious about the understanding of the mysteries of life and
position of women. The female protagonists are tolerant and submissive but do not seem to be ready to compromise their identity and individuality. They suffer from intense isolation because they cannot reconcile the demands of their psyche with those of the world around them. They view this world as a hostile place and often take a negative stance, which generates psychic states of fear, guilt, anger, bitterness, anxiety, helplessness and depression. Through these women Anita Nair question the need to accept the man-made image of the woman.

Women were only a species who lived behind the man-made fences. The conflict that the women have been undergoing since ages in the beginning in the male dominated society was never properly understood but was left unattended. Many of the writers portrayed Indian women as ‘longsuffering wives and mothers silenced by patriarchy’. She bounced with unbounded energy and told the untold that she kept numb since ages. She is also prone to contemplating the gap between the mundane depths to which life can frequently sink. It was precisely this reality of life that made her to stay true to her convictions. Women mostly compete and are compelled to a kind of inner thinking which presents new outlook to her profession as a writer, which could only be credited to her natural power of telling a story. Anita Nair captured intact, life’s fleeting moments, striving to a purpose and the new phenomenon novels, took a remarkable shape in the vibrancy of her thought process. For her, the most precious forms of happiness often came from things that money could not buy and craved for the implicit trust, be it parents or the one who shared her life. She was talked about and was objectified from various quarters of the society which resulted in a sea change in her cerebration that she couldn’t imagine stagnating- either in body or in the mind.

The present research is completely based on the study of the women characters in the novels of Anita Nair to change the destiny of the women who have no rights, freedom, no honour and no social importance in such a social structure where the men are supreme. As the
society gradually emerges from its cover of suppression into progressive permissiveness, the women in the novels detail out the changes in their world. The twentieth century has seen a transformation, in India, taking up the cause of the woman who is searching for ways to assert her selfhood in a society that is prejudiced in favour of man. In simple terms, women are programmed to feel dependent on men. Even though, today, women may be richer and enjoy all the trappings of success, deep down in their psyche they fear they can’t survive alone. They needed the protection and support of men either because of their brute force or because of their social status in the group, which came about either through their physical strength or their personality. Women’s needs were much more pressing. They were unable to survive on their own and depended on the males around them to protect them. Independence became an established fact and it stirred new hopes of progress and prosperity for all sections of society. By projecting the pathetic condition of their woman resulting from the conventions of traditional society, these writers are trying to emancipate their woman. They give their heroines new challenging perspectives that enable them to emerge out of their dominancy into the openness of assertion. They are courageous enough to renounce the pattern of female expression set by age-old patriarchal codes of behaviour.

Women are brought up to act as if they were weak, emotional, passive - a traditional bigotry. If women are given equality, it is possible to see that there were benefits for individual women. They would be free of the depression of being told what to do by men. And there would be benefits for society at large – it would double the mass of psychological senses available for the higher service of humanity. The ideas and potential of half the population would be liberated; producing a great effect on human development. Independence is a requirement for leading a peaceful life. Independence doesn’t mean that one person never needs other people. Independence means that it adds at least as much value back as it take from every deal. The ultimate ideal is to be independent and use that
independence to lead a healthy life. It is not necessary to lead a peaceful life by making the persons dependent it is just by freeing them from their dependencies.

Chapter I introduces the thesis by outlining the thematic focus and reviewing the literature on the evolution of Indian Writing in English as a new and an independent discipline. It discusses the background, Indian history, writers of pre independence and post independent period, writing style of the novelists from 1894 to 1990. The style and portrayal of women characters by the male writers and the rise of women novelists in this discipline. Deals with the novels of women writers and acknowledges the need for changes in their writings. The new phenomenon of novel which took its shape in the twentieth century and offers valuable reflections on theoretical and creative aspects of contemporary Indian English fiction impacted by different material and ideological spheres of life in recent times. A study of contemporary fictional works and their analysis based on different theoretical perspectives certainly points out how contemporary creative writings and their studies have moved ahead to explore new domains. And finally it talks about Anita Nair’s literary achievements as a poet, short story writer and as a novelist and her contribution to the world through Literature.

Chapter II briefly observes the history and influences that post-colonialism has had on language and literature, particularly with regard to Indian writing in English. The next section turns its attention to the effects post-colonialism has had on the early literature written in English. This leads us to a consideration of the inheritance of contemporary Indian women writers in historical, social, and literary terms. The final section is perhaps the most important section, outlining as it does some of the weighty problems and obstacles that confront the Indian authors of this age, writing and publishing locally and globally in the twenty-first century. India is one of the traditional countries with male dominated society.

Chapter III deals with the life of the protagonists, who faces the spiteful assaults of endurance as a single woman in Nair’s The Better Man and Ladies Coupe. They shuttle
between the present and the past and also shift their mind from realism to fancy not knowing where to stand and what to do and finally they learn to live in the confused space. Finally they explore their essential independence without losing independence. They were finally able to emerge from the submissive roles assigned to them by society and emerge as free and independent individuals with their own distinct identity. The change in their social role and function led to a greater participation of women in the public sphere and the gradual weakening of the bonds that tied her down to home and family alone.

Chapter IV will track the theme of revolutionary women Radha in *Mistress* and Meera in *Lessons in Forgetting*. The dominant tendency has always been to confine these women. Both of them are unable to carve out an identity for themselves. Both of them are subjected to extreme psychological pressures. The novels are also anxious about the understanding of the mysteries of life and position of women. And in the novels analyzed we can find female feticide, betrayal by partners and friends, love & dependence on family members, corporate parties and accepting certain unimaginable things which are often considered forbidden in the society. As they took up a journey towards self realization they have left the secured domain of their home and are now in the battlefield of life, fully armored with their talent. They had proven themselves. Towards the end of the novel they have mastered anything and everything which a woman can dream of. But they still have to go a long way to achieve equal status in the minds of Indian men.

Chapter V which is the conclusion is a recapitulation of the findings of the earlier chapters. All the characters in Anita Nair’s novels reach their destination as an independent human asserting their freedom after their protest against the male dominated world. How women suffer due to patriarchal hegemonic structures and the way these women protest against their subjugation forms the central concern in a number of fictional writings. The study of such writings is aimed to explore the extent to which they serve the purpose of
giving voice to women and support their struggle for rights. The critical perspectives used for this study involve the study of the kind of images of women the writers present and the way these images serve the feminist ends. It also exhibits inner personality of women in Indian society regarding the novels of Anita Nair. It will bring out the distinction between the roles of the modern women and that of the traditional women discussed in these novels.

The vital point of this chapter is to examine the own voice of Indian women which is suppressed for centuries, in a male dominated. Anita Nair through her novel implies that women have to raise their voices against suppression. Nair shows that women have been keeping tranquility since elongated in spite of being under the dominance of men. Her writing about women and she questions the theory that marriage is the ultimate goal of the woman and reveal how it leaves them badly mauled and terribly frustrated. A detailed study provides an obvious image and a better understanding of the perspectives of Anita Nair. The present work proposes to analyse the images of women. Various factors like tradition, socialization of the girl, deprived childhood, poor mothering and marriage as an engine of oppression add to the woman's woes.

The author possesses a special sensibility to record the waves of the female especially in husband-wife relationships. Her female protagonists are forbearing and passive but do not seem to be ready to sacrifice their identity and individualism. They suffer from intense segregation because they cannot reconcile the demands of their psyche with those of the world around them. She views this world as a hostile place and often takes a negative stance, which generates intuitive status of panic, guiltiness, fury, hostility, concern, defenselessness and hopelessness. Through the women characters in the novels Nair questions the need to accept the man-made image of the woman. Anita Nair’s women raise the question of their way of life consolidated by patriarchy, and see it not only as the site of their oppression at home and in society but also make it a field of battle to overcome their oppressors.
The next chapter will deal with postcolonialism, a new and emerging in the field of literature. It explains the key points and perception on postcolonialism in literature and examines its aspects as they appear in the novels. The elements of postcolonial theory such as hybridity, multiculturalism, disapora, etc will be traced in detail.