CONCLUSION

Reality is change and change is evolution. In every sphere it is the only constant. The omnipresent joint family of the past is slowly altering its very face. It still does exist, in many families it is only the way people live or are expected to live, but with the shrinking globe, relocation and travel being a part of everyday life, slowly, surely the system is giving way.

Another aspect of changing the family is the education and awareness in modern women. While, in the past, right from her childhood, the Indian woman was taught skills and crafts that would make her a good housewife – the world beyond the threshold was not open to her. She was told that home of her birth was just a temporary phase and she would have to nurture another family after marriage. The brothers and sisters she loved and grew up with, would be replaced by others in her matrimonial home, and she was expected to treat them with equal love and respect. Once she married, her lot was the kitchen and the home. It was her duty to keep both clean. The extended family had to be fed on time, their laundry washed and their needs looked after. In India, a good daughter – in – law always puts the family before self. Her needs come last. And in most cases, she was happy doing all of this to the best of her ability. The flip side of the freedom though was when she felt the need to work. And she came out with a new vigour and dreams to do something constructive.
Suddenly, she grew wings. This was also the time, when the traditional family structure broke due to her revolt.

Literature has always been the mirror of the society. Till the earlier half of the nineteenth century, the concentration was entirely on the freedom of this country. However, when the society under went a major change in the form of the breaking of joint families, a major change in literature was witnessed, too. The breaking of the joint family structure is perhaps the biggest event of the last century. Hence, various writers concentrated in emphasising the importance of family structure through their works.

1950 – 1980 was the period which saw the maximum works written on the family structure specially, the 70s saw several works coming on family structure. All these novelists tried to find out the probable reasons of the breaking of the family system in our county. As stated in the first chapter, there are many probable reasons of the destruction of the traditional family structure. However, the main reason is the role of woman and the deteriorating importance of relationships. Many a time, it is observed that the reference of woman is left behind in literature. Due to this, a lot of research is being done in America about the rights of women and family with reference to law.
Previously, women and relationships were taken for granted. There were endless relationships in the Indian society such as marital relationship, parents – children relationship, siblings’ relationship, girls’ relationships with her in – laws, relationship of friends, relationship of master and slave, relationship of rivals and relationship of an individual with the society. Many of these relationships have woman as the equal participant. In a family, the role of a woman is of two types – one is of love, dedication and affection and the other is of violence between a male and a female. Unfortunately, in this country, women were considered mere slaves for a long period of time.

However, it is noteworthy that even today, 30 % of the families are female oriented. In the Hindu religion, woman is considered a symbol of strength and there are many references of strong woman such as Draupadi, Satyabhama, Bharati, Vidyotama, Mandodari and Ratnavati. In India, at present, there are many independent organisations and institutions which give importance to the freedom of woman. Due to this, there is a drastic change in relationships also. In this context, marriage is the most affected relationship. Due to the liberation and the growing individualism, the modern woman got more sensitive towards the marital relationship. This gave rise to the expectations and desires. Unfortunately, there is a big change in the women of this country, while there is no change in the outlook of the society and the males. Hence, in the absence of the rapport between the husbands and the wives, the country witnessed a number of separations and divorces.
Such a pathetic condition is the major theme of the novels of Ms. Anita Desai and Ms. Nayantara Sahgal. Both, these novelists are concerned with the females and their relationship with their families. According to Ms. Desai and Ms. Sahgal, the meaning of family has become limited in the present scenario. In India, the meaning of family is always unwritten because the written imagination of family doesn’t represent the actual family structure of this country. Right from memoirs to great Indian epics such as Ramayana and Mahabharata, family has been depicted as a medium of violence. In Mahabharata, the whole family of Kauravas and Pandavas get destroyed because of the obsession for power.

In the novels of Ms. Desai and Ms. Sahgal, we find the reference of middle class family. The females of these two novelists are sensitive and are the representation of the modern woman who wants to be a woman rather than a wife or a mother. In her quest for identity, she breaks the set norms and tries to spread her wings in the sky of her desires and expectations. For her, relationships are the biggest hurdle since, they try to detain her instead of encouragement.

Relationships cannot be neutral. They are either good or bad. They can take an individual to the seventh heaven and they can become the major cause of his mental imbalance. Such nurturing and destroying relationships are the major concern of Anita Desai and Nayantara Sahgal.
According to Desai and Sahgal, relationships remain with us till the end. They are similar to life. Hence, it is essential that just as we give importance to life by living it fully, we should also give importance to relationships by nurturing them properly.

The modern 21st century is a century of loneliness, thanks to the reducing size of family. However, the nuclear and the petite families contain the possibilities of deeper and closer relationships. This is possible when the family members realise the importance of sacrifice for one another and change their attitude. The role of a woman is changing in the modern times. She has grown into more than just a provider of physical needs. Today’s woman plays many roles. She is ‘mom’, ‘friend’, ‘banker’, ‘manager’ and ‘gofer’ all rolled into one. In playing so many roles, she needs her husband for support but quite a few husbands, who play typical roles at home in the larger family situation, promise their wives that they would help around the house if needed. Thus, it could be said that the size of the family is not important but the mutual love, sacrifice, respect and understanding between the family members are important. The nuclear families don’t promise the heaven to the family members. Similarly, joint families become the major cause of the dissatisfaction of the family members, sometimes. It’s the relationship of the family members that matters, nothing else.

Here, we are, then; the life as we live and the relationships in which we go through everyday. These relationships make us live
everyday and they also make us die everyday. The tensions, desperation and the tensions are nothing but the outcome of all these relationships.

In India, relationships have always played a major part in an individual’s life, thus strengthening the family system. Though, the family system provided that essential security to an individual which any human being needs, it also ruins him entirely. Family ties are always the most beautiful things in this world but when these ties break, they also break the members at all levels. Unfortunately, this country which saw the traditional joint family system also faced the breaking of families which proved harmful to the individuals. Emotions, feelings, warmth, love, caring, passion and aspirations took a back seat thus giving chance to materialism to spread its wings all over. This sudden change not only increased the individualistic approach but also made us very selfish and self centred thus making worse the life of sensitive individuals. Such is the theme of the works of Ms. Anita Desai and Ms. Nayantara Sahgal. For a style like theirs, the essential ingredients are childhood memories, some immaculate relationships, the materialistic world and a heart that is forever calling out to the other side of a rushing stream. No need to say, both Ms. Desai and Ms. Sahgal glide successfully into the realms of relationship and changing family system thus telling us that the relationships and the change of family will be immortal in this country, moving continuously with the time. Perhaps, the voice of the coherent fabric of the family structure mingles with the voice of Robert Frost’s poem *Stopping by the Wood on a Snowy Evening* which says:
The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.