"To achieve lasting literature, fictional or factual, a writer needs perceptive vision, absorptive capacity and creative strength."

–Lawerence Clark Powell
CHAPTER-VI
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Indian English literature has been enriched by a galaxy of female writers. A good number of female authors have dealt with the experience of women's life. But researches have not yet been done on these writers in adequate numbers as Anita Nair is one of the influential contemporary novelists. This researcher has selected her four novels namely *The Better Man, Ladies Coupe, Mistress* and *Lessons in Forgetting* for an in-depth study. A number of reviewers have pointed out the contributions and achievements of Anita Nair, but a clear cut assessment of the works of Anita Nair from the point of view of women's voice and self-identity is not perceived so far.

D. Silvia Flavia in her research work entitled 'Select novels of Anita Nair: A Psycho-Analysis' discusses that Nair makes her readers understand and feel what it is to be a woman, know how a woman thinks and feels and behaves. She depicts the psychological crisis of Indian women who are subjected to physical and psychological torture in a male dominated society. She killfully explores the agonized mind of the persecuted women. She portrays the psychological conflicts of women to choose between tradition and modernity. She protests against the violence against women physically and mentally.

Silvia Flavia's research paper the 'Concept of Patriarchy and Female Defiance in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe'* deals with the impact of patriarchy in the Indian society. She is of the view that colonialism and the concept of patriarchy are inseparable in feminist discourse as it emphasizes a relationship of inequality and injustice. Though it seems that the colonial master has vanished from the colonized
countries, the impact of colonization is still felt in the form of patriarchy. It is obvious that only men feast on the fruits of independence whereas women are still subjected to oppression by the male as the colonial masters did on the colonized. The colonial domination still continues in the form of male domination towards women.

Ms. Poonam Dnyandeo Patil in her research work entitled 'Female Protagonists in the Novels of Anita Nair: A Feminist Perspective' presents critical study of the female protagonists in the fiction of Anita Nair from the feminist point of view. She points out that Anita Nair's novels mainly deal with the experiences of the women protagonists, who faces traumatic situations in their family. Subjugation of women in the predominantly patriarchal family life in India, female infanticide, prostitution, lesbianism and rape are the issues she has projected in her fiction. Her fiction mainly presents the ethos of the middle-class Indian life. The men and women in her fiction are influenced by the modernity, but at the same time they appear to be unable to disentangle themselves from the traditional way of life and the social customs. In an urban middle class life, women find themselves entrapped in a male-dominated world. They are assigned a secondary position in the family as a result of the social customs, and traditional values assigned to an ideal womanhood. In a family life, essentially in India, a woman is forced to occupy a secondary status even if she is an earning member of the family. It is not her femininity, but the age-old social tradition and the control of education by men which are the factors contributing to the subjugation of women in their family life and the society in general.

K.A. Agalya in her research work entitled 'Psychological Insight Into Resuscitation of Self, Relationship and Time in Select Novels of Anita Nair' points
out that there is no resistance but an immersion in and embracing of the world of experience in the novels of Anita Nair. She uses her art to express the subterranean life of silence saying under the skin, a life that is no less. If not more eloquent and vibrant than the life lived in the outside world. Her novels reveal the rise of a new consciousness which fuses the aspirations of an independent and free entity with the pleasure of an aesthetically vibrant and radiant self. The isolation and insecurity that her characters suffer is human, and the growth of women is from self-alienation to self-identification.

The character becomes strong and takes over the story, bringing in complexities, human truths emerge and artificial buildings fall away. The truth is that, personal reasons trigger off the writing most of the time; reasons come out of the writer's own life. A writer writes not only out of herself, but also out of the society, its tradition, its life and she is living in it. Her basic focus in writing is always the human being. Society is the background; it is what the society does to the individual, that the writer is really concerned.

The writer, through her writing may give expression to a very personal emotion, but when this personal becomes public, it becomes universal, and symbolizes human emotion itself. It is through giving expression to human feelings that the writer becomes a part of a movement for a wanted and needed social change. It is very essential that the woman of today need to clarify what the self expects. They had to struggle a lot to establish one's identity and to assert one's individuality; it has led the women to wage a desperate fight against the existing social order of the day. Hence it becomes essential for women to assert their role models and redefine its parameters.
Quiet aware of the predicament of a woman in this male-chauvinist society especially, when she is not economically and ideologically independent. Her women stand at the cross roads of traditions. They seek change but within the cultural norms, seek not to reinterpret them, but merely make them alive with dignity and self-respect. Her women seek anchorage in marriage. They looked at it as an alternative to the bondage imposed by the parental family and opt for it. They do not accept to be considered as the objects of gratification. Though all the characters of Anita Nair, it is very clear that women are subjected to undergo pressure in the hands of male-dominated society and also these women strive to get their self a better position simply by shifting their thought from why to why not. In this society, resuscitation can happen only when such longing ideas come into existence.

Premalatha, S. in her research work entitled 'Evolution in the portrayal of women characters: A select study of the novels of Manju Kapur, Anita Desai, Githa Hariharan and Anita Nair' presents her views that Anita Nair has presented an entirely unconventional notion through Akhila's character, trying to focus the reader's attention to Akhila's problems her situation to take up the responsibility of supporting the family like a father, and later facing the selfishness of the siblings and the consequent loneliness and later her decision to find a companion and to leave them to in search of realization of her bodily needs. Akhila expends her energy, who has responsibilities and who knows how harsh is the struggle against the worlds opposition even then she decides to come out of the conventions not only to satisfy her physical desires but also to enjoy the relaxation.

Through introspection and analysis, she enters a new phase of self-realization and more radically with her self-assertion. The novelist has direct contact with the
middle class, so she has depicted and explored the world with full confidence and launched upon various problematic areas to bring forth change and improvement in the existing conditions of the society. There is a gradual acquisition of new values and ideologies related to liberty, equality, nationalism, a rational outlook and a zeal for social justice.

S. Seema Rajan in the research work entitled 'Desiring Subversion the Issues of Culture Gender and Psyche in Anita Nair's Fiction' points out that Anita Nair is not ready to accept the traditional view of the feminine. She provides justification for the radical claims the women characters make in the novels. She is of the conviction that women have been pressurised to play out the role of cultural Cinderella putting down the very idea of going out to find herself. The women are victims of the dominant adults who are representatives of society based on arbitrariness. The arbitrariness is one product of culturality which is yoked to the essential characteristic masculinity. However, Anita Nair shifts the feminine punctated by passivity into a self-progressive cultural role. Naturally, she equates the feminist struggle with a counter culture or rather a subculture which suggests an alternative living punctuated with the radical feminist dissidence. The novels of Anita Nair demonstrate many of the women's experiences devalued by masculinity and hence it becomes imperative that they must reject. This is one commitment which makes the women proclivity largely signified by a collective change. The struggle by women is the tendency to contest cultural imperialism.

There have been many research articles published on the novels of Anita Nair in which researcher have discussed a lot of issues portrayed in Nair's fictions. Dr.
Meetu Bhatia Kapur and Dr. Shilpi Gupta in the research article entitled 'Transgression of Journey: A Reconstruction of Female Identity in the Novels of Anita Nair' focus on the issues of empowerment of female protagonists in the novels of Anita Nair. It became the central concern which conceptually became interconnected with their identity and freedom. A long interrogation of self-through introspection, psychological analysis and stream of consciousness techniques made them bold enough to go against the traditional image in the patriarchal set up. Nair's female characters, struggle to the facts and challenges on both intrapersonal and interpersonal front. There is always a situation of conflict with the self and the society at large. This generally results in the process of the empowerment and rediscovery of self-esteem and self-identity.

S. Suganya in the research paper entitled 'Woman Flouting the Constraints in Anita Nair's The Better Man' focuses on the concept of patriarchy that signifies a relationship of inequality. The research paper attempts to show how in life, suppression and oppression do not always come in recognizable forms, but often under the guise of love, protection and the assurance of security. The Better Man unveils the reality of Indian women who are still deprived of their rights in love and marriage. Marriage is still a social necessary, where women seek security and men respectability. Domination is the significant in an analysis of the man-woman relationship where the male characteristics are ones coupled with mental thought and positive activity, at the same time as the woman is regarded as basically submissive, her role to be the respectable of male sexual drive for the subsequent reproduction of the species.
Nalini Saxena in the research article entitled 'Concept of Existential Elements of Freedom and Responsibility in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*' focuses on the author's remarkable endeavour to disclose the efforts and steps taken by women characters in order to establish their self-identity and self-discovery. These steps are an exploration of the existentialist concept of freedom as a human being chooses the way they want to live their life. They were all in the situation where they were to prove that they can take some serious steps in order to change their life and also to show their individual identity. Akhila the chief protagonist begins her journey for self discovery when she starts her journey to Kanyakumari without seeking permission from her family members. She realizes that she as an individual to free to take decisions on her own to change her life. Prior, she realizes that she has lost her own identity and is living life for others. The author examines the existential concepts of freedom and responsibility in all these characters by giving them freedom to come out of the world of emotional and physical trauma and to live their life which is full of happiness, to realize their own strength and to change.

Alice Cherian's research paper entitled 'Indian Feminism in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* and *Mistress*' nurtures the readers with multi-dimensional aspects of the author and her works. It elaborates Nairs style of writing and the language used in her works.

Nliyathi R. Krishna's research paper entitled 'Ecofeminism in the novels of Sarah Joseph and Anita Nair' analyses the portrayal of ecofeminism and its impact on the contemporary novels.
Abhilasha Singh's research paper entitled 'Women as Catalysts in Anita Nair's Ladies Coupe' tries to find out the truth for herself and women of middle classes as well. She undertakes a long journey to test her own strength that survival for a single woman is an impossible task in male dominated social structure.

The proposed thesis attempts to study the predicament of Indian women and their quest for selfhood in the traditional patriarchal society. It also focuses on the psychological development of Nair's female characters and their behaviour. This research work also investigates gender discrimination, cultural difference, status of women in patriarchal set-up, women's aspirations and their demand for equality and liberty in the modern context.


