Chapter 4 “Akhila’s Journey through Self Discovery in “Ladies Coupe”

Modern Indian-English writer Anita Nair is considered as a audacious and straight forward writer. Her novels reveal is the effect of social conditioning on women. Her novels depict the real life of her characters without hiding anything from her readers. Society uses many different means to circulate beliefs. literature is one of the means to carry the ideas further bounded by such massages.. Anita Nair has very nicely, portrayed this concept in her novels. Especially through Akhila in Ladies Coupe. The characters of Anita Nair’s novels commit adultery and sacrilege as depicted in Mistress. They break the age old convention and do not confisicate themselves to the boundaries of women. Her art of characterization is the backbone of the story.. Many of characters experience sex before entering the social institute of marriage or blemish in extra marital affairs that is firmly against the Indian society. she break the chains of the society in portraying her women character which can lead to its destruction. She is bold enough to tell the truth however bitter it is and Simultaneously she forces us to think on the importance of removing adultery to save family life .

Though economically independent women of Anita Nair they don’t have control over their own lifethey are indecisive in many important issues .Nair has very clearly brought this concept in the light the modern Indian woman may be educated and financially sovereign but still the tie their life is in the hands of others..In the Mistress the character of Radha being discontented with her husband she opts for an extra marital affair with Chris her husband Shyam tries his level best to bring her back to him, he is ready to forgive her for all her mistakes, accept her at any cost .In many of her novels, Anita Nair has depicted husband-wife relationship. Her female characters are very bold that they overthrow the social custom and culture and did anything to pleased themselves. The husband-wife relationships lost which is the big loss of the society . The new concept of feminism presented by Nair is not up to the mark as our Indian values.

'Ladies Coupe' is a masterpiece by Anita Nair a prolific writer. This novel presents the life of six women, all trapped in the unsteadiness of custom and the social order. The patriarchal society into which they are born places a number of hurdles and obstacles in the path of their smooth
development. The future appears bleak and dark with an air of nothingness being spread about. With great courage and willpower the women face the chances and even fight them out. The journey undertaken by the women is not only a physical one but more emotional in nature, at the end of which each has a better understanding about themselves. This voyage also helps in the realisation of the self and many other things not comprehended so far.

Nair deals with the various problems of women and takes up all those issues that most women would not dare to voice in public. Some of the issues that she so skillfully deals with are gender bias, desire, the ‘male-made’ society, breaking the patriarchal order and much more. All women face similar problems all around. However, things are specially difficult for those coming from the lower stratum of the society. Those coming from the upper class and those financially independent certainly find things easier. A woman despite of all her talents and skills has to work twice as hard to prove her identification, and despite of all her struggle and endeavour is in the least appreciated.

Marriage is a social institution in which live according to conventional life. Most marriages are successful only because of the women. In most families, the man is the ruler of the house; wife a analyst or a minister who assists or helps; but not the ruler Beyond the threshold of her house, woman finds life less promised and bewildering due to her social and cultural insecurities. Whenever women step out of their confinements, they have to fight to clean out the negative image of women already lodging in the minds of men and women. In certain aspects women are treated as angel sand goddesses. In some other aspects women are predictable to be slaves, who are prepared to work for a man and his payback and comfort.

Margaret Shanti is one of the fellow travelers in the ladies coupe. Margaret’s story is a story of a woman who learns her own strategies to get her dreams true. Margaret’s husband, Ebenezer Paulraj, is an example for male dominance. He exercises Margaret into a position of subservient silence, making her out to be an unnoticed and ordinary girl. A girl, with a sparkling academic career and a warm and exciting personality, is reduced to an average girl. His subtle cruelty to the children in his school gets repeated with his wife too. Once he was infatuated with the girlish
characteristics of Margaret. It was visible even at their first meet. To preserve the girlish charm in her, when she happily announced her pregnancy, he insisted on aborting the baby. Margaret’s felt confusion, fury, distress, ache and decadence.

Margaret has gone through physical, emotional and spiritual crisis throughout her life. She keeps on growing till she finds a state where she is happy and peaceful. Margaret’s marriage to Ebenezer Paulraj is like a fairy tale for her. Ebenezer Paulraj loves Margaret Shanti from the bottom of his heart but not ready to accept her individual likes and dislikes, whims and fancies and dreams and aims. Margaret’s state ,hands tied ,liberty, is excellently portrayed by Anita Nair. He loves her but he did not allow her individuality. Margaret is originally a little girl who says ‘yes’ to whatever her husband says and ready to do anything for him. She is jolted out of this role when she has to go for an abortion. He controls her completely. She is forced to do B.Ed., though she wants to do Ph.D. She is made to work only for her husband and he nags her all the time. She starts to hate him and the day she realizes her hatred towards him, she feels liberated from some unknown command:

I mouthed the words: I HATE HIM. I HATE MY HUSBAND. I HATE EBENEZAR PAULRAJ. I HATE HIM. HATE HIM.

I waited for a clap of roar, a hurling meteor, a hurricane, a dust tempest for some super phenomenon that is usually meant to accompany such momentous and perhaps sacrilegious revelations. (Ladies Coupe 98)

When Margaret understands that she is isolated, she finds consolation through eating a lot of food. She puts on weight. Ebe, on the other hand, who is aware of his health and fitness, makes her feel guilty about her weight gain. She leads a routine life until the day James, the golden fish, floats dead. The moment proves to be a turning point in her life. She does not want her life to float like dead fish. She identifies herself with the golden fish. Ebenezer’s love for food and sex becomes a tool for Margaret. She starts pampering Ebenezer with sex and food he likes the most in his life. The result he becomes fat, loses his egotism and needs her more and more. She, once controlled by him earlier, now holds him completely in her hands. A unique way adapted by
Margaret helps her to go back into the society, changes her parents’ outlook and attitude of her husband. The strategy, finding and attacking the failing of the rival to win him is creatively handled by Anita Nair. The heavy despair of Margaret, her silenced voice, her physical and mental sufferings, and the attempt she takes to make her tough are the places where Anita Nair proves to be a prominent writer of Indian Writing in English.

According to Indian custom, a woman is always synonymous with superior wife. A good wife should be realistic, subservient and righteous. Janaki is likely to take up this customary role of women. She plays various roles such as a daughter, a wife and a mother but not an individual who claims her life to be her own. The secondary position becomes everlasting for her. This is mainly due to the patriarchal pattern of her society, which is accepted as a natural occurrence. The problems of adjustment with the husband and his relatives have been the most broadly treated troubles in the novels written by Indian women novelists.

**Janaki** gets married to Prabhakar, when she is eighteen year old and leads a happy, contented, long married life for forty years. Janaki’s husband is a caring partner and she has a son and daughter-in-law. Janaki leads a content life until she realizes her meekness. She feels some rope of revolt when she finds her husband controlling everybody even their grown up son.

Prabhakar’s authoritarian superiority, accuracy, and correctness irritates Janaki. The life which has gone smoothly starts to find its ups and downs. She discovers herself and her true happiness that lies in her, but she is not able to take off the web under which she is covered for a long period. Her initial response to Akhila’s query “**Why should a woman live by herself? There is always man willing to be with her**” (*Ladies Coupe* 21), explains it.

“**I am a woman who has always been looked after. First there was my father and brothers; then my husband, When my husband is gone there will be my son, waiting to take off from where his father left off. Woman like me end up being fragile**” (22).
Sheela, the next narrator of Ladies Coupe, is a sensitive girl of fourteen year old, blessed with a deep insight. She looks at the family around her and relationship between her grandmother, mother and father and she understands the dynamics of life. Her grandmother teaches her practical life. She becomes attached to her grandmother until she dies and the attachment brings in a maturity to Sheela. Her conversation with other fellow travelers seems to be a matured one. The knowledge of three generation women can be found in Sheela; her mother’s and her grandmother’s and also her own. She knows that:

“Women turn to their mother when they have no one else to turn to. Women know that a mother alone will find it possible to unearth some shred of compassion and love that in everyone else has become ashes” (Ladies Coupe 71).

Sheela’s grandmother also teaches her the harmful picture of men who lead women bodily as well as sensitively. Sheela is scolding by her father ceaselessly for using shit in every sentence, for speaking to boys and for being impolite. He has encouraged her to speak “with a razor-edged wit and a finely developed skill of repartee” (70). Sheela’s father always gives preference to her as his child. However, when she starts to talk like a grown woman, he is completely changed and starts to control her whenever she begins to talk. When her grandmother dies of cancer and her body is prepared for funeral, Sheela dresses her grandmother in a good costume with her jewels. She does it because she remembers the words of her grandmother,

“The only person you need to please is yourself. When you look into a mirror, your reflection should make you feel happy” (Ladies Coupe 67).

Thus, Sheela fulfills the wish of her grandmother by tender her deadbody with jewels. A fourteen year old girl’s internal search and adulthood are beautifully pictured by Anita Nair.

Through the character of Prabha Devi, Anita Nair hints at the gender bias which begins from the cradle. The news of the birth of Prabha is denounced by her father in the following words:
“Has this baby, apart from ruining my business plans addled your brains as well? If you ask me, a daughter is a bloody nuisance” (169)

As a child she is confident to play games suitable for a girl and as she grows up is groomed to be the perfect wife and home-maker. However, as she grows up finds life very tedious and refuses to define life in a mechanical way. Acknowledging her own weakness and nervousness, she decides to flow along with the tide rather than being throw away on the banks. Every Indian parent is more concerned about the male child when compared to the female child; and every home has different rules for them.

The character of Prabha Devi is used to prominence the distinction made between children of different gender. Although Prabha Devi’s father is unhappy at her birth, her mother appears rather happy. For her, a daughter is a person who would continue living the language, opinion and conduct of the mother, even after she is gone. She is happy that there is someone to wear her jewellery and take her receipes to the other house. Prabha's mother loved her and favored her company to that of all her four sons. Inspite of all this distress and love for the daughter, she also realizes that a woman is not supposed to voice her concern or opinion. “She had discovered that a woman with an opinion was treated like a bad smell, to be shunned” (170).

Prabha Devi is an proficient woman “whose embroidery was done with stitches so fine that you could barely see them,” whose “ideas were light and soft,” and who “walked with small mincing steps, her head forever bowed, suppliant, womanly” (170). After her marriage with Jagdeesh, who owns a jewellery shop, she acts as a conventional wife.

For a brief period, she turns into a arrogant and teasing woman, but reverts back to her family with a difference in attitude. Using a swim suit and indulging in swimming gives her a sense of freedom and identity as wife and mother. Prabha Devi is presented as a woman with her share of virtue and vices, but Anita Nair shows great respect towards this individuality.
Anita Nair, with a deep, emotional imminent, proficiently utilizes the story of Marikolunthu to remark upon the sexual abuse of Indian women from rural background. Marikolunthu’s story recalls her come across with men and concludes that most men take benefit of women’s isolation, illiteracy, reliance, unawareness and annoyance. They never pause to guilt the woman at the end. The society dominated by patriarchal culture tends to lay down the rule that a woman’s liability towards the family is total whereas any sort of other authority is conveniently denied to her. This society shuns to think that the woman is tough willed to create catastrophic sentence she is completely ignored.

Marikolunthu undergoes disgrace and embarrassment, which result in negating her son Muthu. Marikolunthu’s character reveals the physical as well as mental suffering due to lack of knowledge. Marikolunthu comes from a poor conditions. Her mother works as a cook at Chettiar’s house, which is one of the richest families in their village. Even as a child she is the sufferer of social and economic suppression. She loses her education by this. She looks after her house when her mother goes for work; later when her mother is badly ill, she is working at the Chettiar’s house. There, she is assigned with the work of taking care of a child of Sujata Akka, the daughter–in-law of Chettiar. She showers love and care upon the child. She takes care of him well, but hates her son Muthu, the one who run off many attempts of abortion. He is the result of her seduction by Murugesan. She does not want the child which is the result of seduction but the situation do not help her. So she leaves her son at her mother’s care and takes care of the household of Chettiar family.

Marikoulunthu, destitute from the society, and Sujata Akka, deprived from her husband, find mutual contentment in their closeness. Later Sujata’s husband also uses Marikolunthu to fulfill his sexual desires. When Sujata Akka comes to know this, instead of punishing her husband, she pushes Marikolunthu out of her household. She gets the responsibility of her own child after her mother’s death. heartlessly she mortgages him at one of Murugesan’s looms for Rs.5000/-. The anger she has on Murugesan, the society which saves him from punishment, her incapability and the hatred of her son, everything comes to an end only at the death of Murugasen. The turning point in her life comes when she sees the dead body of Murugesan burning at the pyre and she
sees Muthu tends to the pyre. She is shocked at the recognition that she has abridged her son to a very lower state for no fault of his. All the hatred she has on him goes with the flames. She feels love for her child. She decides to look after him and makes up her mind to call him back to her.

Finally Marikolanthu, an unspoken victim, forced motherhood and lesbianism, finds peace only after accepting her responsibility of the child, whom she has worthless and neglected. Marikolanthu’s constant search for meanings and values of life ends here.

Further, this interaction with other women gives Akhila an individuation from personal to historical. She realizes that other women have also experienced similar things. These women add to her sense of being as an individual and also as an Indian woman. The concept of ‘Indianness’ helps Akhila understand how she shares communal pressures with these women and also how she can make a place for herself in the existing hostile community. This can both be a source of strength as well as discouragement. But in Akhila’s case this literal and metaphorical journey serves as an educating experience which definitely gives her strength by broadening her horizon. Akhila decides to go on this journey because she realizes that she has reached her saturation point where her life has been taken out of her control.

She wants to run away from her family and responsibilities therefore, she plans to go on a journey that ultimately makes her a different woman. The novel, then, can be taken as one which is about the self-discovery of a woman by herself. Further, the place, Kanyakumari, where Akhila is going, has mythical significance attached to it. Kanyakumari is named after ‘Kanyakumari’- the virgin goddess who “like Akhila, had put her life on hold, condemned to an eternal waiting.”(Nair, 2004:3-4). But it is interesting how , Nair is trying to change the convention. Her protagonist, Akhila would not be a virgin in eternal waiting but rather a rebellious figure who refuses the goddess like role. Akhila is more like Narenda who is in search of answers and who finally achieves “joy of wisdom” and turns into Vivekananda- “the saint who taught the world to arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached.” (ibid). Akhila towards the ends gains a voice, gains wisdom, she has gone through the process of individuation and as a result,.She now possesses the seeds which can inspire others to search their souls, their inner self’s and look for answers which lie within them.
Being a modern woman Akhila feels sickened with her mother’s conventional preaching. Even then she supports her family and sacrifices all her happiness and her own personal life, right from educating her brothers and marrying off her sisters. They all get settled in their lives, but turn a blind eye towards her desires. Not even her mother thinks about the welfare of her daughter and remain so unconscious to the fact that she has made sacrifices so that her family prospers. The noble deed of prosperity done by her for her family adds to misfortune in her life. Her mother never bothers for her to get married and have family. She feels caged and rapt because of their indifferent attitude and disdain for her. This makes her a rebellion. She likes everything which is against narrow-minded Brahmin culture.

She falls in love with a boy named Hari, who is much younger to her. They even share an intense physical relationship as well, which confirms Akhila’s rebellion against the forced customs on her. She tries to revive the pleasure of being a woman with him. But owing to the fear of communal pressure she decides to end her relationship with him. She feels suffocated and befriends Katherine, a Christian by religion who is considered as immoral by Brahmin community just because of their life-style whereas Akhila gets inspired only by her different and unconventional life-style. To give voice to her bolted emotions she starts consuming eggs which is against Brahmin food restrictions. Akhila tries to fight all the prejudices whether gender related or caste related.

Karpagam, a childhood friend of Akhila, is pertinent as a very modern and unconventional woman. She lives according to her wishes and instincts. Although she is a widow, defies all norms to be followed by the widows and adorns herself with coloured clothes and jewellery. She criticizes all the ancient laws which snatch the freedom to live one’s own life after husband’s death and explodes, Who made these laws anyway? Some man who couldn’t bear the thought that in spite of his death, his wife continued to be attractive to other men. (Showalter, Elaine, 1985)”

One day Akhila is suddenly flooded with desire to find the ‘real her’. All her life she has been continuously haunted by the question “Can a woman stay single and be happy, or does a
woman need a man to feel complete? When she decides to leave her family and live alone, her siblings do not approve that. They doubt why she is talking about her needs. She gets irate and wants to be “Nobody’s daughter. Nobody’s sister. Nobody’s wife. Nobody’s mother.” (Nubile, Clara, 2003)

In an impulsive moment she buys a one-way ticket for herself to Kanyakumari and in the compartment silently listens to the stories of other women, which finally make Akhila to take the ultimate decision of her life, something only for herself. This work of fiction raises many forbidden questions about the role of women in post-colonial India. They have been repressed, oppressed and humiliated by the society, their own families and their male counterparts. All the women in this work belong to different age groups, varied cultural and economic backgrounds representing different facets of life. This work of fiction can also be viewed in terms of collective women’s psyche. This psyche is a product of female culture rooted in different classes, nationalities and races. It is as Elaine Showalter states,

“collective experience within the culture whole, an experience that binds women writers to each other over time and space. (Showalter, Elaine, 1985)”

After listening to all these stories of different women in the coupe Akhila finds herself more determinant, more strong. She also realizes that there is no one perfect solution to her dilemma. No one can teach her how to lead her life but finds that for sure she had been doing it all wrong. All sacrifices and denial to self due to the ‘lakshman rekha’ drawn for women by the hypocrite society can never be the right way of surviving. Now she wanted everything for herself whether it is gratification of her physical desires or having family and children. She even establishes a sexual relationship with a stranger in a hotel room in Kanyakumari. She doesn’t even bother to ask this stranger’s name. She is now a transformed and intermediary being. Like the characters presented in the novel, in real life also women wants to create a new world- a world of their own. For Akhila the quest for an answer to this troublesome question becomes the quest for her identity. Akhila’s responsibilities include maintenance of the house and ejecting her duties to the satisfaction of everyone. The quest for identity is carried out during the train journey; Akhila listens to the other women, but also rethinks of her past. Different figures of women emerge from
Akhila’s past: her mother, her neighbour Sarasa Mami, her Anglo-Indian friend Katherine and her widowed friend Karpagam.

Akhila’s mother is a very traditional and conservative Brahmin woman following strictly the prescriptions of her own caste. She embodies the ideal Hindu good wife- the *pativarta*- and she does not revolt to the role forced on her by the society and custom. On the contrary, she blindly accepts her role and also inculcates her daughters with these principles. When her father passed away, her mother becomes a widow and she undergoes the ritual of widowhood. Her mother is deprived of the symbols of marriage, which is defined as symbols of gender discrimination. And being the eldest child of the parents, Akhila shoulders the responsibilities. Getting a job in the income tax department on compassionate grounds, she not only becomes the “man” of the family but also loses her individual choices. Being forced to play the role of the man in the family, Akhila deletes the essence of womanhood from herself to become a “Spinster, government employee, historian and eater of eggs” (90)

She forgets her womanhood and she is drawn into a coil of duties in guiding her brothers in their studies and career and also arranges their marriages. She forfeits everything for the sake of the family, but intense inside she rebels.

Akhila becomes rigid and solemn. The house is in order but the members have forgotten about Akhila’s emotion and her emotional needs. Akhila handles all burdensome tasks carefully and she’s allowed a bigger identity. Not called by her name, she gets the treatment of Akka, elder or older sister, the customary respectful address set aside to women either inside or outside the family group. Even her mother used to call her Ammadi. She feels at a disagreement with her emotions. The flow in her inner nook tries to stimulate her. She suffers an identity crisis. What Akhila missed the most was that no one ever called her by her name any more. Her brothers and sister had always called her Akka. Elder sister. At work, her colleagues called her Madam. All women are Madam and men are Sir. And Amma had taken to addressing her as Ammadi.

...As though to call Akhila by her name would be an affront to her head-of-the-household status. (84)
This reminds the readers about the Indian female condition where she is expected to spend her time to perform the role of the daughter, sister and main source of income of the family to satisfy their requirements. The readers are handled to the feeling when Akhila gets out of control and ask over her,

“So who was Akhilandeswari? Did she exist at all? If she did, what was her identity? Did her heart skip a beat when she saw a mango tree studded with blossoms?”(84)

Akhila at forty five is a single and lonely. Her singular form of revolt until now is seen when she wants to enjoy a cooked egg brought by an Anglo-Indian colleague Katherine, who teaches her how to eat an egg. She starts eating eggs thus transgressing the norms of Brahmins. Akhila is not a being without desires. She falls in love with Hari, a younger man and had an compassionate physical relationship. Akhila rediscovers the pleasure of being a woman with him. However, she decides to depart Hari because she is frightened of the age difference between them and also she fears the social disgrace.

The reason why Akhila is attracted towards Katherine was because she lives independently without being concerned about the neighbours and the society. And also she was the only person whom Akhila knew was not concerned within the four corners of the family-husband, baby, home and mother-in-law. The protagonist fights the world of injustices related to gender, class, caste and religion around her. In the novel *Ladies Coupe* caste, class, gender and religion become borders, walls and enclosures which separate human beings.

Like Katherine another interesting character is Karpagam, one of Akhila’s old friends. Karpagam is a Hindu Brahmin widow, but a very modern and avant-garde one. Karpagam represents a “new woman” who lives independently following her own desires and impulses. She is not afraid of what the others think of her manners. Although she is a widow, she keeps on wearing colour garments and her nuptials jewellery thus go astray the norms of her caste. . She criticizes all the ancient laws which snatch the freedom to live one’s own life after husband’s death and explodes,

Who made these laws anyway? Some man who couldn’t bear the thought that in spite of his death, his wife continued to be attractive to other men.
Ladies Coupe At the end of the novel we realise that every person possess some fine qualities and inner vigor which even they are unaware of. It is only in the face of certain untoward incident or conditions into which they are thrown that these traits begin to surface. Further these qualities receive a finer border and luster only when faced with predicaments. Six women find themselves together in a ladies coupe, traveling, each for her own purpose. This ladies coupe becomes a comfort zone where each one begins voicing their tale and in the process is both reassured and persuaded of greater things.

Margaret, a chemistry teacher represents the women who are forced to lose their self-identity by their husbands. A fourteen year old girl Sheela’s portrayal depicts the modern young women who are aware of their need of peculiarity. Marikolunthu, pictures the rural women who lose their life because of illiteracy and ignorance. Janaki, a pampered housewife’s bearing is common to be found in India. Prabhadevi who seeks her identity as a human being not a thing. Each chapter of the novel is dedicated to one of the women’s stories. Akhila’s chapters alternate between the chapters of other five women. Stylistically this configuration helps Akhila to think and reflect upon what she has heard. All the chapters given to other women have titles. It is only Akhila’s chapters which are without name. However, towards the end, Nair gives Akila’s last chapter a name: Akhila Speaks. This highlights the fact that through her expansion, Akhila has gained a voice.

Margaret, in her story, comes out to be the winner. Akhila to, towards the end of the story is at the winning end though her situation is totally different from Margaret’s. Akhila through her symbolic renaissance and transcendence is able to acquire a new self- a self which has suffered, experienced and finally learned the true essence of life.

Nair successfully provides a glance into the women's world. The female consciousness and the feminine experience is brought out very successfully. The women that Nair portrays are distinct and different from those of the past. The prevailing social structure, economic condition, modern education and western power have all helped women to change her outlook, her way of thinking and her total persona. Successfully coming out of the conventional wraps the belongings of the
change in women is seen in almost every sphere of human activity. This change has greatly influenced the man-woman relationship too. This was one area not fully explored and people shied away from bringing private and personal issues into public. This positive change in women is helping them to define and redefine themselves in a positive way.

Another interesting thing that Nair tries to do is giving her women a explanation to the many problems they face. She is of the opinion that if problems arise, can solutions be far behind. Being a believer in traditional values, her women are also true propogators of values and principles. Inspite of having marital problems, they realise that it is not so easy to break up marital ties and go against social order. Not willing to ruin things, they look at it with a new sense of interest giving it a different height altogether. It is the attitude of the Indian society with its mindset that Nairs women wish to break through. They rebel and revolt (very often silently), but not to break or undo the social order. Living within the frame work of the society with its standards, ethics, beliefs and custom, they long for and shape an identity for themselves by asserting for equal righter and chance. Every writer has a message which is brought out through their work of art. Nair is no exemption. She has a lot to say to her readers. A very, superficial reading of the novel 'Ladies Coupe' brings to front the following elements: the quandary of women her consciousness of the same, her desire to be recognised as a person and not merely a woman and her insist on to have an independent identity. However, on reading the novel with a deep insight one realises that there is much more. A women who is the sheer incarnation of endurance and selflessness is ready to make numerable sacrifice and all that she seeks in return is her husband's faith and admiration, children's unconditional love, parent's life long support and the companionship of friends.

“\textbf{It is necessary for women to live within relationship. But if the rules are rigidly laid that as a wife or mother you do this and no further, then one becomes unhappy}”

\textit{(Vishwanathan, 230)}

Nair's objective and message is that every woman should seek to find a refuge within themselves, and not elsewhere. Every woman is strong enough to state and as certion that she has a solution to all her problems, instead of being dominated and subordinated by someone. One
needs to have a balanced and practical approach towards life and keep working at the wheels of life to keep it going.

**Ladies Coupe** is one such novel which deals with a woman's quest for strength and independence. At the end of the novel we realise that every person possess some fine qualities and inner vigor which even they are unaware of. It is only in the face of certain untoward incident or conditions into which they are thrown that these traits begin to surface. Further these qualities receive a finer border and luster only when faced with predicaments. Six women find themselves together in a ladies coupe, traveling, each for her own purpose. This ladies coupe becomes a comfort zone where each one begins voicing their tale and in the process is both reassured and persuaded of greater things.

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