



A Critical Review of Anita Nair's Select Novels

Dr.G.Rajeshkumar, Assistant Professor of English, Madurai Kamaraj University (DDE),
Madurai, Tamil Nadu (State), India.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7312-8473>

Mr. B.Thangamarimuthu, Assistant Professor of English, Government Arts and Science College,
Nagalapuram-628904, Thoothukudi (Dist), Tamil Nadu (State), India.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6016-1725>

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.6945420

Abstract

Anita Nair is one of the contemporary writers of India in the 21st Century. Her novels mainly focus on the pathetic lives of women who wriggle in the hands of men. She portrays the trials and tribulations of women in a picturesque manner. Her notable novels are 'Ladies Coupe', 'The Better Man', 'Mistress' and 'Lessons in Forgetting'. This review paper explores Anita Nair's novels to find out the research done on the themes of Anita Nair to find out future research possibilities. First of all, the researcher has collected the appropriate previous research works done on the particular topic and the articles were read, studied and analyzed to find out the research areas focused in the past years. Secondly, the proposed models of the particular research papers are elaborated to get the ideas. The third and fourth parts should analyze and identify the particular research paper properly like what type of methodology data and critical approach used for investigation. In this review article, the findings are also detailed for better understanding to open new research avenues for the future academicians.

Keywords: Critical Review, Anita Nair, Novels, Research Gap, New Approaches.

Introduction

Among many of the women's writings which project equal, social, political, legal, moral and cultural rights, Anita Nair's novels have added a new dimension to Indian fiction in English. She is feminist with a different angle having multifaceted personality. She has received many awards for the contribution to the field of literature. She has received JFW Award for literary Excellence in 2010, the Sahitya Akadamy in 2012. For her contribution to Children's Literature, she was also presented the Central Sahitya Akadamy Award. Nair's first book is a collection of short stories called *Satyr of the Subway*. Her first novel, *The Better Man* is reflective of the moral fibre of the society. The next novel, *Ladies Coupe* (2001) is a story of a women's search for strength and interdependence. Her third novel, *Mistress* (2005) has named a finalist for the 2007. It focuses on human relationship and man-woman relationship. Her fourth novel, *Lessons in Forgetting* was published in 2010. It deals with the universal theme of love, grief and the rediscovery of the self. It also focuses on the theme such as parenthood, marriage and relationship. Her fifth novel is *Cut Like Wound* as a



detective fiction novel. It differs from Anita Nair's usual literary fiction. For the first time, she has discussed the transgender community in the novel. The novels of Anita Nair have presented the new woman with changed roles and her novels are a great reservoir for research activity. Ample research has been done by many research scholars and ample is to be done. Nair's '*Ladies Coupe*', '*Mistress*', '*Lessons in Forgetting*' can be taken as examples for Feminist studies. This review paper focuses on the past researches done on the author and the future prospects to be taken into consideration. It scrutinizes the scholarly papers from select reputed journals and has done an analysis to get down the themes original data study in the works of Anita Nair. It will provide opportunity to the young researchers to find future topics.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study bring out the research gap in the works of Anita Nair and to propose new areas of research in her works.

Methodology

The study has employed descriptive methodology to analyze the past researches done on Anita Nair. This method may give a clear idea with the elucidation of the past themes elicited in the earlier works and will help to find the new areas of research.

Discussion

Mainly, most of the paper aims to explore women's subjectivity and agency through an analysis of Anita Nair's novel, *Ladies Coupe*. Her women characters vociferously challenge the power of the hegemony. It throws light on encounter with self and the sufferings of the downtrodden at the hands of the repressive forces of society and the plight of women though subjugated who strive for their identity by revolting against the patriarchal oppression. Anita Nair projects Indian feminism and attitude through women characters in her novels. Nair's *Mistress* as delineating the dynamics that happen to an art form in its course of acculturation. In *Ladies Coupe*, it was an overnight journey in ladies' coupe with the other five ladies, Janaki, Margaret, Marikolanthu, Prabha Devi, and Sheela. The coupe is a symbol of their existence and the space they occupied in society. All the six ladies are different acquire each other in age, class, and caste. In this struggle for survival, he has to fight not only with outer forces but with his own internal turbulent world of weaknesses which overpower his sense and action. Mythologies of all religions as well as factual histories are loaded with the stories of men who let the weaknesses of their individual character(s) rule them down. Nair's maiden work in children's literature expresses the concept of intersubjectivity through the psychoanalytic perspective. Her novels trace the journey of a disturbed individual exploring the emotional boundaries confronting him. In general, Nair has tried to show how life of the middle class in the modernized cities has changed, becoming callous, with the loss of tradition and culture. Anita Nair's novels show how carefully she expresses the frustration and disappointments of women who experience the social and cultural oppression in the male-dominated society. Anita Nair provides perfect examples of victimized women in a patriarchal system. Let the glance of the review begins:



Ramen Goswami (2022) in the article “Women’s Marginalization in Manju Kapur and Anita Nair’s Selected Novels: A Comparative Study” had spoken about the Marginalization of women as portrayed in the novels of Anita Nair. It shows the feeling of weakness and planned exclusion felt by a group of women as a result of patriarchal influence over women. The researcher claims that women are marginalized due to the patriarchal framework of the Indian society. When a woman is alienated, and pushed into the margins disparity occurs in their lives. It is a kind of conspiracy with the fundamental traits of dominance, driving the woman into submission by all means. All the walks of life makes women marginalized.

Madhumita Basu (2021) in the article “Quest for Selfhood: A Study of Anita Nair’s *The Ladies Coupe*” has investigated on the Theorizing Patriarchy elements in the novel *The Ladies Coupe* with regard to the feature of patriarchy in society in relation to six systems: the mode of production, paid work, state, male violence, sexuality and cultural institutions. This paper objective to discover women’s subjectivity and business enterprise thru an evaluation of Anita Nair’s novel. In the novel Nair demanding situations the gender stereotypes embodied in society and unveils the insidious misogynistic gadget of gendered electricity inequalities. Nair exposes that repression of ladies intersects with discrimination primarily based totally on race, sexuality, class, age, records of confinement, religion, language, and citizenship popularity. Her novel reveals the pernicious kinds of violence enacted towards ladies and delve deep into questions of sexuality and lady subjectivity in structures of patriarchy. All Women characters display how ladies are steady sufferers of gender-primarily based totally violence, and gender inequalities. Though, those ladies meet for the primary time they percentage their lifestyles stories with every different. Their memories display how the invisible systems of patriarchy dominate ladies. Even though those women’s fluctuate in age, instructional historical past and cultural upbringing, their memories have a not unusual place thread, the tragic dilemma of Indian ladies in a patriarchal social order. The coupe symbolically represents the distance which allows those ladies to critique the gendered inequities of society. It permits them the figurative adventure to selfhood. Within the distance of the train, those ladies assignment the ideological structures of private/ public domain. The adventure allows them to reject cultural prescriptions and reconstruct their identification. The narratives of those six ladies unmask the deeply misogynistic patriarchal culture. Their lifestyles stories gift the social paradigm and reiterate the inescapable nature of exploitation and sexual violence ladies face in India.

Gomathi (2021) in the research article entitled “Encounter With Self In Anita Nair’s *The Better Man*” has analyzed on the women knotted in the menaces of the cultural, social and monetary systems designed via way of means of the patriarchy and ladies characters are vociferously assignment the power of the hegemony. It throws mild on stumble upon with self and the sufferings of the downtrodden on the hands of the repressive forces of society and the plight of women though subjugated who attempt for their identification via way of means of revolting towards the patriarchal oppression. Change is possible; wish in no way



dies; and happiness may be determined however to enjoy the change, but little, the person have to attempt even though via way of means of doing so the relaxation of the sector can also additionally flip towards you. One can also additionally draw a similarity within side the crucial topic of the two novels name Ladies Coupe and The Better Man. The men and women are stuck in an internet of relationships partially in their very own making and partially one this is made for them. The characters quit with a positive feel of pride in figuring out their desires and aspirations and dwelling lifestyles as they desire.

Ambika (2021) in the paper entitled “Feministic Perspective in Anita Nair’s *Ladies Coupé*” has explored on the feministic elements in the novel *Ladies Coupé*, internal thoughts of the depressed women by the way of means of distinctive feature in their female sensibility and mental perception and brings to mild their issues, which might be the final results of Indian women’s psyche and emotional inequalities in a male ruled society. And it raises the questions whether or not the position of an Indian lady as a consultant of different ladies, dwelling below oppressive patriarchal structures with regards to cultural resistance, have to be constrained most effective to their roles as other halves and mothers. In this real world, women’s position is constrained to duplicate irrespective of their own goals and desires. *Ladies Coupé* questions the status of women’s in a conventional certain social order that sees women only in the position of an obedient daughter, a well mannered wife, and a breeder of children. Women in post-colonial India boldly defy such delimiting roles and assert self-dignity and private freedom. They are to pen their simple bodily and emotional desires and acts uninhabiting to meet them. The teach adventure in truth symbolizes a journey far from own circle of relatives and responsibilities, a adventure so that it will in the long run cause them to aware in their shallowness and dignity. The tremendous atmosphere, delicious, heat novel takes reader into the coronary heart of women’s lifestyles in contemporary India, revealing how the dilemmas that women face of their relationships with husband, mothers, friends, employees, and children. Anita Nair’s “Ladies Coupe” brings into recognition the difficulty of self-realization.

Maya Menon (2020) in the research paper “Negotiating into the Third Space: Art and Cultural Hybridity in Anita Nair’s *Mistress*” has probed in the novel *Mistress* as delineating the dynamics that manifest to an artwork character in its path of acculturation. In the novel, from a postcolonial part of view opens up the Third Space (Homi K Bhabha) of Hybridity, to which an artwork character like Kathakali is uncovered to, in its due path of popularisation and survival. The look at explores the dynamics of dance drama Kathakali, and the decontextualization that occurred to it, even as appropriated into more “understandable”, “intelligible” character. The journey of Kathakali into the ‘Third Space’ is frequently questioned, criticized and mocked by the characters like Koman. Yet, one couldn’t forget about the appropriations that it had gone through as part of acculturation. As Bhabha says, the hybrid Kathakali of Sundaran is something new, that incorporates with it a type of novelty, an in-betweenness, that makes its transcultural and agreeable to everyone. Kathakali in its



conventional shape along the hybridized range and each reigning the inventive global with all of the forte make a ambitious look in Anita Nair`s Mistress

Suman Yadav (2020) in the research article “Changing Role of Women in Anita Nair`s *Ladies Coupe*” has observed in the novel *Ladies Coupe* at the how women`s are converting of their position in the society and the coupe is an image in their life. All the women`s characters are differently purchase every different in age, class, and caste. Likewise Chaucer`s *Canterbury Tales* pilgrimages, those women also are narrating their testimonies. But their testimonies are a try to seek a solution as to whether or not an unmarried lady in a male-dominated. Women have entered many spheres of way of life. They are now no longer constrained to the bounds of the house. They no longer look like the old generations. Our typical Indian society praises the women who donate themselves to their households and by no means take care of themselves. People criticize the ones girls who contend with their needs, health, splendor and pastimes additionally. Anita Nair`s characters are aware in their life as an man or woman who have their very own rights and wishes. They have created a new position for themselves in the society. These characters need to discover new horizons of self-esteem and liberation with the aid of using pop out in their very own emotional perplexities and disturbances.

Hitendra Dhote (2020) in the research paper “Critical Reading of Anita Nair`s *The Better Man*” has crammed on the lifestyle, the beliefs, customs, and culture elements in the novel *The Better Man* with regard to the Man isn`t always handiest product of flesh and bones however as well of mind and feelings. These aptitudes represent his each internal and outer personality. His existence on this planet is a non-stop battle for life towards all peculiar circumstances. In this battle for survival, he has to combat now no longer handiest with outer forces however together along with his very own inner turbulent global of weaknesses which overpower his experience and action. Mythologies of all religions in addition to authentic histories are loaded with the testimonies of guys who permit the weaknesses in their man or woman individual(s) rule them down. There also are testimonies of folks that defeated their weaknesses with robust will and backbone and emerged victorious. Various characters constitute a specific phase of humans that mirror the social cloth of Kerala of contemporary times. Through the characters and the topics Nair has tried to chronicle a village and the happenings of the small city in Kerala, the lifestyle, the beliefs, customs, and subculture.

Rashmi Priya (2020) in the article “Mapping Knowledge, Power and Space in Anita Nair`s *Living Next Door to Alise*” has prodded on the psychological approach in the novel *Living Next Door to Alise*, it attempts to study Nair`s maiden work in children`s literature from the concept of intersubjectivity through the psychoanalytic point of view. It suggests the distinction among social interaction and intersubjectivity. It builds expertise through sharing. It aids in understanding the power of one over the other and has managed by time, space and culture. This study is through using the language of both verbal and non-verbal indicators between the two characters. The identical may be stated with recognize to intersubjectivity. What we suppose as the translation want now no longer be the identical among any



individuals. This have a take scrutinize has been restrained to examine the aspects of area and similarly studies may be finished at the temporal and cultural aspects.

Nisha Nambiar (2020) in the research paper entitled “A Passage to Redemption in Anita Nair’s *The Better Man*” has traced the journey of a disturbed individual in the novel *The Better Man* by exploring the emotional boundaries confronting him. The trauma of having to negotiate among one’s fractured internal self in addition to the want to camouflage the non-life of this sort of self will become terribly noticeable. In the procedure it delineates the diffused sun sunglasses of a man or woman’s internal being and his existential anguish. It tries to study the quantity and shape of subordination conditioned with the aid of using the social and cultural surroundings where the protagonist has been placed. The trauma of having to barter among one’s split inner self in addition to the want to camouflage the non-life of this sort of self will become terribly apparent. It heralds the start of a brand new being or the growing of a higher guy from the stays of his cloistered self.

Jaiganesh & Shyamala Devi (2020) in the article “Identity Crisis in Anita Nair’s *Lessons in Forgetting*” scrutinized on the cultural elements in the novel *Lessons in Forgetting* explores material relationships in the high – middle class family along with the problem of parenthood in the context of family life in the corporate world. Educated women in India attempt to assert their individuality, though they may be restrained of their own circle of relatives’ existence with the aid of using the conventional patriarchal subculture. The family members in the company global are suffering from the sensation of tension, love, betrayal, competition, ambition and greed etc. The lack of confidence makes humans and self serving in the company global, which ends in the lack of values. This is the instance of ways the company global has affected socio-cultural existence and has triggered is degradation. In this novel, Nair has attempted to expose how existence of the center magnificence in the modernized towns has changed, turning into callous, with the lack of subculture and subculture.

Sridharana & Ramakrishnan (2020) in the paper “Feministic Perspectives In Anita Nair’s *Mistress*” have hunted Feministic elements in the novel *Mistress* on the need of liberation and education of Indian women. Feminist literature has usually carried the heavy burden of dealing with, now no longer to mention separating layers of comprehension of traditions and religions. Her idea of a free woman transcends the boundaries of financial or social freedom however pertains to her intellectual and emotional mindset and wellbeing. It offers with infatuation and obsession throughout the gulfs of religion, marriage legitimacy and convention. Anita Nair presents best examples of victimized girls in a patriarchal system. Male has dominated society and its anti-woman ideology is the base purpose of women’s backwardness and their struggling and victimization. The utmost sticking in the novel of the original is the creative alchemy in one of the women individual portrayal that transforms the right into a hidden agenda for the social transformation of women in our society.

Findings and Conclusion

The study has revealed that there are many feminist themes studied in the past



researches. They are based on the feminist themes and mostly speak of the patriarchal domination, male chauvinism, hegemony and other vices employed on women. It also deciphers the female status filled with tears and turmoil. Every of the authors in the past two years dealt mostly on these themes. There is no evidence of close text analysis, new criticism, eco criticism and eco feminism employed on the select novels. So, the future studies can be done on the aforesaid new perspectives to foster research in an active manner.

References

- [1] Ambika. 'Feministic Perspective in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupé*'. *Language in India*, ISSN 1930-2940, Vol. 21:2 February 2021.
- [2] Basu, Madhumita. 'Quest for Selfhood: A Study of Anita Nair's *The Ladies Coupe*.' *International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies (IJHSSS)*, ISSN: 2349-6959 (Online), ISSN: 2349-6711 (Print) Volume-VII, Issue-V, September 2021, Page No. 91-96 Published by Scholar Publications, DOI: 10.29032/ijhsss.v7.i5.2021.
- [3] Gomathi. 'Encounter with Self in Anita Nair's *The Better Man*'. Vol.7 *Special Issue 1 March, 2021* ISSN: 2349-8684.
- [4] Goswami, Ramen. "Women's Marginalization in Manju Kapur and Anita Nair's Selected Novels: A Comparative Study." *IJARIE*. Vol-8 Issue-2, 2022.
- [5] Hitendra B. Dhote. 'Critical Reading of Anita Nair's *The Better Man*'. *European Journal of Molecular & Clinical Medicine*, ISSN 2515-8260, Volume 7, Issue 8, 2020
- [6] Jaiganesh & Dr. B. Shyamala Devi. 'Identity Crisis in Anita Nair's *Lessons in Forgetting*'. *Journal of Xi'an University of Architecture & Technology*, Volume XII, Issue VI, 2020, ISSN No 1006-7930.
- [7] Maya N. Menon. 'Negotiating into the Third Space: Art and Cultural Hybridity in Anita Nair's *Mistress*' *Journal of English Language Teachers' Interaction Forum*, Vol. XI.2. April – June 2020.
- [8] Nambiar, Nisha. 'A Passage to Redemption in Anita Nair's *The Better Man*' Vol. - IX, Issue - II, November, 2020-April, 2021, 136-139.
- [9] Priya, Rashmi. 'Mapping Knowledge, Power and Space in Anita Nair's *Living Next Door to Alise*' *Research Review* ISSN: 2321- 4708, Oct. 2020, Year - 7 (90).
- [10] Sridharana & T.Ramakrishnan. 'Feministic Perspectives in Anita Nair's *Mistress*.' *Adalya Journal*, ISSN NO: 1301-2746.
- [11] Yadav, Suman. 'Changing Role of Women in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*.' *International Journal of English and Studies IJOES0*, Volume-2, Issue-9, 2020, ISSN: 2581-8333.

Author (s) Contribution Statement: Nil

Author (s) Acknowledgement: Nil

Author (s) Declaration: I declare that there is no competing interest in the content and authorship of this scholarly work.



The content of the article is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.