

## **SYMBOL OF SELF- DISCOVER: *LADIES COUPE***

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“Knowing yourself is the  
beginning of all wisdom”

- Aristotle

Anita Nair is a popular Indian English writer. She was born at Mundakottakurissi, near Shonur in Kerala state. A bestselling author of fiction and poetry, her novels *The Better Man* and *Ladies Coupe* have been translated in to 21 languages. Anita Nair plays most important role by her novels. Her novel *Ladies Coupe* is self –discovery of five women who need their own Identity. In this novel she portrayed women’s oppression, male domination and problems of women. Especially Akhila who is a Protagonist of the novel, she led a head role of her family after her father’s death. But she was dominated by her own brothers and sisters. She is searching her own way of identity in the journey of Kanyakumari. On her way of journey she meets other five women, which was icon to her self- realization. At finally she is in her own way of making decisions in her life. She is free from the Dominated family and society.

Literature, to my mind is with me and you, and with every one of us. I mean to say that Literature comes out of us, our surroundings, our feeling, our independence, our behavior and our perceptions. Yes, today we have a bulk of literature in almost all languages of the globe.

In this novel express the Indian women’s how they treated in their family and society. Nair’s shows Indian women how they suffered by male domination. In this novel main character is Akhila (Akhilandeswari) who sacrifices her life to her family, after her father’s death. She takes her family her own hand. She is worked in the income tax department as a clerk. She was nineteen years old girl when her father was death. She had two brothers and one sister.

Whatever Akhila do for her family, they do not care about that. Where ever she wants to go she gets permission from her brothers. Her mother always teaches her how to lead a life with her husband as a good wife. But she led her life under the suppression when she meets her friend Karpagam than only she takes her own decision. Karpagam, she was childhood friend of Akhila. She was a widow but not follow the customs and rituals in her life. She leads the life for her own wish. She wears colorful cloths and kumkum. She not gave an importance to the society and what the others think.

Marikolathu, her full life she lean someone to help her. Why she shows that sister as areal thing because her owner Sujata treat Marikolathu as her own sister. She was struggling to make her own identity still the end of her life. When she was abused by Murugesan, she does not reveal but when it knows by her mother and Sujata they plan send her out of the village. Marikolathu hates her life and she gave a birth to a boy baby named Muthu. But she not eventouches that boy and do not show any love towards him. Marikolathu and Sujatha these are the woman Character under the male – domination.

Janaki who is a married woman from the character of Janaki, Nair shows that a woman having the happiness in “A Certain Age”. When she was getting married she live her life for the sake of her husband and children. Janaki is naturally having strength but she not accepts that, always wants help of her husband. She scarifies her life for her husband and child as a good mother and wife.

Janaki Prabhakar is married women. She does not have any identity in her own. She was satisfied with the identity of her father, husband and son. In this novel she introduced herself with the words “I am a woman who has been looked after. First there was my father and my brother; then my husband when my husband is gone, there will be my son” (22)

Prabha Devi shows her identity with the help of Floating. She was a daughter of jeweler shopowner and a wife of diamond merchant Jagdeesh. She was born to live her life as her father’s wish she is not able to make her own decisions. After her marriage her husband does not accept her own wish. So she tries to make her own individuality so she change her character and try to know swimming and finally achieve in that. She does not want to show her as simply Wife and mother and sacrifices her life for her family. So that she needs to get her identity she chooses to learn swimming, and makes her identity in that.

Oil Of Vitriol was tells about the gold medalist Margaret Shanthi. She is a Chemistry Teacher, she is a educated and working woman but she get a suppression from her husband in both home and working place. She also gets a abortion because the reason was her husband he donot want a baby now. He wants his wife always young and beautiful. Margaret got suppression in many years. Now the time came to come out that. She does not tolerate that so that she takes revenge upon him. Her husband was a perfect example for the Male- domination. He loves his wife depth of his heart but do not accept her wish. She wants to come out from that. So she takes a tool as a cooking and her husband as a fat man, to show her power towards him.

Sheela is fourteen years old girl; she loves her grandmother than her mother. Her grandmother was more strong character in this novel. She teaches her how the Woman should be and not should be. Her grandmother teach that the woman always take a step with more confident and more powerful. What are all the things her grandmother teaches her she follow that in her life. But Sheela’s father not like that he not allows Sheela to take her own decisions. But she does not care about that and lead her life as her grandmother wish. Sheela was the only person to having more attachment to her grandmother, so this was a reason she behave like more maturity woman. After grandmother death she leads her life in the same way. Through this character Nair shows that how the woman should be lead her life with brave and courage.

These four Character Nair shows that, how the woman leads their life. Nair was the only Writer rise the question in her novel for Women and also show through the characters how the woman should be and not should be these two things were given by her. When the woman realizes her own strength and confidence then she lead her life full of happiness.

Akhila is the only spinster in this novel. Akhila was an unmarried woman she getting a lot of Suffering from society, family and her sisters her sisters. They are also a woman but they treat

her own sister in the cruel manner. “What about you? You’ve been the head of this family ever since Appa. Don’t you want a husband, children, a home of your own? In their minds Akhila had ceased to be a woman and had already metamorphosed into a spinster” (77)

She was worked as a clerk in income tax office. She was forty-five years old woman still unmarried and no freedom in her life. She did the all the things for her Family and Sibling but they are never thought about Akhila’s Marriage. She Plans to escape from her home. ‘Dreaming of escape and space hunger for life and experience’ (2)

When she was ready to go, her sister asks she don’t get a permission from her younger brothers Narayan and Narsi.. “I don’t know what Narayan Anna and Narsi Anna will say when they know of your going away suddenly, and all by yourself too...”(7)

According to the woman status in laws of Manu, “By an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house” (Fe.Exp.22). In that manner Akhila is a woman and head of the family. She do not do anything an independently in her own house. Akhila is ready to gather life and experience. She shares seats from five other Woman. They are all share their experience in their own their life. Prabha Devi asked Akhila why a still unmarried Akhila reply is “My father died and I had to look after the family. By the time they were all settled in their lives, I was much too old to marry” (20)

According to the Woman status in of Manu “A female child, young woman is not supposed to Work independently even at her place of residence. Girls are supposed to be in the custody of their father when they are children, Woman must be under the custody of their husband when married and under the custody of her son as widows in no circumstances is the allowed to asset herself independently”(Fe;ex25). Who all are born as woman in this world they are always depending others still their life time it. If the woman wants to lead a life alone, the society is ready with their Knife words.

Akhila want to come out the suppression because of Karpagam who was a friend of Akhila. Akhila always belonging others Karpagam said lead her life in her own way. “She was always an extension someone else’s identity. Chandra’s daughter Narayan’s akka, priya’s aunt; Murthy’s sister-in-law... Akhila wished for once someone would see her as a whole being” (201)

When Akhila want to free her and her life with her family and suppression of others her sisters tread her as envy. She is also a woman but she treads her sister like envy. “All these years that I cooked and cleaned for you ... you repay me by telling me that you are sick and tired of us. You are a jealous old Woman. That’s what you are full of envy and spite because I have a husband and children and you have nothing” (204)

When Akhila is realizing she was lead her life under the support of her brothers and sisters she wants to come out from that. But her brother and sister both of them oppose her idea. They do not allow her lead her life as her own Akhila argued with her brother. “For twenty six years, I gave all of myself to this family I asked for nothing in return. And now when I wish to make a life of my own, do any one of you come forward and say it’s time you did this akka. You deserve to have a life of your own. Instead you worry about what it will do to your individual lives” (206)

Akhila ask her brothers and sister this much time she sacrifices herself for them. But they do not think about her she was a woman she also had a dream and life. She fights with them. Her sister Padma, she also a woman but not understand the feeling of a woman she give a reply to her sister. “She’s having a love affair; and she doesn’t want us to find out. That’s why she wants to go away by herself. Who is he? A how did you find him?”(206)

According to a man they always think woman as a weaker sex. And they thought without the help of man the woman do not do anything this was a mindset of a man. Nair portrayed the character when Akhila want to lead her life of her own . Her brother ask her “Akka, please talk to a few others and you’ll hear for yourself how difficult it is a woman to life alone” (207)

According to the laws of Manu “Girls are supposed to be under the custody of their father when they are children, women must under the custody of their husband when married and under the custody of their sons as widows” (Fe. Ex 25) Janaki also tells about her experience in life as a married wife of her duty was do a good role as a wife, daughter-in-law and mother. And she leads a life according to the rules of society. She considered as a home was a kingdom of woman. “I believed that a woman’s duty was to get married. to be a good wife and mother. I believed in that tired old cliché that a home was a woman’s kingdom”. (23).

Marikolathu go to Vellore to work there two ladies named Missy K Missy V both of them working in a hospital. They two give a name for Marikolanthu as Mari. Nair shows that the women’s identity was always given by others. “But we can’t call her, that her name is such a mouthful. I think we’ll call her Mari” (229).

When Marikolanthu want to go alone in her village her mother advice her do not go alone because the girl was grown up she faced lot of dangerous in the outside. But she was not take care about that in that time Rukimini who was a servant maid with her mother she snapped that “you are a grown up girl and not a young child any more don’t you know that there are dangerous lurking in every corner , hiding behind every tree and bush”(238).

The women belong to a poor family. The rich persons are suppressed them in the cruel way. The person is a woman their way of attitude was in bad manner. The poor women good and having virgin they are not consider them as a good. “Why are you pretending to be a guileless virgin? I know all about women like you. If the chettiar sons can feast on this body of yours...”(239)

Anita Nair’s “Ladies Coupe” depicts the trip as a symbol of self discover. It moves round strength of the character. When we analysis deeply of the characters of Ladies Coupe we find that each and every character shows their choice, responsibility , freedom and desire as a promoter of existentialism in their own way. Some other issues related to women like oppression, suppression and stereotyping of women as a second sex under patriarchal social organization, oppression of women of low caste and their sexuality has focused on the novel. As per the rules of the society the women who have lost her virginity she lost her life totally. She is not having anything to do in her life. “Who will you marry you? Your life is over and you’ll end up in the gutter like a street dog with its litter... you have nothing left in your life”(245).

In this particular work Nair’s brings out the life of 5 differently of mind women, who have been sufferers of the male dominated society. Their life brings out the conditional issues of the gender separation of the society. The place they possess in family and community frame work draws us towards the life of women a decade ago. Margret Shanthi who was a well-educated woman and gold medalist in chemistry, she led her life as a queen in her mother’s house. But when she get married with Ebe her life was totally changed she get only the domination from him. So she wants to show herself to him.

The story of Ladies Coupe portrays six culturally diversified women “Akhila”, “Sheela Vasudevan”, “Prabha Devi”, “Janaki Prabhakar”, “Margaret Paulraj” and “Marikolathu”. The shelves of these female protagonists search for create their identity and existence. Individuality,

strength and independence with the help of freedom and duty are main features of the novel. These females are those who break the image of traditional and ideological women and speak against conventions of freedom. They define the pathway to get honor themselves. Nair moves them from a state of obedience and deficiency into a situation of active and presence, from the kitchen and the bedroom to the street and the world at large. These are the stories, which together make a single story, of women rediscovering their bodies. The coupe becomes a symbol for a utopian world that is modern from patriarchy, one that is not characterized by fake binaries.

Anita Nair is one of the notable writers in India. She always focuses on the problems of woman in our society. They create a chain around their life and lead their life they do not cross that in any situation. This paper we can compare the two characters of Akhila and Marikolathu. Nair states that, these two characters the woman is educated or not educated they are having a male domination in their life. This paper consists six woman characters who are all get suppression from their husband and society but they try to come out that and come out and achieve in her life. In this they thought how many roles the woman plays in their life that is not a big thing they want their identity in their own this only they want. But these women are creating a world by themselves and lead their life free and happy. Their only wish no one was not dominating them, they wish to do what they want.

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