

**A STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLORATION
OF INDIAN WOMEN IN THE NOVELS OF
ANITA DESAI, IQBALUNNISA HUSSAIN AND
SHASHI DESHPANDE**

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A study of Psychological Explorations of Indian women in the novels of Anita Desai, Iqbalunnisa Hussain and Shashi Deshpande.

Anita Desai, Iqbalunnisa Hussain and Shashi Deshpande are the most accomplished contemporary novelists in English. Their works reflect the psychological explorations, and the man -woman relationship in modern society. They deal with the burning problems of sex and psychology. They highlight women's issues and present Indian sensibility in Indian English. Their works especially in regards to woman's status in society, are regarded as outstanding contribution to Indian writing in English.

The aim of present research project work is to highlight psychological explorations of Indian women in the novels of Anita Desai, Iqbalunnisa Hussain and Shashi Deshpande. A close study of their novels reveals that they have projected women's quest for freedom, their status and role in the society. They have also presented social, psychological problem of woman and man woman relationship. Their chief characters confidently struggle against their circumstances. Psychological explorations, man woman relationship and marital disharmony find an important place in their novels. In this research work, I have attempted to analyze the various problems dealing with psychological exploration and man -woman relationship in the novels of Anita Desai, Iqbalunnisa Hussain and Shashi Deshpande.

Indo - Anglian literature recently has attracted a wide spread interest, both in India and abroad. Today, it has established its position in world literature. Indo - Anglian poetry, prose, fictions and dramas are extremely popular today. A number of talented writers and poets are busy in popularizing them.

As for fiction, it has left behind all the other branches and has achieved a prestigious position in the Indo - Anglian literature. It has been recently developed. Through fiction one can express one's experiences, feelings and ideas in context of human -relationship as well as the other complexities in Indian society. In this way it is most acceptable way of presenting one's view about life and society.

The early Indo - Anglian writing is available in the form of prose letters, memoranda, traditions, religious, social and political treatise. Novels were written after the departure of Britishers, when Indians thought that they should give expression to the social and cultural surroundings of their country in Indian English just as Britishers were writing in British English and Americans were writing in

American English. With this idea India authors started writing in English and the result was a great success.

Bhudeva Chandra Mukherjee's *Anguria Binimoy* (1857), Bankim Chandra's *Raj Singha* (1881) and *Durgashandini* (1890), Tagore's *Ghare Baire* (1916) and *Char Adhyaya* (1916) are some noticeable novels in Bengali. Kishorilal Goswami's *Labangolata* (1891) and Debki Nandan Khatri's *Chandrakanta* are famous novels in Hindi. Hari Narayan Apte's *Maisorcha Wagh* (1896) in Marathi and *Galagnath's Kumudini* in Kannada are important works which are of great importance in the development of the history of fiction in Indo - Anglian literature R.C. Dutt, Bankim Chandra and Tagore translated their novels into English.

However the real beginning of Indo - Anglian fiction can be considered with the works of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838 - 94). His first published work *Raj Mohan's Wife* (1864) was in English. It was followed next year by *Durgashandini* in Bengali which was translated in English in 1890. Bankim's *Raj Mohan's Wife* is a realistic melodramatic tale of the long sufferings of a typical Hindu wife Matangini. Another novel written by him in *Anandmath* (1882) and novel is known for the national anthem Vande Mataram. Simultaneously Raj Lakshmi Devi's *The Hindu Wife* (1876), Tom Datt's '*Binaca*' (1878) and Kali Krishna Lahiri's *Roshinara* (1881) were also published. Then come the era of national awakening (1900 -1920) the beginning of 20th century, when the social inequalities and the exploitation of women attracted the attention of social reformers, thinkers, writers and novelists. The awakening of national consciousness and the efforts made by Britishers to destroy the darkness of blind faiths, superstitious and ignorance regarding the condition of a girl were a great driving force to the growth and development of Indo - Anglian novel.

Six Joginder Singh's *Nasrin* (1915) Balkrishna's *The Love of Kusuma* (1910) Sorabji Corendia's *Love and Life Behind the Purda* (1910) and *Between the Twilight* (1908) are some very important novels because of their theme of national and social awakening. Similarly, S.K.Ghose is one of the best and talented Indo - Anglian novelists of this era. He has written two novels of remarkable literary interests *1001 Indian Nights* (1905) and *The Prince of Destiny* (1909). The novel *1001 Indian Nights* is known for its adventures, suspense and romance whereas *The Prince of Destiny* is the first great political novel which is known for its vivid characters. The hero Barath presents a union of the highest ideals of the East and the West in his characters. He is a believer in non -violence and wishes to win over English men by the power of love

and not by the power of sword. In this novel, the English life and characters are very finely portrayed.

During 20th century different types of novels like the social, political, historical and regional were also written. S.B. Banerjea's *Tale of Bengal* (1910) narrates village life in Bengal and various evils present in society in the first decade of the 20th century are also described in this novel. Sir Jogendra Singh portrays the landscape of Almora (U.K.) and the will region of Punjab in his novels like *Nur Jadan* (1909), *Nasrin* (1915) *Kamala* (1925) and *Kamini* (1931). The vast desert of Rajasthan are picturesquely described in Bal Krishna's *The Love of Kusuma* (1910).

It was R. Tagore who brought forth the Indo - Anglian fiction on the world literary stage. He wrote in Bengali but he had a mastery over English language and literature. Three of his novels, *The Wreck* (1910), *Gora* (1910), *The Home and The World* (1916) appeared in English version in his own life time.

The Wreck is a social novel which discusses the problems of marriage. *Gora* is Tagore's most ambitious work of fiction. It is a political novel which projects Tagore's vision of the individual's role in renaissance India. Tagore presents a psychological analysis of his characters. His novels greatly influenced novelist like Mulkraj Anand, R.K. Narayan and many others.

Now we come to the fine great Indo - Anglian novelist who have enriched the treasure of Indo - Anglian fiction by their great contribution. They are Mulkraj Anand, Raja Rao, R. K. Narayan, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Manohar Mangonkar. These novelists were highly influenced by Gandhiji as well. During freedom struggle Mahatma Gandhiji was a powerful influence and a source of inspiration for all. All these novelists depicted Mahatma Gandhiji's sometimes as a character and sometimes as a powerful influence on their work.

Mulkraj Anand is a prominent novelist of the 20th century. He was born on December, 1905 in a Hindu Kshatriya family in Peshawar. In his novels he describes both types of character the exploiters and the exploited ones. These are the real people whom he saw around him. He writes:

“All these heroes as the other men and women who had emerged in my novels and short stories were dear to me, because they were the reflection of real people. I had known during my childhood and youth.” (Anand 2)

Anand has written some very fascinating novel. *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936), *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937), *The Village* (1939) and *Across the Black Waters* (1940). In his novels, Anand describes social problems, the social distinction and manmade barriers that divide humanity. He condemn lack of sympathy and understanding in the upper strata of society for the poor and the lower class. Anand assets that discrimination on the basis of cast and class produces social tension and disturbs the moral balance of society. It is callous and highly inhuman. Anand's *The Village* (1939) depicts how landlords, priests and lawyers exploit poor and innocent farmers and *Gauri* (1960) shows the exploitation of women. *Gauri* deals with psychological exploration and man woman relationship.

The second great novelist is Raja Rao. First he was pained by the slavery of Indian and he involved himself in Indian's struggle for independence but under the influence of his Spiritual Guru he started leading a spiritual life. His famous novels are *Kanthpura* (1938), *The Serpent and Rope* (1960) *The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965). *Kanthpur* is replete with Gandhian influence, while *The Serpent and The Rope* and *The Cat and Shakespeare* express his vision of life fully. Raja Rao, the winner of Sahitya Akademi Award for *The Serpent and The Rape* has an enormous reputation as a novelist. He has also been awarded the Padma Bhushan by the Government of India for his literary achievement.

The third is R.K. Narayan known as a regional novelist whose novels revolve round Malgudi region. He believes in 'Art for Arts sake' and writes for the sake of pleasure. Neither he preches any high philosophy of life nor does he concentrate on some burning problem of contemporary society. He writes only with the aim of providing pure delight to the people. His characters are very simple who make a revolt against society but the jerk of life make them compromising they retreat and withdraw. *The Dark Room* (1938) *Mr. Sampath* (1952) *The Financial Expert* (1955) *The Guide* (1958) *The Man Easter of Malgudi* (1962) and *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1967) are some of the novels written by R.K.Narayan. *The Dark Room* is a study of domestic disharmony. The middle class family life has been portrayed in all his novels. Malgudi presents a vision of Indian in a small sized painting.

“He operates from deep within his society. The India of Narayan's novels is not the India the visitor sees.”

(Mahood 94)

The fourth great Indo -Anglian novelist is Bhabani Bhattacharya who is known for the representing the problems of contemporary society. He has been given the Sathitya Akademi Award for his famous novel *Shadow from Ladakh* (1966). His other novels are *So Many Hangers* (1947), *Music for Mohini* (1952) and *He Who Rides a Tiger* (1954) and *A Goddess Named God* (1960). *So Many Hangers* deals with the horrible Bengal feminine which shows man's inhumanity to man. It is also a dramatic study of a set of human beings trapped in unique tragic predicament *music for Mohini* deals with the theme of adjustments of traditional values to new forms of East and West in the form of the character of Mohini. The novelist provides due significance the role of Noman in Indian society. *Shadows from Ladakh* deal with the betrayal of Indian by China. It belongs to the post - independent India.

The 5th novelist is Manohar Malgonakar whose novels deal with army theme. His famous novels are *Distant Drum* (1960) and *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964). Both the novels deal with Army life.

Now we come to the contribution made by women writers in the process of development of Indo -Anglian novels. Though the eye of a woman writer a different world can be seen. There are a lot of women novelists who focus their attention on the issues of women. In fact there is a vast scope for the expression of feminine sensibility. In 19th century Toru Datt, the renowned poetess, wrote a novel in English and since then many women writers have written a lot regarding the problem of woman. The key of the success of women novelists lies in the fact, that women are born story tellers and gifted with sympathy, sensitivity and understanding. A number of women writers like Kamala Markandaya, Ruth P. Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Shobha De, Shashi Deshapande and Nayantara Sangal have dealt with issues related to women. Each one is different from the other. Each one of these has her world of experience and her own way of presenting her own character.

Kamala Markandaya a profile and talented woman novelist was born in 1924 in Madras. She is one of the most versatile and popular woman novelists. Her first novel *Nectar In a Sieve* (1954) deals with the life of farmers, their hard works, their sufferings and above all their tragic end. Hunger, social customs and traditions also add to the sufferings of peasants. It is concerned with rural economics. Markanday's next novel *A Silence of Desire* (1960) is a study of the reality of religious faith and the opposition between man's quest for scientific truth and the sense of mystery. The

novel is concerned with spiritual realities. Similarly, *A Handful of Rice* (1966) deals with urban economics, characterized by black marketing, hoarding, soaring price and exploitation. Her *Coffer Dams* (1969) deals with the tension caused by dam building and the removal of the poor. Her *Nowhere Man* (1972) depicts the miserable condition of immigrant Asians. It deals with the theme of East West encounter through individual relationships and experiences. Its central characters are nowhere men, i.e. Indian immigrants in England who belong neither to India nor to England. The novel thus as a psychological study dealing with the problem of alienation and rootlessness. Thus Kamala Markandaya is extraordinary in portraying the psychology of her characters in a different manner.

Ruth P. Jhabvala is another important woman novelist who was born in Germany. She was married to an Indian architect and settled in India. Since 1951, she has written about psychological exploration, man - woman relationship, problem of adjustment and social life in her novels. Some of her novels are *To Whom She Will* (1955), *The Nature of Passion* (1956), *Esmond in India* (1958), *The Householder* (1960), *Get Ready for Battle* (1962), *A Blackward Place* (1965), *A New Dominion* (1972) and *Heat and Dust* (1975). *To Whom She Will* is a simple love story that presents Indian social life in Delhi in which love does not win but tradition and family win the battle in the end. The novelist well describes orthodox upper class Hindu family in *The Nature of Passion*. It is a good social documentation. In *The Householder* the novelist presents the various problems of married life and the social status of her characters. The novel *Heat and Dust* is autobiographical for which she has been awarded Booker prize.

Another famous woman novelist is Attia Hossain. She also highlights the problems of woman in society. Her famous novel *Sunlight on A Broken Column* (1961) gave her a permanent place in Indo - Anglian literature. It is concerned with a young woman's personal crisis set against the larger historical background of the freedom movement in India. The novelist remarks on social orthodox traditions which enslave woman, especially a muslim one.

Similarly Santha Rama Rau, a prolific woman novelist has written two very important novels *Remember The House* (1956) and *The Adventures* (1970). *Remember The House* is an autobiographical novel. This novel deals with a quest for the self, East West encounter and her own personal experiences.

Kamala Das has written novels like *The Alphabet of Lust* (1980) and *A Doll for the Child Prostitute* which are an expression of the sexual exploration of women and their search for liberation. These novels are autobiographical where she describes her personal experiences and struggle. In *A Doll for the Child Prostitute* she also deals with the quest for identity.

Obviously the whole feminine writing is marked with melancholy and sorrow. This may be due to the position of women in society. Even today an average woman feels uncertainty about her identity in society. Although the women of today have a great share in social responsibilities and they have also a number of avenues open before them yet the general opinion about woman as a shadow figure to a male character, be he a father, a husband or a son, continues to persist. Therefore a sincere effort is required to contradict such opinions and to affirm the dignity of woman in the family as well as in the wider social life. Thus this problem is not only a literary one but also a psychological, a political and an economic problem, feminist writing plays a very dominant role in this field as it brings about a radical change in public attitude towards a woman as well as man – woman relationship. It makes the people realize that love - making and domestic duties are by no means the single concern of women.

We can define feminism as femaleism or femaleness the qualities which all females possess, not only human females but also all other females in the creation. Although we cannot listen to them yet they also feel the same pressure of motherhood and child bearing. Today feminism has been named as a sense of personal courage. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of current English* (5th Edition) defines feminism as a belief in the equal rights and opportunities (legal, political, social, economic etc.) as men or as a movement in support of this. This is one of the best interpretations of feminism we are dealing with and it can bring a new change in woman and uplift her upto the level of man in this male dominated society.

Feminism can also be defined as a mode of existence in which the woman is free from the dependence syndrome whether it is the husband or the father or the community and lead a normal life of her own. If we talk about feminist tensions, we also talk the tensions of life. The feminist tensions are the tensions of living whether one is a man or a woman. Both the man and woman feel the same tensions while living together in society. Several minor and major decisions for instances, which paper to read, whether to have tea or coffee, where to go, what to do, to go out or stay home, to have a child or not, influence the root of every marriage. Even unmarried

girls feel the constraints of parents of society to which they belong, the social group, in which they live, of the schools they go to.

The only male novelist who talked of woman's role is Bhabani Bhattacharya. His *So Many Hungers* is a good feminist novel. The main character Kajoli shows great courage and is really not dependent on any one, neither on her grandfather, nor on her husband. She goes to Calcutta where she is sold into prostitution but she saves herself and her dignity by selling news papers.

Nayantara Sahgal is the best example of feminist writing. All the novels talk about women who are oppressed by marriage, by political circumstances and by accident of history, but the women characters are courageous enough as they rebel against society and choose their own path of life.

Kamala Markandaya and Margaret Drabble are also feminist writers. Kamala Markandaya has written the novel *Possession* (1963) under the impact of the feminist movement in Europe, particularly in France. In *Possession*, it is a woman's world in which the male is managed or used, purchased, commanded, exploited and taken around like a pet. Drabble's two feminist novels *The Milestone* (1965) and *The Realms of Gold* (1975) reveal the heroic possibilities in women. Drabble's female characters hate the traditional image of womanhood and embrace the new roles of woman.

In man - woman relationship woman is forced to have secondary place by strong cultural forces and social traditions. They find themselves living in a world where men condemn them and their existence is justified only as sex object. In history we find many examples of cruelties and barbarism inflicted on women. It is woman who has been accused of the original sin and the root of all evils. She is considered impure and sullied and is forced to live in a crippling state - bought, sold, raped, beaten, tortured and finally murdered. After marriage her husband, even if he is an adulterer or stained, with every evil yet he is still her husband and she cannot leave him, cannot divorce or remarry while the man can divorce, kill his wife and still be free from social blames.

The feminist novelists have realized this condition of woman. They are filled with anger and give expression to their emotions in their feminist writing. From this point of View feminist can be considered as a fictional strategy as it aims at projecting a feminist View of life and its problems. It aims at providing us an altogether new awareness of the woman's role in the modern complex world.

Now we come to the three great Indo -Anglian of feminist women novelists. They are Anita Desai, Iqbalunnisa Hussain and Shahi Deshpande. The study of their huge fictional works in context of psychological explorations of Indian women is the aim of present research work. Thus these three fictionists have been studied from the view point of psychological explorations of Indian women.

Indo - Anglian novel plays a great role in enlightening the society and attracting readers of varied taste and temperaments. During the last two decades, there is an astonishing development of Indo - Anglian writing particularly fiction, the spirit of the age is more effectively reflected in the fiction of the period. The novels published during the last two decades have made a mark in the world of literature. We can find the increasing recognition and respect the modern Indo - Anglian novelists are achieving in the literary world today. They have proved their mettle by winning several major literary awards in competition with writers whose mother tongue is English. We have some shining examples in the form of writers like Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Vikram Seth and Jumpa Lahiri etc. Salman Rusdie won the Booker Prize for *Midnights Children* in 1984, Arundhati Roy for *The God of Small Things* in 1997. Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* won the Booker Prize for the best book and W. H. Smith Award in 1994. Jumpa Lahiri is the first Indian author to win the prestigious Pulitzer prize in The USA. for her collection of Short stories *The Interpreter of Maladies* (1999). The novels of Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai, Nayantara Shegal and Sahshi Deshpande are getting translated into numerous foreign languages.

Though Indo - Anglian fiction has still a long way to achieve its position yet the modern novelists have enriched it by their outstanding contribution and also affirmed their position in the world literature. The novels in the previous era were mainly concerned with pre - independence problems and external aspects of society and little with the human psyche. Not it has become more sociological and psychological. There is a frank treatment of love, sex and marriage in modern novel. The recent decades have witnessed the emergence of a fresh awareness of woman whose importance has been recognized in literature on various grounds. However, there is a sad commentary that has rarely been defined as a subject on her own but merely as an entity that concern man. For centuries, the human experience has been synonymous with the masculine experience. The masculine ideology denies existence of woman except as a daughter, a sister, a wife, a beloved and a mother. Our male -

dominated society also denies woman the possibility of being a SHE, person capable of achieving individual identity. The discrimination as well as women's anomalous status has left indelible marks in the sphere of lit. Women find fiction as an appropriate medium through which they can voice the rights of their sex.

The feminist goal of equality with men has undergone a significant change in recent years. Feminism deals with the new awareness of the woman's the modern society. It is the struggle against all forms of patriarchal oppression and is committed to the struggle equality to women. Masculine psychology is the first and foremost factor in female subjection. The present day feminist thought tries to destroy masculinist hierarchy. Women have always been considered as subordinates to men. Feminists re-examine the concept of womanhood and challenge the existing patriarchal ideology. The recent trend in feminism literature is an indication that it is possible for a woman to assert her right remaining even under male dominance.

All human beings are bore free and equal in dignity and right. Woman is a symbol of creativity, delicacy, love, warmth, patience and dignity. Under the sheltering shadows of her soothing affection, we grow and germinate like small seeds into plants. Woman forms a vital but vulnerable section of any society. In the modern times, she suffers from many restrictions imposed on her by the society. Women were highly respected in the ancient India. Even in the days of India's slavery some women were famous and great. They took part with men in the struggle for freedom. Today we have women as scientist, business executives, engineers, doctors, lawyers, astronauts and administrators etc. The culture of our in nation is known and admired all over the world. The greatest role that women are playing is in the promotion of the culture and fine arts. They have made great progress in the arts and singing, dancing, acting, painting, writing and fashion designing.

Indian women, who are independent in every way, still remain slaves of society customers, parents, husbands and children, Manu, the law given of the ancient India, placed woman at the lower stratum than man. The concept of women in Manusmriti that a woman has to be all her life under the domination and control of her father, her husband or her son seem to assume a practical shape in our society. The question of gender discrimination and the issue of woman's right gain prominence in the light of available statistics viz. sex ratio (933 females per 1000 males) literacy rate male 75.85% females 54.16% as per 2011 census and the day to day incidents. It reflects great disparity between the two sexes. Women are subjected

to greater criminal victimization both inside and outside their homes female infanticide, child prostitution and dowry are the bane of our society. Tackling gender inequalities and ensuring equal freedom for the fair sex is a challenge of the new millennium for many years, there has been a deep rooted prejudice in India against women taking up employment and becoming earning members of the family. In the changing social scenario where women are becoming more and more and career conscious all ambitious. There is still a section of society that opposes woman's individual freedom.

Women have traditionally been the weaker sex. In developing countries like India, achieving equality has been a far dream. Over the years, incidents sexual harassment have been increasing young girls and women everywhere face a very real danger of sexual harassment. Not only in their jobs and educational institutions, but every time they go out. Such incidents are increasing at alarming rate. Incidents of rape have increased all over the country, very often victims are mere children. It undermines the confidence of women and terrorizes them. The women are helpless to deal with such things and feel guilty for no faults of theirs. The Supreme Court has made any kind of sexual harassment viz. physical contact or advance, a demand or request for sexual favours sexually coloured remarks and verbal or non-verbal sexual conduct -an offence,, The court are now recognizing that women are equal citizens and also granting them a better legal status. Women today are much bolder. They are challenging masculine oppressions and breaking into new careers which by new were supposed to be men's job.

A number of modern women novelists like Anita Desai, Nayantara Sehgal, Shashi Deshpande, Shobha De, Raji Narasimhen, Mrinal Ponde, Nina Sibal, Githa Hariharan, Arundhati Roy, Anita Nair, Dina Mehta, Namita Gokhale and Deepa such are extraordinary in revealing the true state of Indian society when it comes to the treatment of women. Their work is marked by an authentic presentation of contemporary Indian with some common themes viz human relationships, woman's inner struggle and inner frustrations, her pains and anguishes, man's tragic loneliness, the lack of proper understanding and communication between the sexes and the discrimination against woman etc. The whole feminine writing is marked by a tinge of sadness therefore it is pessimistic in tone. Perhaps, it is due to the precarious position of woman in the society.

The present study has critically examined the treatment of the theme of psychological explorations of Indian women in the novel of Anita Desai, Iqbalunnisa Hussain and Shashi Deshpande.

Anita Desai, Iqbalunnisa Hussain and Shashi Deshpande's novels throw light on inner climate, the climate of sensibility. Their primary intention as a novelist is to depict the psyche and emotional states of their protagonists. They have a great significance to achieve and handle the nuances of human inner psyche beautifully. In their novels we do not find political and philosophical or social ideas of characters but only characters with their observation, motivations, their consciences and their tensions.

Anita Desai, Iqbalunnisa Hussain and Shashi Deshpande are blessed with good observation, sensitiveness and penetrating analysis of the characters, the qualities necessary for a psychological novelists. It becomes natural for them to make each work of their haunting discovery of the inner -self. They want to point out the psychological aspects of characters to employ a certain design. They discover the significance of reality by plugging below the surface and plumbing the depths, illuminating those depths till they become a more lucid, brilliant and explicable reflection of the apparent world.

Anita Desai, Iqbalunnisa Hussain and Shashi Deshpande are primarily a novelist of moods, of persistent state of mind or psyche. They are interested in the psychic life of their characters and their novels reveal their real concerns are with the exploration of human psyche. Their contribution to fiction writing have been quite commendable and substantial. They come face to face with intangible realities of life, the innermost depths of the human psyche and the chaotic underworld of human mind through their novels. Their distinctive stature as a novelist derives primarily from the fact that they have made extensive use of the stream of consciousness technique in their novels. Their achievements lie in the fact that they employ a relatively new technique in Indian English fiction with a remarkable. consummate skill. The fiction of Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Iqbalunnisa Hussain have become self analytical and introspective and the individuals quest for a personal meaning in life have become a theme of unavoidable interest for her. Their primary emphases are, thus on sights and sounds, on movements and patterns both physical and mental as they impinge on the consciousness of their protagonist. Their protagonists have usually sensitive sense of doom and withdraw into a sequestered world of their own.

Anita Desai, Iqbalunnisa Hussain and Shashi Deshapande have presented in their novels the predicament of sensitive women characters, who find it very difficult to adjust in the present mechanical and urbanized set up. They sincerely brood over the fate and future of modern woman. They have explored different aspects of feminine psyche like man woman dichotomy, their very personal relations, presentation of neurotic characters etc. In fact most of their novels are a study of feminine psyche, which comprises women of all ages. Images and symbols are employed freely to reveal the inner psyche of the characters and illuminated their obsession changing and contrasting moods, and psychic deviation besides emphasizing the obscure and weird atmosphere of their tale.

They portray their female characters on the verge of psychological breakdown with a View to capture the prismatic quality of life in their fiction. They use the stream of consciousness technique, flashbacks and interior monologues. Their female characters are mostly educated, well to do and hypersensitive ladies burdened by chaotic milieu. They reflect the inner struggle of such characters, their desire to break the shackles and come out of their shells and assert themselves as human beings. They can be considered as the innovator of psychological study of alienated women in India. They deal with the problem of meaninglessness in life and lack of communication not from the philosophical or sociological but entirely from psychological point of View.

As psychological novelists they try to delve deep into the emotional built up and crevice of their characters. They employ very beautifully all techniques of psychological novel like zigsaw puzzle, diary entries, self analysis along with stream of consciousness and flashback.

They make each work of theirs an accelerating exploration of the psychic self. The psychological turmoil creates psychic imbalances, which in turn, handicap them in establishing harmonious and gratifying inter -personal relationships. There is a complete compatibility between their theme and technique with the help of colour and symbols they reveal the hypersensitive nature of their heroines. Their language have three major characteristics love of words, sensuous richness and sensitivity, which suit their expression of personal vision. They are such interested in life with its hopes, frustrations, negations, rejections and chaotic flow of events as they are concerned with the art of giving shape, purpose and wholeness to life.

The novelist language and theme also reveal the meaningful correlations between the psychic conditions of the characters. Their deft handling of language, imagery and syntax in order to convey as acquainted expression of the interior psyche of their characters is superb and unique. They present with a keen View that how moral values of women are conveniently altered to suit the demands of men who treat them as their objects of possession to be ruled and controlled by through myths, customs and social discourse.

They use of various linguistic devices in order to present the submerged psychic truth is unique in itself. Clusters of images, symbols, myths, fresh collocations, parallelism alliteration, consonance, rhyme, different levels of semantic interpretation are some of the devices used by them.

Anita Desai:

A close study of Anita Desai's novels reveals that characters have had peculiar childhood. They are not able to adjust their former life with the later life. Maya and Monisha and even Sita, Nanda Kaul and Bim are haunted by their past and that is the reason and their intricate relationship. Her novels present a disillusioned, harsh and complete picture of the world. In her novels Desai unfolds her feminine psyche in depth rather than trying to describe the surface appearance of existence. Through her female Protagonists Desai quivers the existing system of absurd notions and established conventions. The root of all these novels is that individual is all alone in this meaningless world.

The most common themes in her novels are the intricacy of human her novels are the intricacy of human interaction. She writes mostly about the depressed plight of women suffering under their coldhearted and thoughtless husbands, fathers and brothers. Man-woman relationship brings characters into alienation, withdrawal, loneliness, isolation and lack of communication that frequently occurs in her novels.

Desai has depicted that man marries for the sake of social norms and it is the woman who suffers. The novelist has very successfully brought the past and the present in an elevated sequence. There is nothing in the present which is not related to the past and vice versa. The blending of the past and the present has been conveyed in an imperceptible manner.

Anita Desai has very strongly depicted the clashes experienced by Indian woman in general. She has represented the struggle of women as they remain deprived politically and socially of their rights. Desai's female protagonists represent

the new women of India with a focused consciousness. They rebel against the existing power structure, internally as well as externally. Desai explores the feminine psyche very deeply to dig only the reasons for women's oppressions.

The underlying themes of her novels do not impede the smooth progress of the plot which she handles with dexterity. It is real life that we see in Desai, with all its violence, squalor, existential agony, frustrations, desperation and simple pleasures.

Desai has painted the loneliness and human sufferings, caused thereby, though human awareness of the characters. All the major characters of her novels seem to have lost their individuality and are in search of it. Her novels deal with whether of life. Her novels portray the struggle of the female psyche for identity.

Anita Desai has earned a separate space for her particular attention towards psychological insight and existential concerns. Her sensitive portrayal and understanding of intrinsic human nature makes her writings conspicuous and captivating. She herself admits her preference for the internal world of the psychic space that has always been a major concern in her fictional writings.

The work of Anita Desai points out a new and mature phase in Indian English fiction. She adds new focusing on the discovering the sensibility a typical modern Indian phenomenon. She thus clearly stands a head the group in as much as she shifts focus on the in her climate the climate of sensibility. Her main concern is to depict the psychic state of her protagonist at some crucial juncture of their lives.

Desai's psychological insights in her characters can be compared with those of George Eliot. Desai's novel deals with the psychological and social problems faced by a present day married woman in today's materialistic society.

Iqbalunnisa Hussain: *Purdah and Polygamy*

The novel shows the helplessness of women in a male dominated world. In this context, it is worthwhile to note Shanta Krishnawami's remarks regarding the position of women in the Muslim Community. She states: "While the Koran placed woman in high esteem and gave them equal rights to property and education, in practice Muslim women in India are generally less educated and vulnerable than their Hindu counterparts. They do not even have the comfort of entering a mosque." (Krishnaswamy 11) All women know that they are being wronged, but the social set-up is that they few react like Maqbool. The rest, reconcile themselves to their fate and lead their life without finding any solution to the problem which besets them. The novel gives a remarkable picture of the plight of women in a community which has

rules framed to the advantages of the men. The womenfolk become mere victims of such social evils. Another interesting fact that has been brought to light in the novel is the indifferent attitude of the women themselves to the polygamous life of the men. Kabeer's mother is the chief cause of his second marriage and she gets him married for the second time merely to take revenge on Kabeer's first wife and people.

Purdah and polygamy is a novel with distinct social purpose, the amelioration of the life of the Muslim woman. Unlike Attia Hosain and Zeenuth Futehally whose heroines rebel against the perpetrators of their oppression, Iqbalunnisa Hussain merely gives an account of the stifling social scenario that deprives the woman of even her right to happiness. Kabeer, the protagonist in the novel, disregards the individual identity of women and indulges in polygamous relationship with many women.

Shashi Deshpande:

A close study of Shashi Deshpande's novels reveals her deep insight into the plight of Indian women, who feel smothered and fettered, in a tradition – bound, male – dominated society. She delineates her women characters in the light of their hopes, fears, aspirations and frustrations, who are aware of their strengths and limitations, but find themselves thwarted by the opposition and pressure from society conditioned overwhelmingly by the patriarchal mind - set. She highlights their inferior position and the subsequent degradation in a male – dominated society.

Deshpande's women protagonists are victims of the prevalent gross gender discrimination, first as daughters and later as wives. They are conscious of the great social inequality and injustice towards them, and struggle against the oppressive and unequal nature of the social norms and rules that limit their capability and existence as a wife. Fettered to their roles in the family, they question the subordinate status ordained to them by society. Although she has a small volume of writing to her credit, her works have drawn great critical attention and acclaim for her sensitive and realistic representation of the Indian middle – class women. Her sincere concern for women and their oppressive lot is reflected strongly in all her novels.

In *Roots and Shadows*, Indu, the protagonist undergoes great mental trauma in her childhood and in marriage due to her husband Jayant's double standards. Ostensibly educated and liberal, he is intolerant about any deviation on her part from the traditional role of a wife. He is no different from the other less educated and conservative Indian men when it comes to playing the roles of a husband. Besides, the

miserable plight of Indu's *Kakis* and *atyas* is revealed to our gaze through Indu's eyes. The heart – rending account of *Akka's* child marriage reveals the miserable condition Indian women of the older generation had to live in.

Shashi Deshpande has remarkably presented the inferior status of women by giving us an insight into the married lives of Indu's aunts and other relations. Although Indu is educated and has a liberal outlook, she realizes bitterly that her lot is no different from her numerous illiterate and village – bred aunts, and she too is a victim like them of the patriarchal social setup.

The Dark Holds No Terrors is a telling example of men who are intolerant about playing a second – filled role in marriage, and how their manhood gets hurt when their wives gain a superior status in society. Manu feels embarrassed and insecure with the rising status of his wife Saru and with it all troubles start. But Deshpande has made society equally responsible for their deteriorating relations.

In That Long Silence, Jaya's troubles in marriage stem from her husband's intolerance towards any deviation from her role of a subservient wife. When threatened with charges of corruption, he expects her to go into hiding with him, which she refuses to comply with. He is greatly enraged and walks out of the house. Jaya is very confused and miserable as she had all along followed her Vanita *mami's* advice that a husband is like a 'sheltering tree' which must be kept alive at any cost, for without it the family becomes unsheltered and vulnerable. She does so but finds herself and the children more unsheltered and insecure.

In *The Binding Vine*, Shashi Deshpande raise the issue of hitherto untouched issue of marital rape. Women like Mira, Urmi's mother – in – law, have to bear the nightly sexual assault by their husbands silently. Other women like Shakutai, her sister Sulu, Kalpana and her sister have their own sorry tales. Shakutai's husband is a drunkard and a good – for – nothing fellow, who leaves his wife and children for another woman. Kalpana is brutally raped by Prabhakar, Sulu's husband. Urmi takes up cudgels on Kalpana's behalf and the culprit is caught. On the other hand is Urmi. Her husband is in navy and during his long absence she craves for some physical gratification. Her friendship with Dr. Bhaskar provides her ample opportunity, but she never oversteps the boundaries chalked out in marriage. But the painful aspect to this is that this virtue of hers will remain unacknowledged by her husband.

A Matter of Time is yet another novel wherein the husband walks out on his family comprising the wife and three daughters. Sumi, the protagonist, is so

shocked that she lapses into complete silence but, apparently tries hard to keep things normal for her daughters. Her desertion is a cause for great humiliation and mental trauma for her as it's not only a matter of great shame and disgrace but a bitter realization of being unwanted. Words of sympathy from relations fail to console her. She is self – respecting and takes up a job for herself and her daughters. Though Gopal, her husband, returns but she is a new Sumi now. She has coped with the tragedy with remarkable stoicism.

The study of Anita Desai, Iqbalunnisa Hussain and Shashi Deshpande's novels in the preceding chapters reveals that their outstanding achievement lies in their sustained use of interior world of human being. They have tried to probe into one of the other aspect of Indian society. They have succeeded in leading reliability authenticity and seriousness to the portrayal of existential theme in particular and alienation, isolation and quest for identity in general. They have expressed their own personal vision of the world, characterized by the basic indecorousness of human life.

Desai, Deshpande and Hussain are modern writer because they know how to deal with new themes they have mainly dealt with the existentialist theme related to alienation caused by mechanization, urbanization, changing values, depersonalization, disorganization, self – misgiving, delusions, ruthlessness, discontent, psychology and maladjustment. In the novels taken up for the study thematic aspect takes place within its purview of problems like psychosomatic, suffering of being rootless, discontent changing values and human predicament.

Their novels are generally obsessed females, highly sensitive and engaged with their dreams and thoughts and alienated from their environments. They often differ in their opinion from others and board on a long journey of thought in order to find the meaning of their survival. That is why that they suffer of their relationship more than others do.

As women novelists, they have won a niche by exploring the emotional world of women, bringing to light the various deeper forces at work in feminine sensibility as well as psychology. They project the tragic vision in their novels by placing her female protagonist in hostile situations.